



# **BUDGET** The United States Department of the Interior **JUSTIFICATIONS**

and Performance Information  
Fiscal Year 2026

## **OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS**

NOTICE: These budget  
justifications are prepared  
for the Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
Appropriations  
Subcommittees.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The Assistant Secretary – Insular, International and Ocean Affairs and the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) carry out the Secretary’s responsibilities for U.S.-affiliated insular areas. These include the territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). Residents of these U.S. territories are U.S. citizens or U.S. nationals. Additionally, OIA administers and oversees Federal assistance to three freely associated states (FAS): the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau (Palau). The Office of Insular Affairs, through its work with the U.S. territories and FAS, is on the front lines of U.S. national security and supporting prosperity at home and peace abroad. These jurisdictions lie in the crosshairs of the efforts by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to undermine U.S. leadership in the Pacific. The territories are an integral part of the fabric of America, and the FAS, while independent, sovereign countries, are uniquely interwoven with the United States in terms of a shared history, ongoing partnership, and a common vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Investments in the U.S. territories and FAS play a critical role in furthering and protecting U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific and Caribbean, as unfunded requirements provide opportunities for the PRC or other maligned actors to fill funding gaps and exert economic and political pressure. The Office of Insular Affairs fills an important role in understanding the nuances of the Federal government’s interrelationship with each of the insular areas to ensure that U.S. strategic interests are successfully supported.

The 2026 budget request strengthens insular economies through judicious investments in infrastructure, public services, health and education, energy, and technical assistance. The Office of Insular Affairs will also promote policies and work to improve Federal coordination on issues impacting insular economies, including reducing reliance on foreign fuels for energy sector development (supporting Executive Order 14154, *Unleashing American Energy*), addressing the cost-of-living (supporting Secretary’s Order 3419, *Delivering Emergency Price Relief for American Families and Defeating the Cost-of-Living Crisis*), and streamlining environmental review processes for energy and infrastructure processes (supporting Executive Order 14156, *Declaring a National Energy Emergency*).

Financial support for critical infrastructure, basic public services, and technical assistance provided through OIA’s 2026 budget deters and combats the PRC’s campaign to influence public opinion and compromise our critical national defense apparatus hosted in these strategically important islands. In 2026, funds will be applied to address pressing issues and priorities and develop action plans to support this Administration’s priorities and mitigate the challenges the insular areas are facing. Assistance will focus on investments that support the territories and FAS in delivering reliable public services to their communities. Direct grants, reimbursable agreements, and contracts with technical assistance providers, both within and outside the Federal government, support these efforts. Robust and unwavering commitment to our U.S. territories and freely associated states directly supports this Administration’s pursuit of a stronger, safer, and more prosperous America.

## Good Accounting Obligation in Government Act Report

The Good Accounting Obligation in Government Act (GAO-IG Act, P.L. 115-414) enacted January 3, 2019, requires that Agencies report the status of each open audit recommendation issued more than one year prior to the submission of the Agency's annual budget justification to Congress. The Act requires Agencies to include the current target completion date, implementation status, and any discrepancies on closure determinations.

The Department of the Interior leadership takes audit follow-up very seriously and considers our external auditors, to include the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Office of the Inspector General, valued partners in not only improving the Department's management and compliance obligations but also enhancing its programmatic and administrative operations. As stewards of taxpayer resources, the Department applies cost-benefit analysis and enterprise risk management principles in recommendation implementation decisions.

The Department's GAO-IG Act Report is available at the following link: <https://www.doi.gov/cj>.

## Budget Overview

The proposed 2026 OIA budget for current appropriations is \$103.0 million.

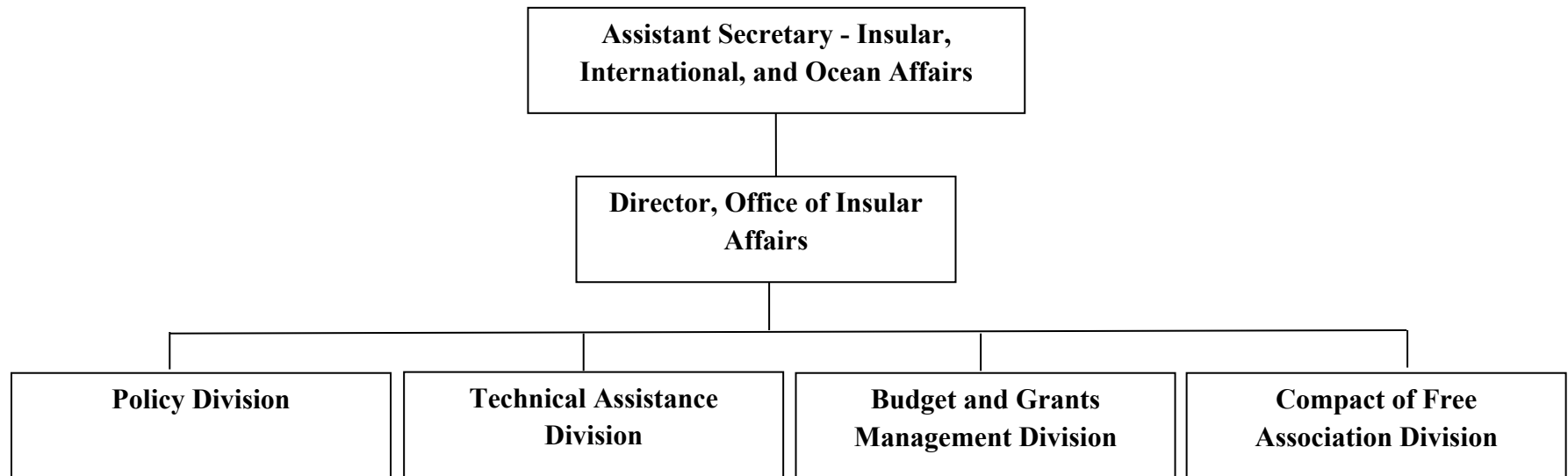
**Total OIA 2026 Budget Request**  
(Dollars in Thousands)

<b>Budget Authority</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>2025 Notional <sup>1/</sup></b>	<b>2026 Request</b>
Current Discretionary	95,850	95,850	75,278
Current Mandatory	27,720	27,720	27,720
<b>Total Current</b>	<b>123,570</b>	<b>123,570</b>	<b>102,998</b>

<sup>1/</sup> Resource levels included are estimates. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

**Organization Chart**

**Office of Insular Affairs**



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## SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS

**Office of Insular Affairs**  
**ASSISTANCE TO TERRITORIES**  
**2026 Summary of Requirements**  
*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Assistance to Territories	2024 Actual	2025 Notional <sup>1/</sup>	2026 Request
<b>ASSISTANCE TO TERRITORIES</b>			
1. American Samoa Operations	28,120	28,120	26,885
<b>Subtotal, American Samoa Operations</b>	<b>28,120</b>	<b>28,120</b>	<b>26,885</b>
2. Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Grants	27,720	27,720	27,720
<b>Subtotal, CIP Grants</b>	<b>27,720</b>	<b>27,720</b>	<b>27,720</b>
3. Territorial Assistance			
Office of Insular Affairs	[10,217]	[10,217]	[9,080]
<b>Subtotal, Territorial Assistance</b>	<b>64,267</b>	<b>64,267</b>	<b>47,580</b>
<b>TOTAL, Assistance to Territories</b>	<b>120,107</b>	<b>120,107</b>	<b>102,185</b>

<sup>1/</sup> Resource levels included are estimates. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

**Office of Insular Affairs**  
**COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION - CURRENT APPROPRIATION**  
**2026 Summary of Requirements**  
*(Dollars in Thousands)*

Compact of Free Association - Current Appropriation	2024 Actual	2025 Notional <sup>1/</sup>	2026 Request
<b>COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION - CURRENT</b>			
1. Federal Services	2,813	2,813	813
2. Enewetak	650	650	-
<b>TOTAL, Compact of Free Association, Current</b>	<b>3,463</b>	<b>3,463</b>	<b>813</b>

<sup>1/</sup> Resource levels included are estimates. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

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## APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

