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Executive Leadership Development Program Launches 2021 Cohort with 40 Public Servants from the U.S. Virgin Islands and Pacific

Business / **Published On October 18, 2020 08:15 AM /**

Staff Consortium **October 18, 2020**

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The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) Director, Nikolao Pula, welcomed forty new participants of the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) for the Pacific and Caribbean insular areas last week by video teleconference. The 2021 Cohort is comprised of mid-level management public servants from American Samoa (4), Guam (4), the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (6), the U.S. Virgin Islands (9), the Federated States of Micronesia (7), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (4), the Republic of Palau (6).

"On behalf of the Office of Insular Affairs and the Department of the Interior, I'd like to welcome each of you," said Mr. Pula to the incoming ELDP cohort. "Each of you are leaders in your respective governments and come with impressive backgrounds of formal education and work

experience. I am pleased that you have all accepted the invitation to join this program and encourage you to take advantage of all that the program and each of you have to offer each other. I promise you will learn and grow.”

“The United States strives to encourage strong leadership skills among public sector officials in all of the insular areas,” said U.S. Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, Douglas W. Domenech. “Through the ELDP, we endeavor to build upon the competence of young professionals to help them grow and give them the tools they need to succeed as future leaders in the U.S. territories and in the freely associated states.”

According to the release, competitively selected from a pool of over one hundred applicants, the members of the 2021 Cohort demonstrated steady career growth with increased levels of responsibility, as well as an expressed commitment to public service. They work primarily in finance and budget, education, health, commerce, and the environment sector.

The ELDP was developed in response to growing concerns expressed by insular area leaders about a lack of continuity and capacity for public sector management in the insular areas, the release said. The ELDP provides mid-level public servants with opportunities for self-improvement and helps to retain and strengthen qualified individuals in core government functions.

The ELDP now counts 149 alumni in the insular areas who represent an extraordinary group of young island leaders with diverse professional backgrounds and an enduring commitment to public service. They continue today as dedicated public servants, found in nearly every branch and agency of each insular area government, with some serving as elected representatives, ambassadors, judges, cabinet members, and directors.

The U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs provides funding support for the ELDP, which is administered by the Graduate School USA’s Pacific & Virgin Islands Training Initiatives (PITI-VITI). First implemented in 2008, the ELDP serves as the premier leadership development program for government employees throughout the U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands and in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The U.S. Virgin Islands ELDP participants who already began their program in September will join virtual training with U.S. federal employees through the Executive Leadership Program managed by the Graduate School USA’s Center for Leadership and Management. The Pacific Island participants are scheduled to meet virtually over the next year. Additional information on each participant as well as detailed program information is available online at <http://eldp.pitiviti.org>.