



Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

Compacts Fact Sheet

The Compacts of Free Association have the force of international treaties and regulate relations between the U.S. and the Freely Associated States (FAS). The FAS consist of the Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. Each of the FAS has signed a separate Compact Agreement; however, the elements listed below are common to all three.

Access to the United States

Citizens of the FAS are free to enter, work, and establish permanent residence in the U.S. and its territories.

In terms of living and working in the U.S., the Compact indicates that citizens of the FAS are to be treated the same as permanent resident aliens. An Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) regulation requires FAS citizens to obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Application and issuance of the EAD can be completed in several hours at the closest INS office.

FAS citizens do not qualify for U.S. citizenship on the basis of having established permanent residence.

The free-entry into the U.S. does not fulfill the residency requirements necessary for naturalization. In other words, FAS citizens are not eligible to become U.S. citizens because they have moved here, but they can stay for as long as they want to.

FAS citizens have the same legal standing in the U.S. as non-resident aliens.

The Compact is not as generous to FAS citizens in other legal matters as it is in terms of housing and employment. Unlike a resident alien (Green Card holder), an FAS citizen can be deported. Children, however, are eligible to receive public education.

FAS citizens cannot be drafted into the U.S. military but are eligible to enlist.

For many FAS citizens the military has been an effective "career ladder" in terms of job training and tuition assistance. School counselors should provide information to FAS students about opportunities within the U.S. Armed Services.

Economic Benefits to the FAS

- The FAS receives financial aid from the U.S.
- The U.S. dollar is the official currency in the FAS.
- Trade between the FAS and the U.S. is considered the same as between the U.S. and its insular possessions.
- The FAS is eligible for U.S. grant programs, subject to U.S. legislation.

And in Return...

The U.S. maintains defense responsibilities and can deny any third country's military from entering the FAS.

Also, while agreeing not to do further nuclear testing, the U.S. retains the use of Kwajalein Atoll in the Republic of the Marshall Islands as an intercontinental-range missile testing site. In effect, the entire North Central Pacific Ocean becomes a buffer zone for the U.S. The boundaries of the FAS become the U.S. defense perimeter.



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900 Fort Street Mall, Suite 1300, Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone: (808) 441-1300 ▪ Fax: (808) 441-1385

Email: askprel@prel.org ▪ Website: www.prel.org