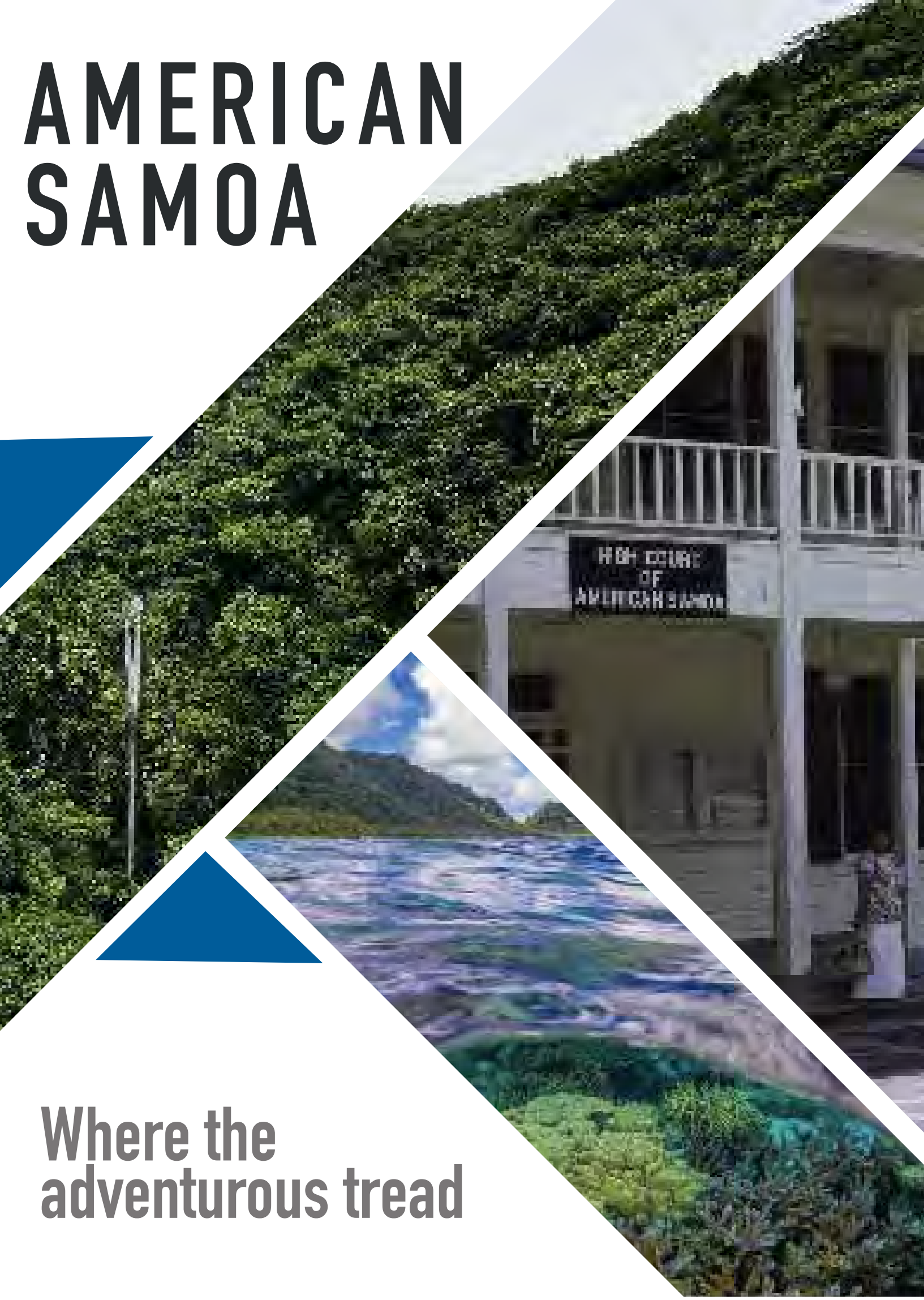


AMERICAN SAMOA



Where the
adventurous tread



“A Message from the Honorable Talauega E. V. Ale, Lieutenant Governor.”

As the only U.S. Territory south of the equator, American Samoa is an exciting place to practice law that will serve as an exceptional foundation to an empowering and satisfying legal career or an enriching addition to a storied legal career. A wide range of opportunities abound not only in public service but in the private sector as well.

As an Assistant Attorney General or an Assistant Public Defender, you will gain valuable litigation experience in a short amount of time. Positions are also available as a Judicial Law Clerk in the High Court of American Samoa as well as the Office of the Legal Counsel to the Governor where novel legal issues are more a rule than an exception. Expansion at the Office of the Administrative Law Judge and establishment of the Office of the Secretary of American Samoa sees a further need for exceptional legal talent.

In the private sector, business is booming and is so robust that private practitioners are turning away clients.

So, no matter where you go, be it with the government sector or the private sector, you will play an important role right at the outset.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Moving to a tropical island in the middle of the Pacific is not for the faint of heart and candidates with an adventurous spirit are encouraged to apply. A very traditional way of life is the norm but with a touch of Americana.

