

# OIA FAX



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COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240



Deputy Assistant Secretary

June 1, 2007

Helaine M. Barnett, Esq.  
President, Legal Services Corporation  
3333 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007

Dear Ms. Barnett:

The Compacts of Free Association between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Marshall Islands, Public Law 99-239 (Jan. 14, 1986; 99 Stat. 1770), and as amended, Public Law 108-188 (Dec. 17, 2003; 117 Stat. 2720), and between the United States and Palau, Public Law 99-658 (Nov. 14, 1986; 100 Stat. 3672), provide that the services offered by certain Federal agencies and programs, including the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), are available to the FSM, the Marshall Islands, and Palau. Pursuant to these Federal statutes, LSC funds the Micronesian Legal Services Corporation, a program which provides FAS citizens free legal assistance throughout the FAS. There are, however, FAS citizens lawfully resident in the United States whom LSC prior to 1996 deemed eligible to receive in this country legal aid through LSC-funded programs but whom LSC has treated as ineligible since then.

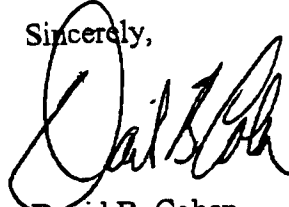
The Department of the Interior has the responsibility to administer and to oversee Federal assistance provided to the FAS under the Compacts of Free Association. The Office of Insular Affairs executes these responsibilities on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior. I oversee the Office of Insular Affairs. Also, I chair:

- the U.S.-FSM Joint Economic Management Committee and the U.S.-Marshall Islands Joint Economic Management and Financial Accountability Committee, which allocate and control Federal financial assistance to FSM and the Marshall Islands, respectively, under the Compacts of Free Association, and
- the committees that oversee and manage the Compact of Free Association trust funds for FSM and the Marshall Islands, respectively

From my position of oversight and responsibility, I can assure you that it is consistent with Federal policy under the Compacts and the public laws enumerated above to allow FAS citizens lawfully resident in the United States to receive LSC services. The Congress provided in the Compact related legislation for LSC coverage to the FSM, the Marshall Islands and Palau. We are not aware of any intention to permit the extension of LSC benefits to FAS citizens in the FAS but to prevent the extension of those benefits to FAS citizens during their lawful residence in the United States.

With the greatest respect I encourage LSC to extend eligibility to FAS citizens lawfully resident in the United States for LSC-funded legal aid services. Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



David B. Cohen

cc: Victor M. Fortuno, Esq.  
Vice President for Legal Affairs, General Counsel  
and Corporate Secretary  
Legal Services Corporation

Mattie Cohan, Esq.  
Senior Assistant General Counsel  
Legal Services Corporation