

**2017**


State Rehabilitation Council

&

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

**Annual Report**





**“ Severity of one’s  
disability does not  
determine their level  
of potential. The  
greatest barriers that  
persons with disabilities  
have to overcome are  
not steps or curbs, it’s  
expectations.”**

**Karen Clay**



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*"Believe in YOURSELF and all that you are. Know that there is something inside you that is GREATER than any obstacle."*

*Christian Larson*

*This Annual Report is Dedicated to our "Youth"*

*"The greatest success we'll know is helping others succeed and grow."*

*Gregory Scott Reid*



**Monika Hofschneider Diaz**

Bachelor's Degree in Human Development and Family Sciences - June 2017  
Oregon State University

"I would like to further my education for my Master's."

My advice: "Even though the journey is long, we can make it and will succeed."

**Angelray Guerrero**

Associate of Arts Degree - May 2016  
Northern Marianas College

"I am currently in the Bachelor's Program for Business Management and I'm scheduled to transfer to Business with an emphasis in IT next spring when it is officially available."

My advice: "Even though the journey is long, we can make it and will succeed."



**Jordan Reyes Agulto**

Associate of Science Degree - May 2016  
Field of study: Criminal Justice  
Northern Marianas College

"I plan to continue with my education if I'm not successful landing in a job."

My advice: "Accept who you are and believe in yourself that you can achieve more."





My name is Efren Echderdei (eh-der-day) Sablan Nicholas and I was born with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). At a young age, I learned of the importance of an education and that I had to work hard and to try my best in everything I did. As a result and with the critical help of the CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), I graduated, with honors, with an Associate's Degree in Computer Applications in May 2014 and then with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management on May 20, 2017.

I was able to attain this level of success in education because of hard work and the great support system I had throughout my life. I grew up with my parents and three older brothers who were always there and ready to help me to overcome my obstacles. I also had teachers, friends, and organizations that helped me significantly. In my early years, the PSS Early Childhood program provided me with a variety of services to help me overcome a range of developmental delays, including speech and language services.

There were difficulties growing up with a developmental disability, with my hyper-alertness and lack of social skills, but in time and with the help of my family and self-acceptance, I graduated from Mount Carmel High School in May of 2011. I continued my education at the Northern Marianas College, with excellent support from the staff and leadership of OVR. OVR's assistance was critical in my college success. They assisted me by paying for all of my tuition and fees, textbooks, the necessary equipment and even school supplies that I needed to complete my education. OVR's help provided me with the access I needed to complete my education with honors – first, as a Magna Cum Laude (cumulative GPA between 3.8 to 3.9) honors distinction in obtaining my Associate's Degree in Computer Applications on May 24, 2014, then as a Cum Laude (cumulative GPA between 3.5 to 3.7) graduate for my Bachelor's Degree in May 2017.

Now I want to be an entrepreneur. I am currently planning a business in t-shirt designs with the focus on the beauty of the islands. I am also taking a break from advancing my education until I gain sufficient experience for acceptance into a Master's Degree program, which I hope to pursue through NMC and again with the critical support of OVR.

My advice for students with disabilities transitioning from high school to college: Be yourself, work hard, and strive for excellence always. There will be families, friends, and teachers along the way supporting you to reach your goals. There will also be times when you will need help in completing certain tasks. You can rely on the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide you with the critical resources and support you need to reach your dreams – their outstanding staff and leadership are your PARTNERS.

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# MESSAGE

## *From the SRC Chairperson*



On behalf of the members of the State Rehabilitation Council of the CNMI, I am honored to present our 2017 Annual Report. This Report highlights the accomplishments of both the State Rehabilitation Council and the Office Vocational Rehabilitation.

This Report features the stories of CNMI people with disabilities who achieved their employment and/or educational goals through the services and supports provided by the VR program. The types of jobs they achieved represent a diverse range of occupations: Accommodation and Food Services; Administrative & Support Services; Retail Trade; Transportation & Warehousing; Wholesale & Trade; Construction; Educational Services; Health Care & Social Assistance; and Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing & Hunting. This diversity illustrates the significant talents of people with disabilities, talents which can contribute in all sectors of the economy and workplace. This diversity also represents an essential strength of the VR program – the ability to individualize services, empowering people with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment consistent with their skills, abilities and interests.


I hope you will take a few moments to review their stories, as well as the statistical data provided about VR and the summary of the Council's activities. I believe the VR program and its focus on competitive integrated employment are valuable assets for the CNMI and its citizens.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the SRC, staff of OVR and most especially the OVR Director, Ms. Arlene A. Yamagata for all their hard work and assistance during my tenure as SRC chair. It has been a privilege and honor to work with you all. Thank you for the opportunity that you have given me to serve on the Council.

Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year to you all.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth S. Ada



**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
State Rehabilitation Council  
FY 2017 Membership Composition and Representation**

**Elizabeth S. Ada**, *Chairperson*  
Former VR Recipient Representative

**Monika H. Diaz**, *Vice Chairperson*  
Primary Consumer / Advocate - Tinian Representative

**Emeterio Fitial**, *Secretary*  
Statewide Independent Living Council Representative

**Angelray T. Guerrero**, *Fiscal Officer*  
VR Recipient Representative

**Josephine Mesta**  
*Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement  
Committee Chairperson*  
State Workforce Investment Board  
Representative

**Anna Yamada**  
*Transition and Assistive Technology Committee  
Chairperson*  
State Educational Agency Representative

**Roy A. Ada**  
*Employment & Marketing Committee  
Chairperson*  
Community Rehabilitation Service Provider

**Arlene Kay A. Yamagata, M.S., C.R.C.**  
*Ex-Officio Member*  
Director of Designated State Unit Representative

**Jill Arenovski**, *Member*  
Business / Industry / Labor Representative

**Victorino S. Cepeda**  
Business / Industry / Labor Representative

**Lucia S. Manglona**, *Member*  
Advocate / Rota Representative

**Chad Merfalen**, *Member*  
Disability Advocacy Group Representative

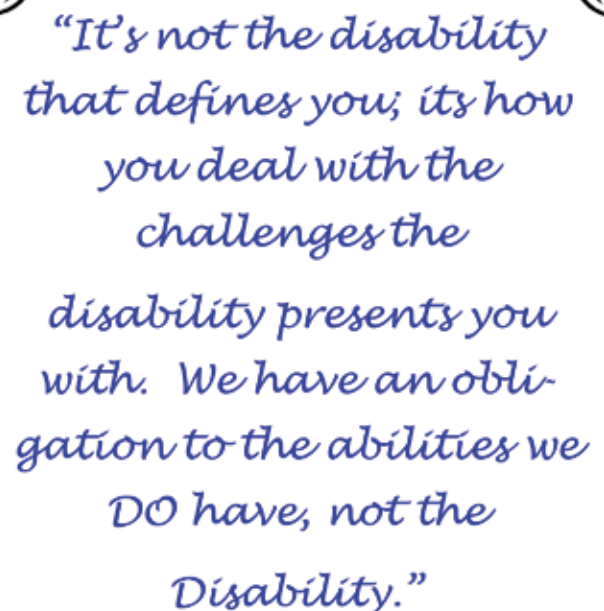
**Ian Morrell**, *Member*  
Business / Industry / Labor Representative

**James Rayphand**, *Member*  
Client Assistance Program Representative

**Jane M. Tudela**, *Member*  
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

**Wilma Villanueva**, *Member*  
Disability Advocacy Group Representative

**Frances A. Torres**, *Member*  
Business / Industry / Labor Representative



*"It's not the disability  
that defines you; it's how  
you deal with the  
challenges the  
disability presents you  
with. We have an obligation  
to the abilities we  
DO have, not the  
Disability."*

