



OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS

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\$1.2 Million in Interior Grants for American Samoa

*Will Support Hospital, Tourism Development and Marketing, Research
on Climate Change Impacts and Local Fishing Industry*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 2, 2015) – Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia’aina recently approved \$1.2 million in grant assistance to American Samoa to support public health and economic development projects. Funding will enable improvements in clinical record-keeping at the Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center, marketing and advertisement for increased tourism and potential business investors, research for economic development and climate change adaptation, as well as development of the local fishing industry.

“We are pleased to offer these grants to American Samoa,” said **Nikolao Pula, Director of the Office of Insular Affairs**. “We trust that funding to these various programs will be effective and helpful in strengthening the efforts of the American Samoa Government (ASG) and local entities.” This is the complete package of grants approved for American Samoa under the FY2015 Technical Assistance and Maintenance Assistance Programs from the Office of Insular Affairs; several were awarded in May.

\$98,500 to the LBJ Tropical Medical Center (LBJTMC) for the OpenVista Implementation Augmentation Project. This project will complete the integration of clinical documentation into OpenVista to allow order entry, order completion, and review of results without need for paper reports, faxing or scanning. The project supports vital communication among providers on clinical evaluations and treatment, and promotes efficient use of human and material resources.

\$198,000 to the American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA) for the professional training and apprenticeship development of Samoan engineers and other technical specialists crucial to ASPA’s operation and financial sustainability. Seven (7) apprentices will be groomed for specific engineer positions at ASPA and receive their professional education at an engineering school in New Zealand. Five (5) apprentices will receive power linemen certification. **\$78,000**

of this grant will go towards funding an American Samoa Renewable Energy Coordinator and partially fund public outreach and education projects for FY15-FY16.

\$25,000 for the Chamber of Commerce to conduct economic research to include surveys and review of existing economic policies, reports, and recommendations produced by government agencies and/or third parties. The research will involve business owners and chief executive officers while reviewing policies on taxation, immigration, political status, port operations, environmental regulations, land registration, government finance, cabotage laws, and employer/employee relations. The Chamber of Commerce's mission is to improve the business climate in American Samoa and help strengthen its economy for the future.

\$300,000 to American Samoa Government and National Park of American Samoa partnership for climate change research and habitat restoration projects to conserve native flora and fauna on Tutuila and Ta'u Islands. The proposed project will provide an understanding of the impacts of repeated cyclones which damage much of the vegetation, facilitate the spread of invasive species, and increase temperature and precipitation regimes. This is the first study conducted for these two mountainous islands involving a series of sea-to-summit forest plots that will aid the identification of extant rare plant and wildlife habitat and provide basis for locating future suitable habitat. Twelve local youth will be involved in the project.

\$105,000 for Rainmaker Hotel Recommercialization through solicitation and marketing efforts to attract an investor and/or operator partner from the leisure and tourism industry. Owned by the American Samoa Government, the Rainmaker Hotel is located on prime real estate overlooking PagoPago Harbor.

\$270,000 to the American Samoa Visitor's Bureau (ASVB) for a Marketing Tourism Project. This will allow ASVB to support partners in the United States, New Zealand, Australia and Samoa with marketing support to develop and promote holiday packages to American Samoa for their respective markets.

\$45,745 for Development of Prototype Fishing Vessel through architectural and engineering plans to replace smaller fishing boats of the American Samoa local fishing fleet. A larger vessel is expected to be safer, more efficient and helpful in developing the local fishing industry. This project was identified as a priority in the American Samoa Economic Development Plan for 2014 to 2017, and in the 2014 American Samoa Marine Conservation Plan.

The Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas carries out the administrative responsibilities of the Secretary of the Interior in coordinating federal policy for 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 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 Assistant Secretary executes these responsibilities through the Office of Insular Affairs.

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