

**San Diego State University
Interwork Institute**

**The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Governor**

**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
and
The State Rehabilitation Council**

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report

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**Prepared by:
Chaz Compton, Ed.D., CRC
Melissa Kronberger, M.S., COTA/L, CRC
Interwork Institute
San Diego State University**

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Arlene Yamagata, former Case Services Manager

Elvira "Vai" Seman, Data Analyst

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University jointly conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of persons with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). A triennial needs assessment is required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is intended to help inform the Unified State Plan developed by the core partners in CNMI's Workforce Development System. The data was gathered, analyzed and grouped into the sections listed below. A summary of key findings and recommendations in each section is contained here. The full results are found in the body of the report.

Section One: Overall Performance of OVR

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods (data, surveys and interviews) related to this topic area:

1. The overall performance of OVR has been impacted by the pandemic and by staffing turnover. The agency is working to increase the number of applications for services and the number of consumers exiting in employment.
2. There is a need for increased community awareness of OVR and their services. This is especially true in the secondary school system throughout Saipan, Tinian and Rota.
3. OVR is not fully matched by the CNMI government. There are significant funds available for Federal draw down if the government would appropriate funds to the agency and demonstrate their commitment to the Federal-State partnership that is the foundation of the public VR program.
4. There is a need to increase the speed with which applicants have an eligibility determination completed. In addition, OVR needs to reduce the percent of individuals that have an eligibility extension completed.
5. There is a need to increase the speed with which authorizations for services are completed to increase the number of vendors and increase informed choice for consumers.
6. There is a need to begin the contracting process sooner so that contractors have enough time to deliver services when the funds are available.
7. There are limited employment opportunities in Saipan, and fewer in the neighbor islands.
8. Accessibility for individuals with mobility impairments and sensory impairments continues to be a challenge in the community and at work. Many buildings and businesses are not accessible and there are very few interpreters available.
9. Although OVR has experienced significant staff changes in the last few years, the agency is fully staffed as of this writing and is confident that they will be able to meet the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in CNMI going forward.

The following recommendations are made to OVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. OVR is encouraged to increase community outreach through a focused marketing campaign to increase community awareness of available services. This is especially important for youth and students with disabilities.
2. OVR is encouraged to regularly advocate for increased funding from the CNMI government.
3. OVR is encouraged to provide ongoing training in eligibility determinations and IPE development to help increase the ability of counselors to move consumers through the process efficiently and quickly.
4. OVR is encouraged to complete as much of the contracting process as possible prior to funding being immediately available in order to reduce the time it takes to complete contracts and begin service once funding is available.
5. OVR is encouraged to work with their government to identify ways to speed up the procurement process once the required approvals are obtained for purchases.

Section Two: The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. The lack of public transportation remains a major barrier to employment for many individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. Although the Office of Transit Authority (COTA) is available, the service is limited and has significant variations in pick up and drop off times.
2. Job training, job skills and increased employment opportunities were all cited repeatedly as rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in CNMI.
3. Individuals with the most significant disabilities need assistive technology in order to be competitive in the workplace. The lack of AT providers and trainers in the use of the technology was a frequently cited barrier to employment.
4. The traditional model of supported employment is not able to be utilized in the CNMI because the Medicaid agency does not have the Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver that funds extended services. Consequently, the only SE that is provided must utilize natural supports for extended service provision and this has been unsuccessful in the past. The lack of SE services means that individuals with the most significant disabilities do not receive the services they need to obtain and retain employment.
5. The need to develop self-advocacy skills was a recurring theme for individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. This need was often cited when identifying the need for higher expectations for individuals with disabilities.
6. Many individuals with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities, need training in basic computer skills in order to be employable. In addition, broadband Internet access is needed in many areas.

7. SSA beneficiaries are fearful of working because they fear they will lose their benefits. There is a need for benefits planning to be available to SSI and SSDI recipients and their families.
8. There is a need for substance abuse treatment options for individuals in all of the islands.

The following recommendations are made to OVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. OVR is encouraged to continue to work with other government agencies to increase the accessible transportation options for individuals with disabilities in the CNMI.
2. OVR should consider educating families on having higher expectations for individuals with disabilities, especially youth. OVR is encouraged to develop a peer mentoring program that will pair consumers with successful individuals with disabilities so that these mentors can instill an expectation that they can be successful. This is especially important for youth.
3. OVR is encouraged to counsel consumers to pursue postsecondary education as appropriate in order to increase their earning potential and employment options.
4. OVR should provide ongoing training for staff and community partners in supported employment.
5. OVR should consider partnering with a local business that provides computer training so that they can increase the computer literacy of their consumers.
6. OVR is encouraged to conduct connectivity assessments for all consumers that are engaged in the comprehensive assessment process for plan development. Digital access has become essential for many individuals to engage in a job search, apply for jobs and work from home.

Section Three: The needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. Tinian and Rota were the most frequently cited areas that may be underserved by OVR. It remains unclear as to whether the need for VR services on these islands is greater than OVR's ability to meet the need. OVR does have counselors assigned to visit the islands, and the demand does not appear to be greater than the current visiting schedule, which varies from monthly to quarterly.
2. Deaf individuals were cited as being potentially underserved by OVR because of the lack of interpreters available at the agency and in the community.
3. Although there were no underserved groups identified by race on a recurring basis, OVR's ability to serve immigrants from Asian countries has been impacted by legal interpretations since the last CSNA. The agency is in the midst of a Federal review of these opinions which may increase the agency's ability to serve individuals with disabilities that are classified as Commonwealth-only workers and workers from Freely Associated States.

4. The needs of minority individuals did not differ from the general population of those served by OVR except for language barriers that can result in delays accessing OVR services.

The following recommendations are made to OVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. OVR is encouraged to conduct regular informational meetings in Tinian and Rota about OVR services and regularly examine the need to potentially increase visits to the islands as the need dictates.
2. OVR is encouraged to identify individuals that are fluent in ASL to increase service to individuals that are Deaf.

Section Four: The needs of youth and students with individuals with disabilities in transition

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities were noted as similar to those of the general population of consumers served by OVR, but work experience and soft skills were stressed more frequently for youth.
2. The lack of public transportation significantly impacts youth and their work options as they have difficulty getting to work experience sites.
3. OVR purchases pre-employment transition services through contracts and has hired a Transition Specialist who is responsible for pre-employment transition services coordination activities.
4. The delivery of pre-employment transition services has been uneven in the last few years, but OVR has worked with providers to ensure that all five of the required activities are now readily available to students with disabilities.
5. Participants indicated that there is a need to share information about OVR and available services more frequently in the schools. It was repeatedly recommended that information target the parents and families of youth and students with disabilities. The family focus is essential as many families tend to shelter their children with disabilities and this can limit their child's exposure to the world of work.
6. Staff and partners indicate that students with disabilities are not applying for services from OVR even after they have received pre-employment transition services as a potentially eligible individual. Consequently, when the students are done receiving pre-ETS, they will not be connected with OVR and this impacts their successful transition to postsecondary education or work when they exit the school system.
7. There are many youth that have Autism or other significant disabilities that are served by the Center for Living Independently and could benefit from supported employment services. The lack of SE extended service providers limits the employment and support options for these youth.

The following recommendations are made to OVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. OVR is encouraged to work to increase the number of students with disabilities that apply for services after receiving pre-employment transition services as a potentially eligible student. This will help ensure students transition with more support and will help increase the services that can be charged to the 15% pre-ETS reserve.
2. OVR is encouraged to follow-up on the recommendations in Section 2 of this report to develop extended services for supported employment. There are many youth in the CNMI that can benefit from the SE model, and the focus on youth services in SE will help OVR expend their SE funds, half of which must be spent on youth 24 and younger.
3. OVR is encouraged to consider having the Transition Specialist act as a case carrying counselor in addition to the role of coordinating transition services. This will allow students and youth to receive seamless transition services as they exit the school system.

Section Five: The needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. While OVR and the Title I program (called WIA program in the CNMI) have a good working relationship, it is primarily one of referral at the local level. When individuals with disabilities come to the WIA program for services, they are referred to OVR as a matter of course.
2. There are very few instances of braided funding of cases between OVR and the WIA program. This is an opportunity for both agencies to expand instances of shared cases in the future.
3. It has been difficult for co-enrollment between core partners to be tracked in the CNMI. While OVR refers consumers to the WIA program for assistance with employment preparation services and job placement, there is no formal tracking system to identify how many consumers follow-through and what happens when they do enroll in services.
4. Regular cross-training between OVR and WIA was noted as an ongoing need that will help both agencies and increase collaboration and shared cases.

The following recommendations are made to OVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. OVR is encouraged to provide regular training to WIA program staff on available services and the benefit of shared cases,
2. OVR is encouraged to work with the WIA program and the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy program to develop a universal application form for all core partners.

Section Six: The need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in CNMI

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. There is a need to establish CRPs throughout CNMI for all VR services other than pre-employment transition services. There are no employment preparation, job development and placement services available for OVR consumers. There are no supported employment providers. OVR staff must provide these services directly as needed.
2. There are very few mental health service providers as well as specialty medical exam providers in Sapan and none in Tinian and Rota.
3. There is an opportunity for OVR to partner with a broadband Internet service provider to increase broadband access if the agency can refurbish two existing buildings.

The following recommendations are made to OVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. OVR is encouraged to consult with pre-employment transition services providers to determine if they are willing to expand service provision to include adults served by the agency.
2. OVR is encouraged to consult with specialty medical exam providers in Guam to arrange for periodic visits to Saipan, Tinian and Rota to provide services to OVR applicants and consumers.

STATE PLAN GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES STEMMING FROM CSNA FINDINGS:

The project team met with Director James “Jimbo” Rayphand to discuss the findings of the CSNA and how the findings can inform the VR portion of the State Plan. The following recommendations were made for the State Plan based on the findings:

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to Section One:

- I. **Goal:** Increase community awareness of OVR and available rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities in CNMI.
 - A. **Priority 1:** Increase awareness in public schools
 - B. **Priority 2:** Increase awareness on Tinian and Rota
 - C. **Priority 3:** Increase awareness among employers
 1. **Strategy:** Regular presentations to students and families in the high schools in partnership with school staff in order to share information about OVR services and how they can benefit youth in transition.

2. **Strategy:** Develop informational brochures in multiple languages and make available in government offices, especially all core Workforce Development partners.
3. **Strategy:** Regular public forums on Tinian and Rota – focusing on how OVR can help individuals with disabilities on the neighbor islands – focus on sharing success stories, possible self-employment opportunities, or government employment opportunities.
4. **Strategy:** Utilize radio and television public service announcements to increase awareness of OVR.
5. **Strategy:** Implement SRC recommendations for an Acceptance Campaign as resources allow

II. **Goal:** Increase professional development opportunities for OVR staff

- A. **Priority 1:** Provide training for VR counselors and technicians on the VR process, Federal laws and regulations, WIOA performance measures, and providing quality services.
- B. **Priority 2:** Provide grant management and leadership training for OVR management staff.
 1. **Strategy:** Explore access to on-demand online training for rehabilitation professionals through resources such as the VR development group (<https://www.vrdevelopmentgroup.com/>).
 2. **Strategy:** Work with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Centers for Quality Employment and Quality Management (VRTAC-QE and VRTAC-QM) as appropriate for targeted training.
 3. **Strategy:** Apply for leadership staff to participate in the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (NRLI) or other leadership development training targeting Executive level staff in the VR program (<https://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/nrli/>).
 4. **Strategy:** Apply for the VR Grants Management Certificate training through the VRTAC-QM (<https://www.vrtac-qm.org/mctraining/>).

III. **Goal:** Increase the quantity and quality of employment outcomes for OVR consumers.

- A. **Priority 1:** Increase the number of consumers successfully exiting in employment by 5% per year.
- B. **Priority 2:** Increase the median earnings of consumers exiting in employment by 5% per year.
- C. **Priority 3:** Increase the number of OVR consumers in postsecondary education training programs.
- D. **Priority:** Increase the use of self-employment as an employment outcome for OVR consumers, especially in the neighbor islands.
 1. **Strategy:** Increase employer outreach and business engagement activities.
 2. **Strategy:** Increase the use of OJTs, internships and work experience training to provide exposure to work and demonstrate ability of OVR consumers to perform the essential function of jobs.
 3. **Strategy:** Work with CNMI government to recruit and hire individuals with disabilities for government jobs.

4. **Strategy:** Identify successful self-employment cases in VR programs in other Pacific Territories such as Guam and/or American Samoa for possible replication in Tinian and Rota.
5. **Strategy:** Increase assistive technology evaluation, provision and training for OVR consumers so that they can maximize their ability to live independently and perform essential functions of jobs.
6. **Strategy:** Recruit additional organizations or individuals to provide employment services for OVR consumers, especially job development and placement.

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to Section Two:

- I. **Goal:** Increase the use of supported employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities in CNMI.
 - A. **Priority 1:** Identify funding sources for extended services in SE.
 - B. **Priority 2:** Develop essential partnerships with agencies or organizations that provide critical support services necessary for SE.
 - C. **Priority 3:** Increase the number of individuals that achieve an SE outcome by 5% per year.
 1. **Strategy:** Work with the Medicaid agency to request the home and community-based waiver (HCBS) for use as an extended services funding source.
 2. **Strategy:** Recruit service agencies or individuals to become SE service providers.
 3. **Strategy:** Provide training for OVR staff and partners on the SE model and how to implement the service for OVR consumers. OVR can request training from the VRTAC-QE to assist with developing and implementing SE.
 4. **Strategy:** Utilize natural supports as an option for extended services and provide training for OVR staff and providers on how to develop natural supports for replication as appropriate.
 5. **Strategy:** Develop a Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) in CNMI through training provided by Virginia Commonwealth University or other online training provider in order to decrease the fear of working and subsequent benefit loss by SSA recipients in CNMI.

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to Section Four:

- I. **Goal:** Expand and enhance the provision of transition and pre-employment transition services to youth and students with disabilities.
 - A. **Priority 1:** Increase the number of students with disabilities that receive pre-employment transition services that apply for services from OVR by 10% per year.
 - B. **Priority 2:** Increase the number of students with disabilities that receive work-based learning experiences as part of pre-employment transition services by 5% per year.
 - C. **Priority:** Increase the number of transition-age youth with disabilities that enroll in postsecondary education training programs after exiting secondary school by 5% per year.

1. **Strategy:** Provide regular informational meetings for student and their families regarding the scope and potential impact of OVR services in the schools.
2. **Strategy:** Conduct intakes at the schools in order to increase the ease and convenience of application.
3. **Strategy:** Examine rate structure and explore the possibility of revising rates to include a differential pay for work-based learning experiences.
4. **Strategy:** In partnership with the schools, conduct field trips for high school students to Northern Marianas College to encourage the pursuit of higher education upon exiting the school system. This can be done as part of pr-ETS or in coordination with the Title I youth program.
5. **Strategy:** Explore funding an Upward Bound-like program to encourage enrollment in postsecondary education (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html>).

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to Section Five:

- I. **Goal:** Increase and enhance collaboration with the Title I (called WIA) program in the CNMI.
 - A. **Priority 1:** Increase co-enrollment in OVR and Title I programs
 - B. **Priority 2:** Increase the number of cases where there is shared funding between OVR and Title I programs.
 - C. **Priority 3:** Increase joint business engagement activities between OVR and Title I programs.
 1. **Strategy:** Highlight examples of joint cases where shared funding exists for replication.
 2. **Strategy:** Utilize integrated resource teams for shared planning.
 3. **Strategy:** Develop customized training programs in partnership with Title I and local employers.

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to Section Six:

- I. **Goal:** Increase broadband Internet access for individuals with disabilities in the CNMI.
 - A. **Priority 1:** Provide access to high-speed broadband Internet access for OVR consumers.
 - B. **Priority 2:** Obtain RSA approval to utilize the establishment authority to refurbish two buildings for use as broadband Internet hubs and as sites to enhance OVR's ability to service consumers.
 1. **Strategy:** Utilize the establishment authority as authorized in 34 CFR 361.49 to refurbish existing OVR buildings for use as broadband Internet hubs.

NOTE: It is important to note that the Covid-19 pandemic occurred throughout the time frame covered by this CSNA. It is very likely that the concern for personal and public health, and the dramatic societal shift to remote work and communication affected the number of individuals with disabilities applying for services and achieving employment outcomes. The information in this study should be interpreted in light of this information.

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IMPETUS FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contains the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. Section 101(15)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act and Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 361.29 requires all State vocational rehabilitation agencies to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities within their respective State and relate the planning of programs and services and the establishment of goals and priorities to their needs. According to Section 102 of WIOA and Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act, each participating State shall submit a Unified or Combined State Plan every four years, with a biannual modification, as needed. In addition, Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 361.29 indicates that the State Plan must include the “results of a comprehensive, Statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council every three years describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State.” In response to this mandate, and to ensure that adequate efforts are being made to serve the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities in CNMI, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, entered into a contract with the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University for the purpose of jointly developing and implementing the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in CNMI.

PURPOSE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND UTILIZATION OF RESULTS

The purpose of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) is to identify and describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within CNMI. In particular, the CSNA seeks to provide information on:

1. The overall performance of OVR as it relates to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in CNMI;
2. The rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
3. The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities, and those who may have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
4. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition, including their need for pre-employment transition services;
5. The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and
6. The need to establish, develop and/or improve community rehabilitation programs within the Commonwealth.

It is expected that data from the needs assessment effort will provide OVR and the SRC with direction when creating the VR portion of the Unified State Plan and when planning for future program development, outreach and resource allocation. This CSNA covers quantitative data for

Program Years (PY) 2020 through 2022, and qualitative data through January 2024. Program Year 2020 began on July 1, 2020 and ended on June 30, 2021. Program Year 2022 ended on June 30, 2023.

METHODOLOGY

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. The specific methods for gathering the data used in this assessment are detailed below.

Analysis of Existing Data Sources

The project team at SDSU reviewed a variety of existing data sources for the purposes of identifying and describing demographic data within CNMI including the total possible target population and sub-populations potentially served by OVR. Data relevant to the population of CNMI, the population of persons with disabilities in CNMI, ethnicity of individuals, income level, educational levels and other relevant population characteristics were utilized in this analysis. Sources analyzed include the following:

- The 2022 American Community Survey: One- and Five-Year Estimates;
- U.S. Census Annual Estimates of Resident Population, 2022;
- 2023 Social Security Administration SSI/DI Data;
- The CNMI Department of Education;
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- Annual Report on People with Disabilities in America-2023, University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.
- Cornell University's disabilitystatistics.org;
- OVR case service data compiled at the request of the project team; and
- The Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA-911 data for OVR and data submitted and entered into Federal RSA's Management Information System (MIS).

Key Informant and Focus Group Interviews

Instrument. The instruments used for the individual and focus group interviews (Appendix A) were developed by the researchers at SDSU and reviewed and revised by OVR.

Interview population. The individual and focus group population consisted of VR staff, community partners and individuals with disabilities. A total of 62 individuals were interviewed in either a focus group or an individual interview. All of the consumers were interviewed in a focus group.

Surveys

Instruments. The instruments used for the electronic surveys of individuals with disabilities and community partners were developed by the project team and reviewed and revised by OVR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). These surveys are contained in Appendices B and C.

Survey population. Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as individuals with disabilities who are potential, current or former clients of OVR. Community partners include representatives of organizations that provide services, coordinate services, or serve an advocacy role for persons with disabilities in CNMI. OVR staff members include those working for the organization in September – November 2023.

Data collection. Data was gathered from the different populations through the use of an internet-based survey. OVR and community programs serving individuals with disabilities, broadly dispersed the electronic survey via an e-mail invitation. Once the survey was active, OVR sent an invitation and link to the survey by e-mail to consumers and partners. Approximately two weeks after the distribution of the initial invitation, another electronic notice was sent as both a “thank you” to those who had completed the survey and as a reminder to those who had not. Survey responses were then analyzed using Qualtrics.

Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity. Respondents to the individual survey were not asked to identify themselves when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results, which served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The electronic survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were provided with the name and contact information of the Project Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternate survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. A total of 208 valid surveys were submitted by the different groups. A survey is considered valid if an individual completed the survey, even if they did not answer all of the questions. If an individual started a survey and did not complete it, it was considered invalid. It is difficult to gauge the return rate of the surveys as many of the e-mail notices and invitations to take the survey could have come from forwarded email invitations. Table 1 summarizes the totals for all of the research methods for this study.

Table 1

Totals for all Research Methods

Data Collection Totals by Type and Group for 2023-24 CNMI CSNA				
Research Method	Research Group and Count			
	Consumer	Partner	Staff	Total
Electronic Survey	138	70	NA	208
Individual Interview	0	1	2	3
Focus Group	26	24	9	59
Total participants	164	95	11	270

There were 270 individuals that participated in this CSNA in some form or another. The project team is confident that the information gathered accurately and thoroughly captures the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Saipan and Tinian. The project team was not able to travel to Rota due to no transportation availability. Findings can reasonably be expected to apply to Rota since the needs are not generally different than Tinian. In addition, survey results from Rota do not demonstrate a significant difference than those from Tinian.

Analysis and Triangulation of Data

The data gathered from the national and agency-specific data sets, key informant interviews, surveys and focus groups were analyzed by the researchers on the project team. The common themes that emerged regarding needs of persons with disabilities from each data source were identified and compared to each other to validate the existence of needs, especially as they pertained to the target populations of this assessment. These common themes are identified and discussed in the Findings section.

Dissemination Plans

The CSNA report is delivered to OVR and the SRC. We recommend that OVR publish the report on their website for public access.

Study Limitations

Inherent in any type of research effort are limitations that may constrain the utility of the data that is generated. Therefore, it is important to highlight some of the most significant issues that may limit the ability to generalize the needs assessment findings to larger populations. Inherent in the methods used to collect data is the potential for bias in the selection of participants. The findings that are reported reflect only the responses of those who could be reached and who were willing to participate. The information gathered from respondents may not accurately represent the broader opinions or concerns of all potential constituents and stakeholders. Data gathered from consumers, for example, may reflect only the needs of individuals who are already recipients of services, to the exclusion of those who are not presently served. Although efforts were made to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process, it would be imprudent to conclude with certainty that those who contributed to the focus groups and the key informant interviews constitute a fully representative sample of all of the potential stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process in CNMI.

FINDINGS

Section 1: Overall agency performance

Section 2: Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment

Section 3: Needs of individuals with disabilities that are minorities, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program

Section 4: Needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition

Section 5: Needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system

Section 6: Need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in CNMI

SECTION ONE: OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE

The first section of the CSNA reports on areas of general performance by OVR. General performance refers to how well OVR is fulfilling its mission of assisting individuals with disabilities to increase their independence and employment. The area of general performance also refers to how effectively OVR performs the processes that facilitate case movement through the stages of the rehabilitation process, how well OVR adheres to the timelines for this case movement identified in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of WIOA, and OVR's policies and procedures. Finally, overall performance also refers to how successfully OVR achieves the WIOA performance measures and the quantity and quality of employment outcomes achieved by their consumers.

The structure of this section, as well as the following sections, will include the following:

1. Data that pertains to the section in question, including observations based on the data;
2. Electronic and hard copy survey results pertaining to the section;
3. Recurring/consensual themes that emerged during the individual interviews and focus groups; and
4. Recommendations to address the findings in each area of the assessment.

The time-period covered by the data in this Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment is the three-year period from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023. This CSNA uses Program Years as opposed to Federal Fiscal Years to be consistent with reporting for the Rehabilitation Services Administration's 911 Case Service Report. The data on agency performance included in this section comes from the data generated by OVR and is compared to the available RSA 911 data submitted by OVR where available.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following recurring themes emerged in the area of Overall Agency Performance:

1. The overall performance of OVR has been impacted by the pandemic and by staffing turnover. The agency is working to increase the number of applications for services and the number of consumers exiting in employment.
2. There is a need for increased community awareness of OVR and their services. This is especially true in the secondary school system throughout Saipan, Tinian and Rota.
3. OVR is not fully matched by the CNMI government. There are significant funds available for Federal draw down if the government would appropriate funds to the agency and demonstrate their commitment to the Federal-State partnership that is the foundation of the public VR program.

