



OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS

**U.S. Department
of the Interior**

www.doi.gov/oia
News Release

Date: August 8, 2016

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**Bureau of Economic Analysis Releases
2015 GDP Data for American Samoa**

Territory now has GDP Data Spanning 14 years beginning in 2002

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 8, 2016) – Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia’aina announced today that the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) has released gross domestic product (GDP) data for 2015 for American Samoa.

The release of the GDP estimates is a critical part of a technical assistance agreement between the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) and the BEA to generate GDP data for the island territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in a manner consistent with GDP data collection for states and the nation as a whole.

“GDP data are critically important for leaders in American Samoa and other U.S. territories to make informed decisions on fiscal policies and economic development strategies,” said Assistant Secretary Kia’aina. “We are pleased to support BEA’s collaboration with the territories in this worthwhile endeavor and look forward to having such work be automatically included in the agency’s annual budget.”

The BEA released the first official set of GDP data for the U.S. territories under OIA jurisdiction in May 2010, which covered the period of 2002-2007, and has since provided data for each subsequent year. With this 2015 release, the territories now have official GDP data that cover the 2002-2015 period.

The BEA is currently mandated to provide GDP data for the United States, the 50 states, and the District of Columbia (D.C.), but not U.S. territories. To produce GDP data for the territories as is done for the Nation, the 50 states, and D.C., OIA entered into a technical assistance agreement with the BEA that provides \$750,000 annually to cover the cost of BEA’s technical expertise and field work in the territories. Over the course of the last several years, the BEA has worked closely with staff in the territories to develop mechanisms to gather and calculate the GDP data.

Among the critical data the BEA generates are the details of the composition of island economic output which provide insight into economic structure and potential for economic growth and development. The OIA-BEA agreement is the only system to generate these basic economic data for the territories that are otherwise statutorily made readily available for the 50 states and D.C.

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for coordinating federal policy with respect to the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and administering and overseeing U.S. federal assistance provided to the freely associated states of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau under the Compacts of Free Association. On behalf of the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas executes these responsibilities through the Office of Insular Affairs whose mission is to foster economic opportunities, promote government efficiency, and improve the quality of life for the people of the insular areas.

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