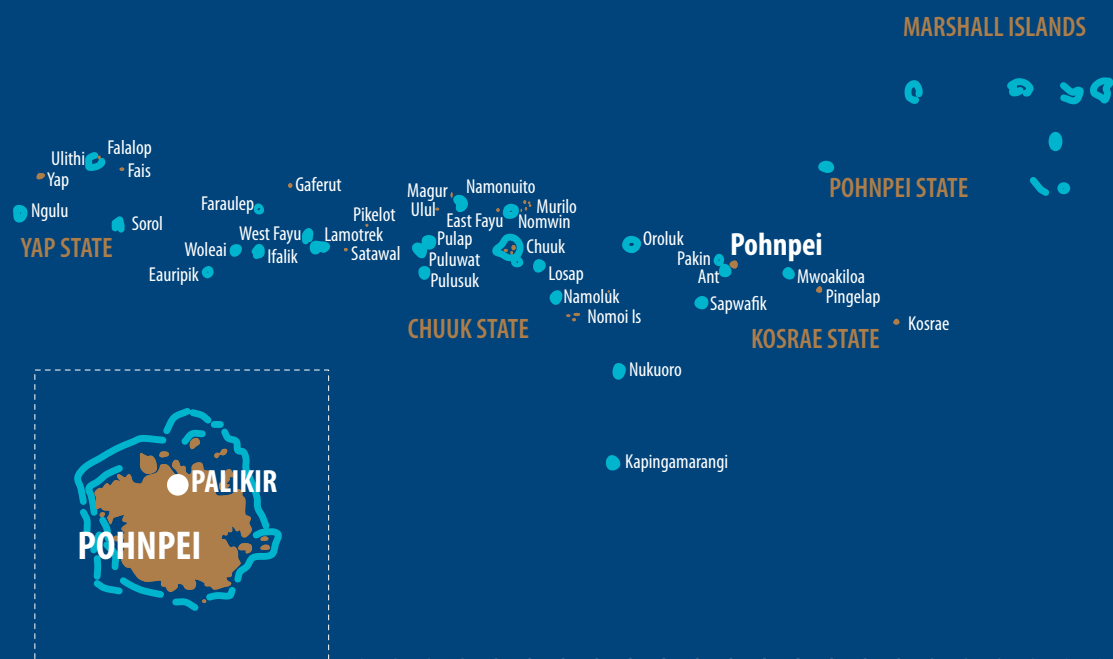


# CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS IN FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) comprises around 607 islands in four states: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap. It lies to the east of Palau, south of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, west of Marshall Islands and north of Papua New Guinea.



Land area  
(km<sup>2</sup>)  
**701**

2020 mid-year  
population estimate  
**105,500**

Population growth  
rate (%)  
**0.3**

## OVERVIEW

This civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) country profile for the Federated States of Micronesia is part of a series of country profiles for the Pacific Island region. The CRVS profiles consolidate knowledge shared by countries on the status of their CRVS systems in the recent past, including through government websites, published reports, media releases and presentations, and direct engagement between the authors of these profiles and in-country civil registration offices and health information offices. The objective of these CRVS country profiles is to provide a living resource (updated every 2-3 years) and quick reference point on the status and developments in CRVS systems in the Pacific Island region. The profiles provide an overview of the legislative, organisational and management frameworks of CRVS systems, registration processes, levels of completeness of birth and death registration, and the most recent developments towards improving CRVS systems. Whilst civil registration covers many vital events, these profiles focus on the registration of births and deaths, and collation of cause of death information. It is envisaged that these country profiles will serve as a fundamental tool in advocating for further investment in strengthening the coverage and completeness of CRVS systems across the Pacific Island region.

## SOURCE OF BIRTH AND DEATH DATA

The source of figures in Table 1 (births) and Table 2 (deaths) is outlined below each table, with the full citation given in the Reference section at the end of the document. All figures were obtained from published sources or through direct contact with in-country civil registration offices and health information offices. The date figures were obtained through direct in-country contact is stated below the tables, and indicates when those figures were extracted from in-country databases.

## SUGGESTED CITATION

Pacific Community and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2021. Civil registration and vital statistics in the Federated States of Micronesia. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact the Statistics for Development Division (SDD) – Pacific Community at: [contact-sdd@spc.int](mailto:contact-sdd@spc.int); <https://sdd.spc.int/>

## CRVS LEGISLATION, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

### *Current legal framework governing birth and death registration*

The recording and registration of births and deaths in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is governed by the Code of FSM (Title 41, Chapter 1 – Health services administration) (1982).