4. There is a need to increase the speed with which applicants have an eligibility determination completed. In addition, OVR needs to reduce the percent of individuals that have an eligibility extension completed.
5. There is a need to increase the speed with which authorizations for services are completed to increase the number of vendors and increase informed choice for consumers.
6. There is a need to begin the contracting process sooner so that contractors have enough time to deliver services when the funds are available.
7. There are limited employment opportunities in Saipan, and fewer in the neighbor islands.
8. Accessibility for individuals with mobility impairments and sensory impairments continues to be a challenge in the community and at work. Many buildings and businesses are not accessible and there are very few interpreters available.
9. Although OVR has experienced significant staff changes in the last few years, the agency is fully staffed as of this writing and is confident that they will be able to meet the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in CNMI going forward.

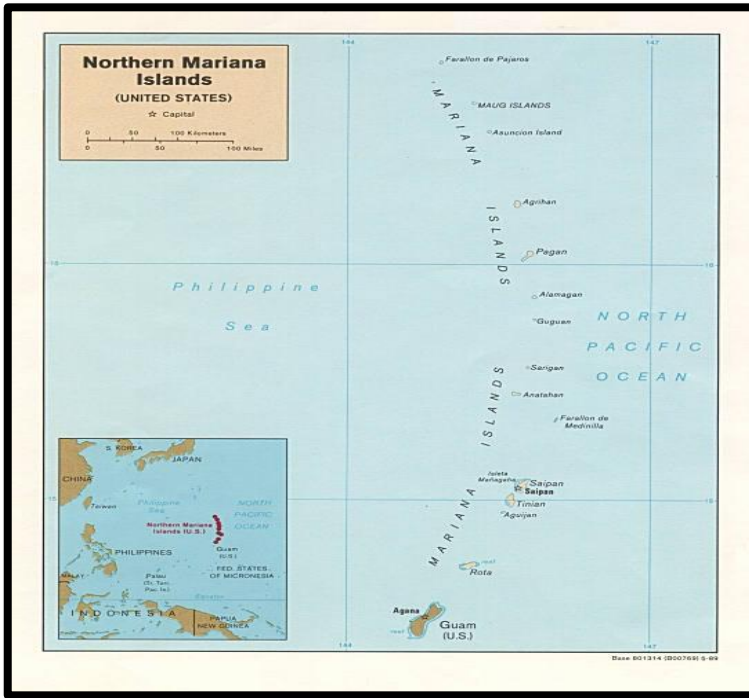
***NATIONAL, STATE, LOCAL AND AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA
RELATED TO OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE***

The project team gathered data from national and state data sets to provide information to OVR and to interested parties related to population, disability prevalence, income, poverty, educational attainment, unemployment, and labor force participation in CNMI. Where available, we have included information specific to the different islands. The project team is hopeful that this information will provide OVR and their partners with data that can guide resource allocation and future planning.

General Trends of the OVR Service Area

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is comprised of 14 main islands. The islands are designated into 4 municipalities by the U.S. Census Bureau: Rota, Saipan, Tinian, and the Northern Islands. The municipalities are comprised of 135 villages. The OVR system recognizes the 4 municipalities as the four islands they serve as noted on page 42 of the FY 2023 Annual Report: History of the CNMI OVR Logo. Map 1 represents the land and water area of Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands. Table 2 is a table of codes for the service Districts with details on the Counties served.

Map 1

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/islands_oceans_poles/nomarianaislands.jpg

Table 2

Municipality, Code, and Area Served

Municipality	Code	Villages Served
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	CNMI	All villages in the Commonwealth
Northern Islands Municipality	NIM	Agrihan; Alamagan; Anatahan; Asuncion; Farallon de Medinilla; Guguan; Maug; Pagan; Sarigan; Urascus
Rota Municipality	RM	Afatung; Agatasi (Payapai); Agusan; Alaguan; Annex F; Apanon; As Akoddo; As Dudo; As Niebes (Nieves); Duge; Fanlagon; Finata; Gagani; Gampapa; Gaonan; Gayaugan (Kaan); Ginalangan (Chudan); I Chenchon; I Koridot; Lempanai; Liyu; Makmak; Mananana; Matpo; Mochong; Mount Sabana (Minachage); Mount Taipingot; Pekngasu; Sailigai Papa; Sayan Gigani; Sinapalo; Songsong; Tagolo Ogso; Taimama; Talakhaya; Talo; Tatachok; Tatgua; Tenetu; Ugis
Saipan Municipality	SM	Achugao; Afetnas; Agingan; American Memorial Park; As Akina; As Falipe; As Gonna; As Lito; As Mahetog; As Matuis; As Palacios; As Perdido; As Rabagau; As Teo; As Terlaje; Banaderu; Bird Island; Capitol Hill; Chacha;

Municipality	Code	Villages Served
		Chalan Galaide; Chalan Kanoa; Chalan Kanoa II; Chalan Kanoa III; Chalan Kanoa IV; Chalan Kiya; Chalan Laulau; Chalan Piao; Chalan Rueda; China Town; Dagui; Dandan; Fananganan; Fanonchuluyan; Finasisu; Forbidden Island; Garapan; Gualo Rai; Hilaihai; I Akgak; I Denni; I Fadang; I Liyang; I Maddok; I Naftan; I Pitot; Kagman I; Kagman II; Kagman III; Kagman; Kagman IV; Kalabera; Kannat Tabla; Koblerville; Laulau Bay; Lower Base; Managaha; Marpi; Matansa; Maturana Hill; Nanasu; Navy Hill; Opyan; Papago; Pidos Kahalo; Puerto Rico; Sabaneta; Sadog Tasi; San Antonio; San Jose (Oleai); San Roque; San Vicente; Susupe; Talafofo; Tanapag; Tangke; Tapochao; Tottotville
Tinian Municipality	TM	Aguijan; Carolinas; Carolinas Heights; Eastern Tinian (Marpo Valley); Marpo Heights; Northern Tinian; San Jose; Western Tinian

Sources: <https://www.citydirectory.us/county-municipality-northern-islands.html>; United States Census Bureau

The Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands (CNMI) is an organized United States insular area which has established a highly developed relationship with the U.S. Federal Government, embodied in a written, mutual agreement. Currently, two United States insular areas are commonwealths, the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico. CNMI has a structured republican form of government with separate executive, judicial, and legislative branches. According to the CIA factbook, the U.S. captured the Northern Mariana Islands in 1944 after the Battle of Saipan. Post-World War II, the islands were part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). After four voter attempts to integrate with Guam in the 1950s and 1960s compiled with rejection from Guam in 1969, the Northern Mariana Islands in 1978 was granted self-government separate from the TTPI. In 1986, when the territory came under U.S. sovereignty as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, residents of the islands were granted U.S. Citizenship. In 2009, CNMI was the last U.S. territory to elect a delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives to represent the interests of the Commonwealth. The delegate serves and votes on committees, and votes in Congress when the House meets as the “Committee of the Whole House” but not when legislation is submitted for a House “full floor” vote. (Sources: <https://www.doi.gov/oia/islands/politicatypes>; <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/northern-mariana-islands>)

Population

The 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas detailed that the total population of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is 47,329 people. The total population of the CNMI decreased in size from the 2010 Census of 53,883 people (- 6,554 numeric change; -12.2 percent change).

The Saipan Municipality has the largest population size and the Northern Island Municipality has the least number of residents based on 2020 population data.

Table 3

CNMI Total Population by Municipality: 2020

Municipality	Total Population 2020	Percent of CNMI Population 2020	Population 2010	Numeric Change from 2010 to 2020	Percent Change from 2010 to 2020
CNMI	47,329	NA	53,883	-6,554	-12.2
CNMI - Urban	36,921	78.0%	-----	-----	-----
CNMI - Rural	10,408	22.0%	-----	-----	-----
NIM	7	0.0%	7	7	X
RM	1,893	4.0%	2,527	-634	-25.1%
SM	43,385	91.7%	48,220	-4,835	-10.0%
TM	2,044	4.3%	3,136	-1,092	-34.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. DRB Clearance CBDRB -FY22-009

The 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas also contained data on the CNMI population in households by age. Recognize the population in household counts are slightly different from the total population counts as the demographics of households consist of adults and children in family living arrangements. This information is provided for OVR to estimate the number of youth that reside in the 4 municipalities. Table 4 contains the CNMI population in households by age counts.

Table 4

2020 Population in Households by Age: CNMI

2020 Population in Households by Age	Total # of households counted	Population Under 18 years	Population 18 years and over
CNMI	46,022	13,602	32,420
CNMI -- Urban	35,901	10,480	25,421
CNMI -- Rural	10,121	3,122	6,999
NIM	7	0	7
RM	1,869	559	1,310
SM	42,188	12,437	29,751
TM	1,958	606	1,352

U.S. Census Bureau. "POPULATION IN HOUSEHOLDS BY AGE." Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table P10, 2020.

Land Use and Urbanization

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), a chain of 14 islands and a few islets in the western Pacific Ocean, located roughly 4,000 miles west of Hawaii and about 1,600 miles east of the Philippines. CNMI includes all the islands in the Mariana Islands Archipelago except Guam, the southernmost island of the chain. The islands of the Commonwealth stretch northward in an arc from Guam toward Japan. Compared to the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa, CNMI ranks: 1) 3rd largest for land area {182 square miles}; 2) 2nd largest for total water area {1,793 square miles}; and 3) 2nd largest for total area {1,976 square miles}.

According to the CIA Factbook, the CNMI land is distributed as follows:

- *Land use: agricultural land: 6.6% (2018 est.)*
 - *arable land: 2.2% (2018 est.)*
 - *permanent crops: 2.2% (2018 est.)*
 - *permanent pasture: 2.2% (2018 est.)*
 - *forest: 65.5% (2018 est.)*
 - *other: 27.9% (2018 est.)*
- *Urbanization: urban population: 92.1% of total population (2023)*
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/northern-mariana-islands/#environment>

The criteria and definitions for rural and urban areas based on the 2020 Census are defined as follows:

- *Rural: Territory not defined as urban.*
- *Urban: Generally, densely developed territory, encompassing residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses within which social and economic interactions occur.*
- *Urban Area: A statistical geographic entity consisting of a densely settled core created from census blocks and contiguous qualifying territory that together have at least 2,000 housing units or 5,000 persons*

The data collected in 2020 indicated that 78 percent of CNMI's population is considered urban, and 22 percent of the population resides in territories that are defined rural. The population density of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is 259.5 people per square mile. The CNMI urban population density is 2,140.80 and the rural population density average is 63 people per square mile.

The U.S. Census Bureau published a list of all 2020 Census Urban Areas for the U.S., Puerto Rico and Island Areas. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has a total of 1 urban area identified as Garapan, located in the Saipan Municipality. Garapan had a population of 36,921 in 2020 and a population density of 2,140.76 people per square mile.

The U.S. Census Bureau published county-level urban and rural information for the 2020 census and included data for the six United States Territories. The 4 municipalities of the CNMI are considered county-equivalents in the Urban and Rural data set. Original category titles contain the word “county” versus “county-equivalent” or “municipality” in the table. The abbreviation “MP” is used in this table for ease of understanding the reference to the municipalities.

Table 5 details the 2020 CNMI municipality urban and rural land area averages and population density averages for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands along with percentage rates of the municipality population that reside within urban and rural blocks.

Table 5

CNMI Urban and Rural Information: 2020 Census

Urban and Rural Information: 2020 Census	Northern Islands	Rota	Saipan	Tinian
Total population of the MP	7	1,893	43,385	2,044
Land area of the MP (square miles)	61.80	32.86	45.90	41.79
Population density of the MP (square miles)	0.11	57.62	945.13	48.91
Total blocks within the County	58	152	561	102
Population of the MP within Urban blocks	0	0	36,921	0
Percent of the population within Urban blocks	0.00%	0.00%	85.10%	0.00%
Urban land area of the MP (square miles)	0.00	0.00	17.25	0.00
Percent of land within the MP classified as Urban	0.00%	0.00%	37.57%	0.00%
Urban population density of the MP (square miles)	0.00	0.00	2,140.77	0.00
Blocks classified as Urban within MP	0	0	386	0
Population of the MP within Rural blocks	7	1,893	6,464	2,044
Percent of the population in the MP within Rural blocks	100.00%	100.00%	14.90%	100.00%
2020 Rural land area of the MP (square miles)	61.80	32.86	28.66	41.79
Percent of land within the MP classified as Rural	100.00%	100.00%	62.43%	100.00%
Rural population density of the MP (square miles)	0.11	57.62	225.56	48.91
Blocks classified as Rural within MP	58	152	175	102

Source: County-level Urban and Rural information for the 2020 Census (Updated September 2023); <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>

Age, Income, and Home Value

Understanding a population's age composition provides insight into an area's changing phenomena, and current and future social and economic challenges. Income is the gauge often

used to determine well-being. Home value provides a picture of the housing situation in the area and insight into the local economic status.

Median Age

The median age of residents for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is 4.6 years lower than the residents of the United States. The median age estimate for the CNMI rural areas is about 11.4 years below the U.S. rural estimate. The median age for all municipalities ranges between 34.3 years to 36.5 years.

Median working age averages are not available for the CNMI. The U.S. median working age averages are provided for reference.

Table 6

Median Age by Municipality: CNMI

Geographic Area	Median age	Median Working Age 16 to 64
United States	39	39.5
U.S. -- Urban	37.9	38.9
U.S. -- Rural	43.4	42.3
CNMI	34.4	NA
CNMI -- Urban	35	NA
CNMI -- Rural	32	NA
NIM	34.5	NA
RM	35.4	NA
SM	34.3	NA
TM	36.5	NA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics

Median Household Income and Median Earnings

The median household incomes and median earnings of the CNMI are significantly lower than the U.S. National incomes and earnings. Tables 7 and 8 detail the median household income and median earnings for the U.S and CNMI in 2019. For reference, the U.S. 2022 1-year incomes and earnings are provided.

Table 7

Median Household Income – U.S. and CNMI

<i>Median Household Income – U.S. and CNMI</i>		
<i>Geographic Area</i>	<i>Median Household Income 2019</i>	<i>Median Household Income 2022</i>
U.S.	\$65,712	\$74,755
U.S. - Urban	\$66,047	\$75,706
U.S. - Rural	\$64,314	\$71,100
CNMI	\$31,362	NA
CNMI -- Urban	\$30,057	NA
CNMI -- Rural	\$39,235	NA
NIM	\$13,125	NA
RM	\$31,289	NA
SM	\$31,220	NA
TM	\$36,065	NA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates and 2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates; 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics

Table 8

Median Earnings: Population 16 years and over with earnings – U.S. and CNMI

<i>Population 16 years and over with Earnings – U.S. and CNMI</i>		
<i>Geographic Area</i>	<i>Median earnings in 2019</i>	<i>Median earnings in 2022</i>
U.S.	\$36,519	\$42,542
U.S. - Urban	\$36,602	\$43,040
U.S. - Rural	\$36,164	\$41,365
CNMI	\$17,002	NA
CNMI -- Urban	\$16,617	NA
CNMI -- Rural	\$19,575	NA
NIM	\$14,375	NA
RM	\$18,135	NA
SM	\$16,870	NA
TM	\$19,493	NA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates and 2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates; 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics

Median Home Value

The median home values of CNMI are significantly lower than the U.S. averages. Note that:

- 1) Home and corporate land ownership is limited to full-blooded Northern Marianas Chamorro or Northern Marianas Carolinian descent (NMD) according to Article 12 of the CNMI constitution; and
- 2) Non-NMD may lease property up to 55 years at a time or purchase a condominium above the first floor of a condominium building on privately owned land.

Table 9 details the median home values in the CNMI in 2020 and median home values in the U.S. in the years 2019 and 2022 for comparison purposes.

Table 9

Median Home Values – U.S. and CMNI: 2019 through 2022

<i>Median Home Values</i>			
<i>Geographic Area</i>	<i>Median Home Values in 2019</i>	<i>DECIA CNMI 2020</i>	<i>Median Home Values in 2022</i>
U.S.	\$240,500	NA	\$320,900
U.S. - Urban	\$257,400	NA	\$349,800
U.S. - Rural	\$190,800	NA	\$242,200
CNMI	NA	\$184,191	NA
CNMI -- Urban	NA	\$222,065	NA
CNMI -- Rural	NA	\$153,486	NA
NIM	NA	\$65,000	NA
RM	NA	\$101,705	NA
SM	NA	\$201,479	NA
TM	NA	\$197,222	NA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates and 2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates; 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics

Poverty

Poverty is defined as not having enough money to meet basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Examining poverty in an area, in addition to income, provides more insight into determining the well-being of an area's population.

Poverty in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for the Working Age 18 to 64 Years

The U.S. federal poverty guidelines used to determine financial eligibility for certain programs for the 48 contiguous and the District of Columbia are not the same guidelines applied for use in Alaska and Hawaii. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) creates separate poverty guidelines for Alaska and Hawaii and does not define poverty for Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau. Although the U.S. Census Bureau collects poverty data, caution is used in making inferences for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

For comparison purposes, the historical Non-farm poverty guidelines for the State of Hawaii from HHS are provided in Table 10. Poverty calculations for CNMI are from taken from the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census of the Island Areas. Poverty rates for the United States and Hawaii are also detailed in Table 11 and the data is taken from one-year estimates for the years 2019 and 2022. Numeric counts for total population and number below poverty level are included with the percentage rates. Codes for the table categories include: 1) Number BPL (number below poverty level); 2) Percent BPL (percent below poverty level); and 3) Total Pop. (total population).

Table 10

Poverty Guidelines for Hawaii (Nonfarm): Historical Poverty Guidelines through 2024

Date of Publication	January 2024	January 2023	January 2022	February 2021	January 2020	January 2019
1 Person	\$17,310	\$16,770	\$15,630	\$14,820	\$14,680	\$14,380
2 Persons	\$23,500	\$22,680	\$21,060	\$20,040	\$19,830	\$19,460
3 Persons	\$29,690	\$28,590	\$26,490	\$25,260	\$24,980	\$24,540
4 Persons	\$35,880	\$34,500	\$31,920	\$30,480	\$30,130	\$29,620
5 Persons	\$42,070	\$40,410	\$37,350	\$35,700	\$35,280	\$34,700
6 Persons	\$48,260	\$46,320	\$42,780	\$40,920	\$40,430	\$39,780
7 Persons	\$54,450	\$52,230	\$48,210	\$46,140	\$45,580	\$44,860
8 Persons	\$60,640	\$58,140	\$53,640	\$51,360	\$50,730	\$49,940
\$ For Each Additional Person (9+)	\$6,190	\$5,910	\$5,430	\$5,220	\$5,150	\$5,080

Source: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>

Table 11

Poverty Rates: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population Ages 18 to 64 Years

Poverty Status 2019		Population poverty status is determined	18 to 64 years
U.S.	Total Pop.	320,118,791	195,703,010
	Number BPL	39,490,096	22,504,357
	Percent BPL	12.3%	11.5%
U.S. -- Urban	Total Pop.	257,646,353	159,318,702
	Number BPL	32,730,451	18,757,758
	Percent BPL	12.7%	11.8%
U.S. -- Rural	Total Pop.	62,472,438	36,384,308
	Number BPL	6,759,645	3,746,599
	Percent BPL	10.8%	10.3%
Poverty Status 2019		Population poverty status is determined	18 to 64 years
Hawaii	Total Pop.	1,379,078	818,415
	Number BPL	128,722	69,228
	Percent BPL	9.3%	8.5%
HI -- Urban	Total Pop.	1,263,936	753,714
	Number BPL	113,600	61,479
	Percent BPL	9.0%	8.2%
HI -- Rural	Total Pop.	115,142	64,701
	Number BPL	15,122	7,749
	Percent BPL	13.1%	12.0%
Poverty Status 2019		All individuals	18 to 64 years
CNMI	Total Pop.	47,035	30,736
	Number BPL	17,876	10,569
	Percent BPL	38.0%	34.4%
NIM	Total Pop.	7	7
	Number BPL	N	N
	Percent BPL	N	N
RM	Total Pop.	1,891	1,212
	Number BPL	689	412

Poverty Status 2019		All individuals	18 to 64 years
	Percent BPL	36.4%	34.0%
SM	Total Pop.	43,095	28,201
	Number BPL	16,460	9,760
	Percent BPL	38.2%	34.6%
TM	Total Pop.	2,042	1,316
	Number BPL	724	394
	Percent BPL	35.5%	29.9%
Poverty Status 2022		Population poverty status is determined	18 to 64 years
U.S.	Total Pop.	325,521,470	197,858,864
	Number BPL	40,951,625	23,192,117
	Percent BPL	12.6%	11.7%
U.S. -- Urban	Total Pop.	259,863,893	160,081,312
	Number BPL	33,303,698	19,039,755
	Percent BPL	12.8%	11.9%
U.S. -- Rural	Total Pop.	65,657,577	37,777,552
	Number BPL	7,647,927	4,152,362
	Percent BPL	11.6%	11.0%
Poverty Status 2022		Population poverty status is determined	18 to 64 years
Hawaii	Total Pop.	1,402,729	823,388
	Number BPL	142,378	80,813
	Percent BPL	10.2%	9.8%
HI -- Urban	Total Pop.	1,206,478	716,144
	Number BPL	111,893	64,740
	Percent BPL	9.3%	9.0%
HI -- Rural	Total Pop.	196,251	107,244
	Number BPL	30,485	16,073
	Percent BPL	15.5%	15.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates and 2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates; 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile, Table DP3, 2020

Internet Accessibility

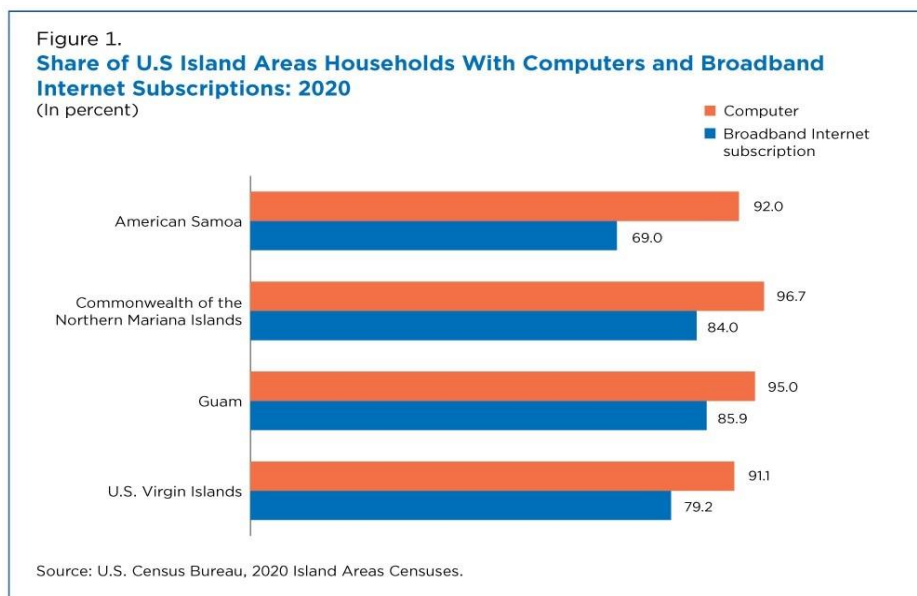
Access to fast and reliable high-speed internet service offers the opportunity to participate equally in society and engage in the global community. Internet access has become as important a measure of capacity and function as reliable transportation. The pandemic made high-speed reliable internet service essential for many jobs and an integral component of any assessment of the individual's ability to participate in rehabilitation services. A study of internet access is especially important in a State where there is a large rural area, as previous studies have shown that many rural communities lack infrastructure and access to internet and satellite networks.

Internet Accessibility in the CNMI

Internet accessibility increased from the year 2010 to the year 2020 in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Although cultural, geographic and socioeconomic differences exist between the U.S. Island Areas, when comparing the internet accessibility and computer ownership of the U.S. Island areas, CNMI had the highest rate of computer ownership, with approximately 84 percent of households reporting having broadband internet subscriptions and about 97 percent of households reporting owning at least one computer. Figure 1 details this information.

Figure 1

2020 DECIA Census: Share of U.S. Island Area Households with Computers and Broadband Internet Subscriptions



Note: The U.S. Census Bureau collects information regarding the availability of computers and electronic devices, and internet subscriptions based on the number occupied housing units in the CNMI and based on household counts, not population counts in the United States.