*Jim Abbott*

# State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Accomplishments – FY 2017

## Executive Committee Principal Tasks:

- Review nominations for Council membership to ensure composition, membership representation, and term status comply with the Rehab Act provisions prior to submission to the Governor:
  - ◊ *Reviewed/discussed membership and composition during their meeting on October 14, 2016.*
- Identify training needs of Council and enlist the assistance of OVR to arrange for formal and informal training on and off-island:
  - ◊ *Attended the Fall 2016 NCSRC, CSAVR, and NCSAB Conferences in San Diego, California.*
  - ◊ *Attended the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: Capacity Building Institute Conference in Kansas City, Missouri (May 2017).*
- Meet at least once a quarter to set agenda for General Council Meeting:
  - ◊ *Executive Committee met on the following dates to develop the agenda for the Council's General Membership Meetings: December 5, 2016, May 10, 2017, August 8, 2017, and September 12, 2017.*
- Participate in the development of the SRC and OVR Annual Reports:
  - ◊ *Participated in the development of the FY 2016 Annual Report and equally shared in the cost of the printing of 200 reports. The Executive Committee reviewed and approved the FY 2016 Annual Report in the interim during their meeting on December 5, 2016, which was ratified and adopted by the full Council on December 14, 2016.*
- Plan for topics to be covered in the SRC Annual Retreat:
  - ◊ *OVR coordinated and facilitated a training for SRC members on April 18, 2017. Topics covered were: Overview of the Public VR Program, WIOA, Requirements for an SRC, Best Practices in the SRC-VR Partnership, SRC By-Laws, Mission Statements/Samples, and Overview of Disability Rights Laws. Ten (10) members actively participated in the training. At the end of the training, evaluation forms were administered, collected, analyzed, and findings shared with the members. Received mostly positive feedback from the participants. One of the recommendations was to limit the reiteration of information being shared.*
- Develop, in consultation with the SILC Executive Committee, the agenda for the Annual Joint SRC and SILC Meeting:
  - ◊ *SRC and SILC's Joint Executive Committee Meeting was held on September 12, 2017 at the Assistive Technology Center in Capitol Hill. Quorum was established, and a joint agenda was developed.*
- Develop the Resource Plan with the SRC Fiscal Officer and ensure that the resources are allocated in a manner consistent with the Rehab Act:
  - ◊ *Amended and approved in the interim the Resource Plan for FY 2017 on October 14, 2016, which was ratified and adopted by the full Council on December 14, 2016.*
  - ◊ *Amended and approved in the interim the Resource Plan for FY 2017 on March 28, 2017, which was ratified and adopted by the full Council on June 1, 2017.*
  - ◊ *Developed and approved in the interim the Resource Plan for FY 2018 on September 12, 2017, which was ratified and adopted by the full Council on September 22, 2017.*
- Other activities of the Executive Committee:
  - ◊ *Appointed Chairs to the Council's various committees.*
  - ◊ *Attended the Autism Awareness Month Proclamation Signing Ceremony on April 3, 2017.*
  - ◊ *Attended the Transition Coalition meeting to discuss the CIRCLES/Transition Model on April 27, 2017.*
  - ◊ *Attended the Saipan Chamber of Commerce meeting on May 3, 2017.*
  - ◊ *Attended Cancer Awareness Month Proclamation Signing Ceremony on September 14, 2017.*



## Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Committee Principal Tasks:

- Assure that OVR meets evaluation and assessment requirements under the Rehab Act and to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of services delivered to VR consumers:
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on May 31, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Quality Assurance Case Review Form at the time being revised to include the required changes from WIOA and the RSA 911 and (2) Revisions completed to the Determination of Eligibility Form to include RSA 911 revisions.*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on September 20, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Completed revision.*
- Review and analyze OVR customer satisfaction levels, performance of OVR as measured by RSA Standards and Indicators, and participate in RSA Section 107 monitoring reviews:
  - ◇ *QA/QI committee tasked OVR with collecting, compiling, analyzing, and reporting on the findings of the Consumer Satisfaction Surveys for FY 2016 in the SRC and OVR FY 2016 Annual Report.*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on May 31, 2017 included discussions on: (1) No word yet from RSA regarding any upcoming monitoring for CNMI OVR; (2) Data on the Standards and Indicators continues to be collected; and (3) WIOA Common Performance Measures are currently being added to the OVR Tracking System.*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on September 20, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Continues to be collected and reviewed for insertion in the 2017 Annual Report.*
- Provide assistance on the development of staff training (Comprehensive System of Personnel Development):
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on May 31, 2017 included discussions on: (1) OVR continues to provide case staffing to ensure counselors are afforded the opportunity to share best practices and (2) March and April 2017 – Completed WIOA and Pre-ETS training for specific OVR staff.*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on August 9, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Webinar on Career Counseling for Students on June 14, 2017; (2) Creating accessible documents; (3) New Consumer Tracking System; (4) Human and Social Services Seminar; (5) National Council on Independent Living Conference; (6) Supervisory Leadership Training; and (7) Updates and review of 911 CTS.*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on September 20, 2017 included discussions on: (1) On-going staff development.*
- Ensure that employment opportunities are consistent with individual informed choices:
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on May 31, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Currently being included in the Case Review Forms.*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on September 20, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Continues to be monitored through case reviews as well as during case staffing.*
- Monitor CAP complaints and Impartial Hearing process and decisions:
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on May 31, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Continues to be monitored by the Director. None of the cases brought by the CAP required an Impartial Hearing Process.*
- Participate in the planning and conduct of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment:
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on May 31, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Contracts will be processed upon grant allotment for SDSU to complete the triennial CSNA which is due this program year.*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on August 9, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Dr. Chaz Compton of SDSU will be assisting; tentative dates: October 23-25, 2017 for Saipan, October 26, 2017 for Tinian, and October 27, 2017 for Rota.*
  - ◇ *CSNA-related information was disseminated and discussed during the Council's General Membership Meetings on June 1, 2017, August 25, 2017, and September 22, 2017.*
- Provide input into the development and improvement of inter-agency agreements and review the status of the implementation of these agreements
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on May 31, 2017 included discussions on: (1) The MOU with PSS-SPED currently requires updates to include the WIOA requirements and Pre-ETS and (2) MOU is still pending with CGC.*
- Monitor compliance by OVR of submission of required federal reports:
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on September 20, 2017 included discussions on: (1) First 9-month report to be submitted in November 2017.*

- Actively participate in the development or revision of OVR policies, procedures, and data gathering instruments that impact program management and service delivery to consumers:
  - ◊ *Committee meeting on May 31, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Policies and procedures are currently being reviewed for revisions needed based on the new WIOA requirements; (2) Revisions are currently being made to include the new RSA 911 data requirements to various OVR forms; (3) Various OVR forms updated; and (4) New OVR forms developed to include new RSA 911 data requirements and Pre-ETS requirements.*
  - ◊ *Committee meeting on September 20, 2017 included discussions on: (1) The ILOB P&P were revised and completed. A draft of the Transition and Pre-ETS P&P was completed and is still under review.*
- Other activities of the Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Committee:
  - ◊ *Presented and shared consumer success stories to the Saipan Chamber of Commerce during their July 5, 2017 general membership meeting.*

### **Employment and Marketing Committee Principal Tasks:**

- Advocate for employment of qualified individuals with disabilities by working closely with WIA, Employment Services, OPM, and private sector employers:
  - ◊ *Ongoing efforts in this area.*
- Monitor successful placement of consumers:
  - ◊ *Takes place during the SRC general membership meetings.*
- Review technical assistance services that employer may receive from OVR:
  - ◊ *“Services to Employers” brochure disseminated to SRC members.*
- Participate in job fairs and career day activities with OVR:
  - ◊ *Participated in the Northern Marianas College Career Fair on 4/27/17.*
  - ◊ *Participated in the Public School System Co-Op Job Fair on 9/7/17.*
- Explore with OVR marketing opportunities and recommend strategies for placement:
  - ◊ *Recommended that OVR partner with WIA to provide work-based learning experience opportunities for students with disabilities in the summer of 2018. (Update: Discussions between OVR and WIA are ongoing.)*
- Other activities of the Employment and Marketing Committee:
  - ◊ *WIOA Core Programs met on July 27, 2017 at the OVR office and discussed the following: MOU, Reemployment and System Integration Dislocated Worker Grant, Performance Reporting, One-Stop, and Updates on WIOA Implementation.*
  - ◊ *Title I and III of the WIOA Program (Officer-in-Charge is a member of the Employment and Marketing Committee) met with Honorable Governor Ralph DLG. Torres to discuss the CNMI Workforce Development Board. The Board had expired and new names were recommended for the Governor’s consideration/selection.*
  - ◊ *Recommended that OVR consider presenting to the Saipan Chamber of Commerce during their monthly meeting. This was achieved on July 5, 2017 with the OVR director presenting on their programs and services including services to employers as well as the purpose and function of the SRC, and the QA/QI chair (who also happens to be Hyatt’s HR director and SHRM president) presenting on Hyatt’s success stories.*

### **Transition and Assistive Technology Committee Principal Tasks:**

- Provide advice and recommendations to OVR for strategies that ensure that age appropriate students with disabilities are provided transition information and assistance planning in their Special Education IEPs:
  - ◊ *Continues to support the CIRCLES/Transition model in an effort to increase the number of student-led IEPs and improve overall transition outcomes.*

*“Success is not final. Failure is not fatal;  
It is the courage to continue that counts.”*