### Assistance to Territories

*For expenses necessary for assistance to territories under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, \$102,185,000, of which: (1) \$93,105,000 shall remain available until expended for territorial assistance, including general technical assistance, maintenance assistance, disaster assistance, coral reef initiative and natural resources activities, and brown tree snake control and research; grants to the judiciary in American Samoa for compensation and expenses, as authorized by the Act of February 20, 1929, as amended (48 U.S.C. 1661(c)); grants to the Government of American Samoa, in addition to current local revenues, for construction and support of governmental functions; grants to the Government of the Virgin Islands, as authorized by law; grants to the Government of Guam, as authorized by law; and grants to the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands, as authorized by section 702 of the Act of March 24, 1976, Public Law 94–241; and (2) \$9,080,000 shall be available until September 30, 2027, for salaries and expenses of the Office of Insular Affairs: Provided, That all financial transactions of the territorial and local governments herein provided for, including such transactions of all agencies or instrumentalities established or used by such governments, may be audited by the Government Accountability Office, at its discretion, in accordance with chapter 35 of title 31, United States Code: Provided further, That Northern Mariana Islands Covenant grant funding shall be provided according to those terms of the Agreement of the Special Representatives on Future United States Financial Assistance for the Northern Mariana Islands approved by section 118 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996, Public Law 104–134, as amended (48 U.S.C. 1804): Provided further, That the funds for the program of operations and maintenance improvement are appropriated to institutionalize routine operations and maintenance improvement of capital infrastructure with territorial participation and cost sharing to be determined by the Secretary based on the grantee's commitment to timely maintenance of its capital assets: Provided further, That any appropriation for disaster assistance under this heading in this Act or previous appropriations Acts may be used as non-Federal matching funds for the purpose of hazard mitigation grants provided pursuant to section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93–288, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5170c).*

Note. —This account is operating under the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Division A of Public Law 119–4).

### Compact of Free Association

*For grants and necessary expenses, \$813,000, to remain available until expended, to support Federal services and programs provided to the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.*

Note. —This account is operating under the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Division A of Public Law 119–4).

## Administrative Provisions (including transfer of funds)

*At the request of the Governor of Guam, the Secretary may transfer discretionary funds or mandatory funds provided under section 104(e) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, Public Law 108–188, as amended (48 U.S.C. 1921c(e), and the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996, Public Law 104–134, that are allocated for Guam, to the Secretary of Agriculture for the subsidy cost of direct or guaranteed loans, plus not to exceed three percent of the amount of the subsidy transferred for the cost of loan administration, for the purposes authorized by the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901–905b) and section 306(a)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(1)) for construction and repair projects in Guam, and such funds shall remain available until expended: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, Public Law 93–344, as amended: Provided further, That such loans or loan guarantees may be made without regard to the population of the area, credit elsewhere requirements, and restrictions on the types of eligible entities under the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 and section 306(a)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act: Provided further, That any funds transferred to the Secretary of Agriculture shall be in addition to funds otherwise made available to make or guarantee loans under such authorities.*

Note. —This account is operating under the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Division A of Public Law 119–4).

## Authorizations

(1) Guam. Executive Order 10077, dated September 7, 1949, transferred administrative responsibilities for Guam from the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of the Interior. Executive Order 10137, of June 30, 1950, amended Executive Order 10077 to make the transfer effective on July 1, 1950. The Guam Organic Act was approved on August 1, 1950 (64 Stat. 384, 48 U.S.C. Sec. 1421 et. seq.) and declared Guam to be an unincorporated territory of the United States and provided that Guam’s relationship with the Federal Government shall be under the general administrative supervision of the Secretary of the Interior. As a result of subsequent amendments to the Organic Act, Guam also elects its Governor and a Delegate to the United States Congress.

(2) American Samoa. In 1900, the islands were placed under the administration of the Secretary of the Navy by Executive Order. In the Act of February 20, 1929 (48 U.S.C. 1661), Congress stated that until it shall provide for the Government of the islands of American Samoa, “all civil, judicial, and military powers shall be vested in such manner as the President of the United States shall direct.” The President vested these powers in the Secretary of the Interior by Executive Order 10264, dated June 29, 1951. Secretary’s Order No. 2657, dated August 29, 1951, set forth the extent and nature of the authority of the Government of American Samoa and the manner in which the authority is to be exercised. Secretarial Order 3009 dated September 24, 1977, provided for an elected Governor and Lt. Governor for American Samoa, and elected officials first took office on January 3, 1978. Pursuant to Public Law 95-556, American Samoa, in November 1980, elected its first Delegate to the United States Congress.

(3) U.S. Virgin Islands. The islands were under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Navy from March 21, 1917, until March 18, 1931 (48 U.S.C. 1391), when responsibilities were transferred to the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to Executive Order 5566, dated February 27, 1931. Organic legislation was first passed in 1936 (49 Stat. 1812), and was revised by Public Law 83-517, effective July 22, 1954 (48 U.S.C. et. seq.). The latter has since been amended in various respects and the Virgin Islands' elected officials first took office on January 3, 1978.

(4) Northern Mariana Islands. On March 24, 1976, the President signed a joint resolution of Congress approving the "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America" (Public Law 94-241). The islands remained a part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to Executive Order 11021 of May 7, 1962. Secretarial Order 2989 dated March 14, 1976, and effective January 9, 1978, provided for the separate administration of the Northern Mariana Islands, provided for the elected Government in the Northern Mariana Islands, and activated various sections of the Covenant. By Presidential Proclamation of November 3, 1986, and as a result of a valid act of self-determination pursuant to Section 1002 of the Covenant, the Northern Mariana Islands ceased to be bound by the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement of 1947 and became a commonwealth in political union and under the sovereignty of the United States.

(5) Office of Insular Affairs. Established August 4, 1995, by Secretarial Order No. 3191.

(6) Covenant (CIP) Grants. Funding under the Northern Marianas Covenant was first established in 1976 under Public Law (P.L.) 94-241, A Joint Resolution to Approve the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America. This was later amended in 1986 by Section 10 of P.L. 99-396 (100 Stat. 840). These provisions were further amended by Public Law 104-134, enacted in 1996, which reduced annual funding to the Northern Mariana Islands and reallocated additional funding to other uses, including capital infrastructure projects in American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

(7) Compacts of Free Association. The Compact of Free Association Act of 1985 was enacted in January 1986 (P.L. 99-239) and authorized funding over a fifteen-year period for the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. In December 2003, the President signed Public Law 108-188, enacting amendments to the Compact of Free Association and providing an additional 20 years of guaranteed annual assistance to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Compact of Free Association for the Republic of Palau was enacted on November 14, 1986, as P.L. 99-658, and was implemented on October 1, 1994. The Compacts of Free Association Amendments Act of 2024 (Public Law 118-42) renewed financial assistance to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau through fiscal year 2043. These basic legal authorities have been supplemented and modified over the years by various omnibus territory acts and other program legislation.

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## AMERICAN SAMOA OPERATIONS

**Activity:** American Samoa

**Subactivity:** American Samoa Operations (\$000)

American Samoa Operations	2024 Actual	2025 Notional <sup>1/</sup>	2026 Request
American Samoa Operations	28,120	28,120	26,885

<sup>1/</sup> Resource levels included are estimates. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

### Program Overview

Each year the Office of Insular Affairs provides grant funds to American Samoa for the operation of the local government, including the judiciary. The American Samoa Government (ASG) does not have sufficient local revenues to fund the entire operating costs of its government. The purpose of this program activity is to help bridge the difference between budget needs and local revenues. The Department defines “budget needs” as the cost of maintaining current programs and services.

### 2026 Program Performance

American Samoa will provide financial reports beginning with the quarter ending December 31, 2025, through the quarter ending September 30, 2026.

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## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (CIP) GRANTS

### Activity: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Grants (\$000)

#### SUMMARY TABLE

CIP Grants - Mandatory	2024 Actual	2025 CR	2026 Request
Capital Improvement Project Grants - Mandatory	27,720	27,720	27,720

Capital Improvement Project funds address a variety of infrastructure needs in the U.S. territories including critical infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, wastewater, and solid waste systems. Improvements to critical infrastructure not only benefit the current population and businesses but also lay the groundwork to attract new investment to the territories, thereby promoting economic growth and self-sufficiency.

#### Program Overview

Public Law 104-134, enacted in 1996, allowed mandatory Covenant CIP funding, previously provided only to the CNMI, to be disbursed throughout the U.S. insular areas for infrastructure. Over the years, significant increases in construction and labor costs continue to impact the mandatory CIP funding has on infrastructure needs in the territories. Starting in 2005, OIA implemented a competitive allocation system for the \$27.7 million in mandatory CIP grants based on a premise that all funds will be used for capital needs in the U.S. territories. The process offers the U.S. territorial governments an opportunity to compete each year for a portion of the guaranteed funding in addition to other assistance or local funding that might be available.