With the exception of the NIM municipality, over 93 percent of households in CNMI municipalities have one or more computing devices available. NIM is the smallest municipality and has the lowest rate (57.1%) and the rates for the remaining municipalities range from 93.8 percent to 97.5 percent. When comparing the rates for the presence of internet subscription service in the CNMI municipalities, the rates vary from no internet subscriptions in NIM households to 90.1 percent in TM. Residents in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands have higher rates of cellular data plan use in their households than broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL service. Key findings are: 1) no internet accessibility is available in NIM; and 2) 14.7 percent of RM households are without any internet service.

Tables 12 and 13 provide a picture of the availability of virtual accessibility in the U.S. and the CNMI, including urban and rural areas. Table 14 contains rates for types of computers and Internet subscriptions for each municipality.

Table 12

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: U.S., including Urban and Rural Areas

	United States	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural
Total households	129,870,928	103,990,597	25,880,331
TYPES OF COMPUTERS			
Has one or more types of computing devices:	95.7%	96.2%	93.8%
Desktop or laptop	80.5%	81.8%	75.3%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	2.5%	2.4%	3.2%
Smartphone	91.3%	92.0%	88.3%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	9.5%	8.9%	11.9%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	63.9%	65.1%	59.3%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%
Other computer	2.5%	2.7%	2.0%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No computer	4.3%	3.8%	6.2%
TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS			
With an Internet subscription:	91.2%	92.0%	87.7%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
Broadband of any type	91.0%	91.9%	87.4%
Cellular data plan	85.3%	86.6%	80.2%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	11.2%	10.4%	14.5%

TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS			
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	75.9%	79.0%	63.6%
Satellite Internet service	6.7%	5.5%	11.3%
Without an Internet subscription	8.8%	8.0%	12.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates

Table 13

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: CNMI, including Urban and Rural Areas

	CNMI	CNMI -- Urban	CNMI -- Rural
Total occupied housing units	14,282	11,392	2,890
AVAILABILITY OF DESKTOP, LAPTOP, SMARTPHONE, TABLET, OR OTHER TYPE OF COMPUTER IN HOUSEHOLD			
Has one or more types of computing devices:	96.7%	96.8%	96.5%
Desktop or laptop	60.8%	60.3%	62.7%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Smartphone	94.9%	95.1%	94.2%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	25.9%	26.7%	22.6%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	48.2%	46.8%	53.8%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%
Other computer	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No Computer	3.3%	3.2%	3.5%
PRESENCE AND TYPE OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS IN HOUSEHOLD			
With an Internet subscription:	84.1%	83.6%	86.0%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Broadband of any type:	84.0%	83.5%	85.9%
Cellular data plan	79.4%	78.8%	81.7%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	22.5%	22.4%	22.6%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	60.3%	59.8%	62.1%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL with no other type of Internet subscription	4.5%	4.6%	4.1%
Satellite Internet service	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%

PRESENCE AND TYPE OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS IN HOUSEHOLD			
Satellite Internet service with no other type of Internet subscription	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other service with no other type of Internet subscription	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Internet access without a subscription	5.1%	5.7%	2.8%
No Internet access	10.8%	10.7%	11.2%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table HBG42.

Table 14

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: CNMI Municipalities

	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Total occupied housing units	7	625	13,041	609
AVAILABILITY OF DESKTOP, LAPTOP, SMARTPHONE, TABLET, OR OTHER TYPE OF COMPUTER IN HOUSEHOLD				
Has one or more types of computing devices:	57.1%	93.8%	96.8%	97.5%
Desktop or laptop	14.3%	52.8%	61.2%	61.4%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	0.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%
Smartphone	28.6%	90.1%	95.1%	96.1%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	14.3%	30.9%	25.7%	24.0%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	28.6%	38.9%	48.4%	54.0%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	28.6%	1.0%	0.5%	0.2%
Other computer	0.0%	1.0%	0.7%	1.5%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No Computer	42.9%	6.2%	3.2%	2.5%
PRESENCE AND TYPE OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS IN HOUSEHOLD				
With an Internet subscription:	0.0%	80.8%	84.0%	90.1%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Broadband of any type:	0.0%	80.8%	83.9%	90.1%
Cellular data plan	0.0%	76.2%	79.2%	87.8%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	0.0%	27.4%	21.9%	29.1%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	0.0%	52.6%	60.7%	59.6%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL with no other type of Internet subscription	0.0%	4.3%	4.6%	2.3%

PRESENCE AND TYPE OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS IN HOUSEHOLD				
Satellite Internet service	0.0%	1.1%	1.0%	1.3%
Satellite Internet service with no other type of Internet subscription	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Other service with no other type of Internet subscription	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%
Internet access without a subscription	0.0%	4.5%	5.3%	1.8%
No Internet access	100.0%	14.7%	10.7%	8.0%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table HBG42.

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education completed in terms of the highest degree, or the highest level of schooling completed. Level of education influences the job market, both in public and private sectors.

High School Graduation Rates

The National average for the total population over the age of 25 whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school diploma or its equivalent, is 26.1 percent and the CNMI's average is 40.2 percent. All four municipalities have higher percentage rates when compared to the National average for those whose highest educational attainment level is a high school graduate or equivalency over the age of 25, and the rates exceed the National average by up to 25.3 percentage points.

Education at or above a Bachelor's Degree

The National and CNMI averages for the total population over the age of 25 whose highest level of educational attainment is a Bachelor's degree is 21.6% and 16.6%, respectively. SM's rate for achieving a Bachelor's degree (17%) exceeds the National rural rate (16.3%) by 0.7 percent and exceeds the CNMI average by less than 1 percentage point. Rates for attaining a Graduate or professional degree in the CNMI are significantly lower than the general, urban and rural U.S. rates.

Table 15 provides rates for both High School Graduation and Education at or above a Bachelor's degree for the United States and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Table 15

Educational Attainment: Population 25 Years and Over

Categories	United States		U.S. -- Urban		U.S. -- Rural	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Population 25 years and over	229,707,137	(X)	181,916,250	(X)	47,790,887	(X)
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	59,908,662	26.1%	43,856,557	24.1%	16,052,105	33.6%
Some college, no degree	43,842,184	19.1%	34,114,311	18.8%	9,727,873	20.4%
Associate's degree	20,222,893	8.8%	15,364,691	8.4%	4,858,202	10.2%
Bachelor's degree	49,641,033	21.6%	41,827,743	23.0%	7,813,290	16.3%
Graduate or professional degree	32,267,301	14.0%	27,773,633	15.3%	4,493,668	9.4%
High school graduate or higher	205,882,073	89.6%	162,936,935	89.6%	42,945,138	89.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	81,908,334	35.7%	69,601,376	38.3%	12,306,958	25.8%
Categories	CNMI		NIM		RM	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 25 years and over	29,449	100.0%	5	100.0%	1,166	100.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	11,851	40.2%	2	40.0%	599	51.4%
Some college, no degree	4,630	15.7%	0	0.0%	176	15.1%
Associate's degree	2,539	8.6%	0	0.0%	96	8.2%
Bachelor's degree	4,878	16.6%	0	0.0%	135	11.6%
Graduate or professional degree	1,316	4.5%	0	0.0%	36	3.1%
High school graduate or higher	25,214	85.6%	2	40.0%	1,042	89.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	6,194	21.0%	0	0.0%	171	14.7%

Categories	SM		TM	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 25 years and over	26,979	100.0%	1,299	100.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	10,657	39.5%	593	45.7%
Some college, no degree	4,244	15.7%	210	16.2%
Associate's degree	2,297	8.5%	146	11.2%
Bachelor's degree	4,575	17.0%	168	12.9%
Graduate or professional degree	1,249	4.6%	31	2.4%
High school graduate or higher	23,022	85.3%	1,148	88.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	5,824	21.6%	199	15.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates; 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile

Bachelor's Degree for the First Major for the Population 25 Years and Over

The 2020 Decennial Census of the Island Areas asked specific questions regarding bachelor's degree attainment. The Census Bureau published numeric counts of CNMI residents ages 25 and over regarding the type of bachelor's degree attained for the first major of study. The data is presented as OVR may find the information beneficial, noting the most frequently selected majors and the availability of local post-secondary educational programs.

Table 16

Detailed Field of Bachelor's Degree for First Major for the Population of 25 Years and Over

Detailed Bachelor's Degree: 1 st Major Ages 25+	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural
Total Number of Degrees	6,194	5,155	1,039
Science and Engineering			
Computers, Mathematics and Statistics	264	216	48
Biological, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences	196	157	39
Physical and Related Sciences	110	92	18
Psychology	118	90	28
Social Sciences	309	262	47
Engineering	567	501	66

Detailed Bachelor's Degree: 1 st Major Ages 25+	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	
Multidisciplinary Studies	25	17	8	
Science and Engineering Related Fields	630	527	103	
Business	1,877	1,611	266	
Education	906	699	207	
Arts, Humanities, and Other				
Literature and Languages	147	124	23	
Liberal Arts and History	180	136	44	
Visual and Performing Arts	99	94	5	
Communications	107	85	22	
Other	659	544	115	
	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Total Number of Degrees	0	171	5,824	199
Science and Engineering				
Computers, Mathematics and Statistics	0	10	247	7
Biological, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences	0	9	185	2
Physical and Related Sciences	0	2	104	4
Psychology	0	4	106	8
Social Sciences	0	9	289	11
Engineering	0	4	541	22
Multidisciplinary Studies	0	0	23	2
Science and Engineering Related Fields	0	21	581	28
Business	0	46	1,783	48
Education	0	39	835	32
Arts, Humanities, and Other				
Literature and Languages	0	5	137	5
Liberal Arts and History	0	2	168	10
Visual and Performing Arts	0	2	95	2
Communications	0	3	103	1
Other	0	15	627	17

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics

Vocational Training 2020

In addition to data regarding educational attainment, the US Census Bureau gathers data for the total population age 16 and over regarding completion of vocational training residing in U.S. Island Areas. Almost 47 percent of the population 16 years and over residing in TM completed vocational training while less than 20 percent of the same age group residing in the RM and SM municipalities completed vocational training. Table 17 summarizes the data for the Islands and the municipalities.

Table 17

Vocational Training Completion Age 16 and Over

Municipality	Completed requirements for vocational training program	Did not complete requirements for vocational training program
CNMI	20.7%	79.3%
NIM	28.6%	71.4%
RM	17.6%	82.4%
SM	19.6%	80.4%
TM	46.9%	53.1%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile

Disabilities Under Age 65

In addition to understanding the general trends of a geographic area, it is also important to gain knowledge of the prevalence of disability in the state when engaging in strategic planning and allocating resources. In this section, demographic data regarding the CNMI's disability population with reference to age, disability type, income, poverty and education are detailed with comparisons to the Nation and to local regions.

Disability Status

The estimated average for the total number of people with disabilities residing in the Nation in the year 2022 is 13.4 percent. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island's percentage is lower than the National average by 3.9 percent, averaging 9.5 percent. Of the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64 years in the CNMI, the reported disability rates from the RM and SM municipalities are lower than the National average of 11 percent and lower than the Nation's urban and rural averages for the same age group. The average percentage rate for individuals 18 to 64 years reporting a disability in TM is recorded at 12.2 percent, which is higher than the CNMI average by 2.8 percent and lower than the U.S. rural average by .6 percent. Disability Status estimates are calculated for the Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP) by the U.S. Census Bureau and are provided in Table 18.

Table 18

Disability Status: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population

	United States		U.S. -- Urban		U.S. -- Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TCNP with a disability	44,146,764	13.4%	33,975,769	12.9%	10,170,995	15.4%
Under 18 years with a disability	3,475,491	4.8%	2,748,227	4.8%	727,264	5.0%
18 to 64 years with a disability	22,007,000	11.0%	17,161,878	10.6%	4,845,122	12.8%
	CNMI		NIM			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
TCNP with a disability	4,483	9.5%	0	0.0%		
Under 18 years with a disability	500	3.7%	0	-		
18 to 64 with a disability	2,894	9.4%	0	0.0%		
	RM		SM		TM	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TCNP with a disability	154	8.1%	4,091	9.5%	238	11.6%
Under 18 years with a disability	11	2.0%	462	3.7%	27	4.5%
18 to 64 with a disability	104	8.6%	2,629	9.3%	161	12.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates; 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile

Disability Types

Knowledge of the types of disabilities reported by municipality residents helps OVR anticipate and prepare for meeting service needs and assisting the consumer to obtain necessary accommodations to maximize function and employability.

Disability types are classified into six categories and detailed by age in the U.S. Census data. When examining the age category 18 to 64 years for the Nation and the Islands, the data indicates that the CNMI's rates for those reporting hearing disabilities are similar to the United States rates. The United States rates for individuals reporting cognitive, ambulatory, and self-care disability are higher than the CNMI rates when compared with respect to geographic counterpart

(i.e., U.S. urban to CNMI urban). The rates for independent living disability in the rural area of the Islands and the U.S. have an insignificant margin of difference (0.2 percent).

Tables 19 and 20 provide specific data for the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Table categories include the population under 18 years and the population ages 18-64. The CNMI ages are slightly different from the U.S. categories as the ages 5 to 17 years are specified for three disability types. Disability type percentages for the CNMI are calculated by adding the total number of male and female counts and dividing the total number of individuals reporting the disability type within the designated geographic area by the number of noninstitutionalized civilians residing in the area.

Table 19

Disability Types and Age: United States

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability		
	U.S.	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural
With a hearing difficulty			
Under 18 years	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
18 to 64 years	2.0%	1.8%	2.9%
With a vision difficulty			
Under 18 years	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
18 to 64 years	2.1%	2.0%	2.5%
With a cognitive difficulty			
Under 18 years	4.8%	4.8%	4.9%
18 to 64 years	5.2%	5.1%	5.5%
With an ambulatory difficulty			
Under 18 years	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
18 to 64 years	4.4%	4.2%	5.6%
With a self-care difficulty			
Under 18 years	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%
18 to 64 years	1.7%	1.6%	2.0%
With an independent living difficulty			
18 to 64 years	3.9%	3.8%	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates

Table 20

Disability Types and Age: CNMI and Municipalities

Disability Types and Age: CNMI and Municipalities	Percent with a disability						
	CNMI	CNMI -- Urban	CNMI -- Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
With hearing difficulty							
Under 18 years	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%
18 to 64 years	2.0%	1.8%	2.9%	0.0%	2.6%	2.0%	2.6%
With vision difficulty							
Under 18 years	1.0%	1.1%	0.6%	0.0%	0.4%	1.0%	0.8%
18 to 64 years	3.4%	3.1%	4.4%	0.0%	2.4%	3.3%	5.5%
With a cognitive difficulty							
5 to 17 years	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%	0.0%	2.2%	2.8%	3.9%
18 to 64 years	2.7%	2.4%	3.8%	0.0%	2.3%	2.6%	4.9%
With an ambulatory difficulty							
5 to 17 years	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
18 to 64 years	3.7%	3.4%	4.8%	0.0%	3.5%	3.7%	4.6%
With a self-care difficulty							
5 to 17 years	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.5%	0.8%	1.3%
18 to 64 years	1.3%	1.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.7%	1.3%	1.4%
With an independent living difficulty							
18 to 64 years	3.3%	3.0%	4.3%	0.0%	2.1%	3.4%	3.1%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile

Disability and Poverty

In this section, poverty and disability statistics are presented. It is important to repeat in this report that that HHS creates separate poverty guidelines for Alaska and Hawaii and does not define poverty for Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau. Although the U.S. Census Bureau collects poverty data, caution is used in making inferences for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Two different questions regarding poverty and disability are addressed:

- 1) What is the proportion of the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) ages 20 to 64 who have a disability and live in poverty?; and
- 2) Of the number of the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) ages 20 to 64 that live in poverty, what proportion have a disability?

Important to note the age demographic for the United States is different from the age demographic for the CNMI. The population for whom poverty is determined in the CNMI begins at age 20 and ends at age 64 and the age range for the United States is age 18 years and over, which includes ages over 64 years.

When answering question 1, “What is the proportion of the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) ages 20 to 64 who have a disability and live in poverty?” for the CNMI, note that the proportion of people living below poverty and have as disability (3.7%), is less than one percentage point higher than the proportion of people 18 and over in the U.S. that are living in poverty and have a disability (3.2%). RM has the lowest rate in response to question 1.

Table 21 contains the United States averages in response to question 1 and 22 contains the averages for the CNMI and the municipalities.

Table 21

Poverty, Disability, and Population: Ages 18 and Over - United States (Question #1)

Poverty, Disability, and Population: Ages 18 and Over	United States
TCNP (total civilian noninstitutionalized population)	324,481,864
18 years and over	253,240,885
Percent of population 18 and over	78.0%
Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	29,341,173
Percent of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	11.6%
With a disability	3.2%
No disability	8.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates

Table 22

Poverty, Disability, and Population: Ages 20 to 64 - CNMI (Question #1)

Poverty, Disability, and Population: Ages 20 to 64		
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	29,384	-----
Income in 2019 below poverty level	10,015	34.1%

Poverty, Disability, and Population: Ages 20 to 64		
With a disability	1,076	3.7%
No disability	8,939	30.4%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	19,369	65.9%
With a disability	1,734	5.9%
No disability	17,635	60.0%
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands -- Urban	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	23,003	-----
Income in 2019 below poverty level	8,117	35.3%
With a disability	810	3.5%
No disability	7,307	31.8%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	14,886	64.7%
With a disability	1,183	5.1%
No disability	13,703	59.6%
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands -- Rural	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	6,381	-----
Income in 2019 below poverty level	1,898	29.7%
With a disability	266	4.2%
No disability	1,632	25.6%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	4,483	70.3%
With a disability	551	8.6%
No disability	3,932	61.6%
NIM	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	6	-----
Income in 2019 below poverty level	2	33.3%
With a disability	0	0.0%
No disability	2	33.3%

Poverty, Disability, and Population: Ages 20 to 64		
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	4	66.7%
With a disability	0	0.0%
No disability	4	66.7%
RM	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	1,160	-----
Income in 2019 below poverty level	386	33.3%
With a disability	31	2.7%
No disability	355	30.6%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	774	66.7%
With a disability	70	6.0%
No disability	704	60.7%
SM	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	26,962	-----
Income in 2019 below poverty level	9,255	34.3%
With a disability	1,007	3.7%
No disability	8,248	30.6%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	17,707	65.7%
With a disability	1,546	5.7%
No disability	16,161	59.9%
TM	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	1,256	-----
Income in 2019 below poverty level	372	29.6%
With a disability	38	3.0%
No disability	334	26.6%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	884	70.4%
With a disability	118	9.4%

Poverty, Disability, and Population: Ages 20 to 64		
No disability	766	61.0%

Source: 2020 DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics

In response to question 2, “Of the number of the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) ages 20 to 64 that live in poverty, what proportion have a disability?,” SM has the highest rate of people that live in poverty and have a disability (10.9%). Conversely, TM has the highest rate of people that live above the poverty level and have a disability (13.3%) and the rate is 4.3 percentage points higher than the CNMI rate and 1 point higher than the CNMI rural average.

Table 23 details the United States averages in response to question 2 and 24 contains the averages for the CNMI and the municipalities.

Table 23

Disability Among the 18 and Over Population Living in Poverty: United States (Question 2)

Disability Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty	United States
Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	29,341,173
Number of 18 years and over in Poverty with a Disability	8,230,762
With a disability	28.1%
No disability	71.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates

Table 24

Disability Among the 20 to 64 Population Living in Poverty: CNMI

Disability Among the 20 to 64 Population Living in Poverty		
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	29,384	
Income in 2019 below poverty level	10,015	
With a disability	1,076	10.7%
No disability	8,939	89.3%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	19,369	
With a disability	1,734	9.0%
No disability	17,635	91.0%
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands -- Urban	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64

Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	23,003	
Income in 2019 below poverty level	8,117	
With a disability	810	10.0%
No disability	7,307	90.0%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	14,886	
With a disability	1,183	7.9%
No disability	13,703	92.1%
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands -- Rural	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	6,381	
Income in 2019 below poverty level	1,898	
With a disability	266	14.0%
No disability	1,632	86.0%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	4,483	
With a disability	551	12.3%
No disability	3,932	87.7%
NIM	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	6	
Income in 2019 below poverty level	2	
With a disability	0	0.0%
No disability	2	100.0%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	4	
With a disability	0	0.0%
No disability	4	100.0%
RM	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	1,160	
Income in 2019 below poverty level	386	

With a disability	31	8.0%
No disability	355	92.0%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	774	
With a disability	70	9.0%
No disability	704	91.0%
SM	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	26,962	
Income in 2019 below poverty level	9,255	
With a disability	1,007	10.9%
No disability	8,248	89.1%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	17,707	
With a disability	1,546	8.7%
No disability	16,161	91.3%
TM	Numeric Count	Percent of population 20 - 64
Population 20 to 64 years for whom poverty status is determined	1,256	
Income in 2019 below poverty level	372	
With a disability	38	10.2%
No disability	334	89.8%
Income in 2019 at or above poverty level	884	
With a disability	118	13.3%
No disability	766	86.7%

Source: 2020 DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics

Disability and Educational Attainment

Data is available for the CNMI Territory regarding disability status and educational attainment for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population age 25 years and over.

Almost 13 percent of the population age 25 and over had a disability and attended school in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The majority of individuals with a disability (43.3%) completed high school, either by diploma, GED or alternative which is almost equal to the individuals without a disability. A large percentage of those with a disability (25.5%) do not

achieve high school graduation, which is slightly over 13% more than individuals without a disability who do not complete high school. High school graduation or equivalency attainment rates are equal or within 1 percentage point difference for those with and without disabilities for the SM and TM municipalities. Roughly one-fifth of people with disabilities in the CNMI municipalities start college, yet Bachelor's degree attainment for people with disabilities are lower than the attainment rates for those without disabilities in all CNMI municipalities by 3.2 to 8.7 percentage points.

Table 25 contains the results for the United State and Table 26 contains data for the CNMI and the municipalities.

Table 25

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Nation

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Nation	United States	
	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	225,493,657	
Population Age 25 and Over	38,005,098	187,488,559
Percent of Population Age 25 and Over	16.9%	83.1%
Less than high school graduate	17.0%	8.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	33.0%	24.4%
Some college or associate's degree	29.0%	27.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	21.0%	39.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates

Table 26

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: CNMI and Municipalities

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: CNMI	CNMI		CNMI -- Urban	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
CNP Age 25 and Over	29,254		22,966	
Population Age 25 and Over	3,721	25,533	2,711	20,255
Percent of CNP Age 25 and Over	12.7%	87.3%	11.8%	88.2%
Less than high school graduate	25.5%	12.4%	26.5%	12.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	40.3%	40.4%	38.7%	38.9%
Some college or associate's degree	20.5%	25.0%	19.8%	25.1%

Bachelor's degree or higher	13.8%	22.2%	14.9%	23.4%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: CNMI Rural and NIM	CNMI -- Rural		NIM	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
CNP Age 25 and Over	6,288		5	
Population Age 25 and Over	1,010	5,278	0	5
Percent of CNP Age 25 and Over	16.1%	83.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Less than high school graduate	22.8%	11.8%	0.0%	60.0%
High school graduate (inc. equivalency)	44.4%	46.0%	0.0%	40.0%
Some college or associate's degree	22.1%	24.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	10.8%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: RM and SM	RM		SM	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
CNP Age 25 and Over	1,166		26,785	
Population Age 25 and Over	136	1,030	3,387	23,398
Percent of CNP Age 25 and Over	11.7%	88.3%	12.6%	87.4%
Less than high school graduate	16.2%	9.9%	26.1%	12.6%
High school graduate (inc.equivalency)	48.5%	51.7%	39.6%	39.6%
Some college or associate's degree	23.5%	23.3%	20.2%	24.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	11.8%	15.0%	14.1%	22.8%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: TM	TM			
	With a Disability	No Disability		
CNP Age 25 and Over	1,298			
Population Age 25 and Over	198	1,100		
Percent of CNP Age 25 and Over	15.3%	84.7%		
Less than high school graduate	21.7%	9.8%		
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	46.5%	45.5%		
Some college or associate's degree	22.7%	28.2%		
Bachelor's degree or higher	9.1%	16.5%		

Source: 2020 DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics

General Trends of Employment, Occupations, Industries, and Labor Force Participation For the Civilian Non Institutionalized Population

Local economies thrive based on employment, occupations, and industries available to area residents and the individuals' participation in the labor force. Knowledge of the local area labor force, internet accessibility, employment rates, occupations, industries, and labor force participation facilitates helping customers find local job opportunities and securing appropriate job placement.