*Winston Churchill*

- ◇ *Committee update session via email on May 30, 2017 included discussions on: (1) The newly-hired VR Transition Counselor who will be providing pre-employment transition services to students; conducting outreach activities to high school students with disabilities; developing relationships with the high schools; developing a relationship with the Co-Op Education and Training Program to help with job development and placement; developing concurrent IEP/IPE with the students and caseload managers/teachers; and conducting worksite observations and tasks analysis while students are working on-site.*
- *Ensure that appropriate VR transition services are provided to eligible students of age who are ready to exit the School System:*
  - ◇ *Committee update session via email on May 30, 2017 included discussions on: (1) OVR has divided out the transition workload to different counselors to ensure the provision of transition services to the various high schools; (2) Created PPT to be used when presenting Pre-ETS information to transitioning students; (3) Participated in the May 18 & 19 Advocacy and Leadership Training with a presentation to Tinian SPED students and parents on VR, Transition, and Pre-ETS (also included AT Program, WIOA-WIA, and VOICES Tinian Chapter). This IDEA Parent/Student Transitional Summit allowed the respective programs to share successes of collaboration, partnership, and commitment to leverage resources to meet the needs of those served as mandated by WIOA; and (4) Ordered and received training booklets for transition students from DOL-ODEP: "Skills to Pay the Bills."*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on September 20, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Pre-ETS conference planned for the latter part of September 2017; (2) Developed and completed forms to capture RSA 911 data and Pre-ETS requirements; and (3) Drafted and revised for Transition and Pre-ETS.*
  - ◇ *Actively involved in the planning, coordination, and implementation of pre-employment transition services during the Pre-ETS Conference in September 2017 on all 3 islands: Saipan (19-20), Tinian (25-26), and Rota (28-29).*
- *Review Transition Guidelines and monitor the effectiveness of the working relationships between PSS/SPED and NMC:*
  - ◇ *Review Transition Guidelines – ongoing efforts in this area.*
  - ◇ *Committee update session via email on May 30, 2017 included discussions on: (1) the committee's hopefulness that OVR will be able to continue building a positive relationship with the SPED program to continue providing advocacy and training sessions to high school students and to continue participating in the CIRCLES/Transition planning activities.*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on September 20, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Continue to build positive relationship with the Northern Marianas College.*
- *Assist eligible consumers obtain needed Assistive Technology services and devices to help them achieve their employment, educational and independent living goals:*
  - ◇ *Committee meeting on September 20, 2017 included discussions on: (1) Seating and Wheeled Mobility Services Training Workshop held September 7-8, 2017 and sponsored by the Disability Network Partners. Laura Cohen, Ph.D., PT, ATP/SMS facilitated the training with over 30 participants in attendance. The presentation included a combination of lecture, hands-on experience, demonstrations, case examples, and opportunities for group discussion and (2) Attended meeting facilitated by Cathy Kirscher of the Helen Keller National Center based in San Diego, California regarding the iCanConnect Program, the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program for people who have both vision and hearing impairments. The goal of the program is to connect these folks with their family, friends, and community through distance communication technology. For the first time in the summer of 2017, the Federal Communications Commission included the CNMI in this program. Currently, the grant funds are being administered by Ms. Kirscher's program in San Diego. In 2016, Ms. Kirscher reached out to the OVR director to solicit support so the FCC may consider expanding the program to the CNMI and its residents.*
  - ◇ *Assistive Technology was one of the topics presented on during the Pre-Employment Transition Services Conference in Saipan (September 19-20, 2017), Tinian (September 25-26, 2017) and Rota (September 28-29, 2017).*
- *Other activities of the Transition and Assistive Technology Committee:*
  - ◇ *Attended the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: Capacity Building Institute Conference in Kansas City, Missouri (May 2017).*

## Transportation, Housing, and Advocacy Committee Principal Tasks:

- Gather information regarding housing and transportation needs of persons with disabilities and identify barriers:
  - ◊ COTA visited Tinian to administer transportation survey.
  - ◊ CNMI Homeless Coalition conducted the Point in Time Count Survey in Saipan on April 8, 2017. A couple of OVR staff participated in administering the survey in the Chalan Kanoa area. The survey is a requirement for the NMHC to be able to apply for the Continuum of Care grant in the near future. Once the report is made available, this committee will obtain a copy to share with the full Council.
- Identify the level or availability of services in transportation and housing for persons with disabilities and identify disparity in services:
  - ◊ Continue to monitor the arrival of public transportation services on Tinian and Rota.
- Work with OVR and other workgroups to address lack of or inadequate housing and transportation through partnership or collaboration among agencies:
  - ◊ Ongoing efforts to work with partners to improve public transportation services as well as make it available in Tinian and Rota.
- Other activities of the Transportation, Housing, and Advocacy Committee:
  - ◊ Attended the Fall 2016 NCSRC, CSAVR, and NCSAB Conferences in San Diego, California.
  - ◊ Advocated to the Honorable Tinian Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas to ensure that municipality sponsored events are ADA accessible (e.g., Annual Pika Festival).
  - ◊ Note: The decision to abolish this committee was approved by the Executive Committee in the interim in their May 26, 2017 meeting, which was ratified and approved by the full Council on June 1, 2017. The Council had received guidance from RSA that this committee “appears to be outside the authorized activities for an SRC, but can be coordinated with other entities.”

“We are all different, we have different hair and different eyes. We like different foods and different stories. So why in the world would we expect everyone to think and learn the same way?”

Linka Vodicka

# MESSAGE

## FROM THE OVR DIRECTOR

December, 2017

Dear Reader,


Can you believe that another year has come and passed us by already?

As we grow older we tend to reflect more and more on yesteryear, and this stirs up a variety of feelings, some good and some bittersweet. In looking back to where the CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation was one year ago to where we find ourselves now, I would like to think that we have journeyed together beautifully and that we are stronger together more than ever.

As I write this message, I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude to our partners for their continued collaboration and faith in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. I have echoed these same sentiments in the past that OVR's successes would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of our partners. Some of our partners include the Offices of the Governor and Lt. Governor, the CNMI Legislature, the State Rehabilitation Council, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc., the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, the Workforce Investment Agency, the Ayuda Network, Inc., the Special Education Program, the Center for Living Independently, employers in both the private and public sectors, consumers and their families, service providers/vendors, and other stakeholders. I would be remiss if I did not recognize the support that we also continue to receive from the Tinian and Rota communities through their respective Mayors' Offices.

As you peruse through the pages of this report, you will find that the stories and the pictures will do a fantastic job of highlighting the activities and projects undertaken – always with the support of our partners – to achieve our VR State Plan goals and objectives. If you find any mistakes or inaccuracies in any section of this report, I encourage you to notify our office right away so that we can make the necessary correction.

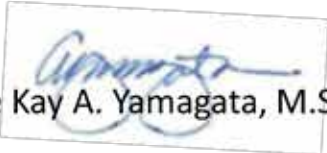





I will be the first to admit that our program is not perfect in any way, shape or form. But I can tell you this...we make it a point to learn from our mistakes and by doing so we commit ourselves to performing to the best of our abilities given our limited resources and unique circumstances to enhance the lives of more people with disabilities who call the CNMI home.

Please allow me to end my message with a quote from Marc Allen: "In partnership, the result is harmony, respect, love, and an explosion of creativity and joy." May it be like this always with our CNMI Disability Network Partners.

*Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays,*



Arlene Kay A. Yamagata, M.S., CRC



*"Man cannot discover  
new oceans unless he has  
the courage to lose sight  
of the shore."*

*Andre Gide*

# OVR Staff Listing

## OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

**Arlene Kay A. Yamagata, M.S., C.R.C.**  
Director

**Lourdes C. Atalig**  
Fiscal Officer

**Elvira O. Seman**  
Administrative Assistant

**Ellena S. Sutton**  
ILOB Case Worker Assistant

## ADMINISTRATION SECTION

**Josephine K. Tudela**  
Manager – Administration & Operations

**Magdalene P. Reyes**  
Data Analyst

**McQueen U. Hiroichi**  
Administrative Clerk

## COUNSELING SECTION

**Rose Ann B. Ichiuo**  
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

**Jane M. Tudela**  
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

**Shana A. Iguel**  
Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Counselor

**John Allen A. Cabrera**  
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Aide

**Matilde S. Selepeo**  
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Aide

**Joseph B. Roberto**  
Employment Specialist



## THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is a State and Federal partnership agency, placed within the Office of the Governor, that provides services to individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. The OVR was established in 1975 and serves the three (3) major islands of the Commonwealth: Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

### Mission Statement

OVR's mission is to increase employment and promote independence among eligible individuals with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

### Vision

The vision of OVR is that individuals with disabilities are employed in competitive and integrated work settings, are empowered to make qualified decisions and informed choices, and are economically self-sufficient.