### *Agencies responsible for birth and death recording and registration*

Health services operate at a state level, under the oversight of the national Department of Health and Social Affairs, which is responsible for a range of public health functions, including collection of birth and death information. The department works closely with the health facilities and health services in each state, providing statistical support, including the coding of medical certificates of death, through their Health Information Office. The responsibility for civil registration, including recording and indexing of each birth and death certificate, is held by the state courts.

### *National CRVS committee and CRVS action plan*

A rapid assessment of the CRVS system was conducted in 2011 with support from SPC and the Brisbane Accord Group (BAG) partners. A series of technical assistance visits from SPC and BAG partners were carried out in 2012 and 2013 to address some of the key issues identified through the rapid assessment, and to strengthen stakeholder engagement. A national meeting of key stakeholders was held in 2015 with the support of SPC and UNESCAP to set targets for CRVS strengthening activities [UNESCAP 2016].

## REPORTING AND REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS

### *Recording births at health facilities and registering births at the civil registry*

In general, across the four states of FSM, in order to register a birth in the civil registry it is necessary for the birth to be recorded in the health system and a certificate of live birth issued from a health facility. Once this is issued, a copy needs to be transferred to the court for civil registration. Although the law sets out a common approach to the registration of births across the states, civil registration procedures differ in the four jurisdictions and are influenced by the differences in topography between the states and the related differences in their administrative procedures. For example, Kosrae is a single island with direct links between the Department of Health and Social Affairs and the court, with records manually shared on at least a weekly basis. The other states, however, have one central island and several outer islands, many of which are relatively inaccessible. Registration in these states necessitates a greater level of coordination among state actors, and most especially within the Department of Health and Social Affairs, to ensure that all births, especially those in the most remote areas, are recorded and issued a certificate of live birth. In Chuuk, the family is required to transfer the certificate of live birth to the state court. In Pohnpei and Kosrae, the transfer is undertaken by the Department of Health and Social Affairs. And in Yap, either the family or the Department of Health and Social Affairs can undertake the transfer. While most of the population of Chuuk lives on the main island Weno or on nearby islands within the Truk lagoon, there are also outer islands with substantial populations. Transport is limited, and communication between health centers and dispensaries is primarily through sporadic transfer of paper records, or more frequently by radio. These are some of the challenges for the recording and registration of births in FSM.

### *Timeframes and costs*

Stipulated timeframes and costs for birth registration were unable to be identified in some states. The Yap State Code outlines that the mother of every newborn child shall report the birth to the magistrate of her municipality within 30 days after the child is delivered. The Yap State Crimes and Punishment Code states that any person who refuses to comply shall upon conviction thereof be imprisoned for a period of not more than ten days, or fined not more than \$25.00, or both.

### *Tasks that require a birth certificate and incentives (financial or other) for completing the birth registration process*

A birth certificate is required for school enrolment and to obtain a passport.

## **REPORTING AND REGISTRATION OF DEATHS**

### *Recording deaths at health facilities and registering deaths at the civil registry*

In general, across the four states of FSM it is necessary for a death to be recorded in the health system and a medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) issued in order to register the death in the civil registry. Once an MCCD is issued by a health facility, a copy needs to be transferred to the court for civil registration. Although the law sets out a common approach to the registration of deaths across the states, civil registration procedures differ in the four jurisdictions, and are influenced by the differences in topography between the states and the related differences in their administrative procedures. The processes and challenges outlined above for birth registration in each State also apply for death registration. Burials in Chuuk and Pohnpei generally take place on community or family land, and there are no permits required prior to burial.

### *Timeframes and costs*

Stipulated timeframes and costs for death registration were unable to be identified in some states. The Yap State Code outlines that it is the responsibility of the next of kin or successor of a deceased person to report the death within 30 days after the death. The Yap State Crimes and Punishment Code states that any person who refuses to comply shall upon conviction thereof be imprisoned for a period of not more than ten days, or fined not more than \$25.00, or both.

### *Tasks that require a death certificate and incentives (financial or other) for completing the death registration process*

A death certificate is required for inheritance of land, property and estates of deceased persons.

## **COLLATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF CAUSE OF DEATH**

### *Process for coding death certificates*

The Department of Health and Social Affairs is responsible for a range of policy and public health functions and works closely with state health services to provide statistical support to the states through their Health Information Office, including the coding of medical certificates of death. All states use a medical certificate of death that is consistent with the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), with data coded in accordance with ICD-10 at a national level. Coded data are not reintegrated with the state records. The quality and completeness of cause of death data varies significantly between the states.

