



OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas

One Million in Grants Available through Office of Insular Affairs Coral Reef Initiative to Protect and Improve Health of Coral Reefs in the U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia’aina today announced the availability of one million dollars in grant funds under the Coral Reef Initiative (CRI) program for the year 2015. The goal of the CRI program is to protect and improve the health of coral reef habitats in the U.S. insular areas for their long-term economic and social benefit.

“Healthy coral reefs are the cornerstone of island communities, from the U.S. Virgin Islands to Guam,” said Assistant Secretary Kia’aina. “Coral reefs protect island communities from coastal erosion, storms and wave damage, provide habitat to numerous marine species, and support cultural practices and livelihoods as well as important tourism and recreational industries. These valuable resources are being threatened by a variety of stresses from inland de-forestation to over-harvesting and climate change. OIA is committed to helping the insular areas protect these vital resources for present and future generations.”

The Coral Reef Initiative in the Office of Insular Affairs accomplishes its goals by awarding grants for projects that help the insular areas address a variety of threats from land-based sources of pollution, to over-fishing and climate change. The program also supports local efforts to improve understanding of the value of coral reefs through outreach and education programs. Examples of recent coral reef projects funded by OIA include restoration of watersheds at Faga’alu, American Samoa, and LaoLao Bay, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; community-based resource management planning in Ulithi Atoll, Yap, Federated States of

Micronesia, and the outer islands of Republic of the Marshall Islands; and coral reef internships for university students in the insular areas.

Applications for 2015 funding are encouraged and will be considered from insular government entities, educational institutions, or non-profit organizations whose grant proposals directly benefits coral reef habitats in the four U.S. territories or three freely associated states, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.

Consideration will be given to proposals that support local and regional priorities for protection and sustainable use of marine resources, and especially coral reefs. Priorities for each insular area are identified in each jurisdiction's Local Action Strategy and by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force which may be accessed through the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force [website](#).

For more information, please see Instructions for Applications to the DOI Office of Insular Affairs Coral Reef Initiative on [Grants.gov](#).

The Department of the Interior is responsible for coordinating federal policy with respect to the territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and administering and overseeing U.S. federal assistance provided to the Freely Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau under the Compacts of Free Association. The Office of Insular Affairs mission is to foster economic opportunities, promote government efficiency, and improve the quality of life for the people of the insular areas.

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