Local hiking trails are bountiful with stunningly beautiful scenery throughout and water recreation activities abound. Spend an evening at the world famous “Tisa’s Barefoot Bar” after a hard day’s work with cold brews and a traditional “umu.” Charter a day trip on board the “MV Deep Calling” for game fishing or scuba dive at the “Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary.” A quick flight East to experience and explore the lush and unspoiled beauty of the Manu’a islands with its sparkling white beaches, crystal clear waters, and warm, welcoming locals is a highly rewarding adventure.

A short flight West to Samoa and swim the pristine waters of “Palolo Deep National Marine Reserve” or relax at the “Saletoga Beach Bungalows & Hotel” within the hour. Or from there, you can visit other exotic locations such as Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia.

In American Samoa, you will have a well-balanced and challenging career with the opportunity to make an impact almost immediately while having easy access to a wide range of local outdoor activities, immersion in an ancient yet thriving culture, and exotic vacationing opportunities that are a hop, skip and a jump away.

Soifua.

High Court of American Samoa

As an “unincorporated” territory, not all provisions of the U.S. Constitution apply which makes the practice of law in American Samoa quite unique. Geographically speaking, the closest U.S. District Court is in Hawaii, however, the U.S. District Court in Washington D.C. also has jurisdiction by virtue of the fact that American Samoa is administered by the U.S. Department of Interior. The High Court of American Samoa is the sole court in American Samoa consisting of a Chief Justice and an Associate Justice, both of whom are appointed by the United States Secretary of Interior.



The High Court consists of four distinct divisions, The Trial Division, the Lands & Titles Division, the Appellate Division, and the Family Drug & Alcohol Division. The rest of the judiciary consists of a local District Court, and village courts. Although not technically a federal court, it exercises limited jurisdiction over traditionally federal matters such as admiralty/maritime matters. The High Court building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was built in 1900. It is a picturesque building that maintains its original and distinct Southern Plantation style and has withstood two World Wars, a multitude of hurricanes, thousands of inches of torrential rainfall and a devastating Tsunami.



Life in American Samoa



American Samoa is a well balanced blend of traditional living with a heavy influence of American music, food, and traditions. Located some 2500 miles from Honolulu, Hawaii, it is a group of six islands and is the only U.S. territory in the southern hemisphere. Tutuila is the main island and is the central hub of the island group.

With a culture stretching back 3000 years, the Samoan culture is a communal way of life and is actively “lived” throughout the islands. The sense of community is quite prominent and people are welcoming and sociable. Do not be surprised if you are invited to join a local family for a barbeque, a game of volleyball, a few cold ones, or even dinner. Small wonder that famous Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson spent the last few years of his life amongst the Samoan people.



Although very traditional, most locals are bilingual, speaking fluent Samoan and English with a prominent influence of American food, music, and traditions. American sports, particularly the National Football League and the National Basketball Association, are extremely popular on island but international rugby and soccer is quickly gaining in popularity as well.





CULTURE





Meet David

“...if you have a family, you will appreciate the **WORK-LIFE BALANCE** that working in American Samoa provides.”

David Wiesner

Brooklyn Law School Brooklyn, NY '17

L.L.M Securities & Financial Regulations, Georgetown University Law Center 2020

Judicial Law Clerk, High Court of American Samoa

Senior Legal Consultant, Office of the Secretary of American Samoa

During law school, I sought as much experience in financial services law as I could. After law school I was hired as an associate attorney at an insurance defense litigation firm in Manhattan where I worked for almost two years. The training was excellent and opened many doors for me. As someone interested in legal history, the great judges in history always fascinated me and I naturally wanted to clerk. In the legal world, you are rarely going to land the role that was your first choice. I applied for the clerkship at the High Court of American Samoa twice before getting hired. While the legal system in American Samoa is essentially the same as the rest of the United States, there are a few novel legal issues you get to work on in American Samoa, such as communal land and matai title law. Additionally, only certain parts of the U.S. Constitution are applicable here. American Samoa is a great place to work if you enjoy the outdoors. If you are adventurous, or like hiking, snorkeling, fishing, or surfing, all of those opportunities are available if you look hard enough and have the right attitude. Also, if you have a family, you will appreciate the work-life balance that working in American Samoa provides. This is a very family friendly place.

Meet Kristi

“The Samoan Culture has reinforced in me **Humility** and **Hospitality** are fundamental to **everyday life**”



Kristi Thaxton

Georgia State University College of Law, '97

Associate Legal Counsel to the Governor of American Samoa

When I came to American Samoa in June 2021, I was looking for a change, and I have not been disappointed. American Samoa has a fascinating history and unique political status that make my work as Governor’s Legal Counsel interesting and challenging. I have the opportunity to work on legal issues at a level of government that I had not experienced before. Along with the generally pleasant tropical climate come the challenges of insects and building and road maintenance, but the scenery and recreational opportunities countervail. Outside work, I enjoy unparalleled hiking, snorkeling and birdwatching. Cultural events featuring traditional music, dancing, arts and cuisine are always special treats. I appreciate the social norms featuring mutual generosity, respect, and faith. I enjoy the opportunity to learn a new language and the convenience of the local populace having excellent command of English. Attorneys seeking a shift from driving consumerism to a more equitable work-life balance or wanting to experience a significant change of setting without completely detaching from the U.S. can find that in American Samoa.