### Values

OVR Values:

- People with disabilities who wish to be employed, their families and other support system that are willing to help them realize their dream of meaningful employment and increased independence.
- The provision of appropriate vocational rehabilitation services.
- The prompt and efficient delivery of vocational rehabilitation services.
- The belief that disability is a natural part of the human experience.
- The belief in the consumer's right to full participation in the development of his/her vocational rehabilitation program.





# CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation VR Portion of the Unified State Plan 2017-2020

## Program Goals

The CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) reviewed and jointly approved the following goals and priorities. The goals and priorities of the OVR for Fiscal Years 2017-2020 are developed in collaboration with the SRC and incorporate the findings of the FY 2011-2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA).

### Basic Support Services Goal

#### Goal 1

Improve the delivery of competitive integrated employment services to VR clients.

#### Goal 2

Facilitate the seamless transition of students/youth with disabilities to employment or continued education through coordination and collaboration with WIOA core and other programs.

#### Goal 3

Strengthen partnerships with employers to identify and provide opportunities for competitive integrated employment to VR clients including transition students with disabilities.

#### Goal 4

Continue to collaborate with the Workforce Investment Agency (WIA) to prepare mutual clients for competitive integrated employment.

### Supported Employment Goal

#### Goal 5

Improve VR service delivery to effectively meet the needs of clients with most significant disabilities.

*"Be faithful to that  
which exists within  
yourself."*

*Andre Gide*

# FY 2017 OVR Highlights & Activities



March 8 & 9, 2017  
Disability Network Partners trainers from the VOICES of the CNMI provided Self-Advocacy and Leadership Training for students at Kagman High School.



The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation as well as the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils provides a bi-annual conference. The Fall 2016 Conference offered workshops on Transition, Joint regulation on performance accountability, federal regulations on services to employers, the one-stop delivery system as well as other key topics for VR programs.

NCIL is the longest running national cross-disability, grassroots organization run by and for people with disabilities. This years NCIL conference was a Global Independent Movement that included members not only from the CNMI but the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal, Cambodia, Japan, South Africa, Mexico and Costa Rica.





**2017 DNP Pre-ETS Conference**  
 Sponsored by the Disability Network Partners to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to Students. Topics included:

- Self-Advocacy + AT & Accommodations
- Assistive Technology & Post Secondary Ed.
- Job Readiness
- "Why is the IEP Important?"
- "In the Driver's Seat"
- Employers' Expectations
- Assistive Technology Apps & Employment
- Basic Interviewing Skills
- Work Readiness
- Job Exploration

Also included were presentations from NMC Disability Support Services, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, PSS-Special Education Program, NMPASI and the PSS Cooperative Ed. Program.



**2017 DNP Pre-ETS Conference Sponsors**  
*left to right*  
 Suzanne Lizama-PSS-SpEd Director, Arlene Yamagata-OVR Director, Pamela Sablan-CDD Ex. Director, Ruth Pangelinan-CDD Fiscal Officer, Floyd Masga-UCEDD Director  
 (Not pictured are NMPASI, MCH & CLI)

The State Independent Living Council (SILC) Congress brought together council members, staff and leadership from State Independent Living Councils and Centers for Independent Living in Phoenix, Arizona, January 17-20, 2017. Rudy Ignacio, Chairperson-Guam System for Assistive Technology Advisory Council and Estella Cabaobas, CNMI SILC Secretary.



**The Transition Coalition** comprised of some members from the DNP was established to address the significant needs of students with disabilities transitioning out of high school into employment and/or post-secondary education. They play a key role in planning the Annual Pre-Employment Transition Services Conference. Through the Transition Coalition's efforts the Program has seen two very successful conferences.

## 2017 Seating & Wheeled Mobility Services Training



### Seating & Wheeled Mobility Services Training (September 7 & 8, 2017)

*Sponsored by: The Disability Network Partners (DNP)-Council on Developmental Disabilities, Assistive Technology Program, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Maternal Child Health, Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc., and the NMC-University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.*

This two-day course was designed for **clinicians, suppliers and others involved in seating and wheeled mobility service provision**. The presentation included a combination of lecture, hands on experience, demonstrations, case examples, and opportunities for group discussion. Topics covered included service delivery models, team members, roles and responsibilities, seating and mobility evaluation, simulation, measurement, common seating and mobility issues, distinguishing technology features, documentation requirements, and the impact of regulatory & legislative activities. Time was spent sharing resources that would be used to assist with service provisions and on-island capacity building.

This training was the first of its kind in the CNMI, and it was very well received.



2017 STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL TRAINING



2017 CNMI Government Labor Day Celebration



2017 STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL TRAINING



2017 Joint SRC & SILC Meeting



2017 STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL



2017 STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL



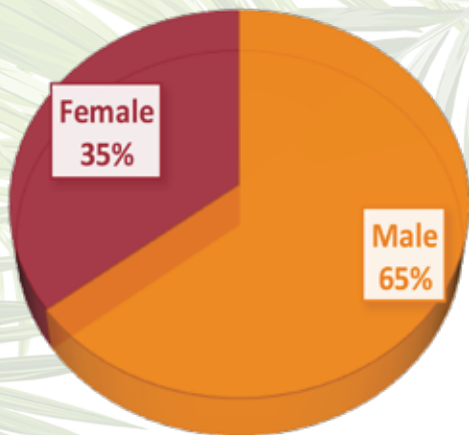
2017 STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING



2017 STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING

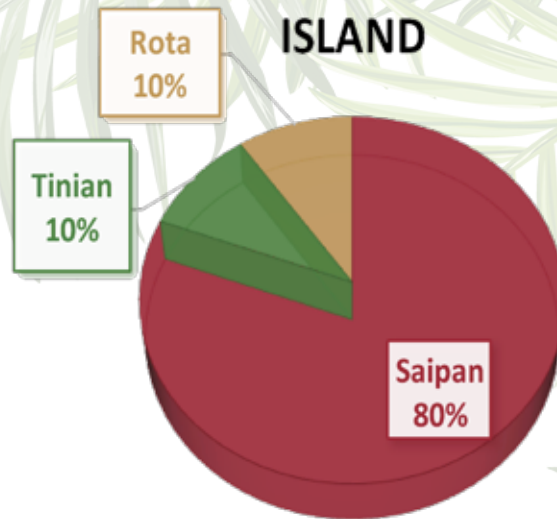
# BS/SE Successful Rehabilitation Profile

## GENDER



Gender	Total
Male	20
Female	11
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>

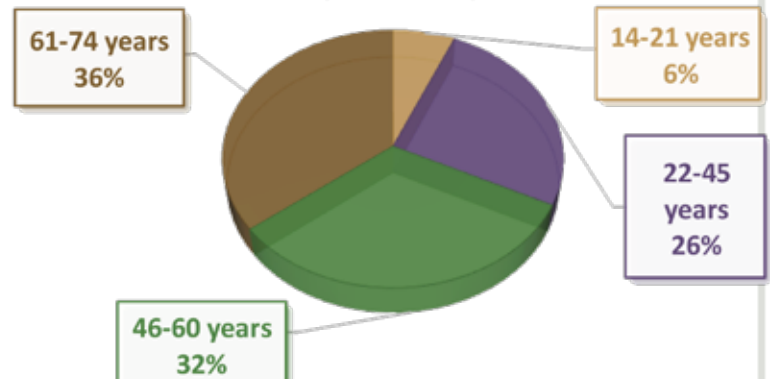
## ISLAND



Island	Total
Saipan	25
Tinian	3
Rota	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>

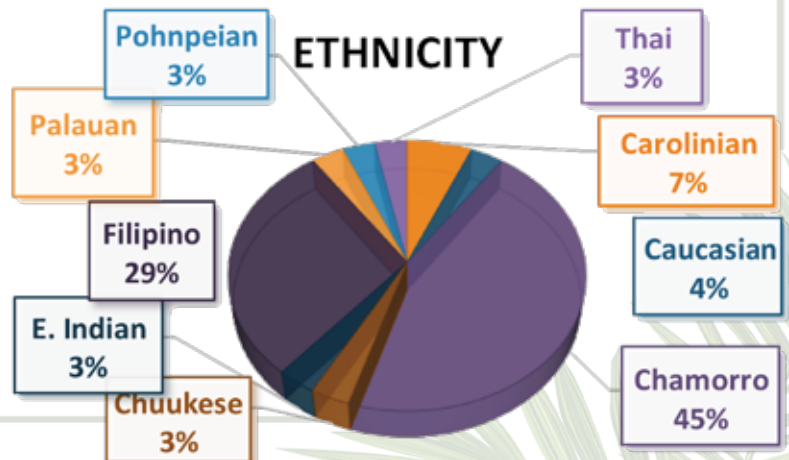
Age Bracket	Total
14-21 years	2
22-45 years	8
46-60 years	10
61-74 years	11
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>