Base level funding was established based on historic trends in 2005 when the competitive allocation system was implemented. It was adjusted for fiscal years 2012, 2017, and 2022 based upon the performance of each of the U.S. territories over the past five years as required by the Section 702 Funding Agreement of 2004 between OIA and the CNMI.

#### Fiscal Year 2022 Baseline CIP Funding (\$000)

CNMI	9,032
American Samoa	9,963
Guam	6,328
USVI	<u>2,397</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27,720</b>

The determination of the annual allocation is made based on a set of competitive criteria that measure the demonstrated ability of the governments to exercise prudent financial management practices and to meet Federal grant requirements. These criteria were revised in 2009 to strengthen these measures and to ensure that awarded funds are being utilized efficiently and effectively. In addition to the application of these criteria to the allocation of capital improvement assistance, OIA may consider the capacity of each insular government to absorb the amount of capital assistance it would otherwise qualify for and any

special or extenuating conditions, such as unspent balances, that might require adjustments to the allocation.

Competitive Criteria for the Proposed Allocation of Mandatory CIP Funding

1. The extent to which the applicant complies with completion deadlines established under the Single Audit Act of 1984.
2. The extent to which the applicant's financial statements are reliable.
3. The extent to which the applicant is exercising prudent financial management and is solvent.
4. The extent to which the applicant has demonstrated prompt and effective efforts to resolve questioned costs and internal control deficiencies identified in single audits.
5. The extent to which the applicant has responded to recommendations identified in reviews completed by the Office of Inspector General, the Government Accountability Office and other Federal agencies.
6. The extent to which the applicant has demonstrated effective contract administration and compliance with local statutes and regulations regarding procurement practices and processes.
7. The extent to which the applicant's capital improvement application is complete and submitted on time.
8. The extent to which the applicant has complied with all reporting requirements applicable to past and ongoing grants in an accurate manner.
9. The extent to which the applicant dedicates adequate resources to critical offices to help ensure properly functioning internal controls and efficient operations, including the presence of a qualified independent auditor with an adequately funded office and strong safeguards to its independence.
10. The extent to which the applicant is able to successfully expend capital improvement funds within the award period.

The competitive allocation system is applied to the \$27.7 million in CIP funds using a point method. The territories are given a score on each of the above criteria. The criteria themselves are ranked so that those considered more significant receive a higher weight than those considered less important in the overall, final score.

While the total available for funding stays constant (\$27.7 million), allocations will vary from year to year depending upon the performance of each insular government with respect to the above competitive criteria, however adjustments to the allocation to any territory shall not increase or decrease by more than \$2 million from each territory's baseline allocation. A change in an annual allotment does not necessarily indicate deterioration in performance. It instead recognizes those governments whose performance has increased during a fiscal year.

To ensure that no territory receives less than \$2 million as a result of the annual allocation and to discourage accumulating CIP funding over multiple fiscal years, OIA proposed an allocation floor of \$2 million. This proposal was communicated to the Governors of each territory in the notice of the fiscal year 2023 and 2024 allocations and baseline recalculations. No objections or comments were received.

The Office of Insular Affairs will work closely with the Governors to prioritize investment in economic development and critical infrastructure necessary to deliver basic public service and attract investment.

**2026 Program Performance****CNMI Construction**

Funds allocated to CNMI for 2026 will be used to continue meeting critical infrastructure needs similar to previous years. The CNMI continues to make progress on projects. Many have undergone NEPA compliance and have been at least authorized to proceed to the engineering and procurement stages of work, if not already undergoing construction.

The CNMI has also started to implement a previously unused aspect of the establishing law unique to the territory, allocating funds each year to address law enforcement issues in the territory for operational costs.

**American Samoa Construction**

Funds allocated to American Samoa for 2026 will be used to continue meeting critical infrastructure needs in American Samoa similar to previous years.

*Operations & Maintenance Set-aside:* Five percent of all grant funds from the mandatory CIP account for American Samoa Construction is set aside for operations and maintenance.

**Guam Construction**

Funds allocated to Guam in 2026 will be used to continue meeting critical infrastructure needs in Guam, similar to previous years.

**USVI Construction**

Funds allocated to the USVI in 2026 will continue to be used for critical infrastructure needs in the territory.

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## TERRITORIAL ASSISTANCE

### Activity: Territorial Assistance SUMMARY TABLE

<b>Territorial Assistance</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>2025 Notional <sup>1/</sup></b>	<b>2026 Request</b>
<b>Territorial Assistance</b>	<b>64,267</b>	<b>64,267</b>	<b>49,080</b>
Office of Insular Affairs	[10,217]	[10,217]	[9,080]

<sup>1/</sup> Resource levels included are estimates. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

The Territorial Assistance activity involves funding for two major functions. The first is salaries and expenses of the Office of Insular Affairs. Its policy and assistance activities involve dealing with virtually every major Federal agency, as well as seven insular area governments. Sound financial management and effective internal controls are emphasized within OIA, and OIA has been able to attain clean audit opinions for all annual financial statements prepared under requirements defined in the Chief Financial Officers Act.

The second major function within this program area includes the various technical assistance activities carried out by the office. The Office of Insular Affairs' technical assistance activities are an effective tool to implement Administration policies and to achieve mutually desired improvements in the insular areas. Technical assistance activities have and will continue to play a critical role in furthering and protecting U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific and Caribbean by strengthening insular economics through strategic investments in critical infrastructure, energy, and economic growth that attract private sector investments and deter the PRC's attempts to gain influence in these strategically important islands.

## Office of Insular Affairs

**Activity:** Territorial Assistance

**Subactivity:** Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) (\$000)

Office of Insular Affairs	2024 Actual	2025 Notional <sup>1/</sup>	2026 Request
Office of Insular Affairs	10,217	10,217	9,080

<sup>1/</sup> Resource levels included are estimates. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

### Program Overview

The Office of Insular Affairs carries out the Secretary's responsibilities with respect to U.S.-affiliated insular areas. The office is organized into three divisions:

- 1) Policy Division: performs general program, political, and economic analysis. It monitors and tracks Federal programs extended to the insular areas and handles legislative affairs other than those related to the appropriations process. The Division maintains a field presence in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam.
- 2) Technical Assistance Division: manages all Technical Assistance grants that provide support not otherwise available to the insular areas to combat deteriorating economic and fiscal conditions. Activities often include, but are not limited to, building institutional capacity in the following critical areas: health care, education, public safety, data collection and analysis, fiscal accountability, energy, transportation, economic growth, and communication. The Division also manages the Coral Reef and Natural Resources program, Brown Tree Snake, and Maintenance Assistance programs as well as payments to the USVI (rum excise taxes) and Guam (Section 30 income taxes).
- 3) Budget and Grants Management Division: is responsible for budget formulation and presentation, chief financial officer activities, and strategic planning. It manages financial assistance under the Compacts of Free Association, operations and capital improvement grants to U.S. territories, and infrastructure-related Territorial Assistance. The Division monitors accountability issues and tracks insular area audit resolutions, including Single Audits. The Division maintains an office in Hawai'i for Compact oversight in the FSM, RMI, and Palau and maintains field presence at the embassy in FSM.

The Office of Insular Affairs is headed by the Assistant Secretary – Insular, International, and Ocean Affairs, who provides overall policy direction, a Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, a Deputy Assistant Secretary, and a Director, who is responsible for overall management of the Office.

### 2026 Program Performance

In 2026, OIA will support national security, economic growth, and U.S. Energy Dominance by executing activities which strengthen the territories, fulfill Compact obligations, and address critical infrastructure

needs. With financial assistance programs averaging to \$1 billion per year, OIA provides oversight of Federal funds.

At the 2026 level of funding OIA will:

- Improve out-year performance of grantees by continuing to focus on oversight.
- Continue implementation of the renewed Compacts of Free Association agreements.
- Continue providing professional services to the insular areas through interagency agreements.
- Continue interagency coordination on issues impacting the insular areas.
- Conduct site visits to grant projects.
- Continue to actively work with the U.S. territories and the FAS to ensure their compliance with the Single Audit Act and to improve the timeliness of their audit submissions and resolution of financial statement qualifications and audit findings.