## **COMPLETENESS OF CIVIL REGISTRATION DATA**

Completeness of birth and death registration varies significantly between states. Kosrae is a single island and has essentially complete registration coverage, in large part due to the intensive follow-up of all events by medical records staff, and the direct links between the Department of Health and Social Affairs and the court, with records manually shared on at least a weekly basis. The other states each have one central island and several outer islands, many of which are relatively inaccessible. At the current time we have been unable to obtain annual figures for births and deaths in FSM. However, work is currently being undertaken to make these figures available in the near future.

Table 1. Completeness of birth registration data

| Year | Source of births            |                     |                             |                     | Completeness of birth registration |                   |                      |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
|      | Civil Registry <sup>a</sup> | Health <sup>b</sup> | SPC projection <sup>c</sup> | Census <sup>d</sup> | Compared with health               | Compared with SPC | Compared with census |
| 2018 | -                           | -                   | 2,477                       | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2017 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2016 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2015 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2014 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2013 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2012 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2011 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2010 | -                           | -                   | -                           | 2,281               | -                                  | -                 | -                    |

Sources: <sup>a</sup>Not available; <sup>b</sup>Not available. <sup>c</sup>Calculated from 2018 crude birth rate (Pacific Community 2018a) and 2018 population projection (Pacific Community 2018b). <sup>d</sup>The most recent census in 2010 recorded the number of births that happened during the 12 months preceding the census (between 5 April 2009 and 4 April 2010) (SBOC and UNFPA 2012). Completeness could not be calculated without figures from the civil registry.

Table 2. Completeness of death registration data

| Year | Source of deaths            |                     |                             |                     | Completeness of death registration |                   |                      |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
|      | Civil Registry <sup>a</sup> | Health <sup>b</sup> | SPC projection <sup>c</sup> | Census <sup>d</sup> | Compared with health               | Compared with SPC | Compared with census |
| 2018 | -                           | -                   | 556                         | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2017 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2016 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2015 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2014 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2013 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2012 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2011 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |
| 2010 | -                           | -                   | -                           | -                   | -                                  | -                 | -                    |

Sources: <sup>a</sup>Not available; <sup>b</sup>Not available. <sup>c</sup>calculated from 2018 crude death rate (Pacific Community 2018a) and 2018 population projection (Pacific Community 2018b). <sup>d</sup>The most recent census in 2010 did not ask questions on all-age mortality, and therefore could not be used to estimate the completeness of death registration. Completeness could not be calculated without figures from the civil registry.

## PUBLICATION OF CRVS DATA AND REPORTS

FSM has previously published a statistical yearbook that contained figures for registered live births and deaths annually. The most recent publication was the 2007 Statistical Yearbook, which contained figures of registered births (1997–2003) and deaths (1993–2003) (DoEPS and DoEA 2007).

## RECENT INITIATIVES AND PLANS TO STRENGTHEN CRVS

1. There is a focus on digitizing new and also historical birth and death records in order to ensure that natural or manmade disasters are not able to destroy files, which can happen to exclusively paper-based records (PCRN 2017a; 2017b).

## REFERENCES

DoEPS and DoEA (Division of Economic Planning and Statistics, Department of Economic Affairs). 2007. Statistical Yearbook. Federated States of Micronesia 2007. Available at: <http://www.comfsm.fm/national/administration/VPA/researchdocs/2007%20FSM%20Statistical%20Yearbook.pdf>

Pacific Community. 2018a. Pocket statistical summary (*Résumé statistique de poche*) 2018. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. Available at: <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/owbuh>

Pacific Community. 2018b. Population estimates and projections. Available at: <https://sdd.spc.int/topic/population-estimates-and-projections>

Pacific Community. 2020. Pocket statistical summary (*Résumé statistique de poche*) 2020. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. Available at: <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/vrcao>

PCRN (Pacific Civil Registrars Network). 2017a. Yap (Micronesia) presentation: meeting 2017 – CRVS for disasters (PowerPoint presentation). Available at: <https://getinthepicture.org/resource/yap-micronesia-presentation-pcrn-meeting-2017-crvs-disasters>

PCRN (Pacific Civil Registrars Network). 2017b. Pohnpei (Micronesia) presentation: meeting 2017 – CRVS for disasters (PowerPoint presentation). Available at: <https://getinthepicture.org/resource/pohnpei-micronesia-presentation-pcrn-meeting-2017-crvs-disasters>