## AGE BRACKET

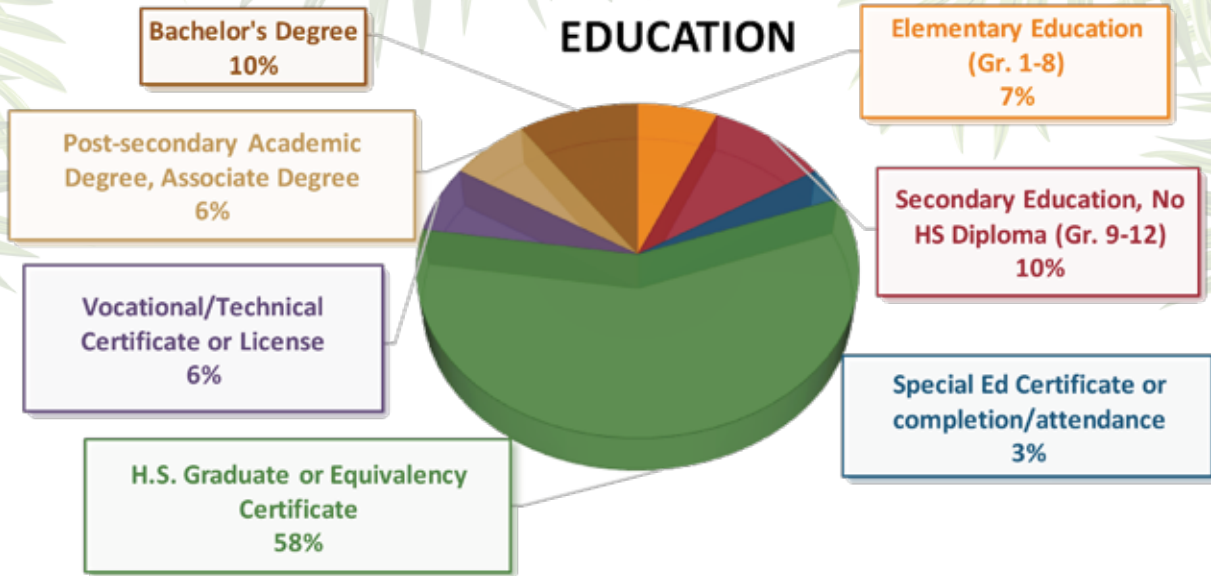


Ethnicity	Total
Carolinian	2
Caucasian	1
Chamorro	14
Chuukese	1
E. Indian	1
Filipino	9
Palauan	1
Pohnpeian	1
Thai	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>

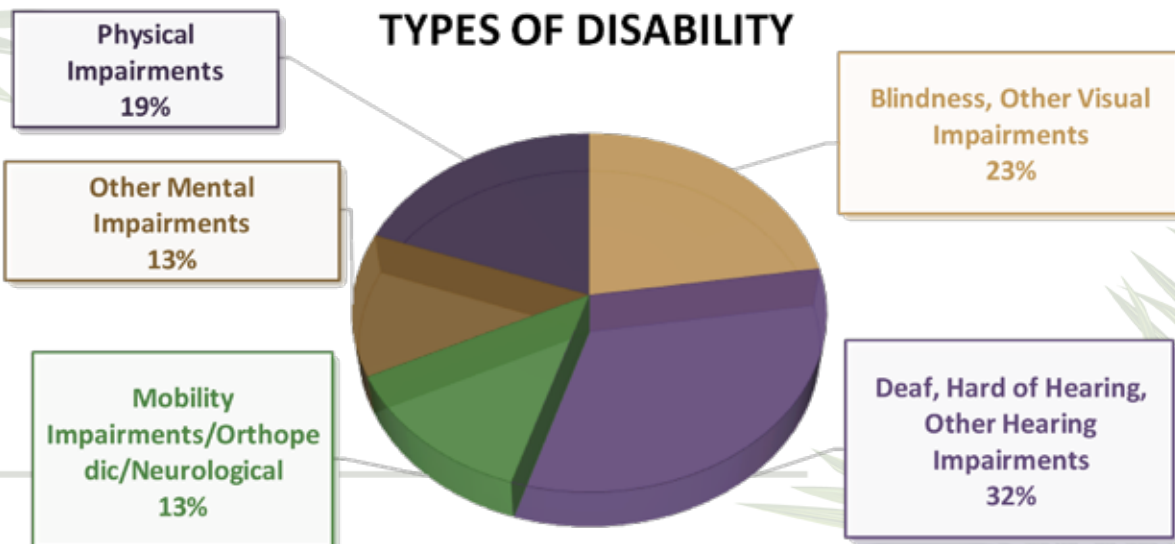
## ETHNICITY



Education	Total
Elementary Education (Gr. 1-8)	2
Secondary Education, No HS Diploma (Gr. 9-12)	3
Special Ed Certificate or completion/attendance	1
H.S. Graduate or Equivalency Certificate	18
Vocational/Technical Certificate or License	2
Post-secondary Academic Degree, Associate's Degree	2
Bachelor's Degree	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>



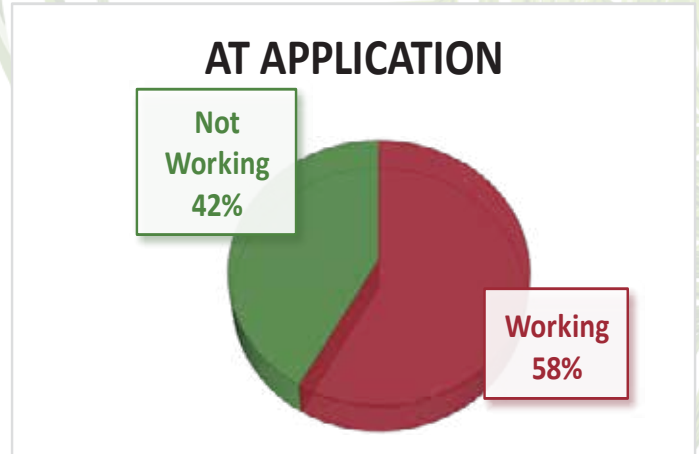
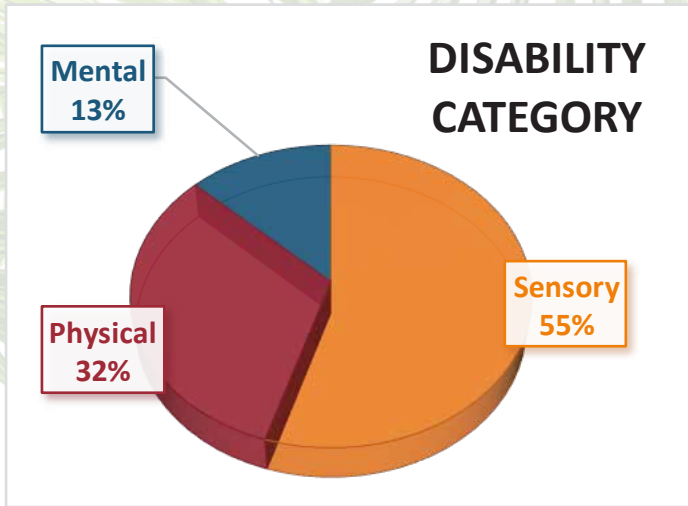
Types of Disability	Total
Blindness, Other Visual Impairments	7
Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Other Hearing Impairments	10
Mobility Impairments/Orthopedic/Neurological	4
Other Mental Impairments	4
Physical Impairments	6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>



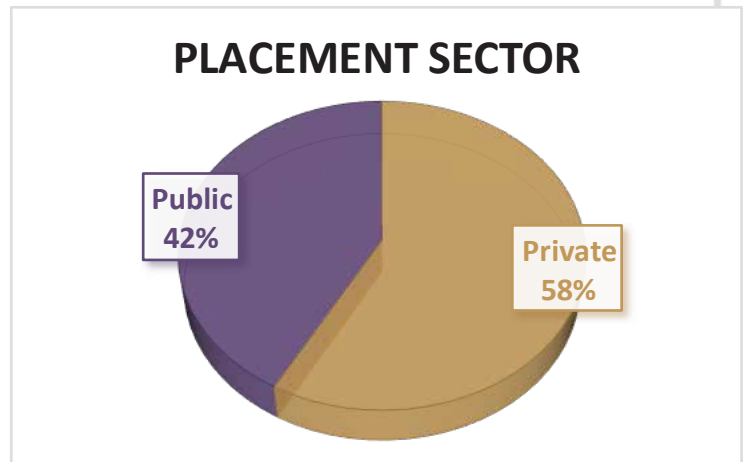


Disability Category	Total
Sensory	17
Physical	10
Mental	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>