### **Section 403 Compliance**

#### **Working Capital Fund**

All OIA's overhead and administrative costs that support Departmental functions are paid from the Office of Insular Affairs account as assessed through the Department's Working Capital Fund (WCF) as follows:

<b>Working Capital Fund</b>						
<i>Dollars in Thousands (\$000)</i>						
<b>2025 Estimate <sup>1/</sup></b>				<b>2026 Estimate</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Direct</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Direct</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
OS Shared Services	127.4	7.4	134.8	151.6	7.9	159.5
OS Activities	505.4	4.8	510.2	603.8	4.8	608.6
IT Shared Services	224.0	144.4	368.4	292.6	191.2	483.8
Interior Business Center	21.3	125.7	147.0	24.3	142.8	167.1
<b>TOTAL, WCF Billing</b>	<b>878.1</b>	<b>282.3</b>	<b>1,160.4</b>	<b>1,072.3</b>	<b>346.8</b>	<b>1,419.1</b>

<sup>1/</sup> Resource levels included are estimates. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

## Technical Assistance

**Activity:** Territorial Assistance

**Subactivity:** Technical Assistance

### Program Overview

The Technical Assistance Program (TAP) provides support not otherwise available to the insular areas to meet immediate needs, to combat deteriorating economic and fiscal conditions, and to maintain the momentum needed to make and sustain meaningful systemic changes.

The Office of Insular Affairs' Technical Assistance Program was authorized in Section 601 of Public Law 96-597 on December 24, 1980. The law as amended reads:

*The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to extend to the governments of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and their agencies and instrumentalities, with or without reimbursement, technical assistance on subjects within the responsibility of the respective territorial governments. Such assistance may be provided by the Secretary of the Interior through members of his staff, reimbursements to other departments or agencies of the Federal Government under sections 1535 and 1536 of Title 31, grants to or cooperative agreements with such governments, agreements with Federal agencies or agencies of State or local governments, or the employment of private individuals, partnerships, or corporations. Technical assistance may include research, planning assistance, studies, and demonstration projects.*

Eligible applicants are non-Federal entities such as local government agencies (including utilities) in American Samoa, CNMI, Guam, USVI, RMI, FSM, and Palau, and hospitals/health centers, institutions of higher education and any non-profit organizations, including entities located within the United States, in the U.S. territories and/or international entities, whose projects directly benefit the seven insular areas in accordance with regulations contained in 2 CFR 200. Applications and requests for OIA TAP grant funds are submitted through Grants.gov under Assistance Listing 15.875 and are subject to a competitive grant review process. If the applicant is not a local government entity, letters of support for the project are requested from the local government impacted. The Office of Insular Affairs also sends a listing of all applications received to the Governors and Presidents or their high-level designees for their respective insular area, requesting that they prioritize and rank the importance of all the requested grants for their respective area, including those received from entities outside the local government. The Office of Insular Affairs considers these rankings when making award decisions.

The purpose of TAP is to fund priority projects for which there are little to no funds available from other Federal agencies. The program provides the flexibility needed to respond to urgent, immediate needs in the insular areas. Some programs are necessary on an ongoing basis for the insular areas; including, but not limited to ongoing financial management, management, and audit training for all insular areas. The ongoing programs were incorporated into the Technical Assistance Program because there was no other source of funds in the Federal budget for these projects.



The Technical Assistance Program allows each government to identify pressing issues and priorities and develop action plans to mitigate these problems. Direct grants, reimbursable agreements, and contracts, both within and outside the Federal government, are keys to implementation. Funded projects are focused to meet immediate needs in the short term and assist the governments in developing long-term solutions. Office of Insular Affairs staff and outside experts provide information on a variety of topics to help improve government operations in areas such as financial management, procurement and contract management, and the administration of Federal grant programs.

**2026 Program Performance**

In 2026, TAP will support the Administration's commitment to furthering national security objectives in the Indo-Pacific and Caribbean through continued financial assistance and support to the insular areas for projects which foster the development of the insular areas in the following categories: economic growth, accountability, financial management, energy, education, health initiatives and health IT systems, public safety, data, and statistical capacity improvement necessary for informed decision making. Other priorities include disaster planning and response, natural and cultural resources, management control initiatives, capacity building, invasive species management, and information technology. Investments in these sectors deter and combat the PRC's campaign to influence public opinion and compromise our critical national defense apparatus hosted in these strategically important islands.

**Maintenance Assistance**

**Activity:** Territorial Assistance

**Subactivity:** Maintenance Assistance (MAP)

The Maintenance Assistance Program is used to support, develop, improve, and institutionalize infrastructure maintenance practices in the seven insular areas. Funds can also be used for critical repairs to infrastructure.

**Justification of 2026 Program Changes****Maintenance Assistance**

The 2026 budget does not request funding for the Maintenance Assistance Program to prioritize financial resources on energy reliability and affordability initiatives.

## Brown Tree Snake Control

**Activity:** Territorial Assistance  
**Subactivity:** Brown Tree Snake Control

### Program Overview

Brown Tree Snake (BTS) Control combines research and operational components designed to prevent the dispersal of BTS from Guam to other vulnerable geographic areas and to ultimately eradicate existing or newly established BTS populations in U.S. areas.

The invasive BTS was introduced to the island of Guam following World War II. Due to an abundant prey base and an absence of natural predators, the BTS population in Guam grew exponentially. It was not until the 1980s when researchers began to study the sudden and sharp decline in Guam's bird populations that the ecological and socioeconomic damage caused by the BTS began to be understood.

The BTS Control Program funds BTS suppression efforts, which are critical to our country's biosecurity and national security as the BTS causes significant damage to the electric grid and utility infrastructure in Guam. With Guam serving as a hub for a growing regional U.S. military presence, including in Tinian, risk of BTS dispersal is also increasing and would cause harm to national security infrastructure and military readiness. The BTS routinely climb wires accessing electrical distribution and transmission lines. This can cause ground faults or short circuits resulting in power outages of varying severity and duration. In 2024, there were 86 power outages on Guam due to the BTS. Island-wide outages result in lost productivity, damage to electrical equipment and lost revenues; and jeopardizes national defense activities on the island.

The BTS has had significant, negative impacts on Guam's economy. The risk of accidental transport and establishment of the BTS in other locations has impacted regional shipping and transportation through increased biosecurity requirements.

Since Guam is a major transportation hub in the Pacific, numerous opportunities exist for this invasive species to be inadvertently introduced to other areas. The BTS has already been accidentally transported from Guam to other sites worldwide through infested civilian and military vessels and cargo.

Documented sites include Hawai'i; CNMI; Corpus Christi, Texas; McAlester, Oklahoma; Japan; Anchorage, Alaska; Wake Island; Taiwan; Kwajalein; Diego Garcia; Darwin, Australia; and Rota, Spain. Most of those sightings were in the CNMI (93) and on Oahu (10).

As stated in the Brown Tree Snake Technical Working Group Strategic Plan, interdiction costs would grow exponentially if BTS were to get to Hawai'i, as it is a major transportation hub in the Pacific and a new interdiction program on any of its islands there would be very expensive. This would also increase the risk of BTS invasion to more areas in the continental United States that have direct flights to and from Hawai'i. Guam is a central hub of the Pacific, and when a natural disaster strikes a nearby island, increased shipments move between Guam and other islands, thus increasing the chances of BTS spreading in the Pacific.

Research is conducted to improve existing BTS control tools, such as barriers, traps, and baits, as well as to develop better control techniques such as toxins, repellents, and attractants. Research is also intended to improve our understanding of the basic biology of the BTS and to develop methods enabling large-scale suppression of BTS on Guam. It is largely accepted that severe population suppression must be achieved before eradication can be pursued. The operational program utilizes the control tools and techniques developed via the research effort to reduce the risk of BTS dispersal to other Pacific islands, the U.S. mainland, and other vulnerable locations.

The BTS Control Program is a cooperative effort primarily involving OIA (financial assistance and grants management); the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (overall program coordination); the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) (basic and applied research); the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA-APHIS-WS) (control, management and applied research); the U.S. Department of Defense (financial assistance, control and management on military facilities); and the Governments of Hawai'i, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

### **2026 Program Performance**

The 2026 BTS funds will support a continued focus on operational interdiction and control initiatives including suppression and eradication. Funding will be used to aid in the efforts to increase suppression of BTS in Guam and to continue research funding and educational outreach.