The labor force includes all people classified in the civilian labor force, plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces (people on active duty with the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard). The civilian labor force consists of people classified as employed or unemployed and actively looking for work. The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population that is in the labor force.

Occupations: U.S. and CNMI

Occupation describes the kind of work a person does on the job.

United States Occupations: BLS

The U.S. Department Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) provides data for the largest occupations within the Nation, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The following chart is the most recent data (May, 2022) results indicating the largest occupations for the Nation.

Table 27

Occupational Employment Statistics for the U.S.

Largest occupations in the United States, May 2022	
Occupation	Employment
Retail Salespersons	3,640,040
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	3,504,230
General and Operations Managers	3,376,680
Fast Food and Counter Workers	3,325,050
Cashiers	3,296,040
Registered Nurses	3,072,700
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,934,050
Customer Service Representatives	2,879,840

Stockers and Order Fillers	2,842,060
Office Clerks, General	2,517,350

Source: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/area_emp_chart/area_emp_chart_data.htm#United_States

The largest occupation in the U.S. is Retail Salespersons, followed by Home Health and Personal Care Aides, which ranks as the second largest occupation in the U.S. The difference between the second ranking occupation and General and Operations Managers, which ranks third, is approximately 127,550 workers.

CNMI Occupations: U.S. Census Bureau

The 2020 Decennial Island Census contained data relevant to occupation for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Table 28 summarizes the occupations by municipality and includes numeric counts and percentage rates.

Table 28

Occupation by Municipality, Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands, 2020

Occupations:	CNMI		NIM		RM	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	18,759	100.0%	5	100.0%	717	100.0%
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	5,334	28.4%	4	80.0%	221	30.8%
Service occupations	4,612	24.6%	1	20.0%	205	28.6%
Sales and office occupations	3,743	20.0%	0	0.0%	133	18.5%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	3,073	16.4%	0	0.0%	88	12.3%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	1,997	10.6%	0	0.0%	70	9.8%
Occupations: Age 16+	SM		TM			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	17,123	100.0%	914	100.0%		
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	4,832	28.2%	277	30.3%		
Service occupations	4,189	24.5%	217	23.7%		
Sales and office occupations	3,456	20.2%	154	16.8%		

Occupations:	CNMI		NIM		RM	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	2,793	16.3%	192	21.0%		
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	1,853	10.8%	74	8.1%		

Source: 2020 DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile

CNMI Occupations and Local Employers

As of March 15, 2024, the marianaslabor.net website was decommissioned and the CNMI Department of Labor accepts all job vacancy submissions for processing and posting on the labor.cnmi.gov website. The information in the following table is taken from the CNMI DOL website on March 18, 2024. The table contains 35 of the most recent job vacancy postings. The postings include occupations, local employers, and wage information to provide a snapshot of current labor force and employer needs in the Island's municipalities.

Table 29

Job Vacancies – CNMI March, 2024

Job Title	Employer Name	Job Category	Wage
Barista	Hafabea, LLC.	Food Preparation and Serving	\$7.97 - \$8 / hour
General Maintenance & Repair Workers	LPZ Enterprises, Inc.	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Service Occupations	\$9.54 / hour
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	SmartStart Learning LLC	Business and Financial Operations	\$11.43 / hour
Maintenance, Repair Workers & Repair Workers, General	Juan t. Guerrero & Associates, INC.	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	\$9.54 / hour
Assistant Cook	Global Sourcing, LLC.	Food Preparation and Serving Food Preparation	\$8.69 / hour
Teaching Assistant-Elementary	Grace Christian Academy	Education, Training, and Library	\$10.46 / hour
Teaching Assistant – Middle and Second (Science)	Grace Christian Academy	Education, Training, and Library	\$10.46 / hour
Cook	Allied Construction Corporation	Food Preparation and Serving	\$9.28 / hour
Delivery Driver	Allied Construction Corporation	Transportation and Material Moving	\$8.20 / hour

Job Title	Employer Name	Job Category	Wage
Cook	Allied Construction Corporation	Food Preparation and Serving	\$9.28 / hour
Delivery Driver	Allied Construction Corporation	Transportation and Material Moving	\$9.20 / hour
Child Care Worker	SmartStart Learning LLC	Personal Care and Service Childcare Worker	\$7.79 / hour
Food Preparation Workers	Allied Construction Corporation	Food Preparation and Serving	\$7.95 / hour
Housekeeping Attendant	Micronesia Resort Inc.	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	\$7.64 - \$9.56 / hour
Recreation Attendant	Micronesia Resort Inc.	Personal Care and Service	\$7.64 - \$9.56/ hour
Beautician	Yan Yi Corporation	Personal Care and Service	\$9.77 / hour
Heavy Equipment Operator	Valcon Guam LLC dba Valdez Equipment	Construction and Extraction	\$18.06 / hour
Cement Mason	Valcon Guam LLC dba Valdez Equipment	Construction and Extraction	\$15.66 / hour
Carpenter	Valcon Guam LLC dba Valdez Equipment	Construction and Extraction	\$15.58 / hour
Solar Energy Construction Manager	Micronesia Renewable Energy, Inc. CNMI	Construction and Extraction	\$40,000 - \$70,000 / year
Vice Operation Manager	Guangdong Development Co., Ltd	Management	\$22.10 / hour
News Reporter	Younis Art Studio, INC.	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media (Newspaper Publishing)	\$17.37 / hour
Marketing Assistant	Island Training Solutions	Management Marketing Specialist/Social Media Management Admin	\$7.25 - \$10 / hour
Program Coordinator	Island Training Solutions	Management Marketing Specialist/Social Media Management Admin	\$7.25 - \$12 / hour
Guest Service Representative	Marianas Staffing Solutions, Inc.	Office and Administrative Support	\$8.72 / hour
Guest Service Representative	Marianas Staffing Solutions, Inc.	Office and Administrative Support	\$8.72 / hour

Job Title	Employer Name	Job Category	Wage
Tailor	Saipan Fashion Company	Personal Care and Service	\$8.84 / hour
Nail Technician	Duong Corporation	Personal Care and Service	\$9.54 / hour
Security Guard	JRTJ Corporation	Protective Service	\$7.96 / hour
Electrical Engineer	JMSI Saipan, LLC	Architecture and Engineering Electrical Engineering	\$26.84 / hour
Server/Wait staff	The Sushi Spot	Food Preparation and Serving	\$7.50 / hour
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	EFG Pacific Holdings, LLC	Business and Financial Operations	\$11.43 / hour
Childcare Workers	EFG Pacific Holdings, LLC	Personal Care and Service	\$7.79 / hour
Security Guard	JRTJ Corporation	Protective Service	\$8.64 / hour
Stock Clerks, Sales Floor	EFG Pacific Holdings, LLC	Sales and Related	\$8.56 / hour

Source: <https://jobs.labor.cnmi.gov/>

CNMI Job Preference Requirement

Important information is posted on the CNMI DOL website for employers, OVR, and the public. On March 15, 2024, Job Preference Requirement 80-20.1-220 was posted on the CNMI Department of Labor website. Picture 1 contains the details of the job preference requirement.

Picture 1

CNMI DOL Job Preference Requirement 80-20.1-220



Source: <https://labor.cnmi.gov/80-20-1-220-job-preference-requirement/>

Regional Industries

The term industry in this section of the report refers to the kind of business conducted by a person's employing organization.

The US Census Bureau publishes data from the 2020 Decennial Census of the Island Areas detailing information on the top industries by employment. Table 30 displays the industries in rank order by the number of employees. The data includes the United States, the CNMI, and the municipalities.

The Commonwealth's lists of leading industries by employment are different from the National list. Public Administration is the top industry by employment in three of the four CNMI municipalities and ranks third on the CNMI general list. Educational services, and health care and social assistance ranks as one of the top five industries in RM, SM and TM, and ranks in the top position for the United States. Retail trade is the third leading industry in the U.S., is the fifth leading industry on the general CMNI list and does not rank in the top five industries for NIM or TM.

Table 30

Local Area Top Industries by Employment: U.S. and CNMI, Including Municipality Averages

Local Area Top Industries by Employment	United States	
	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	162,590,221	162,590,221
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	37,480,570	23.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	20,474,027	12.6%
Retail trade	18,073,795	11.1%
Manufacturing	16,096,892	9.9%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	14,097,318	8.7%
Construction	11,213,024	6.9%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	10,967,381	6.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	9,779,768	6.0%
Other services, except public administration	7,675,317	4.7%
Public administration	7,545,529	4.6%
Wholesale trade	3,502,056	2.2%
Information	3,137,801	1.9%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2,546,743	1.6%

	CNMI	
	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	18,759	100.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	3,809	20.3%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	2,335	12.4%
Public administration	2,259	12.0%
Construction	2,204	11.7%
Retail trade	2,121	11.3%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,632	8.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,359	7.2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	776	4.1%
Other services, except public administration	724	3.9%
Wholesale trade	566	3.0%
Manufacturing	411	2.2%
Information	396	2.1%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	167	0.9%
	NIM	
	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	5	100.0%
Public administration	5	100.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0	0.0%
Construction	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	0	0.0%
Wholesale trade	0	0.0%
Retail trade	0	0.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	0	0.0%
Information	0	0.0%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	0	0.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	0	0.0%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	0	0.0%

	NIM	
	Number	Percent
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	0	0.0%
Other services, except public administration	0	0.0%
	RM	
	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	717	100.0%
Public administration	216	30.1%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	99	13.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	93	13.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	83	11.6%
Retail trade	77	10.7%
Construction	47	6.6%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	26	3.6%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	25	3.5%
Other services, except public administration	16	2.2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	15	2.1%
Manufacturing	9	1.3%
Information	7	1.0%
Wholesale trade	4	0.6%
	SM	
	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	17,123	100.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	3,626	21.2%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	2,118	12.4%
Construction	2,016	11.8%
Retail trade	1,979	11.6%
Public administration	1,783	10.4%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,562	9.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,147	6.7%

	SM	
	Number	Percent
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	746	4.4%
Other services, except public administration	696	4.1%
Wholesale trade	559	3.3%
Manufacturing	395	2.3%
Information	367	2.1%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	129	0.8%
	TM	
	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	914	100.0%
Public administration	255	27.9%
Construction	141	15.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	129	14.1%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	124	13.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	84	9.2%
Retail trade	65	7.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	45	4.9%
Information	22	2.4%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	15	1.6%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	12	1.3%
Other services, except public administration	12	1.3%
Manufacturing	7	0.8%
Wholesale trade	3	0.3%

Source: 2020 DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile

Employment, Occupations, Industries and Labor Force Participation for People with Disabilities

Data on employment, occupations, industries, and labor force participation for people with disabilities is collected and analyzed by the U.S. Census Bureau. This section presents statistics collected by the Bureau regarding people with disabilities and their participation in the labor force in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Occupations, Industries, and Employees with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau collects and analyzes data for the largest occupations and industries within the CNMI and the municipalities for people with disabilities who are part of the civilian employed noninstitutionalized population (CENP) age 16 years and over. The following tables summarize numeric counts of the occupations and industries that people with disabilities are employed in.

Table 31

Numeric Count of Employed Individuals by Disability Status, Age and Occupation: CNMI

Disability Status and Age by Occupation		CENP 16+	CENP 16 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability	CENP 65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
CNMI	Total	18,759	17,958	1,122	16,836	801	168	633
	Management, business, science, and arts occupations	5,334	5,036	324	4,712	298	72	226
	Service occupations	4,612	4,441	288	4,153	171	35	136
	Sales and office occupations	3,743	3,643	222	3,421	100	17	83
	Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	3,073	2,910	153	2,757	163	35	128
	Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	1,997	1,928	135	1,793	69	9	60
NIM	Total	5	5	N	5	N	N	N
	Management, business, science, and arts occupations	4	4	N	4	N	N	N
	Service occupations	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Sales and office occupations	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
RM	Total	717	695	43	652	22	6	16
	Management, business, science, and arts occupations	221	212	11	201	9	N	7

Disability Status and Age by Occupation		CENP 16+	CENP 16 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability	CENP 65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
	Service occupations	205	201	10	191	4	N	N
	Sales and office occupations	133	129	10	119	4	N	4
	Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	88	84	6	78	4	N	N
	Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	70	69	6	63	N	N	N
SM	Total	17,123	16,383	998	15,385	740	152	588
	Management, business, science, and arts occupations	4,832	4,561	283	4,278	271	66	205
	Service occupations	4,189	4,030	259	3,771	159	31	128
	Sales and office occupations	3,456	3,363	194	3,169	93	16	77
	Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	2,793	2,642	138	2,504	151	32	119
	Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	1,853	1,787	124	1,663	66	7	59
TM	Total	914	875	81	794	39	10	29
	Management, business, science, and arts occupations	277	259	30	229	18	4	14
	Service occupations	217	209	19	190	8	N	5
	Sales and office occupations	154	151	18	133	N	N	N
	Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	192	184	9	175	8	N	7

Disability Status and Age by Occupation		CENP 16+	CENP 16 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability	CENP 65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
	Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	74	72	5	67	N	N	N

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Detailed Crosstabulations

Table 32

Numeric Count of Employed Individuals by Disability Status, Age and Industry: CNMI

Disability Status and Age by Industry		CENP 16+	CENP 16 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability	CENP 65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
CNMI	Total	18,759	17,958	1,122	16,836	801	168	633
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	167	154	7	147	13	N	11
	Construction	2,204	2,090	119	1,971	114	22	92
	Manufacturing	411	385	19	366	26	8	18
	Wholesale trade	566	539	34	505	27	4	23
	Retail trade	2,121	2,046	105	1,941	75	12	63
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,359	1,300	89	1,211	59	6	53
	Information	396	385	23	362	11	N	8
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	776	728	44	684	48	12	36
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,632	1,530	104	1,426	102	23	79

Disability Status and Age by Industry		CENP 16+	CENP 16 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability	CENP 65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	2,335	2,206	157	2,049	129	34	95
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	3,809	3,696	190	3,506	113	21	92
	Other services, except public administration	724	691	42	649	33	7	26
	Public administration	2,259	2,208	189	2,019	51	14	37
NIM	Total	5	5	N	5	N	N	N
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Construction	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Manufacturing	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Wholesale trade	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Retail trade	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Information	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Disability Status and Age by Industry		CENP 16+	CENP 16 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability	CENP 65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Other services, except public administration	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Public administration	5	5	N	5	N	N	N
RM	Total	717	695	43	652	22	6	16
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	26	26	N	26	N	N	N
	Construction	47	45	5	40	N	N	N
	Manufacturing	9	9	N	9	N	N	N
	Wholesale trade	4	4	N	4	N	N	N
	Retail trade	77	73	6	67	4	N	4
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	83	83	6	77	N	N	N
	Information	7	7	N	7	N	N	N
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	15	15	N	14	N	N	N
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	25	24	N	21	N	N	N
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	93	89	5	84	4	N	N
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	99	93	4	89	6	N	N
	Other services, except public administration	16	16	N	15	N	N	N

Disability Status and Age by Industry		CENP 16+	CENP 16 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability	CENP 65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
	Public administration	216	211	12	199	5	N	4
SM	Total	17,123	16,383	998	15,385	740	152	588
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	129	117	7	110	12	N	10
	Construction	2,016	1,909	106	1,803	107	19	88
	Manufacturing	395	370	19	351	25	7	18
	Wholesale trade	559	533	34	499	26	4	22
	Retail trade	1,979	1,909	97	1,812	70	12	58
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,147	1,093	79	1,014	54	6	48
	Information	367	358	21	337	9	N	7
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	746	699	42	657	47	12	35
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,562	1,462	95	1,367	100	23	77
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	2,118	2,002	138	1,864	116	29	87
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	3,626	3,523	179	3,344	103	18	85
	Other services, except public administration	696	664	39	625	32	6	26
	Public administration	1,783	1,744	142	1,602	39	12	27
TM	Total	914	875	81	794	39	10	29

Disability Status and Age by Industry		CENP 16+	CENP 16 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability	CENP 65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	12	11	N	11	N	N	N
	Construction	141	136	8	128	5	N	N
	Manufacturing	7	6	N	6	N	N	N
	Wholesale trade	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Retail trade	65	64	N	62	N	N	N
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	129	124	4	120	5	N	5
	Information	22	20	N	18	N	N	N
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	15	14	N	13	N	N	N
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	45	44	6	38	N	N	N
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	124	115	14	101	9	4	5
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	84	80	7	73	4	N	4
	Other services, except public administration	12	11	N	9	N	N	N
	Public administration	255	248	35	213	7	N	6

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Detailed Crosstabulations

United States Department of Labor Disability Employment Statistics

The U.S. Department of Labor provides monthly Disability Employment Statistics. The Labor Force Participation Rate refers to the percentage of non-institutionalized U.S. citizens who are in the labor force. The unemployment rate measures the percentage within the labor force who are currently without a job. The data indicates that labor force participation rates for individuals with disabilities is consistently over 43 points higher than the rate for individuals without disabilities. In addition, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is consistently at least between 3 and 4 percentage points higher compared to individuals without disabilities. Table 33 contains the statistics for August through December 2023, and includes the Annual 2023 averages for individuals without and with a disability in the U.S ages 16 and over.

Table 33

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates for PWD in the U.S

Group	Labor Force Participation Rates				
	23-Nov	23-Dec	Annual 2023	Jan-24	Feb-24
People with Disabilities	24.8%	24.5%	24.2%	24.5%	24.4%
People without Disabilities	68.2%	67.6%	68.1%	67.6%	68.0%
	Unemployment Rate				
	23-Nov	23-Dec	Annual 2023	Jan-24	Feb-24
People with Disabilities	7.3%	6.7%	7.2%	6.6%	7.7%
People without Disabilities	3.3%	3.4%	3.5%	3.9%	4.0%

<https://www.bls.gov>

Labor Force Participation (LPF): People with Disabilities in the CNMI

The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population that is in the labor force.

Of the total population age 16 years and older residing in the United States who report having a disability, 28.1% are employed and participating in the Labor Force, while approximately 69.2% are not in the labor force. The labor force participation rates for the CNMI is based on the civilian noninstitutionalized population 18 to 64 years. The CNMI's average for those who report a disability and are employed is 38.7%.

Table 34 provides data based on disability status and employment for ages 16 and over from the U.S. Census Bureau for the year 2022 for the Nation. Table 35 details data for the CNMI and the municipalities taken from the 2020 Decennial Census of the Island Areas.

Table 34

LFP - Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP) Age 16 and Over: U.S.

Labor Force Participation and Employment Status: People with Disabilities in the U.S.	United States		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Population Age 16 and Over	264,618,455	41,295,440	223,323,015
Employed	61.4%	28.1%	67.6%
Not in Labor Force	35.8%	69.2%	29.7%
Employed Population Age 16 and Over	162,576,634	11,621,187	150,955,447

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates

Table 35

LFP – Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (CNP) ages 18 to 64: CNMI and Municipalities

Labor Force Participation and Employment Status: People with Disabilities: CNMI	CNMI	
	Number	Percent
CNP 18 to 64 years	30,720	100.0%
With a disability	2,894	9.4%
Percent employed	(X)	38.7%
No disability	27,826	90.6%
Percent employed	(X)	60.1%
	NIM	
	Number	Percent
CNP 18 to 64 years	7	100.0%
With a disability	0	0.0%
Percent employed	(X)	-
No disability	7	100.0%
Percent employed	(X)	71.4%
	RM	
	Number	Percent
CNP 18 to 64 years	1,212	100.0%
With a disability	104	8.6%
Percent employed	(X)	41.3%

No disability	1,108	91.4%
Percent employed	(X)	58.6%
SM		
	Number	Percent
CNP 18 to 64 years	28,186	100.0%
With a disability	2,629	9.3%
Percent employed	(X)	37.8%
No disability	25,557	90.7%
Percent employed	(X)	59.8%
TM		
	Number	Percent
CNP 18 to 64 years	1,315	100.0%
With a disability	161	12.2%
Percent employed	(X)	50.3%
No disability	1,154	87.8%
Percent employed	(X)	68.4%

Source: 2020 DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile

Employment Status by Disability Status and Type

Employment status by disability type is estimated for the population ages 18 years to 64 years by the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. average for individuals with cognitive disabilities (41.1%) ranks the highest for labor force participation when compared to other disabilities. The CNMI averages for individuals reporting a cognitive disability and are employed are 26.2% (CNMI), 25.2% (CNMI Urban) and 28.7% (CNMI Rural) respectively.

In the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the rates for individuals reporting hearing disabilities and are employed are over 41 percent in RM, SM and TM. Note the rate for the U.S. is 23.6%, which is 18.2 percent lower than the general CNMI rate of 41.8 percent.

Table 36 contains employment rates by disability type from 2022 for the Nation. Table 37 summarizes the data for the CNMI and the municipalities.

Table 36

Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: U.S.

<i>Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: U.S.</i>	United States
Total 18 - 64 years:	199,645,753
In labor force:	78.5%
Employed:	95.8%
With a disability	6.5%
Hearing	23.6%
Vision	22.1%
Cognitive	41.1%
Ambulatory	26.6%
Self-care	6.1%
Independent Living	18.9%
No disability	93.5%
Unemployed:	4.2%
With a disability	15.1%
No disability	84.9%
Not in labor force:	21.5%
With a disability	26.1%
No disability	73.9%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	6.9%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	93.1%
Total Pop w/ disability	11.0%
Total Pop w/o disability	89.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates

Table 37

Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: CNMI, Including Urban, Rural and Municipalities

Hearing Disability	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Total CNP 18 years and over:	47,128	36,725	10,403	7	1,893	43,185	2,043
18 to 64 years:	65.2%	65.5%	64.2%	100.0%	64.0%	65.3%	64.4%
With hearing difficulty:	2.0%	1.8%	2.9%	0.0%	2.6%	2.0%	2.6%
Employed	41.8%	40.5%	44.7%	0.0%	48.4%	41.1%	47.1%
Not employed	58.2%	59.5%	55.3%	0.0%	51.2%	58.9%	52.9%
No hearing difficulty:	98.0%	98.2%	97.1%	100.0%	97.4%	98.0%	97.4%
Employed	58.4%	58.5%	58.2%	71.4%	57.3%	58.1%	66.7%
Not employed	41.6%	41.5%	41.8%	28.6%	42.7%	41.9%	33.3%
Vision Disability	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Total CNP 18 years and over:	47,128	36,725	10,403	7	1,893	43,185	2,043
18 to 64 years:	65.2%	65.5%	64.2%	100.0%	64.0%	65.3%	64.4%
With vision difficulty:	3.4%	3.1%	4.4%	0.0%	2.4%	3.3%	5.5%
Employed	44.8%	45.0%	44.3%	0.0%	37.9%	44.8%	47.2%
Not employed	55.2%	55.0%	55.7%	0.0%	62.1%	55.2%	52.8%
No vision difficulty:	96.6%	96.9%	95.6%	100.0%	97.6%	96.7%	94.5%
Employed	58.5%	58.6%	58.4%	71.4%	57.6%	58.2%	67.3%
Not employed	41.5%	41.4%	41.6%	28.6%	42.4%	41.8%	32.7%
Cognitive Disability	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Total CNP 18 years and over:	43,910	34,324	9,586	7	1,749	40,251	1,903
18 to 64 years:	70.0%	70.0%	69.7%	100.0%	69.3%	70.0%	69.1%
With a cognitive difficulty:	2.7%	2.4%	3.8%	0.0%	2.3%	2.6%	4.9%
Employed	26.2%	25.2%	28.7%	0.0%	28.6%	25.3%	35.9%
Not employed	73.8%	74.8%	71.3%	0.0%	71.4%	74.7%	64.1%
No cognitive difficulty:	97.3%	97.6%	96.2%	100.0%	97.7%	97.4%	95.1%

Cognitive Disability	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Employed	59.0%	59.0%	58.9%	71.4%	57.8%	58.6%	67.7%
Not employed	41.0%	41.0%	41.1%	28.6%	42.2%	41.8%	32.3%
Ambulatory Disability	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Total CNP 18 years and over:	43,910	34,324	9,586	7	1,749	40,251	1,903
18 to 64 years:	70.0%	70.0%	69.7%	100.0%	69.3%	70.0%	69.1%
With an ambulatory difficulty:	3.7%	3.4%	4.8%	0.0%	3.5%	3.7%	4.6%
Employed	26.6%	25.3%	29.8%	0.0%	33.3%	25.1%	46.7%
Not employed	73.4%	74.7%	70.2%	0.0%	66.7%	74.9%	53.3%
No ambulatory difficulty:	96.3%	96.6%	95.2%	100.0%	96.5%	96.3%	95.4%
Employed	59.3%	59.3%	59.2%	71.4%	57.9%	59.0%	67.1%
Not employed	40.7%	40.7%	40.8%	28.6%	42.1%	41.0%	32.9%
Self-care Disability	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Total CNP 18 years and over:	43,910	34,324	9,586	7	1,749	40,251	1,903
18 to 64 years:	70.0%	70.0%	69.7%	100.0%	69.3%	70.0%	69.1%
With a self-care difficulty:	1.3%	1.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.7%	1.3%	1.4%
Employed	13.2%	12.3%	15.6%	0.0%	11.1%	12.8%	22.2%
Not employed	86.8%	87.7%	84.4%	0.0%	88.9%	87.2%	77.8%
No self-care difficulty:	98.7%	98.8%	98.4%	100.0%	99.3%	98.8%	98.6%
Employed	58.6%	58.7%	58.5%	71.4%	57.4%	58.3%	66.8%
Not employed	41.4%	41.3%	41.5%	28.6%	42.6%	41.7%	33.2%
Independent Living Disability	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Total CNP 18 years and over:	33,508	26,227	7,281	7	1,334	30,730	1,437
18 to 64 years:	91.7%	91.7%	91.8%	100.0%	90.9%	91.7%	91.5%
With an independent living difficulty:	3.3%	3.0%	4.3%	0.0%	2.1%	3.4%	3.1%

Independent Living Disability	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
Employed	21.2%	21.2%	21.1%	0.0%	32.0%	20.6%	26.8%
Not employed	78.8%	78.8%	78.9%	0.0%	68.0%	79.4%	73.2%
No independent living difficulty:	96.7%	97.0%	95.7%	100.0%	97.9%	96.6%	96.9%
Employed	59.3%	59.3%	59.4%	71.4%	57.6%	59.0%	67.4%
Not employed	40.7%	40.7%	40.6%	28.6%	42.4%	41.0%	31.6%

Source: 2020 DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile

AGENCY-SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The project team requested data related to overall performance and case movement from OVR for this assessment. The data is presented throughout the report in the applicable areas. Table 38 contains general information for all OVR consumers for Program Years 2021 and 2022. Valid data for PY 2020 was not available as the RSA data dashboards did not begin populating until PY 2021.

