

Office of Island Affairs

Strengthening public health systems to improve community health outcomes across US territories and freely associated states

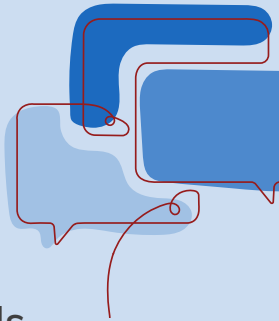
Caribbean and US-Affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPI) face unique health challenges due to their remote locations, climate, and limited local resources. Recognizing their unique history, culture, and demographics, the **Public Health Infrastructure Center's Office of Island Affairs (OIA)** supports public health agencies serving these regions.

About OIA

OIA collaborates with health officials and federal partners in the US territories and freely associated states. The office works to:

- **Facilitate consultations** among senior island officials, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) leaders, and federal partners to address priority issues.
- **Support training needs** through collaborations between CDC programs and partners, offering tools like the Grants Management Academy, which equips island health professionals with skills to manage federal funding effectively.
- **Share information** through communications such as the *OIA Bulletin*, which keep public health professionals in island communities informed of emerging issues, opportunities, and collaborative efforts.
- **Support funded partnerships**, such as the Pacific Island Health Officers Association's Pacific Public Health Fellowship, which builds workforce skills through practical, hands-on learning opportunities.
- **Maximize CDC funding impact** by supporting cross-cutting capabilities like workforce development, data modernization, and partnerships.

In 2024,
OIA facilitated
more than 200
consultations
with island officials,
CDC leaders, and
federal partners



Supporting Emergency Response in Island Communities

OIA plays a critical role in supporting rapid, coordinated responses during public health emergencies in island communities. During emergencies, this office:

- **Connects CDC with island health departments** to ensure timely information sharing and coordination.
- **Serves as a liaison** across federal and local agencies to streamline interagency communication.
- **Coordinates and tracks requests** for federal assistance, including supplies, personnel, and funding.
- **Supports laboratory operations**, testing sites, and protocols to ensure access to timely diagnostic services.
- **Identifies deployment needs** to send the right expertise and resources where they're needed most.




Since 2020, OIA has contributed to


6 emergency responses in Puerto Rico and


3 in the US Virgin Islands


A Closer Look: The Pacific Public Health Fellowship

The Pacific Public Health Fellowship offers new graduates and early career professionals hands-on experience at public health departments within island communities. Examples of fellows' work includes:

 **Helping track hepatitis B in Guam** by assisting with the development of the territory's first system to monitor the disease and creating education materials for healthcare professionals.

 **Combating antimicrobial resistance in Palau** by investigating repeat antibiotic prescriptions to improve how antibiotics are used.

 **Identifying local health needs in the Republic of the Marshall Islands** by surveying households and launching projects tailored to each community.

 **Addressing community public health across Micronesia**, including helping with tuberculosis screening events and raising awareness about Hansen's disease, a chronic infectious disease with a high prevalence in the region.

Training the Next Generation of Island Public Health Leaders

The Pacific Public Health Fellowship contributes to a strong, sustainable workforce.

43 fellows

have served in local USAPI health departments since 2021



94% of graduates

are employed or continuing their education in public health