

Tips for Completing the Progress Narrative

ACF requires grantees to provide narrative information on program operations, challenges, and successes as context for the quantitative (numeric) measures in the quarterly performance reports (QPR/PPR). The qualitative narrative is designed to help grantees and ACF understand program-level successes and challenges during the reporting period. Grantees are encouraged to use the narrative to illuminate and interpret their quantitative performance measures. This tip sheet provides detailed steps for accessing and saving the template and tips on how to complete the progress narrative each quarter.

For more information about the QPR/PPR, see Module VIII.A of the [nFORM User Manual](#). Information on compiling and submitting your progress narrative with your QPR/PPR can be found in Module VIII.A.4.



Accessing and saving the progress narrative template

You must save the progress narrative template directly to your computer in order to complete it. There are separate templates for the QPR and PPR and for HM and RF programs.

1. You can access the templates either from nFORM or the HMRF Grantee Resources site. If downloading from nFORM, navigate to the QPR/PPR screen (R1) under the Reports tab; the narrative template link appears above the QPR/PPR table. If downloading from the HMRF Grantee Resources site, select either the [Healthy Marriage](#) version or the [Responsible Fatherhood](#) version.
2. To download the template from nFORM or the HMRF Grantee Resources site, right-click on the applicable QPR or PPR Narrative PDF link and select "Save link as...".
 - Mac users should hold the "Command" key while clicking the template link instead of right-clicking.
 - **NOTE:** If you "left-click" on the progress narrative template link (e.g., when you click the link the way you would usually click any other link), a message will open in a new tab saying, "Please wait...". However, the template will not open.
3. After right-clicking on the applicable progress narrative template link and selecting "Save link as...", a file explorer window will open where you can select a location to save the template to (such as your desktop or another folder). Add the due date for the applicable report to the file name before selecting "Save". For example, you can name your last progress narrative for grant year 3 as "GrantName-PPR-narrative-10302023".
4. Minimize or exit out of your browser.
5. Navigate to where you saved the template (i.e., your desktop or another folder) to open the saved version from your computer. The file should open in Adobe, where you can type directly into the fillable fields of the template.
 - **NOTE:** The template is compatible with Adobe Reader versions DC May 2021 (21.001.20155) and later; grantee staff with earlier versions of Adobe may have difficulty completing the template.



Completing the progress narrative

As you think through the topics and types of information you want to include in the progress narrative, consider these helpful tips:

- Use the narrative to help tell the story of your program. Describe any successes or challenges your grantee faced during the reporting period and how those affected progress towards performance goals and targets.

- For example, a grantee could explain why they are not on track to meet their annual enrollment or primary workshop participation targets and their continuous quality improvement (CQI) strategies for getting back on track.

C-03 Program Enrollment

2. Enrollment targets and actual enrollment

| | Number of community individuals |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Enrollment target for the grant year | 300 |
| Enrolled since the beginning of grant year through the end of reporting period | 74 |
| % of grant-year target met to date | 24.7% |

B-03 PROBLEMS

Describe challenges encountered implementing your program during this reporting period. Describe any current or expected deviations or departures from the original project plan, including actual/anticipated slippage in task completion dates, and special problems encountered or expected. Use this section to advise your Federal Program Specialist and Grants Management Specialist of assistance needs.

1. Implementation challenges performance measures

Please review the performance measures in section C-07 of the PPR. For any challenge categorized as "somewhat of a problem" or "a serious problem," please describe the nature of the problem and any proposed solutions.

Due to the closing of a partner organization that provided childcare during our in-person workshops, we have experienced challenges with recruiting participants since we could no longer offer childcare during our in-person workshops. To address this challenge, we are focusing our CQI efforts on identifying childcare and workshop design alternatives to better meet the needs of the families we serve.

- Describe trends that might not be apparent in the quantitative section of the QPR/PPR.
 - For example, the quantitative measures may show that a grantee is still falling short of their workshop participation targets. But, the grantee's attendance rates may have improved in recent weeks as a result of their CQI efforts. This type of programmatic detail can be helpful to include in your narrative.
 - For local evaluation grantees that use service assignments in nFORM, clients assigned to Control No Services or Control Waitlist No Services groups are not included in QPR/PPR performance calculations. Local evaluation grantees can use the narrative to provide updates on these groups. Grantees can also use the narrative to describe reassignments of clients from control waitlist to other groups since those clients' services and outcomes may differ from other clients.
- Focus your narrative by concisely summarizing key points.
 - Discuss additional details during meetings with your grantee's FPS, in lieu of long write-ups in the narrative.
- Avoid restating the numeric data. Instead, provide information that helps your grant team and FPS interpret the performance measures.
 - For example, if a Fatherhood FIRE grantee's average cumulative number of substantive ISCs does not align with the grantee's service plan or ACF's requirement that FIRE grantees provide at least 8 substantive ISCs to each client/couple, use the progress narrative to describe any staffing or client retention issues that contributed to this issue.
- Include relevant information from other sources such as qualitative data (focus groups, interviews, or observations), CQI or evaluation surveys administered outside of nFORM, or other information that your program collects.
 - For example, if your grantee offers more than one primary workshop, you can describe the average hours of participation by primary workshop in the narrative, since the PPR aggregates this metric across primary workshops.