At Application	Total
Working	18
Not Working	13
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>



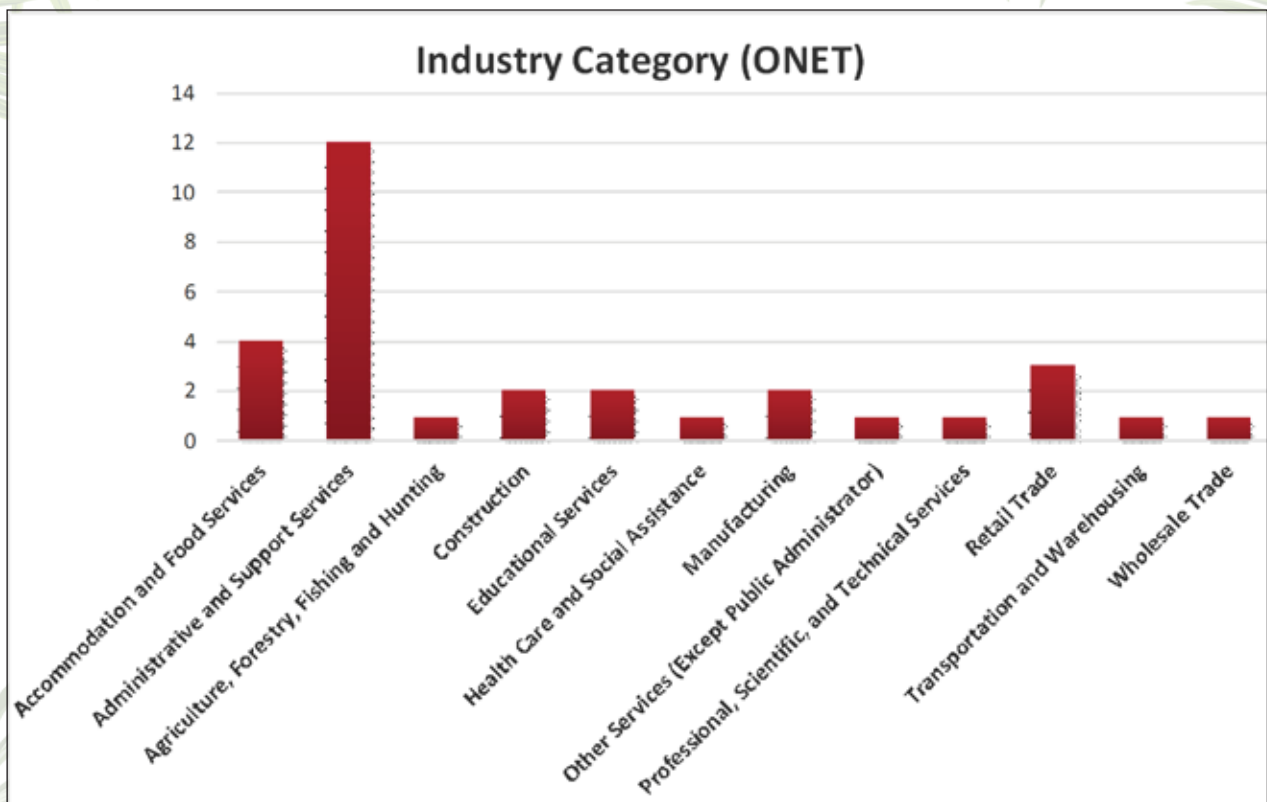
Placement Sector	Total
Private	18
Public	13
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>



Social Security Income (SSI)	Total
Average amount of SSI at Application	\$579.20
Average amount of SSI at Closure	\$308.60

Average Earnings		
	Before	After
Average Annual Earning of Consumer Before and After Rehabilitation	\$14,358.71	\$21,101.94
	Before	After
Average Hourly Wage of Consumer Before and After Rehabilitation	\$7.30	\$10.88

Industry Category (ONET)	Total
Accommodation and Food Services	4
Administrative and Support Services	12
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1
Construction	2
Educational Services	2
Health Care and Social Assistance	1
Manufacturing	2
Other Services (Except Public Administrator)	1
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1
Retail Trade	3
Transportation and Warehousing	1
Wholesale Trade	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>



<b>Caseload for Employment Programs for FY 2017</b>	
Employment Programs	Total
Basic Support Services	224
Supported Employment Services	43
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>267</b>

<b>Caseload for Independent Living Program for FY 2017</b>	
Independent Living Programs	Total
Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who are Blind/Visually Impaired	18
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>18</b>

**CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Consumer Satisfaction Survey - Phase I  
Results for Fiscal Year 2017**

**TIMELINESS OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

		Yes	No	No Ans.	Total:
1	The Orientation started on time.	67	0	0	67
		100%	0%	0%	100%
		Yes	No	No Ans.	Total:
2	The presentation was easy to understand.	66	1	0	67
		99%	1%	0%	100%
		Yes	No	No Ans.	Total:
3	The OVR staff was easy to contact.	64	0	3	67
		96%	0%	4%	100%
		Yes	No	No Ans.	Total:
4	The OVR staff treated me in a professional manner.	67	0	0	67
		100%	0%	0%	100%
		Yes	No	No Ans.	Total:
5	The OVR staff was responsive in answering my questions and concerns.	67	0	0	67
		100%	0%	0%	100%
		Yes	No	No Ans.	Total:
6	I know what services OVR offers and how to apply for those services.	65	0	2	67
		97%	0%	3%	100%
		Yes	No	No Ans.	Total:

**QUALITY OF SERVICES**

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
7	Please rate the quality of services you received from OVR.	61	6	0	0	0	67
		91%	9%	0%	0%	0%	100%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
8	Please rate the courtesy and respect you received from the OVR staff.	63	4	0	0	0	67
		94%	6%	0%	0%	0%	100%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
9	Please rate the accessibility of the OVR facilities.	54	8	0	0	5	67
		81%	12%	0%	0%	7%	100%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
10	Please rate the chance of you recommending OVR services to someone else.	62	4	0	1	0	67
		93%	6%	0%	1%	0%	100%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:

**NOTE:** 67 out of 67 (100%) Applicants participated in the Phase I Survey.

**Consumer Satisfaction Survey - Phase II (ST26)  
Results for Fiscal Year 2017**

**SERVICES**

		Yes	No	No. Ans.	Total:
1	I felt the OVR staff was respectful and helpful.	18	0	0	18
		100%	0%	0%	100%
		Yes	No	No. Ans.	Total:
2	My VR plan for services was based on my skills and abilities.	17	1	0	18
		94%	6%	0%	100%
		Yes	No	No. Ans.	Total:
3	I received services that I needed.	18	0	0	18
		100%	0%	0%	100%
		Yes	No	No. Ans.	Total:
4	I benefited from services that I received.	18	0	0	18
		100%	0%	0%	100%
		Yes	No	No. Ans.	Total:
5	Services were provided in a timely manner.	17	0	1	18
		94%	0%	6%	100%
		Yes	No	No. Ans.	Total:
6	I am satisfied with the quality of services I received from OVR.	17	0	1	18
		94%	0%	6%	100%
		Yes	No	No. Ans.	Total:

**QUALITY OF SERVICES**

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
7	The ability to reach my counselor or another OVR staff member within one business day.	16	2	0	0	0	18
		88.89%	11.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
8	My counselor's ability to clearly explain services available to me.	16	1	0	0	1	18
		88.89%	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	5.56%	100.00%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
9	My counselor's ability in listening to my needs and concerns.	18	0	0	0	0	18
		100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
10	My counselor's ability in involving me in making decisions about the services I needed.	16	1	0	0	1	18
		88.89%	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	5.56%	100.00%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
11	My counselor's ability in involving me in choosing service providers.	13	3	0	0	2	18
		72.22%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	11.11%	100.00%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
12	The services in helping me get or keep a job.	14	3	0	0	1	18
		77.78%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	5.56%	100.00%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
13	Your counselor's overall performance in assisting you.	17	1	0	0	0	18
		94.44%	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
14	The quality of services you received from OVR.	17	1	0	0	0	18
		94.44%	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
15	The chance of you recommending OVR services to someone else.	14	3	0	0	1	18
		77.78%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	5.56%	100.00%
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:

26 **NOTES:** 18 out of 31 (58%) Consumers after successful closure participated in the Phase II Survey. Phase II survey is administered after Successful Closure (ST26).