## Coral Reef Initiative & Natural Resources

**Activity:** Territorial Assistance

**Subactivity:** Coral Reef Initiative & Natural Resources

### **Program Overview**

Natural resources, from mountain ridges to reefs and in between, provide an integral foundation for healthy economies and the livelihood of islands and the people who reside therein. Funding provided through OIA plays a critical role by supporting the efforts of U.S. insular area governments, as well as regional and non-profit organizations, in the development of strategies and effective programs for managing and protecting their natural resources.

Invasive species pose a significant threat to national security by impacting food security, natural resources, infrastructure, and military readiness, especially in the Pacific where Military presence is vital to the region. Other threats to natural resources include invasive species such as the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB), *Oryctes rhinoceros*, which is found on Guam and Palau and was discovered on Rota in the CNMI, as well as the Little Fire Ant (LFA), *Wasmannia auropunctata*, currently found on Guam and recently discovered on Yap in the FSM. Office of Insular Affairs funding has supported insular area governments and has been leveraged with funding from other partners such as U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the University of Guam to detect, respond to, contain, and eradicate invasive species.

Additionally, healthy coral reefs, from the USVI to Guam, protect these islands from coastal erosion and storm damage and support important tourism and recreational industries. The Office of Insular Affairs has supported coral reef recommendations identified by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (CRTF) and the All Islands Coral Reef Committee, as well as the Micronesia Challenge.

The Office of Insular Affairs continues to support and bolster the efforts and work of each of the U.S. territories and the FAS to set their own priorities for natural resource management in accordance with focal areas and species included in the Regional Biosecurity Plan (RBP). Work performed by regional organizations such as the Micronesia Challenge, the Micronesia Conservation Trust, and the Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC) is encouraged and supported when possible. The Office of Insular Affairs also takes into consideration priorities identified by the Micronesian Islands Forum (MIF), composed of the Governors and Presidents of the Pacific Insular Areas and the Micronesian Presidents' Summit.

### **2026 Program Performance**

#### **Coral Reef Initiative & Natural Resources**

In 2026, the Coral Reef Initiative and Natural Resources program will continue to provide financial assistance to the insular areas to protect natural resources and to combat invasive species related to focal themes and focal species identified in the RBP update found in the Appendix.

## **Energizing Insular Communities**

**Activity:** Territorial Assistance

**Subactivity:** Energizing Insular Communities

### **Program Overview**

Insular communities face unique economic growth challenges due to their geographic isolation, finite resources, and dependence on imported oil for their energy needs. To assist the islands in meeting these challenges, OIA is working to restore American prosperity and strengthen national security interests by improving energy development, production, transportation, distribution, exporting, and generation capacity to provide a reliable, diversified, growing, and affordable supply of energy for the territories.

The Energizing Insular Communities (EIC) grant program plays a crucial role in helping the territories implement the actions identified in their respective strategic energy and action plans, and will be key to securing reliable, affordable, and resilient energy in the territories. In response to this Administration's prioritization of reliable energy in the territories, the EIC program will support an American Energy Dominance approach. This shift will further reduce reliance and expenditures on imported foreign fuels, reduce the cost of electricity to consumers, and improve the performance of energy infrastructure and overall energy efficiency in the territories.

Each year, OIA publishes the grant application instructions with set criteria for selecting the best submissions. The greatest weight is given to proposals that reduce a territory's cost of electricity, are identified in the territory's strategic energy plan or energy action plan, and propose to expend the funds within 24-36 months. Review meetings are held with OIA senior staff, the Budget and Grants Management Division, and others, including subject matter experts from the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL), to review and discuss each submission. Projects are selected for funding based on the results of these meetings and information provided by territorial governments.

### **2026 Program Performance**

In 2026, OIA will request proposals for its EIC Program that promote domestically produced energy and protect the United States' economic and national security interests and military preparedness by ensuring that an abundant supply of reliable energy is readily accessible in every territory. The EIC program will provide grant funding for energy strategies that reduce reliance on imported foreign fuels, reduce the cost of electricity to consumers, and improve the performance of energy infrastructure and overall energy efficiency in the territories.

**Compact Impact - Discretionary**

**Activity:** Territorial Assistance  
**Subactivity:** Compact Impact - Discretionary

**Justification of 2026 Program Changes****Compact Impact - Discretionary**

With the passage of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2024, Compact migrants are eligible for key Federal programs while residing in the United States. As a result, OIA is not requesting the smaller discretionary supplement to offset educational service and infrastructure costs incurred by the defined affected jurisdictions in P.L. 108-188.

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## COMPACTS OF FREE ASSOCIATION

### Federal Services Assistance

**Activity:** Compact of Free Association (Current Appropriation)

**Subactivity:** Federal Services (\$000)

Federal Services	2024 Actual	2025 Notional <sup>1/</sup>	2026 Request
Federal Services	2,813	2,813	813

<sup>1/</sup> Resource levels included are estimates. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

The Federal Services Assistance program provides discretionary funding to support activities related to the Compacts of Free Association. These activities have previously included U.S. Postal Service mail and package delivery to the freely associated states, Palau's single audit, and payments to RMI for Tax and Trade Compensation.

### Justification of 2026 Program Changes

#### Federal Services

The Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2024 provides for \$634 million for continued USPS services to the FAS. As a result, OIA is no longer requesting funding to offset costs incurred by the USPS for providing mail service in the FAS.

### Program Overview

The Federal Services program provides funding to support activities related to the Compacts of Free Association. In prior years, such funds were used for reimbursing USPS for services provided in the FAS, the RMI Tax and Trade payments, and funding for the Palau Single Audit.

### 2026 Program Performance

The Federal Services program will continue to provide funding to support activities related to the Compacts of Free Association. The new Compact period will require available discretionary funds for tasks required by the Compact agreements, but not funded through mandatory appropriations, including Federal interagency activities and support for bi-lateral dialogues and consultations.

**Enewetak****Activity: Compact of Free Association (Current Appropriation)****Subactivity: Enewetak (\$000)**

<b>Enewetak</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>2025 Notional <sup>1/</sup></b>	<b>2026 Request</b>
<b>Enewetak</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>0</b>

<sup>1/</sup> Resource levels included are estimates. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

**Justification of 2026 Program Changes****Enewetak**

The Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-42) approved separate mandatory funding for a new Sector Grant for Enewetak Development. With a fixed allocation of 4.8 percent of total available sector grant funding (\$52.0 million for FY 2026), the new mandatory funding negates the need for continued discretionary appropriations for this purpose.

## APPENDIXES

### Regional Biosecurity Plan

House Report 116-448 (July 14, 2020) contained a directive requiring the Department to include an update on efforts to implement the Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawai‘i (RBP). The following is the required biosecurity update.

#### REGIONAL BIOSECURITY PLAN

DOI continues to lead extensive activities in the Pacific region in collaboration with Federal agencies, State, territorial, and international governments, and other organizations to improve biosecurity actions and minimize invasive species threats. DOI investments through Region 12 – Pacific Islands agencies include the National Park Service (NPS), OIA, Office of Native Hawaiian Relations (ONHR), USFWS, and USGS, which support a range of invasive species-related activities in Hawai‘i and U.S. affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPI) such as prevention, detection, control, eradication, research, education, and restoration. The USAPI consists of three United States territories: American Samoa, CNMI, and Guam; and three independent countries in free association with the United States: FSM, RMI, and Palau.

In Hawai‘i and the USAPI, DOI activities aim to limit the introduction, establishment, and spread of numerous invasive species of concern. Species range from brown tree snakes to invasive insects, such as the coconut rhinoceros beetle and little fire ant, and marine invasive species, such as stony coral tissue loss disease, smothering seaweed, and invasive soft corals. They also include other invasive species capable of affecting economies and ecosystems including feral swine; Miconia, a highly invasive tree species; fire-prone grasses; and plant pathogens, such as the fungi that causes rapid ‘Ōhi‘a death impacting 80 percent of Hawai‘i’s forests. DOI is committed to working internally and with other Federal departments, including the Departments of Defense, Commerce, Agriculture, and State, as well as with the U.S. Ambassadors to the Freely Associated States, and regional and local partners to identify opportunities to strengthen national security and military readiness through improving biosecurity and invasive species management in the Pacific region.

Efforts undertaken by DOI bureaus and offices in Hawai‘i and the USAPI complement strategies identified by partners in the Pacific region. These efforts also align with priorities identified in the “Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawai‘i (RBP),” a plan developed by the Department of the Navy in 2015 that provides strategic guidance and sets forth recommended actions necessary to strengthen biosecurity.

In fiscal year 2025, bureaus continue to focus on high-impact invasive species, or groups of species, that are either established or identified as likely to become established and warrant actions to minimize risk of introduction and impacts. These focal areas and species are listed below.