Table 38
General statistics for all OVR consumers

Performance Measures for OVR PY 2021-2022		
Item	Program Year	
	2021	2022
Applications	52	59
Number that exited in employment	28	22
Employment rate at exit	63%	45%
Employment rate in 2nd Quarter after exit	56%	58%
Employment rate in 4th Quarter after exit	31.8%	58.8%
Median earnings of those exiting in employment	\$24,960	\$24,830

The data indicates that the number of applications to OVR increased from PY 2021 to 2022, while the number of individuals exiting in employment reduced by the same amount. The employment rate at exit decreased from year to year, but the employment rate in the second and fourth quarter after exit increased in each area. The median earnings were consistent from PY 2021 to 2022.

It is important to note that even though CNMI does not have negotiated target rates for the WIOA common performance measures and is not subject to sanctions for performance, the employment rates in the second and fourth quarter after exit are higher than many VR programs in the nation, and highest among the US Territories or Commonwealths.

Gender and Age:

The project team examined data by gender and age for OVR the results are in Table 39.

Table 39

Gender and Age of OVR Consumers

Gender and Age of Individuals served	All Consumers Served		
	2020	2021	2022
Male	52.2%	48.6%	59.1%
Female	47.8%	51.4%	40.9%
24 and younger	32.8%	29.4%	40.9%
25 - 64	59.7%	62.8%	48.8%
65 and Older	7.5%	7.8%	10.2%

The data indicates that OVR served more males than females in PY 2020 and 2022, but a slightly higher rate of females in PY 2021. The disparity between males and females served was significantly larger in PY 2022, and this is an area where OVR may wish to further study to determine if there is some reason that males are currently outnumbering females.

The rate of youth ages 24 and younger increased by more than 10% from PY 2021 to 2022, while working age adults decreased. This pattern is consistent with national trends for the VR program.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Respondent Demographics

Individual survey respondents were asked to identify their age. One-hundred twenty-five respondents indicated their age. The largest percentage of respondents were between the ages of 25 to 64 (67.2 percent) followed by individuals under the age of 25 (28.8 percent). Table 40 identifies the age of the respondents.

Table 40

Individual Survey: Age of Respondents

Age Range of Respondents	Number	Percent
25-64	84	67.2%
under 25	36	28.8%
65 and over	5	4.0%
Total	125	100.0%

Respondents were asked to identify their Island of residence. Saipan was cited by 120 respondents (87 percent). Rota was cited the least number of times. Table 41 details the survey results to this question.

Table 41

Individual Survey: Island of Residence

Municipality of Residence	Number	Percent
Saipan	120	87.0%
Tinian	13	9.4%
Rota	5	3.6%
Total	138	100.0%

Individual Survey: Disability Types

Individual survey respondents were asked two questions regarding their disability.

Primary Disability

Respondents were presented a checklist and asked to identify their primary disabling condition. The category “other” was cited by about 17 percent of the respondents. Items listed in the narrative comments in response to the item “other” included: ADHD; autism; benign mass; cerebral palsy; hearing impairment; learning disability; seizures; and sleep apnea. “No impairment” was the second most frequently cited category in response to the question. The category “Deaf or Hard of Hearing” was cited by about 11 percent of the respondents. Table 42 details the survey results in response to the question.

Table 42

Individual Survey: Primary Disability

Primary Disability	Number	Percent
Other (please describe)	21	16.9%
No impairment	20	16.1%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	14	11.3%

Primary Disability	Number	Percent
Mental Health	12	9.7%
Intellectual Disability (ID)	11	8.9%
Developmental Disability (DD)	11	8.9%
Physical	10	8.1%
I don't know	10	8.1%
Blind or visually impaired	6	4.8%
Mobility	6	4.8%
Spinal Cord injury	3	2.4%
Communication	0	0.0%
Deaf-Blind	0	0.0%
Brain injury	0	0.0%
Total	124	100.0%

Secondary Disability

Respondents were also asked to identify their secondary disabling condition, if they had one. Roughly 42 percent of the individuals reported no secondary disability and slightly more than 10 percent of the respondents indicated that they did not know if they have a secondary disability. Nine of the 117 respondents cited the category “other” and reported medical and health conditions such as: anxiety; dyslexia; migraine headaches; high blood pressure; major depression; seizures and sleep disorder or cited “none.” Table 43 details the results.

Table 43

Individual Survey: Secondary Disability

Secondary Disability	Number	Percent
No impairment	49	41.9%
I don't know	12	10.3%
Physical	11	9.4%
Other (please describe)	9	7.7%
Blind or visually impaired	7	6.0%
Mental Health	7	6.0%
Mobility	6	5.1%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	5	4.3%

Secondary Disability	Number	Percent
Intellectual disability (ID)	4	3.4%
Developmental Disability (DD)	3	2.6%
Spinal Cord injury	2	1.7%
Communication	1	0.9%
Brian injury	1	0.9%
Deaf-Blind	0	0.0%
Total	117	100.0%

Individual Survey: Association with OVR

Individuals who responded to the survey were presented with two questions asking them to identify the statement that best described their association with OVR by identifying their client status, and their reason for seeking OVR services.

Client Status

Slightly more than 32.5 percent of the individual respondents indicated that they were current clients of OVR. A gap of 5.8 percent is noted between current clients and previous clients. Sixteen of the 138 individuals (11.6%) selected “other” and 14 indicated that they were either staff, community partners, employers, or school staff. Table 44 summarizes the results from the survey.

Table 44

Individual Survey: Client Status

Association with OVR	Number	Percent
I am a current client of OVR	45	32.6%
I am a previous client of OVR, my case has been closed	37	26.8%
I have never used the services of OVR	32	23.2%
Other (please describe)	16	11.6%
I am not familiar with OVR	8	5.8%
Total	138	100.0%

Reasons for Seeking OVR Services

Respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to identify their reasons for seeking OVR services. There was no limit to the number of options a respondent could choose.

Eighty-nine respondents answered the question. Almost 43 percent of the respondents indicated they were seeking assistance finding a job. Sixteen narrative responses were received in the category “other” and a diverse list of reasons were noted including gaining work-related information, keeping a job, learning more about services, and learning about educational attainment gaps for people with disabilities. Six of the narrative responses indicated that the client wanted financial assistance for hearing aids, physical therapy service, medication, CPAP machines, and flights to obtain medical assistance off of the Islands. Table 45 contains the individual survey results in response to the question.

Table 45

Individual Survey: Reasons for Seeking OVR

Reasons for Seeking OVR	Number	Percent of number of respondents
I needed help finding a job	38	42.7%
I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies	27	30.3%
I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education	26	29.2%
I was told to by someone	17	19.1%
Other (please describe)	16	18.0%
I wanted help with technology skills/equipment	10	11.2%
I needed money	4	4.5%
I don't know	3	3.4%
I was in danger of losing my job	2	2.2%
Total	143	

Individual Survey: Service Delivery Methods

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding service delivery, including meeting location and remote services.

Meeting Location

Individual survey respondents were asked to indicate where they usually met with their counselor. The majority of respondents (44.8%) meet with their counselor at the OVR office. Table 46 details the meeting locations reported by respondents.

Table 46

Individual Survey: Meeting Location

Meeting Location	Number	Percent
I go to a OVR office to meet with my counselor	47	44.8%
I don't have a counselor	36	34.3%
I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school	13	12.4%
I meet with my counselor virtually (e.g., Zoom or other videoconferencing platforms)	9	8.6%
Total	105	100.0%

Remote OVR Services

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, OVR closed offices and modified service delivery for clients to include remote services. Individual survey respondents were asked two questions regarding remote services.

Remote OVR Services Received

Individual respondents were provided a list of services and asked to identify the types of services that were delivered to them remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although 19 percent of the 102 respondents that answered the question indicated that they received assistance with looking for work or applying for jobs remotely, roughly 37.2 percent of respondents indicated that they did not receive remote services during the pandemic. Nine of 13 responses recorded in the written comments for the item response option “other, please describe,” cited “none/not applicable/I don’t know” or “case closed/not in OVR.” Three comments cited financial assistance with college and technical school. Table 47 summarizes the results regarding remote services.

Table 47

Individual Survey: OVR Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID

OVR Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID	Number	Percent
I have not received any services from OVR remotely during the pandemic	45	37.2%
Help looking for work or applying for jobs	23	19.0%
Guidance and counseling (provided by my OVR counselor)	22	18.2%
Other (please describe)	14	11.6%
Help understanding how work will impact my disability	7	5.8%
Help keeping a job	5	4.1%
Assistive technology	5	4.1%
Total	121	100.0%

Effectiveness of Remote Services

The respondents who utilized remote services were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services that were delivered remotely. Fifty-three respondents answered the subsequent question.

The ratings for effectiveness of remote services provided during the pandemic indicate that almost one-half of the respondents (47.2%) indicated that remote services were effective and another 13.2 percent of respondents indicated that the remote services were extremely effective. Conversely, almost 21 percent of respondents indicated that the remote services delivered were either less effective or not effective at all. Table 48 details the effectiveness ratings for remote services as selected by individual respondents.

Table 48

Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Remote Services

Effectiveness of Remote Services	Number	Percent
Effective	25	47.2%
Somewhat effective	10	18.9%
Less effective	8	15.1%
Extremely effective	7	13.2%
Not effective at all	3	5.7%
Total	53	100.0%

Individual Survey: OVR and the Services

An open-ended survey question relating to the overall performance of OVR asked individual respondents if there was anything they would like to add to the survey regarding OVR. A total of 12 narrative responses were received. Six of the comments were positive and included citing gratitude to OVR for the assistance. Five comments cited “not sure/I don’t know/none” and one comment identified receiving a vision examination. Two quotes are:

- *“My experience from OVR was truly one that was stress free and very smooth. Staffs were friendly and easy to talk to. I appreciate the assistance that was offered to me. Thank You OVR!”*
- *“They are very helpful!”*

Individual Survey: Anything Else Would Like to Share

Individual survey respondents were presented with a second open-ended question asking them if they had anything that they would like to share. A total of 55 narrative comments were received. Forty-one comments cited the phrases “no/NA/none” or indicated a reason why no additional feedback is being provided. Five comments cited “thank you” to OVR. Two comments were specific questions about applying for OVR. Two comments cited suggestions for improving OVR relationships with employers and providing more information about OVR. One comment

was a request to keep OVR funded and three comments addressed problems staff encounter. The remaining comment cited not receiving a referral to the WIOA Job Center in Saipan.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Respondent Characteristics

The first survey question asked partners to classify their organization. One-fourth of the respondents identified other Federal, State, or Local Government Entity as their organization type. Medical providers and Veterans agencies were not represented in the survey. Comments received in the category “other” identified businesses; community members; schools, independent living centers; non-profit organizations; and social service organizations. Table 49 identifies the classifications indicated by partner respondents.

Table 49

Partner Survey: Organization Type

Organization Type	Number	Percent
Other Federal, State, or Local Government Entity	18	25.7%
Secondary School	14	20.0%
Other (please describe)	13	18.6%
Other Public or Private Organization	8	11.4%
Client Advocacy Organization	6	8.6%
Postsecondary school	4	5.7%
Community Rehabilitation Program	2	2.9%
Developmental Disability Organization	2	2.9%
Individual Service Provider	2	2.9%
Mental Health Provider	1	1.4%
Medical Provider	0	0.0%
Veterans Agency	0	0.0%
Total	70	100.0%

Partners were presented a list of Islands and asked to identify the Islands where they provide services. There was no limit to the number of counties that a respondent could choose. Sixty-nine partners answered the question.

Respondents most frequently identified Saipan as the Island where they provide service. Table 50 includes this information.

Table 50

Partner Survey: Islands Served

Island Served	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Saipan	59	85.5%
Tinian	29	42.0%
Rota	26	37.7%
Total	114	

Partners were provided with a list and asked to identify the client populations with whom they worked with on a regular basis. There were no limitations to the number of client populations that a partner respondent could choose.

The client population of “transition-aged youth” was cited by roughly 59% of partner respondents who answered the question. The client populations that “are blind or have low vision,” “that are racial or ethnic minorities,” and are “Veterans” are being served by roughly one-fourth of the partners. Respondents who selected the “other” category reported: serving individuals with a variety of disabilities; individuals requiring assistance finding and securing employment; children and families; and the general public. Table 51 details the client populations that partners serve.

Table 51

Partner Survey: Client Populations

Client Populations	Number of times chosen	Percent of total number of respondents
Transition-aged youth (14-24)	39	59.1%
Individuals with the most significant disabilities	31	47.0%
Individuals served by WIOA Job Center, or WIA (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)	30	45.5%
Individuals that need long-term support to maintain employment	25	37.9%
Individuals that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	23	34.8%
Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities	19	28.8%
Individuals that are blind or low vision	18	27.3%
Veterans	16	24.2%
Other (please describe)	14	21.2%
Total	215	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment as it relates to overall program performance for OVR:

10. The overall performance of OVR has been impacted by the pandemic and by staffing turnover. The agency is working to increase the number of applications for services and the number of consumers exiting in employment.
11. There is a need for increased community awareness of OVR and their services. This is especially true in the secondary school system throughout Saipan, Tinian and Rota.
12. OVR is not fully matched by the CNMI government. There are significant funds available for Federal draw down if the government would appropriate funds to the agency and demonstrate their commitment to the Federal-State partnership that is the foundation of the public VR program.
13. There is a need to increase the speed with which applicants have an eligibility determination completed. In addition, OVR needs to reduce the percent of individuals that have an eligibility extension completed.
14. Participants indicated that the delays in procurement of goods and services can adversely impact the ability of individuals to receive timely services and begin training programs. The length of time it takes to pay invoices results in many businesses not becoming vendors for OVR, which limits the ability of consumers to exercise informed choice.
15. In addition, there is a need to begin the contracting process sooner so that contractors have enough time to deliver services when the funds are available. Currently, the process was described as occurring only when funds become available, so by the time the contract process runs its course, there is a very limited amount of time left in the fiscal year to deliver the services.
16. There are limited employment opportunities in Saipan, and fewer in the neighbor islands.
17. While OVR utilizes OJTs and work experience training, these do not often result in permanent employment for consumers.
18. Accessibility for individuals with mobility impairments and sensory impairments continues to be a challenge in the community and at work. Many buildings and businesses are not accessible and there are very few interpreters available.
19. Although OVR has experienced significant staff changes in the last few years, the agency is fully staffed as of this writing and is confident that they will be able to meet the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in CNMI going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to DVR based on the results of the research in the Overall Agency Performance area:

6. OVR is encouraged to increase community outreach through a focused marketing campaign to increase community awareness of available services. This is especially important for youth and students with disabilities.
7. OVR is encouraged to regularly advocate for increased funding from the CNMI government.
8. OVR is encouraged to provide ongoing training in eligibility determinations and IPE development to help increase the ability of counselors to move consumers through the process efficiently and quickly.
9. OVR is encouraged to complete as much of the contracting process as possible prior to funding being immediately available in order to reduce the time it takes to complete contracts and begin service once funding is available.
10. OVR is encouraged to work with their government to identify ways to speed up the procurement process once the required approvals are obtained for purchases.

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to this section:

- IV. **Goal:** Increase community awareness of OVR and available rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities in CNMI.
 - D. **Priority 1:** Increase awareness in public schools
 - E. **Priority 2:** Increase awareness on Tinian and Rota
 - F. **Priority 3:** Increase awareness among employers
 6. **Strategy:** Regular presentations to students and families in the high schools in partnership with school staff in order to share information about OVR services and how they can benefit youth in transition.
 7. **Strategy:** Develop informational brochures in multiple languages and make available in government offices, especially all core Workforce Development partners.
 8. **Strategy:** Regular public forums on Tinian and Rota – focusing on how OVR can help individuals with disabilities on the neighbor islands – focus on sharing success stories, possible self-employment opportunities, or government employment opportunities.
 9. **Strategy:** Utilize radio and television public service announcements to increase awareness of OVR.
 10. **Strategy:** Implement SRC recommendations for an Acceptance Campaign as resources allow
- V. **Goal:** Increase professional development opportunities for OVR staff

- C. **Priority 1:** Provide training for VR counselors and technicians on the VR process, Federal laws and regulations, WIOA performance measures, and providing quality services.
- D. **Priority 2:** Provide grant management and leadership training for OVR management staff.
 - 5. **Strategy:** Explore access to on-demand online training for rehabilitation professionals through resources such as the VR development group (<https://www.vrdevelopmentgroup.com/>).
 - 6. **Strategy:** Work with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Centers for Quality Employment and Quality Management (VRTAC-QE and VRTAC-QM) as appropriate for targeted training.
 - 7. **Strategy:** Apply for leadership staff to participate in the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (NRLI) or other leadership development training targeting Executive level staff in the VR program (<https://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/nrli/>).
 - 8. **Strategy:** Apply for the VR Grants Management Certificate training through the VRTAC-QM (<https://www.vrtac-qm.org/mctraining/>).
- VI. **Goal:** Increase the quantity and quality of employment outcomes for OVR consumers.
 - E. **Priority 1:** Increase the number of consumers successfully exiting in employment by 5% per year.
 - F. **Priority 2:** Increase the median earnings of consumers exiting in employment by 5% per year.
 - G. **Priority 3:** Increase the number of OVR consumers in postsecondary education training programs.
 - H. **Priority:** Increase the use of self-employment as an employment outcome for OVR consumers, especially in the neighbor islands.
 - 7. **Strategy:** Increase employer outreach and business engagement activities.
 - 8. **Strategy:** Increase the use of OJTs, internships and work experience training to provide exposure to work and demonstrate ability of OVR consumers to perform the essential function of jobs.
 - 9. **Strategy:** Work with CNMI government to recruit and hire individuals with disabilities for government jobs.
 - 10. **Strategy:** Identify successful self-employment cases in VR programs in other Pacific Territories such as Guam and/or American Samoa for possible replication in Tinian and Rota.
 - 11. **Strategy:** Increase assistive technology evaluation, provision and training for OVR consumers so that they can maximize their ability to live independently and perform essential functions of jobs.
 - 12. **Strategy:** Recruit additional organizations or individuals to provide employment services for OVR consumers, especially job development and placement.

SECTION TWO: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Section 2 includes an assessment of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment. This section includes the rehabilitation needs of OVR consumers as expressed by the different groups interviewed and surveyed. All of the general needs of OVR consumers were included here, with specific needs identified relating to supported employment.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for supported employment:

1. The lack of public transportation remains a major barrier to employment for many individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. Although CODA is available, the service is limited and has significant variations in pick up and drop off times.
2. Job training, job skills and increased employment opportunities were all cited repeatedly as rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in CNMI.
3. Individuals with the most significant disabilities need assistive technology in order to be competitive in the workplace. The lack of AT providers and trainers in the use of the technology was a frequently cited barrier to employment.
4. The traditional model of supported employment is not able to be utilized in the CNMI because the Medicaid agency does not have the HCBS waiver that funds extended services. Consequently, the only SE that is provided must utilize natural supports for extended service provision and this has been unsuccessful in the past. The lack of SE services means that individuals with the most significant disabilities do not receive the services they need to obtain and retain employment.
5. The need to develop self-advocacy skills was a recurring theme for individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. This need was often cited when identifying the need for higher expectations for individuals with disabilities.
6. Many individuals with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities, need training in basic computer skills in order to be employable. In addition, broadband Internet access is needed in many areas.
7. SSA beneficiaries are fearful of working because they fear they will lose their benefits. There is a need for benefits planning to be available to SSI and SSDI recipients and their families.

8. There is a need for substance abuse treatment options for individuals in all of the islands.

***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO
THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST
SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED
FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT:***

The project team examined the consumer population of OVR to determine the number and rate of disability types served by the organization as well as the percent of consumers that were SSA beneficiaries. The results are detailed in Table 52.

Table 52

OVR Consumers by Disability Type and SSA Beneficiary Status

Disability Type of those served by OVR			
Disability	Number and Rate Served by Year		
	2020	2021	2022
Visual Impairment	19	52	7
Percent of all served	7.5%	18.4%	3.3%
Physical Impairments	79	70	58
Percent of all served	31.2%	24.8%	27.0%
Communicative Impairments	43	51	38
Percent of all served	17.0%	18.1%	17.7%
ID/DD or other Cognitive	60	60	65
Percent of all served	23.7%	21.3%	30.2%
Mental Health Impairments	52	49	47
Percent of all served	20.6%	17.4%	21.9%
SSA Beneficiaries	76	69	72
Percent of all served	30.0%	24.5%	33.5%

The data indicates that the number and rate of individuals served by OVR with visual impairments decreased significantly from PY 2021 to 2022. The rate of individuals with intellectual or other developmental disabilities increased by almost 9% from 2021 to 2022 while the rate of those with mental health impairments increased by 4.5% in the same period. The data also indicates that one-third of all individuals served by OVR received either SSI or SSDI or both.

It should be noted that the project team requested data on those served by OVR that were receiving supported employment services. Because of the lack of extended services providers, there were not individuals receiving supported employment services.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Receipt of Social Security Disability Benefits

Individual survey respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to indicate whether they received Social Security disability benefits. The total number of respondents who answered this question is 122.

Based on the table data, the inferences can be made that almost three-quarters of the individual survey respondents do not receive Social Security disability benefits. About 12 percent of the respondents receive SSI. Table 53 summarizes the responses to this question. Note that individuals were allowed to select more than one option in the series of items (e.g., in the case of an individual who received both SSI and SSDI).

Table 53

Individual Survey: Social Security Benefit Status

Social Security Benefits Status	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I do not receive Social Security disability benefits	88	72.1%
I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits	17	13.9%
I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)	15	12.3%
I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get	5	4.1%
I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)	2	1.6%
Total	127	

Individual Survey: Finances and Money Management

OVR included a series of questions in the survey that seek to identify the financial management competency of respondents and how fiscal issues impact their ability to function independently.

Financial Situation

Respondents were given a list of statements and asked to describe how they manage their financial situation. A total of 99 respondents participated in answering this survey item. Slightly

more than one-half of respondents indicated they are doing OK financially and almost 36.5 percent of the respondents are either not doing well financially or are in desperate need for money. Table 54 details the results.

