

ALASKA

COVID-19

Screening Testing to Reopen
and Keep Schools Operating
Safely

How will funding be distributed?

- All schools around the state are eligible to receive funding, including charter and private schools
- Funding will be distributed through a grant process via DHSS GEMS (Grant Electronic Management System). You will receive an invite from the GEMS system with your grant award information.
- If schools are not eligible to receive grants directly, a subaward will be provided to you from your local/regional school district.
- Funding will be based on enrollment information provided by EED

Payment Distribution Cycle

- Funding will be available May 1st and as soon as the grant award is executed, through July 31,2022. The award amount is listed in your GEMS invitation.
- Applicants will receive an initial 20% disbursement of their overall award to begin testing immediately.
- The remainder of the funding will be distributed quarterly and will be contingent upon meeting all reporting requirements.

How Funds Can Be Used

- Purchase screening testing kits, and necessary supplies;
- Providing courier services to improve turn-around time for results;
- Providing Personal Protection Equipment;
- Improve laboratory reporting;
- Personnel support, onsite, such as a screening testing coordinator, for sample collection, or other additional staff needed to implement testing programs, etc.

How Funds Can Be Used

- Logistical and operational support, including IT systems and data management, as needed;
- Contract with testing companies directly to provide services;
- Partner directly with local laboratories;
- Subawards with private schools within region/district.

Items Funds Cannot Be Used For

- Resources or activities funded by another HSS Contract, grant, or MOA
- Purchase of vehicles
- Reimbursement of pre-award costs
- Research
- Indirect costs associated with the award
- Food and/or water
- Hospital bill or insurance claims
- Clinical care
- Publicity and propaganda (lobbying)



Grant Process

- If you have never received a grant award from DHSS via GEMS (Grant Electronic Management System), an invitation will be sent to school point of contact or business managers from DHSS GEMS Administration. This invite will establish an Agency Power User for the school district. This person will manage the award in GEMS and have the authority to sign the award on behalf of the school district. If additional agency contacts need to be added to GEMS, the Agency Power User has permissions to do so. The GEMS site can be found at: <https://gems.dhss.alaska.gov/>. Users must have a myAlaska account, preferably one separate from your personal myAlaska account to have access to agency information and awards in GEMS. Any issues with this, please contact Amy Burke, below.

Grant Process

- Each school district will have to complete a budget in GEMS, update their agency record (i.e., address, facilities, contact list, etc.), provide a narrative or proposal detailing use of funds, and sign the State and Federal Assurances. All items must be completed prior to signing and submitting the award back to DHSS for review.
- DHSS grant staff and Public Health staff will review the submitted grant documents and if approved, the grant award will be executed. If revisions are required or unallowable expenses need to be removed, the grant award will be returned to the school district for updates.
- Within 15 days of grant award execution, the first advance of 20% of your award amount will be provided. If applicable, please make sure you are registered with the State of Alaska's Vendor Self Service (VSS), here: <https://iris-vss.alaska.gov/webapp/PRDVSS1X1/AltSelfService> to receive payments.
- Reporting will be required by Public Health and quarterly reports will be required to be submitted in GEMS for next advance payment.
- Grants and Procurement Section Chief Amy Burke will be your point of contact, amy.burke@alaska.gov or 907.465.1624.

Important Dates

Grants Invitation sent April 26, 2021

- Invitation to receive a grant award will be emailed to school contacts from GEMS.
- Grants awards will require schools to provide a budget, proposal for use of funds, and updates to agency information in GEMS prior to execution.
- Once all requested documents are provided, reviewed and approved, the grant award will be executed.
- First disbursement provided to schools within 15 days of grant execution.

Special Conditions: July 31, 2022

- 2021-22 school year testing implementation plan due.
- Reporting method approved.

Submit questions to: Amy.burke@alaska.gov

Testing Activities

- **CDC recommends screening testing in schools**
- Establish a program that is **easy to administer** and **requires minimal additional resources** from schools
- **“Viral testing strategies in schools should be part of a comprehensive prevention approach.**
- **Screening testing is intended to identify infected people without symptoms...to prevent further transmission.” – CDC Guidelines**



2021-22 School Year Testing Plan

Follow CDC guidance on how often to test, staff, students, sports:

- Personnel: Who do you need to hire, school nurse, test coordinator, assign to current staff?
- What tests will you use?
- Ordering testing supplies
- DHSS will provide training support and can help you answer these questions

Reminder on testing

- Testing does not replace other mitigation strategies like masks
- Testing adds an additional layer of protection to help staff and students stay in school
- Per CDC, testing can be used to mitigate risks in schools, especially if 6-foot distancing is not always possible

CDC Screening Testing Recommendations

- At least once per week for all students and staff in most circumstances
- If transmission risk is high (8%+ test positivity in community or average daily case rate $>7.1/100,000$ in community and $<70\%$ of students and staff fully vaccinated), test high-risk sports participants twice per week
- If transmission risk is low ($>90\%$ of students AND staff vaccinated or community case rate $<1.4/100,000$ and positivity $<5\%$), students may skip testing. Staff should still test once per week.

Reporting Guidance

Schools should use a secure Web Entry portal to report all results within 24hrs

- We can set up facility-level accounts as one per school, or one per district, depending on your preferences

Schools that are already reporting: scale up existing plan.

- Let us know if you need to add more user accounts
- If you also will contract community test sites, we need to discuss your plan so those results can be attributed to school testing
- If you are fax reporting: shift to electronic

Reporting Guidance cont'd

Make a reporting plan now

- Determine staff responsible for reporting. Will you have one at each school, or centrally report from an admin office? Prepare to give the names and emails for your reporting staff so we can connect with them. When ready, send an email to covidtestreporting@alaska.gov to request a reporting meeting.
- For questions: megan.tompkins@alaska.gov, 907-269-8014

ALASKA
COVID-19

REOPENING SCHOOLS

Part 2:
Questions?