

# March 2021



*FAPAC-DOI Newsletter*



# *In this issue*

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# *From the president*

Dear FAPAC-DOI,

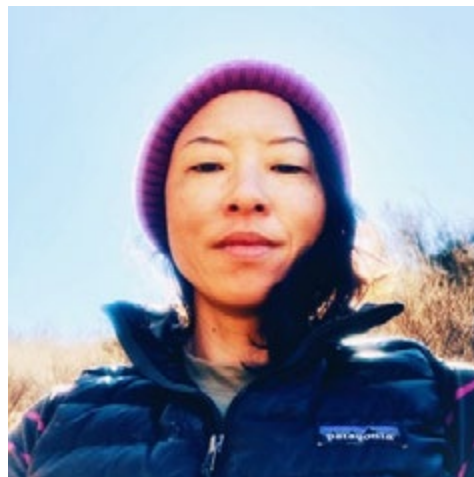
How are you doing? How are you coping? How are you taking care of yourselves and your loved ones? My self-care consists of regular yoga, acupuncture, and spending time in the outdoors. The outdoors is where I feel the most “normal” and whole, and is where I let go of the stresses and anxiety that have become an all too regular part of my being.

These are not easy times. I encourage you to prioritize the well-being of yourselves and your loved ones; we will be stronger together because of it.

Stay well,



Lena Chang  
President, FAPAC-DOI



# Member spotlight

## Martin J. Moore III

Compact Grants Manager  
Office of Insular Affairs

My name is Martin and I am a grants manager with the Office of Insular Affairs. I am a part of the Honolulu Field Office and primarily focus on the Freely Associated States of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. The Office of Insular Affairs, with our main headquarters located in Washington DC, is responsible for coordinating federal policy and assistance for the U.S. Territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, in addition to that of the Freely Associated States.

Although I consider “home” wherever my mom is, I also call two geographic locations home: Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and the Republic of Palau. These two places are on totally opposite sides of the world and couldn’t be more different, but the experience has definitely made me who I am today. I am a proud Palauan-American millennial who binges Netflix and Hulu, enjoys scrolling social media, sees sarcasm as my primary language, and loves learning about new cultures. I love going to the beach, but I love food way more! (BTW, did you catch those malasadas in last month’s newsletter? I’m about to go to Alaska just for those!). I love to cook and when people ask me how what recipes I follow, I tell them my cooking is most often improvised. Fun fact, I have spent half my life in Pennsylvania and the latter half my life on some island somewhere (Palau, Chuuk, or Hawaii). I pride myself on being optimistic, independent and always ready for an adventure. I went to a boarding school in Chuuk, Micronesia for high school, and I studied International Studies at Chaminade University of Honolulu.

I enjoy my job because I get the opportunity to assist and witness the implementation of policies and federal assistance on the ground in our jurisdictions. I am from Palau and have visited the other Freely Associated States and I always feel connected as Pacific Islanders when visiting. Speaking of feeling connected, it is so great to have a space like FAPAC to learn more about each other! We are all on this journey together whether some of us are well-seasoned veterans or fresh neophytes in DOI, we might as well get to know each other for the ride.



# *The impact of COVID-19*

## and OIA's support for Pacific Islander communities through CARES Act funds



Pacific Islander communities in Hawai'i, Guam, Washington, and Arkansas were among the most impacted by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic in 2020.

Pacific Islanders in Hawai'i were more than twice as likely to die from or to be hospitalized by COVID-19 than other racial and ethnic groups, after adjusting for age and gender<sup>i</sup>. According to the Hawai'i Health Department, Chuukese, Marshallese, and Samoans were identified among the most impacted. On Guam, Chamorros and Chuukese made up the highest proportions of hospitalized cases, making up just over 30 percent of the total hospitalizations combined. Furthermore, a report<sup>ii</sup> issued by the Guam Department of Public Health in December 2020 identified ethnicity as a risk marker for COVID-19 mortality with Chuukese having the highest fatality rates overall on Guam. While comprising only 7.1 percent of Guam's population, those identifying as Chuukese accounted for 16 percent of total cases and 31 percent of COVID-19 deaths.

Reports in the summer of 2020 found impacts on Pacific Islander communities in the U.S. mainland to have been equally stark. In Spokane County, Washington, though Marshallese make up less than one percent of the county's population, they were reported to represent nearly one third of all COVID-19 cases in the county<sup>iii</sup>. Similarly, in Northwest Arkansas, Marshallese, who made up between 1.5 to 3 percent of the total population of Benton and Washington counties, accounted for 19 percent of all COVID-19 cases and 38 percent of the reported deaths<sup>iv</sup>.