Table 54

Individual Survey: Financial Situation

Current Financial Situation	Number	Percent
I am doing OK financially	54	54.6%
I am not doing well financially	28	28.3%
I am doing well financially	9	9.1%
I am in desperate need for money	8	8.1%
Total	99	100.0%

Managing Money

Individual survey respondents were presented a checklist of statements regarding money management and asked to indicate whether the item represents how they manage money. Although over 27 percent of respondents indicated they have a monthly budget and about one-third of respondents have savings accounts and/or checking accounts, less than 8% of the respondents indicated they invest money. Roughly 21.5 percent of the respondents have another person managing their money. Table 55 details the results.

Table 55

Individual Survey: Managing Money

Managing Money	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I have a checking account	34	34.7%
I have a savings account	32	32.7%
I have a monthly budget	27	27.6%
I have no specific way that I manage my money	21	21.4%
Someone else manages my money for me	21	21.4%
I have no money to manage	12	12.2%
I invest my money	8	8.2%
Total	155	

Interest in Financial Services

When asked the question, “If OVR offered financial education or skills training, would you be interested in receiving these services?”, roughly two-thirds of respondents were interested in

receiving OVR sponsored financial services and roughly one-fourth of the respondents were unsure. Table 56 includes this information.

Table 56

Individual Survey: Interest in OVR Financial Services

Interest in OVR Financial Services	Number	Percent
Yes	68	67.3%
I am not sure	24	23.8%
No	9	8.9%
Total	101	100.0%

Individual Survey: Barriers to Employment

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions to identify barriers to employment

Identifying Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Respondents were presented with a list of 18 potential barriers and asked to indicate whether or not the item had been a barrier that impacted their ability to obtain or keep a job. There was no limit to the number of barriers that an individual survey respondent could choose. A total of 88 survey respondents participated in answering the question.

Two items, “limited job skills/work experience” and “lack of education or training” were cited most frequently by respondents and the rates range between 27 to 29.5 percent of the total number of respondents. “Criminal record,” “lack of housing,” “concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working,” and “substance abuse” were the lowest ranking barriers.

Table 57 summarizes the barriers identified by respondents.

Table 57

Individual Survey: Identifying Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Identify Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	26	29.5%
Lack of education or training	24	27.3%
Lack of available jobs	23	26.1%
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	21	23.9%
Lack of assistive technology	16	18.2%

Identify Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Mental health concerns	16	18.2%
Other health issues	15	17.0%
Lack of job search/interview skills	14	15.9%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	11	12.5%
Language barriers	9	10.2%
Lack of reliable transportation	8	9.1%
Lack of attendant care	4	4.5%
Lack of broadband Internet access	4	4.5%
Lack of child care	3	3.4%
Criminal Record	2	2.3%
Lack of housing	2	2.3%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	2	2.3%
Substance abuse	1	1.1%
Total	201	

Top Three Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Individual survey respondents were presented with a subsequent question asking them to identify their top three barriers to obtaining or keeping a job. Eighty-one individuals answered the question.

Respondents identified limited job skills/work experience as the top/most frequently selected barrier to getting a job. Lack of education or training and lack of available jobs were identified as the second and third top barriers to employment. Note that the top three barriers selected by individuals in response to this question are the same top three barriers cited in the previous table. Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability was cited 21 times on the previous Table 58 but is cited 14 times in response to this question. Also, lack of broadband Internet access was cited four time in the previous table and cited two times as a top barrier to employment. Table 59 details the responses to the question asking respondents to identify the three top barriers to getting a job.

Table 58

Individual Survey: Top Three Barriers to Getting a Job

Top Three Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	35	43.2%
Lack of education or training	25	30.9%
Lack of available jobs	19	23.5%
Other health issues	17	21.0%
Mental health concerns	16	19.8%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	15	18.5%
Lack of job search/interview skills	14	17.3%
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	14	17.3%
Lack of assistive technology	12	14.8%
Language barriers	7	8.6%
Lack of attendant care	5	6.2%
Lack of reliable transportation	4	4.9%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	3	3.7%
Lack of housing	2	2.5%
Lack of broadband Internet access	2	2.5%
Criminal Record	1	1.2%
Substance abuse	1	1.2%
Lack of child care	1	1.2%
Total	193	

Other Barriers to Getting A Job

Individuals were presented with an open-ended question asking them to identify other barriers that they may have experienced that prevented them from getting a job that are not included in the previous questions. There were 20 individuals who provided a narrative response to this question. Nine of the respondents indicated that they did not experience other barriers and four of the comments cited currently enrolled as high school or college students. Content analysis of the remaining seven responses indicated that the following are “other barriers” preventing respondents from obtaining or keeping a job: needing a one-to-one aide; bureaucracy and slow speed of receiving services; hearing impairments; and no previous work experience.

Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing OVR

Respondents were presented with three questions regarding barriers to accessing OVR services.

Barriers to Accessing OVR

Respondents were presented with a list describing potential barriers to accessing OVR services and asked to indicate whether the barriers had made it difficult to access OVR services. There was no limit to the number of barriers that an individual respondent could choose.

Thirty-five percent of respondents cited “other, please describe” which ranked the item as the most frequently cited barrier to accessing OVR service by respondents and 23 narrative comments were received. Sixteen comments cited phrases “no barriers/none, n/a.” Two comments cited enrollment as a high school student and three comments noted not having participated or not being qualified for OVR. The remaining narrative comments included: currently being served by OVR and being unable to read and write.

Table 59

Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing OVR Services

Identify Barriers to Accessing OVR Services	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Other (please identify)	27	35.5%
Lack of available transportation to the OVR office	22	28.9%
Lack of information about available services	12	15.8%
Slow service delivery by OVR staff	12	15.8%
OVR's hours of operation	9	11.8%
Lack of disability-related accommodations	8	10.5%
Lack of broadband Internet access	6	7.9%
Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor	5	6.6%
Difficulties completing the OVR application	4	5.3%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	4	5.3%
Other difficulties with OVR staff	4	5.3%
Language barriers	3	3.9%
I have nobody that can help me access services	0	0.0%
Total	116	

Other Challenges to Accessing OVR Services

Respondents were presented with a yes/no question asking if there were any additional challenges or barriers not previously mentioned that made it difficult to access OVR services. Of the 93 responses received, 6 respondents indicated “yes” and 5 provided a written response. The narrative responses cited different barriers to accessing services. Four quotes are:

- *“Caseworker not very detailed in explaining what services are available and how to go about getting them”*
- *“Finding the right job”*
- *“I believe because of salary”*
- *“No one to guide me if I do get a job”*

Individual Survey: How Can OVR Change to Help Get A Job

Individual survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking them for suggestions on how OVR could improve their services in order to assist them in getting a job. A total of 62 survey participants responded to the question.

Thirty-one comments (50%) did not have suggestions as the comments contained reasons for why the question did not apply to their situation or cited phrases such as “none/not sure/NA.” Fifteen comments requested additional direct assistance from counselors with the job search and securing employment, including reaching out to employers. Four comments recommended providing more training and courses. Seven comments contained specific requests for financial and personal supports related to employment.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Identifying Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Partner survey respondents were given a list of 23 barriers and asked to identify the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for OVR clients. There was no limit to the number of barriers that a respondent could choose. A total of 48 responses were received.

Thirty-two partner respondents identified “limited job skills/work experience” and thirty partners identified “lack of available jobs” as common barriers to achieving employment goals for clients. The items “lack of education or training” and “employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities” were selected by slightly more than 54 percent of partners as a common barrier to achieving employment goals, resulting in a tie for the third position on the list of common barriers to employment.

Three of the top four items (limited job skills/work experience, lack of available jobs, lack of education or training) that partners selected as common barriers to getting or keeping a job match the individual survey list of top three barriers to employment, noting a reverse rank order of items in the second and third positions of the partner list.

Table 60

Partner Survey: Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals – General OVR Clients

Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals – General OVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	32	66.7%
Lack of available jobs	30	62.5%
Lack of education or training	26	54.2%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	26	54.2%
Lack of job search/interview skills	25	52.1%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	24	50.0%
Lack of soft skills	20	41.7%
Lack of reliable transportation	20	41.7%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	19	39.6%
Lack of technology skills	19	39.6%
Mental health concerns	18	37.5%
Lack of assistive technology	17	35.4%
Language barriers	14	29.2%
Other health concerns	14	29.2%
Lack of attendant care	14	29.0%
Lack of childcare	13	27.1%
Cultural barriers	12	25.0%
Other transportation issues	11	22.9%
Lack of Internet access	11	22.9%
Substance abuse	10	20.8%
Lack of housing	9	18.8%
Criminal record	5	10.4%
Other (please describe)	1	2.1%
Total	390	

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Partner survey respondents were given a list of 23 barriers, including an option for "other", and were asked to identify the barriers that prevent OVR clients with the most significant disabilities from achieving their employment goals. The sample size was 47 respondents.

The items partners most frequently selected as barriers to achieving employment goals for clients with the most significant disabilities are similar to the barriers partners chose in response to the previous question. One significant change noted between the two survey questions is the position of the item “other health concerns,” which ranks in the 6th position for clients with the most significant disabilities and ties for the 13th position in the results for the general population of OVR clients. One comment was received in the category “other” and is quoted:

- “Stigma from community/ family that they can achieve their employment goals”

Table 61 summarizes the results.

Table 61

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	34	72.3%
Lack of education or training	30	63.8%
Lack of available jobs	28	59.6%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	27	57.4%
Lack of job search/interview skills	24	51.1%
Other health concerns	21	44.7%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	20	42.6%
Lack of attendant care	20	42.6%
Lack of soft skills	19	40.4%
Lack of technology skills	19	40.4%
Lack of reliable transportation	19	40.4%
Language barriers	18	38.3%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	18	38.3%
Lack of assistive technology	18	38.3%
Mental health concerns	14	29.8%

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of Internet access	11	23.4%
Other transportation issues	8	17.0%
Cultural barriers	7	14.9%
Substance abuse	4	8.5%
Lack of childcare	4	8.5%
Lack of housing	4	8.5%
Other (please describe)	2	4.3%
Criminal record	1	2.1%
Total	370	

Partner Survey: Difficulties Accessing OVR Services

Respondents were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons that the general population of OVR clients might find it difficult to access OVR services. Twelve response options were provided.

"Slow service delivery" was identified by partners as the top reason why the general population of OVR clients find it difficult to access services. Partners were divided on the second reason why clients have difficulty accessing services. Although partners and individual survey respondents cited transportation as a top reason preventing access to OVR services, overall, partner and individual survey responses to this question are different.

The narrative comments received in the category "other" did not reveal key themes. The quotes are:

- *"Lack of counselor"*
- *"Lack of Effective transition practices at secondary graduation"*
- *"Lack of information to public"*
- *"No stable OVR office in Rota. OVR Staffs fly in from Saipan"*

Table 62 details the partner results.

Table 62

Partner Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficult Access OVR Services

Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access OVR Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Slow service delivery	20	45.5%
Limited accessibility of OVR via public transportation	18	40.9%
Application/Eligibility process is too cumbersome	18	40.9%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the OVR office	10	22.7%
Lack of technology needed to engage in virtual or remote services	10	22.7%
Language barriers	8	18.2%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	5	11.4%
Inadequate assessment services	5	11.4%
Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with OVR staff	5	11.4%
Lack of assistance to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	4	9.1%
Other (please describe)	4	9.1%
OVR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	4	9.1%
Total	111	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment:

1. The lack of public transportation remains a major barrier to employment for many individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. Although CODA is available, the service is limited and has significant variations in pick up and drop off times.
2. Individuals with the most significant disabilities need assistive technology in order to be competitive in the workplace. The lack of AT providers and trainers in the use of the technology was a frequently cited barrier to employment.
3. The traditional model of supported employment is not able to be utilized in the CNMI because the Medicaid agency does not have the HCBS waiver that funds extended services. Consequently, the only SE that is provided must utilize natural supports for extended service provision and this has been unsuccessful in the past. The lack of SE services means that individuals with the most significant disabilities do not receive the services they need to obtain and retain employment.
4. The need to develop self-advocacy skills was a recurring theme for individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. This need was often cited when identifying the need for higher expectations for individuals with disabilities.
5. Many individuals with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities, need training in basic computer skills in order to be employable. In addition, broadband Internet access is needed in many areas.
6. SSA beneficiaries are fearful of working because they fear they will lose their benefits. There is a need for benefits planning to be available to SSI and SSDI recipients and their families.
7. There is a need for substance abuse treatment options for individuals in all of the islands, Interview participants indicated that methamphetamine and alcohol abuse is common, with limited options for treatment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to OVR based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment area:

1. OVR is encouraged to continue to work with other government agencies to increase the accessible transportation options for individuals with disabilities in the CNMI.
2. OVR should consider educating families on having higher expectations for individuals with disabilities, especially youth. OVR is encouraged to develop a peer mentoring program that will pair consumers with successful individuals with disabilities so that these mentors can instill an expectation that they can be successful. This is especially important for youth.
3. OVR is encouraged to counsel consumers to pursue postsecondary education as appropriate in order to increase their earning potential and employment options.
4. OVR should provide ongoing training for staff and community partners in supported employment.
5. OVR should consider partnering with a local business that provides computer training so that they can increase the computer literacy of their consumers.
6. OVR is encouraged to conduct connectivity assessments for all consumers that are engaged in the comprehensive assessment process for plan development. Digital access has become essential for many individuals to engage in a job search, apply for jobs and work from home.

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to this section:

- II. **Goal:** Increase the use of supported employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities in CNMI.
 - D. **Priority 1:** Identify funding sources for extended services in SE.
 - E. **Priority 2:** Develop essential partnerships with agencies or organizations that provide critical support services necessary for SE.
 - F. **Priority 3:** Increase the number of individuals that achieve an SE outcome by 5% per year.
 6. **Strategy:** Work with the Medicaid agency to request the home and community-based waiver (HCBS) for use as an extended services funding source.
 7. **Strategy:** Recruit service agencies or individuals to become SE service providers.
 8. **Strategy:** Provide training for OVR staff and partners on the SE model and how to implement the service for OVR consumers. OVR can request training from the VRTAC-QE to assist with developing and implementing SE.
 9. **Strategy:** Utilize natural supports as an option for extended services and provide training for OVR staff and providers on how to develop natural supports for replication as appropriate.

10. **Strategy:** Develop a Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) in CNMI through training provided by Virginia Commonwealth University or other online training provider in order to decrease the fear of working and subsequent benefit loss by SSA recipients in CNMI.

**SECTION THREE:
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM
DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF
INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR
UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM**

Section 3 includes an identification of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by OVR.

***RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION
METHODS***

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by the OVR:

5. Tinian and Rota were the most frequently cited areas that may be underserved by OVR. It remains unclear as to whether the need for VR services on these islands is greater than OVR's ability to meet the need. OVR does have counselors assigned to visit the islands, and the demand does not appear to be greater than the current visiting schedule, which varies from monthly to quarterly.
6. Deaf individuals were cited as being potentially underserved by OVR because of the lack of interpreters available at the agency and in the community.
7. Although there were no underserved groups identified by race on a recurring basis, OVR's ability to serve immigrants from Asian countries has been impacted by legal interpretations since the last CSNA. The agency is in the midst of a Federal review of these opinions which may increase the agency's ability to serve individuals with disabilities that are classified as Commonwealth-only workers and workers from Freely Associated States.
8. The needs of minority individuals did not differ from the general population of those served by OVR except for language barriers that can result in delays accessing OVR services.

***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO
THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM
DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF
INDIVIDUALS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR
UNDERSERVED BY DVR***

Race and Ethnicity

An understanding of the local population's ethnic diversity is needed in order to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups residing in the community.

- **Race:** *“The U.S. Census Bureau collects race data in accordance with guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and these data are based on self-identification. The racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the categories of the race question include race and national origin or sociocultural groups. OMB requires that race data be collected for a minimum of five groups: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. OMB permits the Census Bureau to also use a sixth category – Some Other Race. Respondents may report more than one race.”*
- **Ethnicity:** *“The U.S. Census Bureau adheres to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) definition of ethnicity. There are two minimum categories for ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. OMB considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race.”*

<https://www.census.gov/glossary/>

Race and Ethnicity for the Total Population

The 2020 Decennial Census of the Island Areas captured a variety of data regarding race and ethnicity for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the municipalities. The general demographic data Table DP1 contained duplicate numeric counts as survey participants were able to identify multiple race and ethnic categories. In an effort to eliminate duplication of numeric counts, the race and ethnicity data for this CSNA report is taken from Table P5 from the 2020 Decennial Census of the Island Areas for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands titled “Hispanic or Latino, and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race.” The numeric counts in Table P5 were used to calculate the percentage rates in Table 63 and Table 64 for this report. For comparison purposes, the United States data from 2022 is included.

Table 63

Race and Ethnicity: Total Population of the United States

Race and Ethnicity: U.S.	United States		U.S. -- Urban		U.S. -- Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total population	333,287,562	333,287,562	266,018,160	266,018,160	67,269,402	67,269,402
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	63,553,639	19.1%	57,897,601	21.8%	5,656,038	8.4%
Not Hispanic or Latino	269,733,923	80.9%	208,120,559	78.2%	61,613,364	91.6%
White alone	192,153,076	57.7%	138,977,344	52.2%	53,175,732	79.0%
Black or African American alone	39,582,961	11.9%	35,720,707	13.4%	3,862,254	5.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1,750,489	0.5%	858,237	0.3%	892,252	1.3%
Asian alone	19,415,251	5.8%	18,771,065	7.1%	644,186	1.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	590,339	0.2%	528,436	0.2%	61,903	0.1%
Two or More Races	14,329,127	4.3%	11,624,374	4.4%	2,704,753	4.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 64

Race and Ethnicity: Total Population of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Race and Ethnicity: CNMI	CNMI		CNMI -- Urban		CNMI -- Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total population	47,329	100.0%	36,921	100.0%	10,408	100.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	554	1.2%	425	1.2%	129	1.2%
Not Hispanic or Latino	46,775	98.8%	36,496	98.8%	10,279	98.8%
One Race	43,442	91.8%	34,137	92.5%	9,305	89.4%
Asian:	21,915	46.3%	19,394	52.5%	2,521	24.2%
Bangladeshi	845	3.9%	657	3.4%	188	7.5%
Chinese (except Taiwanese)	3,268	14.9%	2,929	15.1%	339	13.4%
Filipino	15,322	69.9%	13,545	69.8%	1,777	70.5%
Japanese	434	2.0%	368	1.9%	66	2.6%
Korean	1,268	5.8%	1,213	6.3%	55	2.2%
Nepalese	30	0.1%	25	0.1%	5	0.2%

Asian:	21,915	46.3%	19,394	52.5%	2,521	24.2%
Thai	163	0.7%	137	0.7%	26	1.0%
Other Asian	585	2.7%	520	2.7%	65	2.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander:	20,448	43.2%	13,961	37.8%	6,487	62.3%
Carolinian	2,271	11.1%	1,748	12.5%	523	8.1%
Chamorro	11,811	57.8%	7,271	52.1%	4,540	70.0%
Chuukese	1,402	6.9%	1,246	8.9%	156	2.4%
Kosraean	45	0.2%	41	0.3%	4	0.1%
Marshallese	56	0.3%	51	0.4%	5	0.1%
Palauan	817	4.0%	652	4.7%	165	2.5%
Pohnpeian	427	2.1%	322	2.3%	105	1.6%
Yapese	276	1.3%	234	1.7%	42	0.6%
Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3,343	16.3%	2,396	17.2%	947	14.6%
White	985	2.1%	710	1.9%	275	2.6%
Black or African American	63	0.1%	49	0.1%	14	0.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	10	0.0%	9	0.0%	1	0.0%
Some Other Race	21	0.0%	14	0.0%	7	0.1%
Two or More Races	3,333	7.0%	2,359	6.4%	974	9.4%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics Table P5

Table 65

Race and Ethnicity: Total Population of the CNMI Municipalities

Race and Ethnicity: CNMI Municipalities	NIM		RM		SM		TM	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total population	7	100.0%	1,893	100.0%	43,385	100.0%	2,044	100.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	0	0.0%	17	0.9%	512	1.2%	25	1.2%
Not Hispanic or Latino	7	100.0%	1,876	99.1%	42,873	98.8%	2,019	98.8%
One Race:	7	100.0%	1,786	94.3%	39,832	91.8%	1,817	88.9%
Asian:	0	0.0%	556	29.4%	20,591	47.5%	768	37.6%
Bangladeshi	0	0.0%	115	20.7%	668	3.2%	62	8.1%
Chinese (except Taiwanese)	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	3,205	15.6%	61	7.9%

Asian:	0	0.0%	556	29.4%	20,591	47.5%	768	37.6%
Filipino	0	0.0%	421	75.7%	14,308	69.5%	593	77.2%
Japanese	0	0.0%	7	1.3%	418	2.0%	9	1.2%
Korean	0	0.0%	5	0.9%	1,250	6.1%	13	1.7%
Nepalese	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	28	0.1%	2	0.3%
Thai	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	160	0.8%	3	0.4%
Other Asian	0	0.0%	6	1.1%	554	2.7%	25	3.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander:	7	100.0%	1,201	63.4%	18,218	42.0%	1,022	50.0%
Carolinian	3	42.9%	1	0.1%	2,263	12.4%	4	0.4%
Chamorro	3	42.9%	1,118	93.1%	9,762	53.6%	928	90.8%
Chuukese	0	0.0%	7	0.6%	1,384	7.6%	11	1.1%
Kosraean	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	45	0.2%	0	0.0%
Marshallese	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	55	0.3%	0	0.0%
Palauan	0	0.0%	25	2.1%	785	4.3%	7	0.7%
Pohnpeian	0	0.0%	15	1.2%	409	2.2%	3	0.3%
Yapese	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	271	1.5%	5	0.5%
Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1	14.3%	34	2.8%	3,244	17.8%	64	6.3%
White	0	0.0%	27	1.4%	936	2.2%	22	1.1%
Black or African American	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	60	0.1%	2	0.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	0.0%	0	0.0%
Some Other Race	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	17	0.0%	3	0.1%
Two or More Races	0	0.0%	90	4.8%	3,041	7.0%	202	9.9%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table P5

Race/Ethnicity and Disability

The U.S. Census collects data on disability among race and ethnic categories for the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) in the CNMI by age. The Census Bureau identifies numeric counts for disability and race/ethnicity for the population under 18, 18 to 64 years, and age 65 and over. Note that in the tables, the category “Other races” includes participants who reported one race that is classified as White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, or Some Other Race. Multiple race reports are recorded in the category “Two or More Races.” The NIM municipality is not included in this table due to the 7 participants (100 percent) are categorized as “Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander.” In this section, Tables 66 and 67 summarize the numeric counts for ages 18 and over. Data for ages under 18 are found in the youth section of this report.

