



FEMA

May 19, 2022

Honorable Lemanu Peleti Sialega Mauga, Governor
American Samoa
Executive Office Building, Third Floor
Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799

Dear Governor Mauga:

In 2005, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) outlined specific actions to help American Samoa implement stricter internal controls. A 2007 DHS Office of the Inspector General report found State Homeland Security Program funds were diverted for use by state government offices for nonauthorized purposes; as a result, all Homeland Security Grant funds were frozen. FEMA sent recommendations to the American Samoa Governor regarding programmatic, financial, and administrative changes to improve grants management and program administration. In 2009, American Samoa submitted a corrective action plan addressing the issues from the 2007 report; as a result, FEMA lifted the funding freeze and placed all DHS grants on a restrictive drawdown status.

After reviewing American Samoa's recent A-133 financial audit and results of enhanced financial monitoring, FEMA Region 9 is removing the restrictive drawdown status placed on grants to American Samoa Office of Disaster Assistance and Petroleum Management (ODAPM) as described below. Furthermore, FEMA Region 9 will remove the restrictive drawdown status for the American Samoa Department of Homeland Security (ASDHS) once the below conditions have been met.

ODAPM

The removal of the restrictive drawdown status on grants administered by ODAPM (Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program) is effective as of the date of this letter for a 12-month probationary period. During this probationary period, ODAPM must:

- 1) participate in monthly technical assistance calls with staff from FEMA Region 9; and
- 2) timely cooperate, as requested, with FEMA as it conducts periodic random sampling of Public Assistance grant expenditures through the Validate as You Go (VAYGo) testing process in accordance with OMB Circular A-123 Appendix C.

ASDHS

Before the restrictive drawdown status on grants administered by ASDHS can be removed, ASDHS must:

- 1) close all open areas of noncompliance from its 2021 enhanced financial monitoring desk review; and

- 2) continue to participate in the current bi-weekly technical assistance calls held with FEMA Region 9 staff.

Once FEMA confirms in writing these requirements are met, FEMA will remove the restrictive drawdown status on grants administered by ASDHS (Emergency Management Performance Grants, Homeland Security Grant Program, and Nonprofit Security Grant Program) for a 12-month probationary period. During this probationary period, ASDHS must continue to participate in the bi-weekly technical assistance calls with FEMA Region 9 staff.

Permanent Removal

Permanent removal of restrictive drawdown status will be evaluated pending the results of monitoring site visits to ODAPM and ASDHS in 2023 and satisfactory resolution of all VAYGO testing.

ASDHS and ODAPM have made significant progress in improving the grants management operations, and FEMA recognizes and commends these efforts. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your teams.

If you have any questions, you may contact Yuliya Rzad, Grants Management Division Acting Director, at yuliya.rzad@fema.dhs.gov or (510) 627-7757.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Fenton
Regional Administrator

cc: Lisa Tuatoo, ODAPM Director
Samana Ve'ave'a, ASDHS Director
Yuliya Rzad, Grants Management Division Acting Director, FEMA Region 9
Robert Pesapane, Recovery Division Director, FEMA Region 9
Kathryn Lipiecki, Mitigation Division Director, FEMA Region 9
Alexander R. Mrazik, Jr., HSGP Western Operations Branch Chief
Official Grant File