Meet Jason

“Few places will give an attorney
MORE RESPONSIBILITY EARLY ON
and the opportunity to explore
multiple areas of the law.”



Jason Mitchell

JD, Atlanta's John Marshall Law School '14

Chief Legal Counsel to the Governor 2021-Present

*Assistant Attorney General (Civil Division) and Director of the Bureau of
Consumer protection 2019-2020*

Assistant Attorney General (Criminal Division) 2018-2019

American Samoa has presented me with an unparalleled opportunity to practice law. I have worked in novel areas of the law that I never would have considered before coming here. My family and I came to American Samoa to experience something different than life in the suburbs. We have not regretted it. I was hired as a prosecutor. I enjoyed the challenges of working in a fast-paced environment and gained experience with bench and jury trials. There are challenges. Many of the victims and defendants have limited English proficiency. Jury trials are all bilingual, and I had to adapt my arguments to accommodate translation. It made my arguments more pointed and effective. The Attorney General's Office is relatively small, and I took the opportunity to switch to the civil division. There I worked as the general counsel for a variety of agencies, including the Department of Health. I worked with the medical professionals here and in other Pacific island nations. I discovered a passion for it just as the world entered the COVID pandemic. When the Lemanu administration came into office, I was asked to join as the Chief Legal Counsel. The work in the governor's office continually presents new issues in areas of the law that are novel. The nature of American Samoa creates a unique legal environment. The territory is the size of a small county, so the American Samoa Government carries out all of the functions that one would normally expect of a state and local government in addition to maintaining its own customs and immigration laws. Few places will give an attorney more responsibility early on and the opportunity to explore multiple areas of the law.

Meet Julia

“Work on a wide variety of challenging and
exciting legal issues in the office while
enjoying the **BEAUTIFUL BEACHES AND LUSH
TROPICAL RAINFORESTS** outside of the office”



Julia Furlong

JD, University of Texas School of Law '15

Assistant Attorney General - Civil Division Chief, Office of the Attorney General 2020-22

It has been a privilege to work at the Office of the Attorney General, and I am grateful to my colleagues and friends here for a truly exceptional experience. American Samoa, with its unique status as an unincorporated, unorganized territory of the United States, is a fascinating place to practice law. My contract with the Office of the Attorney General offered the opportunity to work on a wide variety of challenging and exciting legal issues in the office while enjoying the beautiful beaches and lush tropical rainforests outside of the office. Even though my relocation here involved moving from a large city more than 7,000 miles away to a much smaller village with rich cultural traditions that were new to me, the friendly local community helped ensure adjusting to island life was a breeze. I will always consider American Samoa a home away from home.



Work with us:

ASG accepts applications on a rolling basis for the following positions.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

- Assistant Attorney General: Civil Division
- Assistant Attorney General: Criminal Division
- Public Defender
- Assistant Public Defender
- Counsel to the Governor
- Assistant Administrative Law Judge
- (Other opening for attorney's and full position descriptions with instructions for applying may be found at: www.americansamoa.gov/jobs)

JUDICIARY

- Law Clerk
- Staff Attorney
- (Other opening for attorney's and full position descriptions with instructions for applying may be found at: www.americansamoa.gov/jobs)

LEGISLATURE

- Senate Legal Counsel
- House Legal Counsel
- (Other opening for attorney's and full position descriptions with instructions for applying may be found at: www.americansamoa.gov/jobs)





Minimum Qualifications & Compensation Package

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

- A Juris Doctor Degree from an ABA accredited law school
- Member in good standing of any US State or Territory
- Must have excellent legal writing and advocacy skills. A writing sample will be required upon application
- Experience demonstrating the ability to make analytical and reasoned judgments on issues of public sensibility
- Ability to develop a team approach to problem solving
- Must be able to provide three professional recommendations from licensed attorneys

COMPENSATION PACKAGE FOR EXECUTIVE BRANCH ONLY

Starting pay:

- \$65,000 annually for attorneys with less than three years of experience
- \$75,000 annually for attorneys with three or more years of experience
- \$80,000 annually for supervisory level attorney's
- \$85,000 annually for Deputy Attorney General and the Public Defender

Benefits

- Government provided housing or \$1000 per month housing allowance
- Eligible for Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness program
- Health Insurance
- Salary step increase annually
- Utility allowance of \$500 per month
- Eligible for John R. Justice Formula Grant funds for repayment of student loans