

For Official Release
PR 001-07202023
Office of the Governor
Utulei, American Samoa
July 20, 2023



Cyber Disruption Consequences Management Workshop in American Samoa

“We reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding our territory’s digital landscape. Under the [Lemanu-Talauega] Administration, we prioritize strengthening our cybersecurity infrastructure to protect critical systems and uphold the trust of our citizens.” - Samana S. Ve’ave’a, Director, Department of Homeland Security.



On July 12, 2023, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) effectively hosted a Cyber Disruption Consequences Management Workshop in the U.S. Army Reserve Center in Tafuna. The workshop was organized in collaboration with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Federal Office of Intelligence and Threat Analysis (OITA), and featured prominent experts, including Ms. Nicole Coughlin and Ms. Caitlyn Sarna from the Argonne National Laboratory, Mr. Raysyn Roach-Vaden from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Honolulu Office, and Ms. Jennilyn P. LaBrunda, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

The event gathered critical IT representatives from various government agencies, including the Department of Treasury, Public Works, Port Administration, ASTCA, Commerce, Legal Affairs, and Homeland Security. Representation from the private sector included Blue Sky Communications and Hawaiian Airlines.

DHS Director Samana S. Ve'ave'a delivered the opening remarks highlighting one of the key priorities of the Lemanu-Talauaga Administration in this field. "At this workshop we reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding our territory's digital landscape," remarked Director Samana. He further stated, "Under this Administration, we prioritize strengthening our cybersecurity infrastructure to protect critical systems and uphold the trust of our citizens. Together, we embrace innovation and collaboration, forging a path towards a secure and resilient digital future for all."

The workshop focused on addressing cyber incident challenges and enhancing participants' understanding of effective strategies for managing consequences. Engaging in various exercises and discussions, attendees explored the complexities of American Samoa's cyber infrastructure, emphasizing the need for collaborative response strategies to mitigate disruptions in government systems and public services. Key topics of discussion were the importance of government, private sector, and public collaborations, along with operational continuity through backups and redundancy systems.

Experts from OITA, FBI, CISA, and the American Samoa Broadband Coordinating (BCORD) Office delivered informative presentations. Participants received practical tools and resources to enhance their cybersecurity practices, while lively discussions and a cybersecurity panel discussion with notable representatives fostered strong relationships with response partners and stakeholders. The panel included Governor's Office Technology Office CIO Ray Tulafono, AS Broadband Coordinator Andrew Berquist from the Department of Commerce (DOC), Esau Esau from the DHS Fusion Center, Mr. Roach-Vaden and Ms. LaBrunda. They each shared their organization's cybersecurity responsibilities and emphasized the necessity of public-private collaboration in combating cyber threats in American Samoa. The workshop left attendees with actionable lessons and a profound understanding of the importance of planning for and managing disruptive cyber incidents.

DHS extends its gratitude to all participants, speakers, and partners for their active participation and dedication to bolstering the territory's cyber preparedness.

###