Central to all work conducted in Hawai‘i and the USAPI is the relationship to biocultural resources. Biocultural resources are physical, biological, and human elements that strengthen a native

people's evolving relationship with a defined place and maintain their unique set of customs, beliefs, language, traditional knowledge, objects, and built environment. Understanding the importance of biocultural resources and integrating them into stewardship activities is crucial for project success and long-term viability in Hawai'i and the USAPI.

**Focal Themes:**

- Prevention: The action of stopping invasive species from being introduced or spreading into a new ecosystem.
- Early Detection (Surveillance) and Monitoring: A process of surveying for, reporting, and verifying the presence of a non-native species before it becomes established such that eradication is no longer feasible. Monitoring is the action of conducting surveys repeated through time to document changes in select attributes of wildlife, plants, habitats, ecological communities, or abiotic resources.
- Rapid Response (including Eradication, when possible): A process that is employed to eradicate a non-native species from a specific location before it becomes established such that eradication is no longer feasible. Eradication is the removal or destruction of an entire population of invasive species.
- Long-term Control (including Eradication, when possible): Containing, suppressing, managing, or reducing populations of invasive species.
- Research: Scientific investigation into invasive species such as biology, impacts, risk, detection, monitoring, and control methods, that often results in the development of new tools and methods to reduce or eliminate invasive species impacts.
- Outreach: The action of providing information externally, outside of DOI, or internally, within DOI, related to invasive species.

**Focal Species:**

- Invasive plants: This category includes non-native grasses, shrubs, vines, and trees.
- Rapid 'Ōhi'a death (and other plant pathogens): This category includes plant pathogens (diseases). Rapid 'Ōhi'a death is a plant pathogen that attacks and kills the culturally and ecologically significant native 'Ōhi'a tree in Hawai'i.
- Mosquitoes and avian malaria: The combination of introduced mosquitoes and avian malaria have decimated Hawai'i's native forest birds and limited their distribution to high elevations that are too cool for mosquitoes to breed. These high-elevation habitats are dwindling due to environmental changes, including invasive feral swine impacts.
- Ants and other non-native social insects: Some Pacific Islands had no or limited species of social insects. However, recently introduced ants and wasps have had devastating impacts on natural resources and people.
- Brown tree snakes: The brown tree snake continues to cause significant negative impacts to native birds, ecosystems, economy, power infrastructure, and agriculture on Guam. The spread of this invasive species to other Pacific islands is a significant national concern. Other reptiles and some amphibians are also potential threats.
- Small mammalian carnivores: This category includes species such as rats, mice, cats, and mongooses. All have had historical impacts and continue to have devastating impacts on Pacific Island ecosystems and infrastructure.

- Ungulates: This category includes ungulates such as feral goats, pigs, mouflon, water buffalo, cattle, and deer that have had significant negative impacts on ecosystems and water resources.
- Aquatic invasive species: This category includes a wide range of invasive marine algae, corals, freshwater fish, macroinvertebrates, and aquatic plants that have had significant negative impacts on aquatic ecosystems.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

- National Park Service: The NPS preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The NPS collaborates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout the United States and the world. Over 6,500 non-native invasive species have been found on NPS lands and waters. Of these, about 650 are in marine environments. The NPS utilizes several approaches for addressing invasive species including, but not limited to, an integrated pest management approach, coordinated and prioritized strategic planning, and Invasive Plant Management Teams to rapidly respond to invasive plants. For example, in Hawai‘i, NPS has designated Special Ecological Areas that best represent native Hawaiian systems, and these areas are managed as high priorities for the removal of plant and animal invasive species.
- Office of Insular Affairs: The OIA implements the Secretary of the Interior’s responsibilities for U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the CNMI, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Office of Insular Affairs also administers funding for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau. The OIA is the primary agency within DOI that funds brown tree snake interdiction, control, and research and collaborates closely with USFWS, USGS, USDA, and the local governments of Hawai‘i, Guam, and the CNMI. Within DOI, OIA reports to Congress on implementation of the Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawai‘i. The OIA also supports invasive species prevention and control efforts through Coral Reef & Natural Resources funding provided annually by Congress.
- Office of Native Hawaiian Relations: The Office of Native Hawaiian Relations discharges the Secretary's responsibilities for matters related to Native Hawaiians and serves as a conduit for DOI’s field activities in Hawai‘i. The mission of the Office is to serve as a liaison with the Native Hawaiian Community and work with DOI and its bureaus on issues affecting Hawai‘i.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: The mission of the USFWS is to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The USFWS operates under Federal statutes to accomplish the mission including the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, Endangered Species Act, the Lacey Act, and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, to name a few. The USFWS accomplishes their mission through invasive species management and habitat and species restoration through various programs such as the following: National Wildlife Refuge System, Fish and Aquatic Conservation, Ecological Services, Habitat Conservation, and Office of Law Enforcement, all of which address invasive species issues at some level. The National Wildlife Refuge System manages invasive species issues on approximately 100 million acres of wildlife habitat spread across over 570 Refuges; Invasive Species Strike Teams (ISSTs) and Refuge staff carry out invasive species management across the Refuge System. The primary strategy used by the ISSTs is early detection and rapid response (EDRR), which focuses on eradicating new, incipient infestations of highly

invasive species. The Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program leads the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, conducts prevention, EDRR, and control of aquatic plants and animals, and leads the designation of invasive wild mammals, fishes, reptiles, amphibians, mollusks, and crustaceans as injurious wildlife under the Lacey Act, which prohibits their imports into the U.S. and transport between the continental U.S. and other jurisdictions (like Hawai‘i, Puerto Rico, or Guam). The Ecological Services Program provides regulatory, coordination, and technical assistance roles relative to invasive species including leadership for brown tree snake management regionally and nationally through the statutorily mandated Brown Tree Snake Technical Working Group. The Office of Law Enforcement agents inspect wildlife shipments and collaborate with other jurisdictions to combat illegal movement and trafficking of invasive species.

For fiscal year 2026 resources allocated toward these efforts, please refer to each bureau’s Congressional Budget Justification.

#### Updates:

- **OIA:** In 2024, OIA provided funds for brown tree snake interdiction, control, and research, and collaborated closely with USFWS, USGS, USDA, and the local governments of Hawai‘i, Guam, and the CNMI to prevent the dispersal of the snake to other geographic areas. The OIA also funded activities related to preventing, detecting, responding to, and controlling invasive species identified in the RBP as focal species. These projects included: **American Samoa:** (focal species – the invasive myna bird) supported the American Samoa Government Biodiversity Conservation Office in protecting American Samoa’s wildlife and paleotropical rainforest habitats by expanding their management of the invasive myna bird populations on the northern part of Tutuila Island. **CNMI:** (focal species – Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle and the velvet bean *Mucuna pruriens*) supported the CNMI Department of Land and Natural Resources to allow the Invasive Species Coordinator to continue safeguarding and affirming the ideas and intention of the CNMI Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (ISSAP) and continue providing the necessary collaborative support for programs such as the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Eradication and Detection Program and the *Mucuna pruriens* Eradication Project.

In response to hearing from the Pacific Island Territories and countries that biosecurity in the Pacific region is a high priority, OIA also held a Regional Biosecurity Training in Guam in November 2024 for nine islands. The training convened over 130 leaders, local government administrators, biosecurity specialists, and port of entry inspectors from the RMI, FSM, Palau, Kiribati, American Samoa, CNMI, Guam, and the USVI as well as invasive species experts from U.S. Federal agencies, the State of Hawai‘i and other local partners to address biosecurity challenges locally and regionally. Three tracks were explored at the training—pre-border inspection and prevention, post-border early detection and rapid response, and invasive species policy and strategy development. A few of the next steps or recommendations that were agreed upon include:

- The islands learned a significant amount from Guam’s customs legislation and are looking to it as a model for their own jurisdictions.
- Each jurisdiction agreed that they would like to create a policy framework with existing statutes, authorities, policies, and gaps for post-border and pre-border biosecurity actions.

- Each jurisdiction agreed to develop pre-border and at-border inspection flow charts with a decision tree that delineates all entities' roles, interagency collaborations, and authority for response.
- Marine biosecurity should be its own category, and jurisdictions should establish consistent port inspection protocols including communication frameworks and flow charts that show imported commodities inspections, who has authority over ballast water, cargo movement, inspection facilities, treatment and fumigation, and perimeter containment and monitoring.