## Consumer Satisfaction Survey - Phase II (ST28) Results for Fiscal Year 2017

### SERVICES

1	I felt the OVR staff was respectful and helpful.	Yes	No	Total:
		1	0	1
		100%	0%	100%
2	I received services that I needed.	Yes	No	Total:
		1	0	1
		100%	0%	100%
3	I benefited from services that I received.	Yes	No	Total:
		1	0	1
		100%	0%	100%
4	Services were provided in a timely manner.	Yes	No	Total:
		1	0	1
		100%	0%	100%
5	I am satisfied with the quality of services I received from OVR.	Yes	No	Total:
		1	0	1
		100%	0%	100%

### COUNSELING SERVICES

If you were not satisfied with the services you received, what was the main reason?

7	The location of the office was not convenient.	Total:
		0
8	It took too long to get services.	Total:
		0
9	The available services through OVR were not what I wanted.	Total:
		0
10	The available services through Provider were not what I wanted.	Total:
		0
11	I did not get along with the OVR staff.	Total:
		0
12	I did not get along with the Provider staff.	Total:
		0
13	The services received through OVR were not helpful.	Total:
		0
14	The services received through the Provider were not helpful.	Total:
		0
15	Other:	Total:
		0

**NOTES:** 1 out of 28 (4%) Consumers participated in the Phase II (ST. 28) Survey. Phase II survey is administered after Closure-Other reasons after IPE initiated (ST28).

**FEDERAL & STATE FISCAL YEAR 2017**

**SOURCE OF FUNDS**

**TOTAL: \$1,112,340**

	Carry-over FY 2016	FY 2017
• Title I – Basic Support Program (*Requires State match of 21.3%)	\$78,313	\$867,301
• Title VI-B – Supported Employment (*Requires 10% State match for cost incurred-YMSD) * FY 2016 Carry-over funds relinquished to grantor agency (\$16,276)	\$25,464	\$17,218
• Title VII-A – Independent Living/Older Blind	\$17,666	\$40,000
• CNMI State Funds		\$82,654

**CASE SERVICES EXPENDITURES**

**Basic Support/Supported Employment**

Services	Total
Assessment	9,569
Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments	60,991
Junior & Community College Training	16,245
Occupational & Vocational Training	2,400
Job Readiness Training	12,484
On-the-Job Training	6,396
On-the-Job Supports – Short Term	6,350
Transportation	14,704
Maintenance	2,776
Rehabilitation Technology	83,112
Personal Attendant	5,243
Miscellaneous Training	596
Others	9,032
<b>TOTAL BS/SE CASE SERVICE EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>229,898</b>

**Pre-Employment Transition Services**

Required Activities	Spent
Job Exploration Counseling	5,967
Work-based Learning experience	3,071
Workplace Readiness Training	11,745
Instruction in Self-Advocacy	842
<b>Total required activities</b>	<b>21,625</b>
<b>Other Activities</b>	<b>25,795</b>
<b>TOTAL PRE-ETS SPENT</b>	<b>47,420</b>

**ILOB Case Services Expenditures**

Services	Total
Independent Living/ Older Blind Services	14,215

# OVR CONSUMER PROFILES

## Rosemina H. Poll

**Village/Island:** Sinapalo II, Rota

**VRC:** Jane Tudela

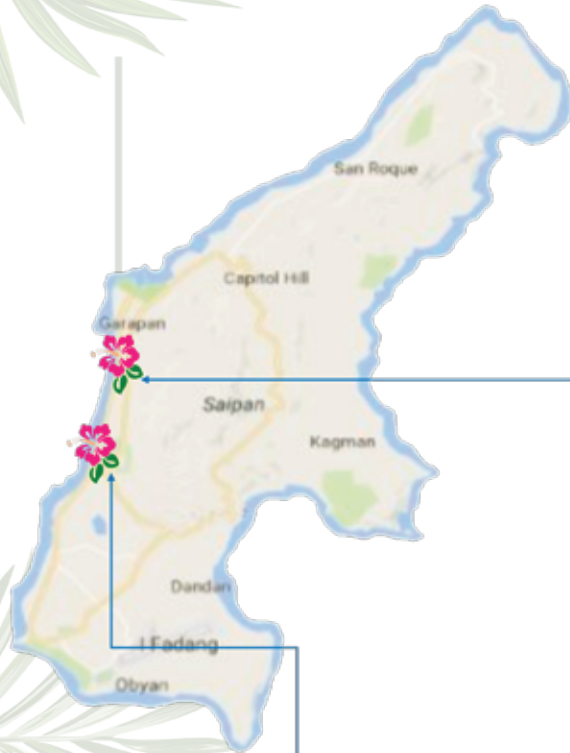
**Program:** Basic Support

**Partnership:** Vocational Rehabilitation and Consumer

**Employer Name:** Lucky Store I

**Job Title:** Stocker

**Hire Date:** June 8, 2017



## Cristina Perez

**Village/Island:** Chalan Laulau, Saipan

**VRC:** Jane Tudela

**Program:** Basic Support

**Partnership:** Vocational Rehabilitation and Consumer

**Employer Name:** Dong Rim Corp. dba Downtown Market

**Job Title:** Cashier

**Hire Date:** November 12, 2014



## Ernesto E. Javier

**Village/Island:** Susupe, Saipan

**VRC:** Rose Ann B. Ichiuo

**Program:** Basic Support

**Partnership:** Vocational Rehabilitation and Consumer

**Employer Name:** Fiesta Resort & Spa

**Job Title:** Plumber

**Hire Date:** November 2005



# Words From Our Applicants

I actually like the set-up now. Orientation and Interview on a 1 one 1 basis, on the same day. As opposed to having orientation on a different day and location. I feel that the services now are better executed on a personal level; as a consumer I feel that I'm being helped.

Great information about services and referrals.

Counselor makes time to meet me at jobsite.

Vocational Counselor is professional and very accommodating. She provided very good information that I can use.

I was given an exceptional and undivided attention by my case worker. This is the kind of services that are very rare to find in a work place. Great job, Rose!

Counselor is able to understand my situation and feelings.





# Words From Our Consumers

## Phase II (ST 26 Successful Closures)

Everyone at OVR is exceptionally nice & helpful. Jiana is supremely professional and great to work with.

Thank you so much for the services rendered to me by the staff, especially Mrs. Rose Ichiuo.

Good services for me at all times.

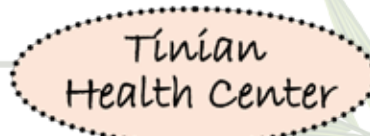
Services are excellent.



# OVR Applauds Employers for Hiring Consumers in FY 2017



## Recognizing Employers Who Supported OVR's Work Experience and On-the Job Training Programs



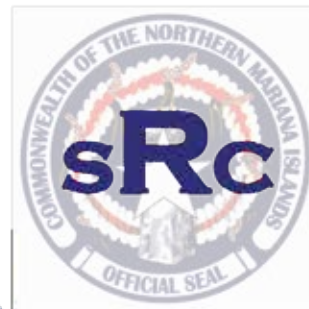
# DISABILITY NETWORK PARTNERS



**Autism Society of CNMI**



**VOICES OF THE CNMI**



## **A Brief Overview on the Independent Living Movement**

*"The history of the independent living movement comes from this philosophy: people with disabilities have the same rights, options, and choices as anybody else." (www.mtstcil.org)*

In order to fully understand and appreciate the Independent Living concept, it is important to have a basic historical knowledge of the movement's trials and tribulations.

Folks within the disability arena claimed that the Independent Living movement started as far back as the 1850's when folks with hearing impairments started organizing locally into groups to advocate for their rights. These groups eventually merged into the National Association of the Deaf in 1880. In the 1940's, groups such as the National Federation of the Blind, the American Federation of the Physically Handicapped, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and The League of the Physically Handicapped were also formed thus advancing the advocacy network for folks with special needs. These groups' shared purpose, regardless of the different types of disabilities they represent, was to eliminate barriers to their much needed services. This was done by way of educating the community about disability issues in order to influence legal policies for better and accessible services.

The Independent Living movement gained national notoriety in 1967 at the University of California in Berkeley when a student with a significant disability by the name of Ed Roberts and his colleagues started protesting and advocating for equal access and comprehensive services for students with disabilities. They were known as the "Rolling Quads", and their protest was significant for it brought national attention to the independent living movement and their struggles for equal treatment and lack of services. These individuals were housed together in an infirmary, and as a direct result they developed a communal sense based on common struggles. Along with this new sense of community was the realization that they were an "oppressed minority" rather than "patients" in an infirmary. This newly realized view was and is still significant for it provided a legitimate shift in policies and services from the "medical model" to a "community based model".