Table 66

Race/Ethnicity and Disability: CNMI and Municipalities – Population Under 18 Years

Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population under 18 years		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
CNMI	Total CNP	13,620	500	13,120
	One Race Total	11,840	422	11,418
	Asian Total	4,922	154	4,768
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	710	16	694
	Filipino	3,365	119	3,246
	Korean	301	5	296
	Other Asian	546	14	532
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	6,765	261	6,504
	Carolinian	714	21	693
	Chamorro	3,610	131	3,479
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2,441	109	2,332
	Other Races [1]	153	7	146
	Two or More Races	1,780	78	1,702
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population under 18 years		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
RM	Total CNP	559	11	548
	One Race Total	510	11	499
	Asian Total	139	N	138
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	N	N	N
	Filipino	93	N	92
	Korean	N	N	N
	Other Asian	46	N	46
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	367	10	357
	Carolinian	N	N	N
	Chamorro	340	8	332

	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	27	N	25
	Other Races [1]	4	N	4
	Two or More Races	49	N	49
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population under 18 years		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
SM	Total CNP	12,455	462	11,993
	One Race Total	10,843	392	10,451
	Asian Total	4,599	146	4,453
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	691	16	675
	Filipino	3,151	113	3,038
	Korean	297	5	292
	Other Asian	460	12	448
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	6,097	239	5,858
	Carolinian	714	21	693
	Chamorro	2,988	111	2,877
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2,395	107	2,288
	Other Races [1]	147	7	140
	Two or More Races	1,612	70	1,542
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population under 18 years		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
TM	Total CNP	606	27	579
	One Race Total	487	19	468
	Asian Total	184	7	177
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	19	N	19
	Filipino	121	5	116
	Korean	4	N	4
	Other Asian	40	N	38
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	301	12	289

Race/Ethnicity and Disability		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
Population under 18 years				
	Carolinian	N	N	N
	Chamorro	282	12	270
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	19	N	19
	Other Races [1]	N	N	N
	Two or More Races	119	8	111

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Detailed Crosstabulations

Table 67

Race/Ethnicity and Disability: CNMI and Municipalities – Population 18 to 64 Years

Race/Ethnicity and Disability		18 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability
Population 18 to 64 years				
CNMI	Total CNP	30,720	2,894	27,826
	One Race Total	29,129	2,700	26,429
	Asian Total	15,971	808	15,163
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	2,452	75	2,377
	Filipino	11,245	654	10,591
	Korean	841	22	819
	Other Asian	1,433	57	1,376
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	12,402	1,818	10,584
	Carolinian	1,421	233	1,188
	Chamorro	7,335	1,069	6,266
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3,646	516	3,130
	Other Races	756	74	682
	Two or More Races	1,591	194	1,397

Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population 18 to 64 years		18 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability
RM	Total CNP	1,212	104	1,108
	One Race Total	1,169	103	1,066
	Asian Total	394	17	377
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	N	N	N
	Filipino	308	16	292
	Other Asian	81	N	80
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	757	83	674
	Carolinian	N	N	N
	Chamorro	705	77	628
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	51	6	45
	Other Races	18	N	15
	Two or More Races	43	N	42
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population 18 to 64 years		18 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability
SM	Total CNP	28,186	2,629	25,557
	One Race Total	26,725	2,455	24,270
	Asian Total	15,032	763	14,269
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	2,410	74	2,336
	Filipino	10,500	613	9,887
	Korean	828	21	807
	Other Asian	1,294	55	1,239
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	10,967	1,622	9,345
	Carolinian	1,413	232	1,181
	Chamorro	6,030	890	5,140
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3,524	500	3,024
	Other Races	726	70	656
	Two or More Races	1,461	174	1,287

Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population 18 to 64 years		18 to 64 years	With a disability	No disability
TM	Total CNP	1,315	161	1,154
	One Race Total	1,228	142	1,086
	Asian Total	545	28	517
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	40	N	39
	Filipino	437	25	412
	Korean	10	N	9
	Other Asian	58	N	57
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	671	113	558
	Carolinian	4	N	N
	Chamorro	597	102	495
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	70	10	60
	Other Races	12	N	11
	Two or More Races	87	19	68

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Detailed Crosstabulations

Table 68

Race/Ethnicity and Disability: CNMI and Municipalities – Population 65 Years and Over

Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population 65 Years and Over		65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
CNMI	Total CNP	2,788	1,089	1,699
	One Race Total	2,716	1,057	1,659
	Asian Total	1,116	296	820
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	76	14	62
	Filipino	843	239	604
	Korean	120	23	97
	Other Asian	77	20	57
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	1,382	700	682
	Carolinian	125	83	42
	Chamorro	978	469	509

Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population 65 Years and Over		65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	279	148	131
	Other Races	218	61	157
	Two or More Races	72	32	40
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population 65 Years and Over		65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
RM	Total CNP	122	39	83
	One Race Total	122	39	83
	Asian Total	24	9	15
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	N	N	N
	Filipino	21	8	13
	Korean	N	N	N
	Other Asian	N	N	N
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	88	29	59
	Carolinian	N	N	N
	Chamorro	84	28	56
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4	N	N
	Other Races	10	N	9
	Two or More Races	N	N	N
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population 65 Years and Over		65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
SM	Total CNP	2,544	1,000	1,544
	One Race Total	2,479	973	1,506
	Asian Total	1,051	274	777
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	74	13	61
	Filipino	786	220	566
	Korean	118	23	95
	Other Asian	73	18	55

Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population 65 Years and Over		65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	1,234	642	592
	Carolinian	125	83	42
	Chamorro	837	414	423
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	272	145	127
	Other Races	194	57	137
	Two or More Races	65	27	38
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population 65 Years and Over		65 years and over	With a disability	No disability
TM	Total CNP	122	50	72
	One Race Total	115	45	70
	Asian Total	41	13	28
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	N	N	N
	Filipino	36	11	25
	Korean	N	N	N
	Other Asian	N	N	N
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	60	29	31
	Carolinian	N	N	N
	Chamorro	57	27	30
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	N	N	N
	Other Races	14	N	11
	Two or More Races	7	5	N

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Detailed Crosstabulations

United States Department of Labor Annual Labor Force Statistics by Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Department of Labor in collaboration with (ODEP) published 2023 Annual Labor Force Statistics by disability status, race, and ethnicity. Statistics provided include the labor force

participation rate, employment-to-population ratio, and unemployment rate by disability status and race/ethnicity for ages 16 to 64 years. Table 69 contains the annual 2023 data.

Table 69

2023 Annual Labor Force Statistics By Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity

2023 Annual Labor Force Statistics by Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity						
Persons with a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2023						
	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	Other	Total
Labor Force Participation Rate	39.6%	42.7%	32.6%	37.1%	37.5%	40.3%
Employment-Population Ratio	35.9%	39.8%	29.2%	34.3%	34.4%	37.2%
Unemployment Rate	9.4%	6.8%	10.2%	7.5%	8.4%	7.7%
Persons without a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2023						
	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	Other	Total
Labor Force Participation Rate	75.2%	79.4%	76.3%	75.6%	73.5%	77.7%
Employment-Population Ratio	71.9%	77.2%	72.1%	73.4%	69.3%	75.0%
Unemployment Rate	4.5%	2.7%	5.4%	2.9%	5.6%	3.5%
Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics						
Notes: The category labelled "Other" combines the three categories of American Indian and Alaska Native, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and multiple races; all categories after Hispanic are limited to non-Hispanics.						

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Race and Ethnicity

Individual survey respondents were asked two questions regarding race, ethnicity and language preference.

Race and Ethnicity

Individuals were asked to report their primary race or ethnic group. The number of respondents who answered the question regarding race and ethnicity was 125.

The majority of respondents identified as Chamorro while Asian respondents accounted for 22.4% of the number of total respondents who answered the question. The responses in the “other” category were: Chamorro, Chuukese, Filipino Chamorro-Austrian, Korean, German, Palauan, Palauan-Chamorro and Pohnpeian. Table 70 summarizes the results to the question.

Table 70

Individual Survey: Race and Ethnicity of the Individual Respondents

Primary Race or Ethnic Group	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Chamorro	76	60.8%
Asian	28	22.4%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	22	17.6%
Carolinian	19	15.2%
Other (please describe)	10	8.0%
Caucasian/White	8	6.4%
African American/Black	1	0.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.8%
Hispanic/Latino	1	0.8%
I don't know	0	0.0%
Total	166	

Preferred Language for Communication

Individuals were asked a question regarding their preferred language for communication. Eighty percent of the 125 respondents who answered the question cited English as their preferred language. Results to the question and the options presented to respondents are contained in Table 71.

Table 71

Individual Survey: Preferred Language for Communication

Language Preference	Number	Percent
English	100	80.0%
Chamorro	19	15.2%
Carolinian	4	3.2%
Other (Please identify)	1	0.8%
American Sign Language	1	0.8%
Spanish	0	0.0%
Hawaiian	0	0.0%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Japanese	0	0.0%
Total	125	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Barriers to Employment Goals – Minorities

Partners were provided a list of 23 barriers and asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who were racial or ethnic minorities. There was no limit to the number of items a partner could choose. Forty-six partner respondents answered the question.

The first ranking item, “language barriers” was selected by almost 72% of the partners as a barrier to achieving employment goals for minorities. The items that ranked in the second, third and fourth positions match the items partners selected as barriers to employment for the individuals with the most significant disabilities and the items partners identified as common barriers to getting a job. The comment in response to the item “other, please describe” is:

- “Poor or lack of interpersonal relationship skills, work ethics”

Table 72 details the results to this question.

Table 72

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Language barriers	33	71.7%
Limited job skills/work experience	31	67.4%
Lack of education or training	27	58.7%
Lack of available jobs	26	56.5%
Lack of job search/interview skills	25	54.3%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	25	54.3%
Cultural barriers	22	47.8%
Lack of soft skills	21	45.7%
Lack of reliable transportation	20	43.5%
Lack of technology skills	17	37.0%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	17	37.0%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	15	32.6%
Lack of Internet access	13	28.3%
Lack of attendant care	12	26.1%
Other transportation issues	12	26.1%

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Mental health concerns	11	23.9%
Other health concerns	10	21.7%
Lack of housing	10	21.7%
Lack of assistive technology	9	19.6%
Lack of childcare	8	17.4%
Substance abuse	4	8.7%
Criminal record	3	6.5%
Other (please describe)	2	4.3%
Total	373	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including individuals who have been potentially unserved or underserved by OVR:

1. Tinian and Rota were the most frequently cited areas that may be underserved by OVR. It remains unclear as to whether the need for VR services on these islands is greater than OVR's ability to meet the need. OVR does have counselors assigned to visit the islands, and the demand does not appear to be greater than the current visiting schedule, which varies from monthly to quarterly.
2. Deaf individuals were cited as being potentially underserved by OVR because of the lack of interpreters available at the agency and in the community.
3. Although there were no underserved groups identified by race on a recurring basis, OVR's ability to serve immigrants from Asian countries has been impacted by legal interpretations since the last CSNA. The agency is in the midst of a Federal review of these opinions which may increase the agency's ability to serve individuals with disabilities that are classified as Commonwealth-only workers and workers from Freely Associated States.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to OVR based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities from Different Ethnic Groups, including needs of Individuals who have been Unserved or Underserved by the VR Program area:

1. OVR is encouraged to conduct regular informational meetings in Tinian and Rota about OVR services and regularly examine the need to potentially increase visits to the islands as the need dictates.
2. OVR is encouraged to identify individuals that are fluent in ASL to increase service to individuals that are Deaf.

SECTION FOUR

NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION

An assessment of the rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities is a required component of the CSNA as identified in 34 CFR 361.29. This section contains an assessment of the need for transition services and pre-employment transition services and the extent to which such services provided are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities were noted as similar to those of the general population of consumers served by OVR, but work experience and soft skills were stressed more frequently for youth.
2. The lack of public transportation significantly impacts youth and their work options as they have difficulty getting to work experience sites.
3. OVR purchases pre-employment transition services through contracts and has hired a Transition Specialist who is responsible for pre-employment transition services coordination activities.
4. The delivery of pre-employment transition services has been uneven in the last few years, but OVR has worked with providers to ensure that all five of the required activities are now readily available to students with disabilities.
5. Participants indicated that there is a need to share information about OVR and available services more frequently in the schools. It was repeatedly recommended that information target the parents and families of youth and students with disabilities. The family focus is essential as many families tend to shelter their children with disabilities and this can limit their child's exposure to the world of work.
6. Staff and partners indicate that students with disabilities are not applying for services from OVR even after they have received pre-employment transition services as a potentially eligible individual. Consequently, when the students are done receiving pre-ETS, they will not be connected with OVR and this impacts their successful transition to postsecondary education or work when they exit the school system.
7. There are many youth that have Autism or other significant disabilities that are served by the Center for Living Independently and could benefit from supported employment services. The lack of SE extended service providers limits the employment and support options for these youth.

***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO
THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRANSITION***

Youth Data

Vocational Rehabilitation services for youth with disabilities enable individuals to pursue meaningful employment that corresponds with their abilities and interests. This section contains various statistics regarding the general trends of youth and youth with disabilities.

Educational Attainment: 18 to 24 years

The 2020 Decennial Census of the Island Areas identified educational attainment for youth ages 18 to 24. The data indicates that the rate of individuals ages 18 to 24 years whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school graduate or the equivalent in the CNMI is 7.2 percentage points higher than the 2022 U.S. average

Table 73 contains educational attainment rates for ages 18 to 24 years, which includes high school graduation rates and bachelor's degree achievement for the United States. Table 74 details the information recorded in the year 2020 for the CNMI and the three municipalities with data available.

Table 73

Educational Attainment for Ages 18 to 24 Years: United States

Educational Attainment: 18 to 24 Years	United States		United States -- Urban		United States -- Rural	
United States	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Population 18 to 24 years	31,254,823	(X)	26,293,036	(X)	4,961,787	(X)
Less than high school graduate	3,636,420	11.6%	2,853,088	10.9%	783,332	15.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	11,051,703	35.4%	8,947,758	34.0%	2,103,945	42.4%
Some college or associate's degree	12,373,694	39.6%	10,725,223	40.8%	1,648,471	33.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	4,193,006	13.4%	3,766,967	14.3%	426,039	8.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 74

Educational Attainment for Ages 18 to 24 Years: CNMI and Municipalities

Educational Attainment 18 to 24 years	CNMI		CNMI - Urban		CNMI - Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population 18 years and over	33,709	(X)	26,423	(X)	7,286	(X)
Population 18 to 24 years	4,260	12.6%	3,267	12.4%	993	13.6%
Less than high school graduate	943	22.1%	755	23.1%	188	18.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,815	42.6%	1,290	39.5%	525	52.9%
Some college, no degree	955	22.4%	777	23.8%	178	17.9%
Associate's degree	342	8.0%	267	8.2%	75	7.6%
Bachelor's degree	190	4.5%	167	5.1%	23	2.3%
Graduate or professional degree	15	0.4%	11	0.3%	4	0.4%
Educational Attainment 18 to 24 years	RM		SM		TM	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population 18 years and over	1,334	(X)	30,930	(X)	1,438	(X)
Population 18 to 24 years	168	12.6%	3,951	12.8%	139	9.7%
Less than high school graduate	23	13.7%	891	22.6%	28	20.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	106	63.1%	1,630	41.3%	78	56.1%
Some college, no degree	29	17.3%	903	22.9%	23	16.5%
Associate's degree	5	3.0%	331	8.4%	6	4.3%
Bachelor's degree	4	2.4%	182	4.6%	4	2.9%
Graduate or professional degree	1	0.6%	14	0.4%	0	0.0%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic and Housing Characteristics

Youth with Disabilities by Disability Type

Knowledge of the types of disabilities reported by residents helps OVR anticipate and prepare for meeting service needs and assisting students and consumers to obtain necessary accommodations to maximize function, educational attainment and employability.

The data in Table 75 was presented in section one of this report where it was combined with data for ages 18 to 64 years. The table data is republished in this section exclusively for the civilian noninstitutionalized population under 18 years. Disability type percentages for the CNMI are calculated by adding the total number of male and female counts and dividing the total number

of individuals reporting the disability type within the designated geographic area by the number of noninstitutionalized civilians residing in the area.

Table 75

Disability Types Under 18 Years

Disability Types	Percent with a disability						
	CNMI	CNMI - Urban	CNMI - Rural	NIM	RM	SM	TM
With hearing difficulty							
Under 18 years	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%
With vision difficulty							
Under 18 years	1.0%	1.1%	0.6%	0.0%	0.4%	1.0%	0.8%
With a cognitive difficulty							
5 to 17 years	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%	0.0%	2.2%	2.8%	3.9%
With an ambulatory difficulty							
5 to 17 years	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
With a self-care difficulty							
5 to 17 years	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.5%	0.8%	1.3%
With an independent living difficulty							
No Data							

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Demographic Profile

Youth with Disabilities: Race and Ethnicity

The U.S. Census collects data on disability among race and ethnic categories for the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) in the CNMI by age. The Census Bureau identifies numeric counts for disability and race/ethnicity for the population under 18. The category “Other races” includes participants who reported one race that is classified as White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, or Some Other Race. Multiple race reports are recorded in the category “Two or More Races.” Table 76 summarizes the numeric counts for the CNP under 18 years.

Table 76

Race/Ethnicity and Disability: CNMI and Municipalities – Population Under 18 Years

Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population under 18 years		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
CNMI	Total CNP	13,620	500	13,120
	One Race Total	11,840	422	11,418
	Asian Total	4,922	154	4,768
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	710	16	694
	Filipino	3,365	119	3,246
	Korean	301	5	296
	Other Asian	546	14	532
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	6,765	261	6,504
	Carolinian	714	21	693
	Chamorro	3,610	131	3,479
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2,441	109	2,332
	Other Races [1]	153	7	146
	Two or More Races	1,780	78	1,702
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population under 18 years		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
RM	Total CNP	559	11	548
	One Race Total	510	11	499
	Asian Total	139	N	138
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	N	N	N
	Filipino	93	N	92
	Korean	N	N	N
	Other Asian	46	N	46
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	367	10	357
	Carolinian	N	N	N
	Chamorro	340	8	332

	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	27	N	25
	Other Races [1]	4	N	4
	Two or More Races	49	N	49
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population under 18 years		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
SM	Total CNP	12,455	462	11,993
	One Race Total	10,843	392	10,451
	Asian Total	4,599	146	4,453
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	691	16	675
	Filipino	3,151	113	3,038
	Korean	297	5	292
	Other Asian	460	12	448
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	6,097	239	5,858
	Carolinian	714	21	693
	Chamorro	2,988	111	2,877
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2,395	107	2,288
	Other Races [1]	147	7	140
	Two or More Races	1,612	70	1,542
Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population under 18 years		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
TM	Total CNP	606	27	579
	One Race Total	487	19	468
	Asian Total	184	7	177
	Chinese (except Taiwanese)	19	N	19
	Filipino	121	5	116
	Korean	4	N	4
	Other Asian	40	N	38
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Total	301	12	289

Race/Ethnicity and Disability Population under 18 years		Population under 18 years	With a disability	No disability
	Carolinian	N	N	N
	Chamorro	282	12	270
	Other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	19	N	19
	Other Races [1]	N	N	N
	Two or More Races	119	8	111

Source: 2020 Decennial Census of Island Areas, DECIA Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Detailed Crosstabulations

School Enrollment, Educational Attainment and Employment Status: Ages 16 to 19 Years

Data found in Table 77 represents detailed national youth school enrollment and educational attainment by employment status for individuals ages 16 to 19 years in the United States, including urban and rural areas. The information is presented to provide OVR in the event OVR has an interest or need to obtain similar data for their agency and may wish to collaborate in-house or with third party data collecting agencies by using the provided table as an example.

Table 77

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19 Years: United States

Statewide	United States	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/ Not Enrolled
Total:	17,402,141	-----
Enrolled in school:	14,605,120	83.3%
Employed	4,583,966	31.4%
Unemployed	583,897	4.0%
Not in labor force	9,437,257	64.6%
Not enrolled in school:	2,797,021	16.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	2,115,074	75.6%
Employed	1,370,664	64.8%
Unemployed	206,956	9.8%
Not in labor force	537,454	25.4%

Statewide	United States	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/ Not Enrolled
Not high school graduate:	681,947	24.4%
Employed	276,946	40.6%
Unemployed	66,340	9.7%
Not in labor force	338,661	49.7%
Total Labor Force Participation	7,088,769	40.7%
Total Not in labor force	10,313,372	59.3%
Urban	United States -- Urban	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/ Not Enrolled
Total:	14,119,497	-----
Enrolled in school:	11,973,010	84.8%
Employed	3,693,430	30.8%
Unemployed	493,463	4.1%
Not in labor force	7,786,117	65.0%
Not enrolled in school:	2,146,487	15.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	1,645,258	76.6%
Employed	1,065,126	64.7%
Unemployed	162,667	9.9%
Not in labor force	417,465	25.4%
Not high school graduate:	501,229	23.4%
Employed	200,739	40.0%
Unemployed	53,063	10.6%
Not in labor force	247,427	49.4%
Total Labor Force Participation	5,668,488	40.1%
Total Not in labor force	8,451,009	59.9%

Rural	United States -- Rural	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/ Not Enrolled
Total:	3,282,644	-----
Enrolled in school:	2,632,110	80.2%
Employed	890,536	33.8%
Unemployed	90,434	3.4%
Not in labor force	1,651,140	62.7%
Not enrolled in school:	650,534	19.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	469,816	72.2%
Employed	305,538	65.0%
Unemployed	44,289	9.4%
Not in labor force	119,989	25.5%
Not high school graduate:	180,718	27.8%
Employed	76,207	42.2%
Unemployed	13,277	7.3%
Not in labor force	91,234	50.5%
Total LFP	1,420,281	43.3%
Total Not in labor force	1,862,363	56.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Bureau of Labor Statistics Youth Labor Force and Unemployment Rates Including Youth with Disabilities

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics collects information on the Nation's youth labor force participation and unemployment by age. The data indicates that the labor force participation rates for youth with disabilities are lower compared to individuals without disabilities when youth are ages 16 to 19 in December 2023 and February 2024 and the difference ranges between 5.2 to 6.6 percentage points. The margin of difference in the Annual 2023 LFP rate is 10.5 percent for 16 to 19 years. When the group ages to 20 to 24 years, the disparity ranges between 21 to 25.7 percentage points and the annual difference for 2023 is 20.7 percentage points.

Important to note: from October through December of 2023, the unemployment rate difference between those with and without disabilities ages 20 to 24 ranged between 0.4 to 6.5%, which is significantly lower than the first four months of 2023 where the range was 6.3 to 10%. In

January 2024, the unemployment rates for youth with disabilities in both age categories were lower than for youth without disabilities.

Table 78 details the National labor force participation and unemployment data for youth ages 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 with and without disabilities from December 2023 through February 2024 and includes the 2023 Annual averages.

Table 78

Youth Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate: December 2023, January and February 2024, and Annual 2023 Averages

Group	Youth Labor Force Participation Rate							
	23-Dec		Annual 2023		Jan-24		Feb-24	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16 to 19	29.9%	35.1%	27.0%	37.5%	33.8%	22.0%	27.9%	34.5%
Age 20 to 24	45.9%	71.6%	51.8%	72.5%	71.2%	49.0%	46.0%	72.4%
	Youth Unemployment Rate							
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16 to 19	15.8%	10.0%	18.0%	11.0%	11.1%	13.4%	28.7%	12.1%
Age 20 to 24	12.0%	5.5%	11.8%	6.4%	6.6%	13.2%	17.5%	7.1%

Source: cpsinfo@BLS.GOV

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Barriers to Employment Goals – Youth

Partner survey respondents were asked to indicate the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from a list of 23 barriers. There was no limit to the number of barriers that a partner respondent could choose.

Two of the top three the most frequently cited barriers to employment that partners selected for youth in transition are two of the top three most frequently cited barriers partners identified as

common barriers to employment. Two narrative comments are quoted from the category “other, please describe” :

- “*Interpersonal relationship skills and work ethics*”
- “*Lack of support from parents/family*”

When comparing the partners’ selection of barriers for the different OVR client populations, four of the 5 most frequently cited barriers to getting a job that partners identified for youth in transition were identified in the top five positions as barriers for clients with the most significant disabilities and for clients who are racial or ethnic minorities (limited job skills/work experience, lack of job search/interview skills, lack of available jobs, lack of education or training).

Table 79 lists the barriers for youth in transition along with the number of times a barrier was identified by partner respondents.

Table 79

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth in Transition

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth in Transition	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	36	75.0%
Lack of job search/interview skills	28	58.3%
Lack of available jobs	28	58.3%
Lack of soft skills	27	56.3%
Lack of education or training	25	52.1%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	24	50.0%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	18	37.5%
Lack of reliable transportation	17	35.4%
Mental health concerns	14	29.2%
Other transportation issues	14	29.2%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	13	27.1%
Lack of attendant care	13	27.1%
Other health concerns	11	22.9%

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth in Transition	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of technology skills	11	22.9%
Lack of Internet access	11	22.9%
Lack of assistive technology	10	20.8%
Language barriers	8	16.7%
Cultural barriers	8	16.7%
Substance abuse	4	8.3%
Lack of childcare	4	8.3%
Lack of housing	3	6.3%
Other (please describe)	3	6.3%
Criminal record	1	2.1%
Total	331	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of youth with disabilities in transition:

1. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities were noted as similar to those of the general population of consumers served by OVR, but work experience and soft skills were stressed more frequently for youth.
2. The lack of public transportation significantly impacts youth and their work options as they have difficulty getting to work experience sites.
3. OVR purchases pre-employment transition services through contracts and has hired a Transition Specialist who is responsible for pre-employment transition services coordination activities.
4. The delivery of pre-employment transition services has been uneven in the last few years, but OVR has worked with providers to ensure that all five of the required activities are now readily available to students with disabilities.
5. Participants indicated that there is a need to share information about OVR and available services more frequently in the schools. It was repeatedly recommended that information target the parents and families of youth and students with disabilities. The family focus is essential as many families tend to shelter their children with disabilities and this can limit their child's exposure to the world of work.
6. Staff and partners indicate that students with disabilities are not applying for services from OVR even after they have received pre-employment transition services as a potentially eligible individual. Consequently, when the students are done receiving pre-ETS, they will not be connected with OVR and this impacts their successful transition to postsecondary education or work when they exit the school system.
7. There are many youth that have Autism or other significant disabilities that are served by the Center for Living Independently and could benefit from supported employment services. The lack of SE extended service providers limits the employment and support options for these youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to OVR related to the needs of youth with disabilities in transition:

1. OVR is encouraged to work to increase the number of students with disabilities that apply for services after receiving pre-employment transition services as a potentially eligible student. This will help ensure students transition with more support and will help increase the services that can be charged to the 15% pre-ETS reserve.
2. OVR is encouraged to follow-up on the recommendations in Section 2 of this report to develop extended services for supported employment. There are many youth in the CNMI that can benefit from the SE model, and the focus on youth services in SE will help OVR expend their SE funds, half of which must be spent on youth 24 and younger.
3. OVR is encouraged to consider having the Transition Specialist act as a case carrying counselor in addition to the role of coordinating transition services. This will allow students and youth to receive seamless transition services as they exit the school system.

