



OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS

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Contact: Tanya Harris Joshua 202-208-6008
Tanya_Joshua@ios.doi.gov

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas

**Interior Grants \$500,000 to Stand Up Micronesian One Stop Service
Centers in Guam and Hawaii**

*Partnering with Non-Government Organizations to Empower Micronesian
Communities*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 14, 2015) – Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia’aina today announced \$500,000 in grant assistance under the Office of Insular Affairs’ Technical Assistance Program for two non-governmental organizations, one in Hawaii and one on Guam, both collaborating with federal, state, and territorial officials on the ground to establish wrap-around one-stop social services for migrants from the freely associated states (FAS) of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau.

“Given the financial and social welfare of migrants from the freely associated states, it is important that the federal government do what it can within its current resources to help empower our Micronesian communities as well as help affected jurisdictions like Hawaii and Guam,” said Assistant Secretary Esther Kia’aina.

Since the implementation of the Compacts of Free Association with the freely associated states, many citizens from these nations have legally migrated to Guam and Hawaii for health, education, and work purposes. In 2013, Census data estimated 14,700 migrants from the FAS living in Hawaii with 17,170 living on Guam. In recent years, both governments estimate spending between \$100-\$150 million on public assistance, mostly for health and education.

Under current federal law, annual mandatory funding for Compact Impact Aid is capped at \$30 million that is shared between Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana

Islands, and American Samoa, while Compact Impact discretionary funding averages around \$3 million.

“While the federal government works in concert with affected jurisdictions on short- and long-term strategies on addressing policy and funding solutions to provide increased Compact Impact Aid, it is equally important for us to ensure that citizens from the freely associated states have fair and equal access to quality of life while living in the United States,” added Assistant Secretary Kia’aina. “The Micronesian One Stop Service Centers have been a priority for the community and service providers for a long time, and I am pleased that we were able to help with their establishment.”

The organizations awarded include:

Partners in Development Foundation (Hawaii) - \$250,000 to help *We Are Oceania*, a One Stop Service Center for Micronesians that will serve as a central physical and electronic resource center linking the various Micronesian communities living in Hawaii with public services and other resources in a way that is culturally sensitive and appropriate. The initial focus of the center will be in the areas of health, education, housing and homelessness, as well as labor. It is centrally located at St. Elizabeth’s Episcopal Church in Honolulu.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Guam – \$249,892 to create a *Micronesian Resource Center One-Stop Shop Project* to assist Compact migrants traveling to and living on Guam.

The Micronesian Resource Center will use the funding to increase the capacity of public and non-governmental entities to improve the integration of FAS migrants. They will provide assistance to new arrivals through orientation services, provide workforce development training and employment services, as well as provide family support initiatives to address cultural and social challenges. The center will be located in the village of Yona. However, to increase its outreach into the community, the center will take their “one-stop shop” services on the road through the use of a Mobil Access to Information (MAI) Van.

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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