Finally in 1972, with a funding of \$40,000 from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), Ed Roberts and the "Rolling Quads" established the first Center for Independent Living in the nation in Berkeley, California. The center's purpose was to provide independent living skills training to people with disabilities so they can live independently out in the community. This prompted the federal government in 1978 to amend the Rehabilitation Act to include Title VII, which for the very first time secured and provided funding for the independent living network. Today there are over 600 centers throughout the nation, including CNMI's very own center. These centers provide an array of services for folks with special needs.

CNMI's own center wasn't established until decades later in 2005 through sheer hard work and support from individuals within the local and federal government and members of our island community. The CNMI's Center for Living Independently, or CLI as referred to locally, continues to thrive on endless support from volunteers and members from both the private and government sectors despite limited funds and man-power. The Independent Living movement continues to be an endless struggle for basic independent living rights. One way to insure continued positive outcome for our people with disabilities is to keep our island community members informed and aware of the movement's ongoing challenges.

For more information on independent living issues, please contact the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. at (670) 235-7273/4 [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org), or contact the Center for Living Independently (CLI) directly at (670) 322-4303.

*Jimmy G. Sablan, Program Manager*

*Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.*



# CENTER FOR LIVING INDEPENDENTLY IN THE CNMI



## *A note from the new Executive Director*

As the new Executive Director, I plan on building upon the programs we currently have. I look forward to collaborating with other agencies to continue to support individuals with disabilities. I thank Ms. Lydia Igitol for her years of hard work and dedication that helped established the Center for Living Independently in the CNMI. We will continue working on our Vision and Mission.

*Sincerely, Susan Satur*

### **MISSION**

To ensure the rights of people with disabilities to live independently and fully integrated within the community.

### **VISION**

That the CLI-CNMI will provide a comprehensive range of services which will make it possible for people with disabilities to live as independently as they choose within our community.





## **“Disability Watch” Newsletter**

The CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, together with the Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc., and the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, is proud to have continued its support for the quarterly publication of the “Disability Watch” Newsletter in FY 2017.

The newsletter, now in its third year, provides a wealth of information about disabilities and the issues surrounding the needs of our CNMI residents with disabilities. An organization or agency that wishes to share information about or related to disabilities may inquire with a representative of any of the 4 agencies for the opportunity to have their article sponsored and published in an upcoming issue:

OVR – Magdalene Reyes at 322-6537/8

DD Council – Elizabeth Ada at 664-7003/5

NMPASI – Thomas Thornburgh at 235-7273

UCEDD – Jennifer Castro at 234-5498 ext. 6808/6802

The goal of our newsletter is to help keep our island communities connected and informed. If you would like to pick up the latest copy of Disability Watch, you may do so at any one of the agencies listed above. You may also find the newsletter online at [www.ovrgov.net](http://www.ovrgov.net) or at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).

Printing was made possible by agency collaboration through an equal cost-sharing arrangement.

The following articles offers valuable information and resources:

**Volume 2 Issue 3:** U.S. Education and Labor Departments Release WIOA Final Rules; Transition Tips for Parents; November is National Family Caregivers Month; Career Exploration Tools; CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities: 5-Year Plan for FY 2017-2021; Assistive Technology Program: 7 Apps for Your Device to Use as Assistive Technology; Zika Virus Infection and Other Arboviral Diseases – Be Mosquito-Wise. Fight the Bite!; OVR Staff Profile; and The CNMI Transition Coalition Presents “Pathways to Student’s Success.”

**Volume 2 Issue 4:** Teaching All Students, Reaching All Learners, Including Students with Disabilities as Diverse Learners; Transition Mini Conference & Cooperative Education’s Job Fair; Social Security Administration & Social Security Disability Insurance; University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities; Disability & Discrimination Training; Supreme Court to Hear Special Education Case; I am Diabetic; and National Family Caregivers & Diabetes Awareness Month.

**Volume 3 Issue 1:** Returning from Service; Notice of Annual Membership & Board of Directors Meeting; Addiction; Statewide Independent Living Council Conducts First Meeting; Memories of Pain; My Fear; Self-Advocacy – Kagman High School; CIRCLES; The Gout; and Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity October 9-11, 2017.

**Volume 3 Issue 2:** What is: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; Northern Marianas College Disability Support Services; Voices of the CNMI – Tinian Chapter; Poem: Alice, I’m Falling; and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation: Together We Can Build a Future; OVR Pre-Employment Transition Services.

# The OVR Logo

The OVR logo, designed with simplicity in mind, has a meaning that runs deep.

The **outer circle** represents Networking, Collaboration, and Cooperation, ingredients necessary for any program's success. The "O" also stands for *Office*. We realize that OVR management and staff alone cannot possibly achieve its mission of increasing employment and promoting independence among eligible individuals with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. To ensure that the goals and objectives continue to be met and that there is a high level of consumer satisfaction, OVR must rely on the collaboration and cooperation of the State Rehabilitation Council, consumers and their families, employers and businesses, disability-related agencies and organizations, and the entire community. As the saying goes: *There is strength in numbers* and, the more people, businesses, agencies and organizations join in the effort of improving the quality of life for all our island residents, we will indisputably witness even better and greater things to come.

The "V" stands for *Vocational* and, the "R" stands for *Rehabilitation*. If you look closely, the "R" somewhat resembles a *latte* stone. *Latte* stones, which are the stone pillars of ancient dwelling places in the Marianas, are strong and resilient and could withstand even the strongest of super typhoons over time. You could say that our consumers exhibit these similar characteristics or qualities. OVR consumers are always working hard to reach their vocational/employment goals and, despite the bumpy roads and obstacles they may encounter along the way, to give up is just not an option. Another truth about the *latte* stone is that they are highly regarded in the CNMI and, like the *latte* stone, OVR applicants and consumers are treated with dignity and respect. Also, the *latte* stone represents one of the two groups indigenous to the CNMI, the *Chamorros*.

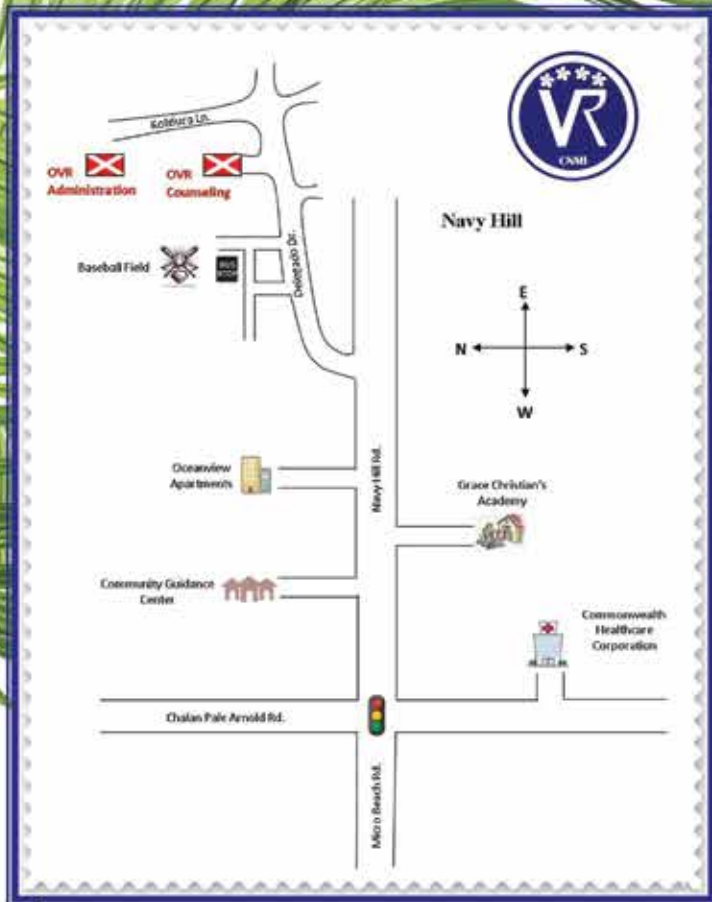
The inner circle has a **deep blue color** that represents the vast Pacific Ocean where the islands of the Northern Marianas are situated.

The **plumerias**, placed right above the "VR" in an arched position, are representative of the four (4) islands that comprise the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: *Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and the Northern Islands*. The plumerias are also representative of the "successes" of our consumers. Just like the tiny buds that blossom into beautiful flowers, our consumers also blossom, with the assistance of OVR and its partners, to become empowered and having realized the depth of their self-worth. Furthermore, the plumeria was selected for the OVR logo as it is the national flower of the CNMI and is also representative of the *Carolinians*, the other group native to the CNMI. The *Carolinians* are known for many things, including their skill in making leis and *mwarmwars*. The plumeria is a popular choice for many lei and *mwarmwar* makers.

"Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't."

Rikki Rogers





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