



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
AMERICAN SAMOA GOVERNMENT**

July 19, 2023

GENERAL MEMORANDUM NO. 176 – 23

To: Secretary of Samoan Affairs, CEOs, Presidents and Executive Directors of Authorities, Directors, Agency and Office Heads

From: Acting Governor of American Samoa

Subject: GAO Federal Collection of Data from U.S. Territories

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), as instructed by the House Committee on Natural Resources Ranking Member and Delegates of the permanent U.S. Territories, are conducting a collection of data from the U.S. Territories under code 106574.

Reported population declines in the territories (and any attendant effects on federal resource allocation), combined with data collection challenges encountered during such operations as the decennial census, have given rise to heightened concerns about unique and disproportionate challenges in obtaining quality federal statistics related to the territories. More broadly, prior work by GAO and others indicates the territories are not consistently included in the scope of data products of the 13 principal federal statistical agencies.

In compliance with GAO's letter of May 31, 2023 announcing this engagement, I designate Directors and Heads of the following Departments, Agencies, and Offices to work on this engagement:

Department of Commerce	Department of Treasury
Department of Health	Department of Education
Department Human and Social Services	Department of Legal Affairs Immigration Office
American Samoa Medicaid State Agency	American Samoa Economic Development Authority
Territorial Administration on Aging	Department of Human Resources
Office of Samoan Affairs	Office of Protection and Advocacy
Governor's Office	Governor's Office Special Program Coordinator
Office of Program Planning and Budget	

The standard preliminary entrance call is scheduled for **Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 11:00 AM SST.** Designees are hereby notified to be present for this call. Please coordinate your efforts to ensure timely response to meet the federal requirements of this GAO notice.

TALAEUGA E. V. ALE
Acting Governor

Enclosure



U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

441 G St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

May 31, 2023

The Honorable Lemanu Pelepoi Sialega Mauga
Governor
American Samoa

Dear Governor Mauga:

This letter is to inform you of a new U.S. Government Accountability Office engagement on **Federal Collection of Data from U.S. Territories – code 106574**. The enclosure provides information on the engagement. If we determine it is necessary to visit locations other than those specified in the enclosure, we will advise you.

We would appreciate your notifying the appropriate officials (within the departments named in the enclosure) of this work. The next step will be to set up an entrance conference. At that meeting, we will request that your agency identify a point of contact for this engagement.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Bair". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke above the name.

Jason Bair
Managing Director
International Affairs and Trade

Enclosure

cc: Blanche Lulu Barber, American Samoa Economic Development Authority

Enclosure

Information on New Engagement

Engagement subject: Federal Collection of Data from U.S. Territories

Engagement code: 106574

Source for the work: Request from the House Committee on Natural Resources (Ranking Member Grijalva) and Delegates of the permanent U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and Guam).

Issue under review and Preliminary Key questions:

Reported population declines in the territories (and any attendant effects on federal resource allocation), combined with data collection challenges encountered during such operations as the decennial census, have given rise to heightened concerns about unique and disproportionate challenges in obtaining quality federal statistics related to the territories. More broadly, prior work by GAO and others indicates the territories are not consistently included in the scope of data products of the 13 principal federal statistical agencies.

- What are the current data gaps in federal statistical products related to the territories, and why do those gaps exist?
- What is known about the implications, if any, for the allocation of federal funds resulting from data gaps in the territories?
- What is known about the costs and benefits of expanding the scope of federal statistical products to possibly address their gaps in the territories?

Agencies to be notified: American Samoa Economic Development Authority, American Samoa Department of Commerce

Other U.S. territories to be contacted: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Estimated start date for the work: Immediately

Time frame for holding the entrance conference: July 2023

GAO Teams performing the engagement: Strategic Issues, International Affairs & Trade

GAO contacts:

- Yvonne Jones, Director (Strategic Issues), 202-512-2717, JonesY@gao.gov
- Latesha Love-Grayer, Director (International Affairs and Trade), 202-512-4409, LoveGrayerL@gao.gov

- Ty Mitchell, Assistant Director (Strategic Issues), 202-512-5699, MitchellT@gao.gov
- Aniruddha (Joyee) Dasgupta, Assistant Director (International Affairs and Trade), 202-512-3605, DasguptaA@gao.gov
- Devin Braun, Analyst-in-Charge (Strategic Issues), 202-512-5577, BraunD@gao.gov