*Springdale Arkansas Cemetery where nearly 50 Marshallese have been interred who passed away from COVID-19 and related complications.*

*Photo: Marshall Islands Journal/Albious Latior*



Pacific Islander organizations such as the Marshall Islands COVID-19 Task Force and other local church and community volunteers throughout the United States have mobilized to help their respective communities and the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) has been pleased to provide some CARES Act funding in support of certain not-for-profit organizations working to bridge the gap for these Pacific Islander communities:



*Workers from the Marshallese Educational Initiative carry food deliveries at the Marshall Islands Consulate in Springdale, Arkansas.*

*Photo: Slate.com*

- In [February 2021](#), We are Oceania, a non-profit organization in Hawai'i with cultural and linguistic expertise, was awarded \$1,033,100 in CARES Act funding to help Pacific Islander communities in Hawai'i. Funds will help train and provide specialists fluent in target Pacific Islander languages to answer and respond to queries about the pandemic, manage food drive efforts, deliver PPE, and provide cleaning supplies.

Listen to Josie Howard, We are Oceania Program Director tell the story about their efforts to support Pacific Islander communities in Hawai'i in an [OIA Conversation on YouTube!](#)

- In [August 2020](#), the Marshallese Educational Initiative (MEI) in Springdale, Arkansas was awarded \$207,076 to support Marshallese in Springdale Arkansas. The funds will support the Marshallese Resource and Educational Center in outreach and awareness efforts related to COVID-19 and other related services.
- In [May 2020](#), Mañelu's Micronesia Resource Center One Stop Shop (MRCOSS) on Guam received \$151,550 to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information, assistance, and workshops during and after the pandemic to communities on Guam. Mañelu's MRCOSS is focused on keeping Micronesian families on Guam informed, aware, and safe during the pandemic. MRCOSS is also providing job training in order to help those who have lost employment due to COVID-19, to successfully re-enter the workforce.

The OIA has been pleased to be able to support Pacific Islander communities where the needs are great. In [February 2021](#), OIA announced that a limited amount of CARES Act funding remains available to prepare for, prevent, and respond to COVID-19. OIA invites island governments and organizations, in particular those serving insular area and Pacific Islander communities dealing with COVID-19, to submit an application for funding through OIA. For more information on how to apply for these CARES Act grant funds, please visit: <https://www.doi.gov/oia/financial-assistance>.

*By Tanya Harris Joshua, OIA Communications Lead, Office of Insular Affairs, [tanya\\_joshua@ios.doi.gov](mailto:tanya_joshua@ios.doi.gov).*

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<sup>i</sup> Data from the Hawai'i State Health Department, reported by the [Honolulu Civil Beat in November 2020](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Data Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services, reported by the [Pacific News Center in December 2020](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Data from the Spokane Regional Health District reported by the [Spokesman-Review in June 2020](#).

<sup>iv</sup> COVID-19 Disparities Among Marshallese Pacific Islanders, Essay, Volume 18, January 7, 2021, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

# *What keeps us going*

“ There have been a number of things keeping me sane: Netflix, lots of baking, yoga...but what has really sustained me has been going on hikes. Being out in nature has been wonderful for exercise, getting out of the neighborhood, and close observation of nature and learning lessons about resiliency from the environment.

**- Janet A. Cushing, U.S. Geological Survey**

“ My 88-year-old mother keeps me going.



Meet Momma J. My momma, my mentor, my best friend, and yes, my dependent. It's been a challenge in Covid-ville keeping her safe and keeping her vibrant. We pick once a weekly outing to stimulate her, get her out of the house and moving. I say that it is for her, but it is for me, too.

It's all about strategy - the time of day (when no one else is out), the place (accessible to disabled), a place for fun conversation over a bottle of Chardonnay. You cannot get this time back - so make it happen and make it fun.

Example: Who can get the bra off faster? Who had the longest call today? Who had the best nap (she did); What was that Hallmark movie and how many times have you already seen it? (now, I know I am connecting with a few of you).

No matter what - cook. it keeps me going to 'create a good meal' and it keeps momma going to have a routine.

**- Pamela A. Mathis, Bureau of Land Management**

# Member resources

## What we're watching

[Giri/Haji](#):  
British crime thriller show  
on Netflix

[AuREUS System  
Technology](#):  
2020 sustainability winner

## What we're listening to

[All Things Considered](#):  
the Brooklyn librarian who  
became a star

[Studio Ghibli soundtracks](#):  
great listen while working

[Moana soundtrack](#):  
great listen for boosting mood

## Diversity, equity, and inclusion

[Revocation of  
Executive Order 13950](#)

[STOP  
AAPI HATE](#)

[Readout of the White House's Listening Session on  
Rising Hate Crimes and Incidents Against Asian  
American Communities](#)

[Judiciary Hearing on Discrimination and Violence  
Against Asian Americans](#)

## Other

[Employee Assistance Program](#)

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