

For Official Release
PR 001-05092023
Office of the Governor
Utulei, American Samoa
May 9, 2023



Day 1 for American Samoa at the Territorial Climate & Infrastructure Workshop



The U.S. Department of Interior Office of Insular Areas convened the Territorial Climate Infrastructure Workshop 2.0 for the second year since the announcement of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed by President Biden on November 15, 2021 and the Inflation Reduction Act last year. The objective is to provide assistance to all territories in order to maximize their opportunities to successfully apply for and receive these federal funds for priority climate and infrastructure projects. To achieve this, federal agencies and significant subject matter related organizations have been invited to share about available resources to include new funding opportunities and technical assistance. The seven specific focus areas are 1. Built Infrastructure 2. Nature Based Solutions 3. Energy 4. Broadband 5. Water 6. Invasive Species 7. Cleanup Revitalizing & Recycle. The American Samoa BIL/IRA team led by AS BIL/IRA Coordinator, ODAPM Director Lisa Tuatoo includes Directors and staff of departments and offices with related mandated functions with priority projects submitted and prepared under BIL/IRA funds. The Executive Director Wallon Young ASPA, CEO Chuck Leota ASTCA, Directors Falenaoti Fruean DPA, Faleosina Voigt DPW, Petti Matila ASDOC, Faamao Asalele ASEPA, Misipati Salanoa TEO, Amaama Tofaeono GRO, and Tavita Togia BIODIVERSITY.

The Honorable Lemanu P.S. Mauga, Governor of American Samoa met with the AS BIL/IRA team on Sunday, May 7, 2023 in Honolulu, Hawaii before his departure for home reminded the directors and staff about the importance of this TCIW 2.0 workshop and for the team to successfully submit applications to request funds for critical priority climate and infrastructure projects for the territory. The Governor Lemanu encouraged the team to network, learn from technical assistance offered and foster relationships with federal counterparts to ensure that the territory will benefit from these once in a generation funding opportunities to address climate change, improve infrastructure and save lives of the people of American Samoa.

In her presentation during the opening ceremony, Director Lisa Tuatoo shared on behalf of the territory, the priority projects, gaps and challenges experienced when preparing applications under BIL/IRA funding opportunities. Although local cost matching has been waived by the DOI grant funding opportunities for the territories, a request was made for all other federal agencies to follow suit in this initiative. Other challenges include the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Build America Buy American Act (BABAA), Supply chain issues, DOI annual allocation, Period of Performance (POP), Equity in competitive grants and training and capacity building to name a few. In accordance to the TCIW 2.0 agenda, the first presentation from American Samoa is under the Built Infrastructure. This was presented by DPW Director Faleosina Voigt on behalf of herself and DPA Director Falenaoti Loi-On Fruean on the priority Built Infrastructure projects list. Other territories gave similar presentations after Director Faleosina Voigt. These were followed by two Infrastructure breakout sessions about resiliency and opportunities for transportation infrastructure compliance, regulatory, construction and sustainability considerations. When asked about one outcome from this TCIW 2.0, Director Lisa Tuatoo responded, “to approve all of American Samoa’s BIL/IRA grant applications.”

The TCIW 2.0 continues with a five full day agenda from Monday, May 8th until Friday, May 12, 2023. The federal agencies in attendance are the US Army Corp of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency, US Department of Transportation, US Department of Interior, US Economic Development Agency, US Environmental Agency, General Services Administration, US Department of Agriculture, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US Coast Guard, DOI Bureau of Reclamation, US Federal Communications Commission National Telecommunications and Information Administration and National Renewable Energy Laboratory. The territories attending are American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas (Saipan) and US Virgin Islands.

##



**INVESTING IN
AMERICA**