In addition to the regional training that convened multiple islands, OIA provided funding for each of the four U.S. territories in its jurisdiction to host on-island biosecurity trainings where there would be a local, hands-on training reflecting the high priority biosecurity needs that each territory has. In January 2025, Guam held its training, focused on addressing policy issues for biosecurity and invasive species.

In fiscal year 2025, OIA expects to continue to provide support for brown tree snake interdiction, control, and research and collaborate closely with USFWS, USGS, USDA, and the local governments of Hawai'i, Guam, and the CNMI to prevent the dispersal of the snake to other geographic areas. In fiscal year 2025, OIA also expects to continue to fund activities related to preventing, detecting, responding to, and controlling invasive species identified in the RBP as focal species. In addition, OIA will continue to provide funding for the CNMI, American Samoa, and the USVI to hold on-island trainings, and well as a second Regional Biosecurity Training that will follow up from and build upon the 2023 training. OIA is finding that the nexus of invasive species and biosecurity to national security and military readiness is relevant to its work and will continue to build upon this approach to keep the Insular Areas protected ecologically as well as from a safety perspective. OIA will also be contributing to the Mariana Islands Conservation Strategy, which is to be developed in 2025 and led by the Department of Defense and the USFWS, by assisting with a biosecurity gap assessment of the Marianas archipelago.

- **NPS:** The NPS has been working closely with Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations to protect Hawaiian forest birds from invasive mosquitoes that spread avian malaria. Haleakalā National Park participated as an initial test site of an Insect Incompatibility Technique (IIT) intended to help to control invasive mosquito populations. Further, NPS units continue to manage invasive ungulates, small predatory vertebrates, invasive plants, and invertebrates, as they have in past years. For example, the National Park of American Samoa has provided snares to villagers to capture feral swine and protect the park from their damage. Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park implements a rigorous little fire ant program that includes monitoring of equipment, vehicles, and materials entering the park and use of pesticides where ants are found. Efforts trapping Indian mongoose and free-ranging cats continue at Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park in Hawai'i as well. Further, several parks located on different islands use fencing to protect sensitive areas from feral ungulates, including Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Haleakalā National Park, Kalaupapa National Historic Park, and Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park. The Pacific Islands Invasive Plants Management Team also continues to provide support to parks to control and eradicate invasive plant species and has a program that trains "youth rangers" to manage invasive plants.

- **USFWS:** USFWS continues to implement biosecurity protocols and manage invasive species throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System.
  - **Invasive Species Strike Team Operations.** As of fiscal year 2024, there were two dedicated ISSTs focused on biosecurity and EDRR for Hawai‘i and Pacific Islands and the Pacific Marine National Monuments. The largest predator proof fence in the country was completed at Kilauea National Wildlife Refuge in 2023, spanning 3,414 meters and protecting 168 acres of wildlife habitat. This past year, the ISST developed and implemented a workplan for long-term management of the areas surrounding the fence line to ensure optimal functioning of the fence. The team completed mechanical and chemical treatments for the entire length of the fence, creating a buffer on both sides. The team worked closely with Pacific Rim Conservation to continue to ensure eradication of invasive feral cats and pigs, which are some of the most pervasive threats to many protected species at the site. The team also continued to work on removal of invasive rodents, both within and around the fence area, further reducing the threats to native wildlife.
  - **Wake Atoll Rat Eradication Project.** The U.S. Air Force implemented a rat eradication project at Wake Atoll (a Unit of the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument and the National Wildlife Refuge System) in 2024 in coordination with USFWS, USDA, Island Conservation, and partners. A USDA conservation dog and handler were present on Wake Atoll from December 2024 to February 2025 and no rats were detected. The last rat observation at the atoll was in November 2024. For tropical ecosystems, successful eradication can typically be declared after one year of no rat detections.
  - **Rapid Response to Invasive Octocoral.** In support of the National Early Detection and Rapid Response Framework, the USFWS established a pilot Rapid Response Fund to provide readily available financial resources to assess and support response actions for quick containment or eradication of newly detected species. In 2024 and 2025, funding was awarded by USFWS to the Navy to support efforts to eradicate an invasive marine octocoral found in Pearl Harbor.
  - **Invasive Ants.** Efforts to control an aggressive invasive species of ant, *Trichomyrmex* *mayri*, at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge have shown promise. This ant inflicts painful bites for people as well as swarming and killing seabird chicks; USFWS is striving for effective control of the ant in 2025.
  - **Palmyra Atoll Rainforest Realignment Project.** In 2019, USFWS, The Nature Conservancy, Island Conservation, and partners began to remove at least 90% of the invasive coco palms at Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge to allow growth of native trees such as *Pisonia grandis* which support nearly all the tree nesting bird species. There are 530 acres of forest on Palmyra, over 230 acres of which were dominated by coco palms at the onset of the project. As of March 2025 (April 2019 to present), approximately 74% of the coco palms have been controlled.
  - **Brown Tree Snake.** The USFWS continued annual coordination and collaboration with the member agencies to implement the 2020-2025 Brown Tree Snake Technical Working Group (BTS TWG) Strategic Plan. Fiscal year 2024 efforts included leadership coordination of the BTS TWG, planning and facilitating the annual meetings, and overseeing the CNMI BTS program. In addition, USFWS recently completed instructing two Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point courses in Hawai‘i (attendees from Federal and Hawai‘i State agencies) and is offering a course on Guam and the CNMI in July 2025. Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office (PIFWO) also supported OIA in fiscal years 2023-2025 to implement the regional biosecurity



- and on-island biosecurity trainings for Guam and the CNMI as well as coordinating biosecurity activities to prevent the spread of invasive species through military and civilian transportation pathways. In fiscal year 2025, PIFWO is leading and collaborating with the CNMI to implement early detection surveillance of invasive ants across all at-risk islands in the CNMI. In fiscal year 2024, the PIFWO and the U.S. Department of Navy continued the implementation of a five-year Implementation Plan under the Guam Micronesia Kingfisher Memorandum of Agreement. The five-year Implementation Plan prioritizes two objectives: (1) assess BTS eradication capabilities within a BTS exclusion fence (135 acres/ 55 ha) and (2) to refine landscape scale BTS aerial treatments and implementation methods on unbound (without exclusion fencing) areas. These projects are vital to understand efforts and funds needed to inform native avian reintroductions to Guam. The projects are being implemented collaboratively by the USGS Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center and the USDA National Wildlife Research Center with efforts projected to continue through fiscal year 2026.
- **Invasive Algae.** Thick blankets of *Chondria tumulosa*, a red alga, have smothered reefs in the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Preliminary assessments of desiccation rates of *Chondria* on marine debris were completed in early 2025 and more intensive studies to control invasive algae will be conducted during the summer of 2025 through the support of the Invasive Species Strike Team.
  - **Verbesina control.** Golden crownbeard is an invasive plant that reduced nesting habitat for all ground-nesting birds at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and is of particular concern for nesting Laysan albatrosses. Verbesina control efforts are progressing in 2025 with a 60% overall decrease since 2024.
  - **Avian Malaria.** The USFWS continues to support efforts to prevent the extinction of Hawaiian forest birds by working with other Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations in the Birds Not Mosquitoes partnership to address non-native mosquitoes responsible for spreading disease to highly endangered forest birds. Advancing landscape mosquito control, this project is using a novel technique called the Incompatible Insect Technique. The Incompatible Insect Technique (IIT) is a way to control insect pests, like mosquitoes, without using harmful chemicals. In Hawai'i, this technique involves releasing male mosquitoes that carry a different, incompatible strain of bacteria than what is present in the wild mosquito population. When these incompatible male mosquitoes mate with the wild female mosquitoes, the resulting eggs do not hatch, decreasing the mosquito population over time, resulting in reduced disease pressure on endangered forest birds in Hawaii. This project is the first conservation application of the tool, and is focused on the *Culex quinquefasciatus* mosquito (a mosquito of both human and wildlife disease concern). The project is conducting applications in remote forest settings by pioneering the delivery via helicopter and unmanned aircraft systems. The USFWS, in collaboration with other DOI bureaus, provided financial assistance to support applications in two key forest bird habitats on Maui and Kaua'i, covering over 6,000 acres.
  - **Partnerships.** The USFWS is an active member of the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS), a partnership of agencies and non-governmental organizations working together to protect Hawai'i from invasive species.

