Because American Samoa is a territory of the United States of America, our Dietitians are members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (the AND). The AND strives to improve the nation's health and advance the profession of dietetics through research, education, and advocacy. The organization accomplishes this through many dimensions including:

1. Providing Reliable and Evidence-Based Nutrition Information for the Public
2. Accrediting Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
3. Credentialing Dietetics Professionals
4. Advocating for Public Policy
5. Publishing a peer-reviewed periodical: Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
6. Giving Back: The AND Foundation

All Registered Dietitians practicing in American Samoa are required to have received their credentials from the Commission on Dietetics Registration, a credentialing agency that awards credentials to individuals at entry and specialty levels who have met CDR’s standards for competency to practice in the dietetics profession, including successful completion of its national certification examination and recertification by continuing professional education or examination.

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**Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Phone: 800-877-1600
312-899-0040
Web: [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

**Commission on Dietetic Registration**
Credentialing Agency for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Phone: 800-877-1600 ext 5500
312-899-4772
Web: [www.cdrnet.org](http://www.cdrnet.org)

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**Additional Resources:**

**LBJ Tropical Medical Center**
PO Box LBJ
Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799
Phone: 684-633-1222
  Ext. 230-Nutrition Care Services Department Head
  Ianeta AhPing, RD
  Ext. 233-Clinical Dietitian-Lisa Littrell, RD
  Ext. 376-Diabetes Education-Loata Sipili, RN, CDE
  Ext. 302-Dialysis Head Nurse-Olita Tafiti, RN
Web: [www.asmca.org](http://www.asmca.org)

**Department of Education**
School Lunch Program
PO Box DOE
Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799
Phone: 684-633-5237
Web: [www.doe.as](http://www.doe.as)

**Woman, Infants, and Children**
American Samoa WIC Program
Department of Human and Social Services
American Samoa Government
Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799
Phone: 684-633-2614
To be a Registered Dietitian in American Samoa, one must meet the requirements as described by the Commission on Dietetics Registration and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The professional role of a Registered Dietitian includes clinical, public health, food service, research, and teaching opportunities. Registered Dietitians are regarded as nutrition experts and are eagerly welcomed into the workforce. Because the role of a Dietitian is relatively new to most of the population, although they may know you are an expert in nutrition your actual role to play in healthcare may not be fully understood in the beginning.

The American Samoa territory has only one medical center located on Tutuila, the largest island in the chain. Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center is a semi-autonomous, 128-bed general acute care hospital and offers in-patient and out-patient services for medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, ear, nose, and throat, eye, pediatrics, and renal dialysis. LBJ is the only medical facility on the island that provides clinical laboratory, diagnostic imaging, and pharmacy services. There are several health clinics in the outlying villages under the Department of Health that provide basic non-emergency healthcare needs. Currently there are no private practices providing healthcare. Health Insurance is available through Medicare and Medicaid services, the U.S. Military, private parties, and some employers.

Current opportunities for Registered Dietitians are endless. The presence of Registered Dietitians in American Samoa is relatively new and therefore people (and employers) are ready and eager to utilize the expertise of a Dietitian, although, some education as to what a Dietitian's role is may still be necessary. Currently there are Dietitians employed at the hospital and with the WIC office. However there are many other agencies currently looking to hire Registered Dietitians, such as the Department of Public Health, Department of Education, and the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) Land Grant program. There are also many opportunities for Registered Dietitians, and other health professionals, to conduct research studies here as well. Many graduate students, and other researchers, will come for a few months at a time to conduct their research ranging from obesity trends, diabetes interventions, and pregnancy outcomes to name a few. Most agencies on the island are willing to work with those professionals who are interested in conducting research. Private practice for the Registered Dietitian is definitely a possibility although it has not yet come to pass as there are no Registered Dietitians currently practicing in a private setting.

The American Samoa Community College offers various 2-year degrees and certificates, but any education beyond this level must be completed at an off-island campus or through an online course.
How to Obtain a Work Permit

Those with U.S. citizenship or those born in American Samoa (U.S. Nationals) do not require a work permit. All others must obtain a work permit/visa according American Samoa’s labor and immigration laws. The American Samoa Immigration Office can be contacted at 1-684-633-4204.

Local Food Customs and Culture

The Fa'a Samoa, or traditional Samoan way, is deeply rooted in the Samoan people from birth and affects all daily activities. The two priorities in a Samoan's life are: family and God. Respect for and obedience to the elders in the family is highly valued, as is respect for and obedience to your Mata'i (chief) and the minister of your family church. Traditional Samoan lifestyle is communal, often times with multiple generations living in one household. Traditional Samoan homes, Fale's, are open with no walls, using blinds made of coconut palm branches during the night or during bad weather. Another example of Samoan communal life is the Fa'aluavelave, or funeral gathering, in which all families and community members connected to the deceased are required to donate money, food, fine mats, and other necessities for the funeral ceremonies in amounts determined by the family leaders.

All major life events are celebrated with a feast, like the Fa'aluavelave for example, and every Sunday families participate in To'onai. To'onai is a large family meal eaten on Sundays after church, and it is often the only meal of the day. The family, usually the men, wake up in the early morning to prepare the Umu before church. The Umu is an outdoor cooking method where foods wanting to be cooked are placed on red hot lava rocks, covered with banana tree fronds, and left for several hours to cook. The traditional Samoan diet consists of breadfruit, taro, and green banana for starch. Protein usually comes from fish (usually raw, Oka), sea cucumber, clams, crabs, lobster, and other seafood, along with the occasional chicken and pork. Traditional Samoan's also hunted the local bird and bat population as well. Vegetables include local greens like baby taro leaves (comparable to spinach) cooked in soups or in coconut milk like in the popular dish Palusami. The Samoan diet also consists of many tropical fruits like papaya, guava, ripe banana, mango, pineapple, and other lesser-known fruits unique to Samoa.

The coconut tree is a vital piece of the Samoan life. The palms are used for building and decoration, coconut water is used to hydrate on a hot day, coconut milk is used in cooking sauces and soups, coconut oil is used in cooking, cosmetics, and traditional Samoan medicine (Fofo), and the coconut shell is often used as a bowl, particularly when cooking fish with coconut cream on the Umu. Traditional Samoan lifestyle is very labor intensive as gathering and preparing all of these foods required hard work from sun-up to sun-down.

Due to the influences of the western world the Samoan diet has changed. More emphasis is placed on high fat meats like lamb flap, lamb neck, "turkey tail" (left over fatty pieces of the turkey), fried chicken, and beef. There is also a very high consumption of processed meats like spam, corned beef, and hotdogs. Traditional starches have been traded in for packaged instant noodles and white rice, and the children run around with snack foods and sodas in hand. It is believed that these dietary changes as well as the trend towards a more sedentary lifestyle have contributed to the islands current obesity problem, and other diseases such as heart disease and diabetes that are often associated with obesity.

CE Opportunities

There are currently no local opportunities to earn CEUs. However, CE opportunities are provided through the AODA newsletter, the AODA Conference, the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, and other online or distance education courses.
AODA Volunteer Opportunities

Opportunities to assist AODA with your time are probably endless. Through the website you can find out where your skills and interest would be of most benefit both to you and to the AODA. For more information on nutrition-related issues in American Samoa, please contact Lisa Littrell, RD the AODA Country Representative for American Samoa at the following address:

Lisa Littrell  
PO Box 1704  
Pago Pago, American Samoa  
96799

Office Phone: 684-633-1222 ext. 233  
Cell Phone: 684-256-1323

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