



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COVID Task Force**

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FINANCING FUTURE FLIGHTS and COST SHARE

Pago Pago, AS -- The American Samoa Government paid the cost for the first Repatriation Test Flight. We are very grateful to the US Department of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs for the grant to help with repatriation and we look forward to receiving those funds. Although CARES Act funding is available and the U.S. Department of Interior is providing \$1.6 million, it is not enough to sustain several months of repatriation flights. The DOI funding provides \$300,000 for the flights for only 3 months. The plan has always been for all passengers to pay the cost share and we are now ready to implement that part of the repatriation flights. Passengers from the first test flight will receive an invoice for the cost share. Passengers for future flights must pay the cost share in order to be confirmed on the flight and to enter the quarantine facility in Honolulu in preparation for the return flight to American Samoa.

GAR Lt. Governor Talauega explained, "For this first flight, we made a decision to focus on COVID testing, quarantine, logistics and coordination of the flight and tabled the issue of passengers paying for the flight until we could complete this first test flight. Now that we have more information, we must address the long-term financial sustainability of future flights and quarantine requirements. Our government is willing to do the repatriation flights because it is the right thing to do to bring our residents home. Even with the assistance from other sources, our government cannot financially sustain this initiative to bring all our residents home, we need everyone's help. For now, ASG must cover the quarantine facilities and meals both in Honolulu and at Tradewinds. We need our passengers to help by paying their cost share of the flight."

For the upcoming repatriation flights, all stranded residents must provide proof of their roundtrip tickets to and from American Samoa to Honolulu during the closed borders policy. All passengers must pay the cost share of the flight but only from Honolulu to Pago. All others who cannot show proof of a R/T ticket will be downgraded for seats on a later flight and must pay the full cost share. This is the only way we can support repatriation for our people. Once repatriation of our people is completed, we will suspend flights while we work with Hawaiian Airlines to plan for regular flights depending on the COVID situation.

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REFUNDS FROM HAWAIIAN AIRLINES

Thanks to the support of Hawaiian Airlines, travelers from American Samoa who were stranded in the U.S. due to the territory's closed border policy. They may request a refund of their unused tickets on Hawaiian Airlines—to and from American Samoa. Because American Samoa's borders remain closed, there is a special refund code for Hawaiian Airlines assigned to passenger refund requests from stranded American Samoa residents. If you are unable to request a refund online, travelers wanting a refund can go to the HA office in Honolulu or in Pago Pago to process their refund requests. Although voluntary, we encourage people who are holding HA tickets to request refunds to apply towards any cost share of the repatriation flights. Given the uncertainty of the containment of the COVID-19 virus in the U.S., it remains unknown when American Samoa's borders will reopen to regular commercial flights.