## Territory Energy Updates

The Office of Insular Affairs provided direct funding assistance in fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2020 for the update of the territorial energy plans, as requested, and professional services beginning in fiscal year 2020 through an interagency agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy for those updates and implementation.

Energy security is critical to the insular areas' future economic development and viability. In terms of residential cost per kilowatt hour, the territories on average pay nearly two or three times the national average for electricity. Public Law 109-58 enacted in 2005 directed the Secretary of the Interior to draft long-term energy plans for the insular areas with the objective of reducing their reliance on energy imports, increase energy conservation and energy efficiency, and use native energy sources.

To combat the high cost of electricity, OIA entered into an interagency agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) in 2010 to help develop long-term strategic energy plans in American Samoa, CNMI, and Guam. The goal was to help the insular areas develop advanced energy systems that increase energy independence and security.

The governors of the three Pacific territories each established energy task forces that included a variety of energy stakeholders from the territories: colleges and universities, utility companies, energy offices, environmental protection agencies, and private sector organizations. The NREL staff worked closely with each territory's energy task force to develop long-term strategic energy plans and short-term energy action plans. These energy plans were finalized and published in July 2013 for the CNMI and Guam. American Samoa's energy action plan was published in August and its strategic energy plan was published in December 2013. In the end, these energy plans were the result of a tremendous collaborative effort among various energy stakeholders over several months.

Intended to be fluid foundational documents, the strategic energy plans lay out a variety of strategies that should be revisited and updated as appropriate. The strategies include analysis of diesel generation systems and renewable energy systems as well as cost effective energy efficiency improvements. Subsequently, the energy action plans were developed to outline how the strategic energy plans will be implemented. The action plans are meant to be much more detailed and specific, assigning specific tasks to individuals with detailed deadlines.

The energy action plans select a handful of specific strategies that are achievable in the short term (one to three years), detail the strategies in feasible incremental steps, identify the stakeholders and desired outcomes, identify the organizations and individuals responsible for implementing the actions, and set a timeline for each step. The action plans are also considered to be living documents that will be regularly updated by the task forces and OIA has offered funding for the update of energy plans. In fiscal year 2019, the CNMI and the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority applied for and received funding to update the territorial energy plan and integrated resource plan, respectively. In fiscal year 2020, American Samoa applied and received funding to update its energy plan and reestablish its American Samoa Renewable Energy Committee (ASREC). In fiscal year 2021, Guam received funding to update the Guam Strategy and Energy Plan.

In fiscal year 2022, in compliance with P.L. 113-235, OIA entered into a new interagency agreement with NREL to provide technical support to OIA and the U.S. territories for continued efforts to improve energy security and resilience, reduce energy costs, and diversify away from dependence on petroleum-based fuels. As part of this agreement, NREL will update energy system baseline data in the territories and assist the territories with the development of their energy security plans and needs assessments. The agreement also provides other programmatic support to OIA and the territories.

Since 2013, **American Samoa** has made significant progress in implementing the strategies identified in its 2013 Energy Action Plan. The ASREC updated its Energy Action Plan in 2016 with the assistance of NREL and added new strategies that continue to reduce the cost of electricity and improve energy infrastructure in the territory.

**Guam** has recently focused its funding requests on stakeholder engagement, data generation and gathering, energy generation development and evaluation, and impact modeling and analysis.

In the **CNMI**, the focus of EIC applications continues to mostly be energy generation, with demand side management through energy efficiency as its next priority.

The **USVI** continued to focus its recent EIC applications on sustainable transportation.

## Capital Improvement Projects Program Update

Section 701 of the Covenant (Public Law 94-241) states, “*The Government of the United States will assist the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands in its efforts to achieve a progressively higher standard of living for its people as part of the American economic community and to develop the economic resources needed to meet the financial responsibilities of local self-government.*” Section 701 does not contain a standard to measure what is an adequate standard of living or the amount of economic resources necessary to meet the financial responsibilities of local self-government. Instead, it speaks of achieving progressively higher standards and a commitment by the Federal government to assist the CNMI in making progress.

Legislation enacted in 1996 established a minimum six-year CIP program for Guam as impact aid resulting from Micronesian immigration authorized in the Compacts of Free Association. Beginning in 2004, however, funding for impact aid for Guam was authorized and appropriated under the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-188), which shifted the funding for impact aid from the CIP program to the Compact Impact program.

Capital Improvement Project funds address a variety of infrastructure needs in the U.S. territories. Below are recent updates to existing projects funded through the CIP program.

**CNMI:** A number of projects reached completion this year. The Department of Corrections completed the replacement of its surveillance system, but is still undergoing replacement of its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), fire alarm, and sprinkler systems. The Northern Marianas Technical Institute has completed replacement of the building’s roof and is now preparing to renovate its carpentry workshop. Several other roof repair and coating projects were completed recently at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation Hospital, the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Building, and the 1300 block of local Government buildings. Renovations were also completed at the Offices of Attorney General and Procurement buildings.

The CNMI continues to allocate funding towards improvements within facilities across the islands. The CHCC has projects to upgrade the existing health information system and replace the floors of patient rooms. Renovations will be conducted at facilities for the Division of Customs and Biosecurity, the Office of Information & Technology Services, Division of Financial Services, the Rota Mayor’s Office and Pavilion.

While most of its infrastructure projects have already been authorized to proceed, the CNMI has allocated funds towards the preparation of environmental assessments for multiple large-scale infrastructure projects, which are required for NEPA compliance before implementation can begin. These projects include the construction of a solid waste convenience center in As Gonno, Saipan; construction of the West Harbor access road and construction and installation of waterlines at the Dugi homestead on the island of Rota; and construction and installation of waterlines and powerlines in the West San Jose homestead on the island of Tinian and the relocation of waterlines in Carolina Heights on Tinian.

**American Samoa:** Until 1996, American Samoa received annual grants for capital improvement needs, as determined by the Department of the Interior and Congress. These grants averaged approximately \$5.0 million annually. During this time American Samoa fell further and further behind in keeping up with the infrastructure needs of a rapidly growing population. Consequently, the people of the territory were faced

with increasing hardship and risk with regard to such basic needs as drinking water, medical services, and education. In recognition of these severe problems, Congress enacted legislation in 1996 directing a portion of the mandatory CIP funds to be used to pay for critical infrastructure in American Samoa.

The legislation also required the development of a multi-year capital improvement plan. The plan was prepared by a committee appointed by the Governor of American Samoa, and the Army Corps of Engineers served as technical advisors to the committee under an interagency agreement funded through OIA. This plan was transmitted to Congress on August 8, 1996. The Capital Improvement Master Plan is updated on an annual basis. All projects have been categorized into three general priority areas. First order priorities include health, safety, education, and utilities. Second order priorities include ports and roads. Third order priorities include industry, shoreline protection, parks and recreation and other government facilities.

Over the past year, a number of American Samoa's infrastructure projects have been completed and others have begun. The American Samoa Shipyard's winch house was completed, making the Ronald Reagan Marine Shipyard fully functional again, and the Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center's labor and delivery suite renovations were completed.

Groundbreaking for a new classroom building at the American Samoa Community College and for an access road in Maleimi also occurred in this past year.

Additionally, progress continues on the Department of Education Consolidated Manua schools project and the American Samoa Shipyard Authority 3,000 Ton Slipway.

**Guam:** Supply chain issues continue to have rippling effects on CIP-funded infrastructure projects on Guam, as they have especially impacted procurement and bids on projects. The Guam Fire Department finally received and integrated into its fleet two long awaited fire trucks, while the Guam Police Department's evidence control center project has required numerous rounds of procurement, finally resulting in the Government of Guam recently allocating part of its CIP funding to supplement the existing budget in order to meet rising costs.

Large projects to design and construct new buildings for the Department of Public Health and Social Services Division of Environmental Health Facility and the Guam Environmental Protection Agency are currently undergoing the architecture, engineering, and design phases, and Department of Youth Affairs projects continue to get reviewed for NEPA clearance.

**USVI:** Ongoing efforts in the USVI are focused on repairing critical road infrastructure, water and wastewater site improvements, and deferred maintenance reduction within the Virgin Islands Department of Education. The public libraries are also a focus, as the Florence Williams Public Library, Enid Baa, and Athalie McFarlane Petersen Public Library on St. Croix continue to address structural renovations and install upgrades to the electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and telephone systems.

Currently, the Virgin Islands Police Department project to implement a Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) is still ongoing, but they have completed installation of the Safe Zone Surveillance system mobile security cameras across the territory.

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