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to this section:

- I. **Goal:** Expand and enhance the provision of transition and pre-employment transition services to youth and students with disabilities.
 - D. **Priority 1:** Increase the number of students with disabilities that receive pre-employment transition services that apply for services from OVR by 10% per year.
 - E. **Priority 2:** Increase the number of students with disabilities that receive work-based learning experiences as part of pre-employment transition services by 5% per year.
 - F. **Priority:** Increase the number of transition-age youth with disabilities that enroll in postsecondary education training programs after exiting secondary school by 5% per year.
 1. **Strategy:** Provide regular informational meetings for student and their families regarding the scope and potential impact of OVR services in the schools.
 2. **Strategy:** Conduct intakes at the schools in order to increase the ease and convenience of application.
 3. **Strategy:** Examine rate structure and explore the possibility of revising rates to include a differential pay for work-based learning experiences.
 4. **Strategy:** In partnership with the schools, conduct field trips for high school students to Northern Marianas College to encourage the pursuit of higher education upon exiting the school system. This can be done as part of pr-ETS or in coordination with the Title I youth program.
 5. **Strategy:** Explore funding an Upward Bound-like program to encourage enrollment in postsecondary education (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html>).

SECTION FIVE: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The following information was gathered during this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System. Throughout this section, the term WIOA or WIA Job Center will be used to refer to services provided by OVR's partners in the American Job Centers (AJCs). The information and comments noted in this Section only refer to OVR's partners, not OVR unless explicitly stated.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system:

1. While OVR and the Title I program (called WIA program in the CNMI) have a good working relationship, it is primarily one of referral at the local level. When individuals with disabilities come to the WIA program for services, they are referred to OVR as a matter of course.
2. There are very few instances of braided funding of cases between OVR and the WIA program. This is an opportunity for both agencies to expand instances of shared cases in the future.
3. It has been difficult for co-enrollment between core partners to be tracked in the CNMI. While OVR refers consumers to the WIA program for assistance with employment preparation services and job placement, there is no formal tracking system to identify how many consumers follow-through and what happens when they do enroll in services.
4. Regular cross-training between OVR and WIA was noted as an ongoing need that will help both agencies and increase collaboration and shared cases.

SURVEY RESULT BY TYPE:

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

WIOA Job Centers (or WIA)

Individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands were asked a series of questions about their use and opinion of WIOA Job Centers (or WIA).

Individual Survey: WIOA Job Centers (or WIA) – Use and Accessibility

Roughly one-fifth of the respondents cited “yes” when asked if they had used the Job Centers beyond an online account.

About 13.6 percent (n=3) of the respondents that physically visited the WIOA Job Centers had difficulty with the accessibility of the building. Two narrative comments were received regarding the physical access of the building and the comments cited Veterans not being prioritized and non-specific difficulties.

With regard to program accessibility, 6 respondents (6 out of 22, 27.3%) indicated that they had trouble accessing the programs at the WIOA Job Centers. Table 80 summarizes the responses to questions of use and accessibility.

Table 80

Individual Survey: WIOA Job Centers (or WIA) Centers - Use and Accessibility

Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Have you ever tried to use the services of the WIOA Job Center (or WIA) beyond an online account?	22	21.8%	79	78.2%	101
Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?	3	13.6%	19	86.4%	22
Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the WIOA Job Center, or WIA (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?	6	27.3%	16	72.7%	22

Individual Survey: WIOA Job Centers - Training and Employment

Seven individual survey respondents (31.8% of 22 respondents) went to the WIOA Job Centers to get training. More than eighty-five percent (85.7%; n=6) indicated that they received the training they were seeking and three (42.9%) found work as a result of the training.

Sixteen (72.7%) out of 22 individuals went to the WIOA Job Center with the purpose of seeking assistance to find a job. Sixteen respondents answered the question regarding receiving help that resulted in employment with 43.8% (n=7) indicating that they did not receive assistance in finding employment.

Table 81 details the results to the questions regarding training and employment from the individual survey.

Table 81

Individual Survey: WIOA Job Centers - Training and Employment

Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you go to the WIOA (or WIA) Job Center to get training?	7	31.8%	15	68.2%	22
Did you get the training that you were seeking?	6	85.7%	1	14.3%	7
Did the training result in employment?	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	7
Did you go to the WIOA Job Center (or WIA) to find a job?	16	72.7%	6	27.3%	22
Did they help you find employment?	9	56.3%	7	43.8%	16

Individual Survey: WIOA Job Centers – Helpfulness and Value

The concepts of helpfulness and value are evaluated in this study with respect to the WIOA Job Centers.

WIOA Job Center Staff – Helpfulness

Twenty-three respondents answered the question regarding helpfulness. Almost an equal number of respondents found the Job Center staff to be either very helpful or somewhat helpful. Table 82 summarizes the results.

Table 82

Individual Survey: Helpfulness of WIOA Job Centers' Staff

WIOA Center Staff Helpful	Number	Percent
Yes, they were very helpful	10	43.5%
They were somewhat helpful	9	39.1%
No, they were not helpful	4	17.4%
Total	23	100.0%

WIOA Job Centers' Services – Value

Twenty-two individuals answered the question regarding the value of the services they received at the WIOA Job Centers. The majority of individual respondents found the services to be very valuable. Table 83 identifies the rating for the value of the services at the WIOA Job Centers by the individuals that responded to the survey.

Table 83

Individual Survey: WIOA Job Centers' Services – Value

WIOA Job Center Services Valuable	Number	Percent
Yes, the services were very valuable	10	45.5%
The services were somewhat valuable	8	36.4%
No, the services were not valuable	4	18.2%
Total	22	100.0%

Individual Survey: WIOA Job Centers – Effectiveness

The majority of individual survey respondents (n=10) indicated that the Centers' services to people with disabilities are very effective. Roughly 18% of individual respondents (n=4) did not have opinion, and an equal number of respondents (n=3) cited either somewhat ineffective or very ineffective, which indicates caution is to be used when making inferences regarding the results of this question.

Table 84 details the effectiveness of the WIOA Job Centers' services.

Table 84

Individual Survey: WIOA Job Centers – Effectiveness

Effectiveness Rating	Number	Percent
Very effective	10	45.5%
No opinion	4	18.2%
Somewhat ineffective	3	13.6%
Very ineffective	3	13.6%
Somewhat effective	2	9.1%
Total	22	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER RESULTS**WIOA Job Centers (or WIA)**

Partner survey respondents in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands were asked a series of questions about their use and opinion of WIOA Job Centers (or WIA).

Partner Survey: WIOA Job Centers (or WIA) – Use and Accessibility

The project team asked partner respondents to identify their frequency of interaction with the WIOA (or WIA) Job Centers. An equal number (n=12) of partners indicated that they interacted with the Job Centers either “somewhat frequently” or “or not at all” while a narrow majority (n=14) of the partner respondents cited “infrequently” in response to the question.

The survey asked about the physical accessibility of the Job Centers. The majority of partner respondents (about 39%) indicated that the WIOA Job Centers were somewhat physically accessible. Note the narrow margin of difference (n=2) between the number of partners (n=12) who cited that they did not know if the Job Centers are fully accessible and the number of partners who indicated that the Centers are somewhat physically accessible.

Partners were divided on whether or not the WIOA Job Centers are programmatically accessible as the results are almost divided equally between the options “fully accessible,” “I do not know,” and “somewhat accessible.”

Tables 85-87 summarize the responses from OVR's community partners regarding interaction and accessibility of the WIOA Job Centers.

Table 85

Partner Survey: Frequency of Interaction with WIOA Job Centers

Frequency of Interaction with WIOA Job Centers	Number	Percent
Infrequently	14	29.8%
Somewhat frequently	12	25.5%
Not at all	12	25.5%
Very frequently	9	19.2%
Total	47	100.0%

Table 86

Partner Survey: Physical Accessibility of the WIOA Job Centers

Physical Accessibility of the WIOA Job Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	14	38.9%
I do not know	12	33.3%
Fully accessible	9	25.0%
Not accessible	1	2.8%
Total	36	100.0%

Table 87

Partner Survey: Programmatic Accessibility of the WIOA Job Centers

Programmatic Accessibility of the WIOA Job Centers	Number	Percent
Fully accessible	13	36.1%
I do not know	12	33.3%
Somewhat accessible	11	30.6%
Not accessible	0	0.0%
Total	36	100.0%

Partner Survey: WIOA Job Centers (or WIA) – Effectiveness Rating

Partners and individual survey respondents were similar in their viewpoint when asked about the overall effectiveness of the WIOA Job Centers in serving people with disabilities. More than 70 percent of the partners indicated that Job Centers effectively serve people with disabilities. Table 88 details the results.

Table 88

Partner Survey: WIOA Job Centers (or WIA) – Effectiveness Rating

Effectiveness of WIOA Job Centers	Number	Percent
Effectively	24	70.6%
Not effectively	5	14.7%
Very effectively	3	8.8%
They do not serve individuals with disabilities	2	5.9%
Total	34	100.0%

Partner Survey: WIOA Job Centers (or WIA) – Improving Service

In the final survey question related to the WIOA Job Centers, the respondents were asked what the Centers could do to improve services for people with disabilities. Partners were presented a list of five items, including the open-ended category “other,” and asked to select all that apply. Thirty-six respondents answered the question.

The item “partner more effectively with VR to serve dually enrolled clients” was cited most frequently by partners as a way to improve WIOA Job Center services.

Table 89 details the results from the partner survey.

Table 89

Partner Survey: WIOA Job Centers (or WIA) – Improving Service

Improving Service of the WIOA Job Centers to Effectively Serve PWD	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Partner more effectively with OVR to serve dually enrolled clients	29	80.6%
Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	16	44.4%
Improve programmatic accessibility	12	33.3%
Improve physical accessibility	10	27.8%
Other (please describe)	1	2.8%
Total	68	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

1. While OVR and the Title I program (called WIA program in the CNMI) have a good working relationship, it is primarily one of referral at the local level. When individuals with disabilities come to the WIA program for services, they are referred to OVR as a matter of course.
2. There are very few instances of braided funding of cases between OVR and the WIA program. This is an opportunity for both agencies to expand instances of shared cases in the future.
3. It has been difficult for co-enrollment between core partners to be tracked in the CNMI. While OVR refers consumers to the WIA program for assistance with employment preparation services and job placement, there is no formal tracking system to identify how many consumers follow-through and what happens when they do enroll in services.
4. Regular cross-training between OVR and WIA was noted as an ongoing need that will help both agencies and increase collaboration and shared cases.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are offered to OVR based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities served through other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System area:

1. OVR is encouraged to provide regular training to WIA program staff on available services and the benefit of shared cases,
2. OVR is encouraged to work with the WIA program and the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy program to develop a universal application form for all core partners.

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to this section:

- I. **Goal:** Increase and enhance collaboration with the Title I (called WIA) program in the CNMI.
 - A. **Priority 1:** Increase co-enrollment in OVR and Title I programs
 - B. **Priority 2:** Increase the number of cases where there is shared funding between OVR and Title I programs.
 - C. **Priority 3:** Increase joint business engagement activities between OVR and Title I programs.
 1. **Strategy:** Highlight examples of joint cases where shared funding exists for replication.

2. **Strategy:** Utilize integrated resource teams for shared planning.
3. **Strategy:** Develop customized training programs in partnership with Title I and local employers.

**SECTION SIX:
NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE
COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN CNMI**

Section Six identifies the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in CNMI that serve individuals with disabilities. There are very few CRPs in CNMI and the findings and recommendations in this Section must be interpreted with this in mind.

***RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION
METHODS***

The following themes emerged in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in CNMI:

4. There is a need to establish CRPs throughout CNMI for all VR services other than pre-employment transition services. There are no employment preparation, job development and placement services available for OVR consumers. There are no supported employment providers. OVR staff must provide these services directly as needed.
5. There are very few mental health service providers as well as specialty medical exam providers in Sapan and none in Tinian and Rota.
6. There is an opportunity for OVR to partner with a broadband Internet service provider to increase broadband access if the agency can refurbish two existing buildings.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Service Providers and Vendors

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions identifying their use of OVR referrals; the quality, effectiveness, and responsiveness of their service provider or vendor; and whether or not they would recommend their service provider or vendor to others.

Use of a OVR Referral

The first question asked individual survey respondents to indicate whether or not they received services from a service provider or vendor that they were referred to by OVR. A total of 101 respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (43.6%) indicated that they did

not receive service provider or vendor services recommended/referred to by OVR. Table 90 summarizes the results.

Table 90

Individual Survey: Use of a OVR Referral

Use of OVR Referral	Number	Percent
No	44	43.6%
Yes	32	31.7%
Not sure	25	24.8%
Total	101	100.0%

Quality of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Individuals were asked to rate the quality of service from the service provider or vendor. A total of 56 responses were received and 39.3 percent indicated that the quality of service from the service provider or vendor was “excellent.” Table 91 details the results.

Table 91

Individual Survey: Quality of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Quality of Services: Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Excellent	22	39.3%
Good	18	32.1%
Fair	13	23.2%
Poor	3	5.4%
Total	56	100.0%

Effectiveness of Service Provider Services or Vendor

Individuals were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services from the service provider or vendor. The majority rated the services from the service provider as either “very effective” or “effective.” Slightly more than one-fourth of the respondents indicated that the services were either somewhat ineffective or ineffective (29.1%). The results are detailed in Table 92.

Table 92

Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Effectiveness of Services: Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Effective	24	43.6%
Very effective	15	27.3%
Somewhat ineffective	12	21.8%
Ineffective	4	7.3%
Total	55	100.0%

Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor

Respondents were also asked to rate the responsiveness of the service provider or vendor. Although the majority of the respondents rated the responsiveness of the service provider as “excellent,” more than one-fourth rated the responsiveness of their service provider or vendor as fair. Table 93 summarizes the results.

Table 93

Individual Survey: Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor

Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Excellent	23	41.1%
Fair	16	28.6%
Good	15	26.8%
Poor	2	3.6%
Total	56	100.0%

Recommend Service Provider or Vendor

The final question asked of individuals regarding service providers and vendors was “Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by OVR?” Over 67 percent of the respondents indicated that they would recommend their service provider or vendor to others. The response ratings are contained in Table 94.

Table 94

Individual Survey: Recommend Service Provider or Vendor

Recommend Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Yes	37	67.3%
Not sure	17	30.9%
No	1	1.8%
Total	55	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS**Partner Survey: Service Providers and Vendors**

Partner survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding rehabilitation service provider services in order to identify the availability of services to clients and whether or not the services are meeting the clients’ needs.

Employment Services Readily Available to OVR Clients

Partners were provided with a list of 16 items and asked to select the employment services that are readily available to OVR clients. Fifty-seven partners responded to the question.

Three items were cited by over 77 percent of partners as services that are readily available to OVR clients (job training, pre-employment transition services, job search/placement/retention). “Other” was cited the least number of times by partners in response to the question and the comments contained the phrases “all” and “training services, certification programs, support services.” Table 95 details the results.

Table 95

Partner Survey: Employment Services Readily Available

Employment Services Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Job training	48	84.2%
Pre-employment transition services	45	78.9%
Job search/placement/retention	44	77.2%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	36	63.2%
Transportation assistance	36	63.2%
Assistive technology	29	50.9%
Disability benefits counseling	24	42.1%
Personal care attendants	14	24.6%
Vehicle modification	11	19.3%
Maintenance or income assistance	11	19.3%
Mental health treatment	11	19.3%
Medical treatment	8	14.0%
Substance abuse treatment	6	10.5%
Housing	6	10.5%
Health insurance	5	8.8%
Other (please describe)	2	3.5%
Total	336	

Employment Services Not Readily Available to OVR Clients

Partner survey respondents were also asked to indicate which services are not readily available in the area of the Islands where the respondent works. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen.

Partners displayed consistency in their choices for available and not available services. The top four employment services listed in Table 95 (above) are found at the bottom of the list of employment services not readily available. Medical treatment and health insurance were cited and qual number of times and the most frequently by partners as employment services not readily available to OVR clients. Table 96 contains the partner results to this question.

Table 96

Partner Survey: Employment Services Not Readily Available

Employment Services Not Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Medical treatment	31	59.6%
Health insurance	31	59.6%
Substance abuse treatment	29	55.8%
Vehicle modification	28	53.8%
Mental health treatment	28	53.8%
Housing	28	53.8%
Maintenance or income assistance	24	46.2%
Personal care attendants	24	46.2%
Assistive technology	14	26.9%
Disability benefits counseling	13	25.0%
Transportation assistance	7	13.5%
Job training	5	9.6%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	4	7.7%
Job search/placement/retention	4	7.7%
Other (please describe)	3	5.8%
Pre-employment transition services	2	3.8%
Total	275	

Service Providers Meeting Client Needs

Partner survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the CMNI were able to meet OVR clients' rehabilitation service needs.

Almost 53% of the partner respondents indicated that service providers are able to meet the needs of OVR customers most of the time. The next most frequently selected choice of the partners was "some of the time." Table 97 summarizes the results to this question.

Table 97

Partner Survey: Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs

Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs	Number	Percent
Most of the time	30	52.6%
Some of the time	22	38.6%
All of the time	4	7.0%
None of the time	1	1.8%
Total	57	100.0%

Services that Providers Are Most Effective in Providing to OVR Clients

Partners were provided a list of 16 items and asked to identify the services that service providers were most effective in providing to OVR clients. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen.

Table 98 contains the partners' choices of services that service providers are most effective in providing. The table is slightly different from Table 99, which contains the partners' list of services readily available. One comment was received in response to the category of “other” and the comment was the word “all.”

Table 98

Partner Survey: Services that Service Providers Are Most Effective in Providing

Services that Service Providers are Most Effective in Providing to OVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Pre-employment transition services	35	71.4%
Job search/placement/retention	27	55.1%
Job training	25	51.0%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	25	51.0%
Assistive technology	18	36.7%
Transportation assistance	16	32.7%
Disability benefits counseling	13	26.5%
Personal care attendants	6	12.2%
Maintenance or income assistance	4	8.2%
Substance abuse treatment	4	8.2%
Vehicle modification	2	4.1%
Medical treatment	2	4.1%

Services that Service Providers are Most Effective in Providing to OVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Mental health treatment	2	4.1%
Health insurance	2	4.1%
Housing	2	4.1%
Other (please describe)	1	2.0%
Total	184	

Client Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Partner survey respondents were given an open-ended question and asked to identify the rehabilitation needs that service providers were unable to meet in their area. Twenty-three respondents provided a narrative response indicating various service gaps.

Six narrative comments did not provide service needs, citing phrases including “none/unsure”. Job coaching services and references to timely services/timeline of assistance were each noted 4 times in the narrative comments. Assistive technology was noted three times and qualified technicians for AT devices was mentioned one time in the narrative comments. Content analysis of the remaining comments include: housing assistance; continued services out of high school; job placement; services for the visually impaired; immediate job placement and retention; job shadowing; appropriate training services; assistive technology for individuals with chronic back pain; and services on Tinian and Rota.

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients’ Needs

Partners were provided with a list of five reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons why vocational rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet clients’ service needs. Respondents were able to select more than one item if desired. Forty-one respondents answered the question.

In response to the question, thirty-one out of 41 partners (75.6%) agreed there are not enough service providers available in area. Two comments received in the category “other” contained the word “none” or “NA.” Five comments identified that “intake/processing time/services take too long to be provided, especially on the islands of Rota and Tinian.” Government process and local government were cited twice in the narrative comments and funding was also cited twice. Quotes from the remaining comments are:

- “Counselor barriers”
- “Employer's funding prevents training partnership with OVR, especially in the outer islands (e.g. Tinian and Rota)”

Table 100 contains the number of times the reason was chosen and the percentage of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Table 100

Partner Survey: Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Not enough service providers available in area	31	75.6%
Client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers	15	36.6%
Other (please describe)	13	31.7%
Low quality of service provider services	4	9.8%
Low rates paid for services	2	4.9%
Total	65	

Top Three Changes to Help Better Serve OVR Clients

Partner survey respondents were presented a list and asked to identify the top three changes that would help them better serve OVR clients.

More streamlined processes, additional training, and Improved communication with referring OVR counselor ranked as the top three changes that would help partners better serve OVR clients. Increased collaboration with the WIOA Job Center (or WIA) was chosen by almost 33% of respondents. Note that: 1) about 55% of the partner respondents interacted infrequently or not at all with the WIOA Job Center (or WIA) Centers; 2) almost 80% of partners believe the Job Centers are very effective or effectively serving people with disabilities; and 3) about 33% of partners are not knowledgeable regarding Job Centers' program accessibility and 30.6% of partners believe that the WIOA Job Centers are somewhat programmatically accessible to clients.

Two comments were received in the category “other” and are quoted:

- *“Communication Overall”*
- *“More collaboration with PSS before graduation”*

Table 101 lists the changes along with the number of times each change was identified as one of the top three changes that would help better serve OVR clients.

Table 101

Partner Survey: Top Three Changes to Help Better Serve OVR Clients

Top Three Changes to Better Serve OVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
More streamlined processes	25	54.3%
Additional training	17	37.0%
Improved communication with referring OVR counselor	16	34.8%
Increased collaboration with WIOA Job Center (or WIA)	15	32.6%
Improved business partnerships	14	30.4%
Reduced documentation requirements	10	21.7%
Smaller caseload	8	17.4%
Increased options for technology use to communicate with clients	7	15.2%
Referral of appropriate individuals	5	10.9%
Incentives for high performance paid by OVR	5	10.9%
Higher rates paid by OVR for services	2	4.3%
Other (please describe)	2	4.3%
Total	126	

Most Important Change OVR Service Providers Could Make to Support Clients' Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Partner respondents were asked to identify the most important change that network or rehabilitation service providers could make to support OVR clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals. A total of 33 written responses were received and 28 contained a variety of different feedback. Content analysis of comments revealed the themes of: providing more training and OJTs; improving outreach with youth; expanding services with an office on the Tinian and Rota Islands and include local business partnerships; meeting consistently with clients and keep being updated; and improving the speed that services are delivered. Three quotes are:

- *“Changing their process to ensure people are qualified and prepared for employment”*
- *“Expand work-based learning strategies such as WET and OJT to allow IWD ample training to learn hard skills of an occupation; provide timely service delivery”*
- *“Reducing the wait time, and communicate with clients”*

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes were recurring from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in the CNMI:

1. There is a need to establish CRPs throughout CNMI for all VR services other than pre-employment transition services. There are no employment preparation, job development and placement services available for OVR consumers. There are no supported employment providers. OVR staff must provide these services directly as needed.
2. There are very few mental health service providers as well as specialty medical exam providers in Saipan and none in Tinian and Rota.
3. There is an opportunity for OVR to partner with a broadband Internet service provider to increase broadband access if the agency can refurbish two existing buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendation is offered to DVR based on the results of the research in the Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in the CNMI:

1. OVR is encouraged to consult with pre-employment transition services providers to determine if they are willing to expand service provision to include adults served by the agency.
2. OVR is encouraged to consult with specialty medical exam providers in Guam to arrange for periodic visits to Saipan, Tinian and Rota to provide services to OVR applicants and consumers.

State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies related to this section:

- I. **Goal:** Increase broadband Internet access for individuals with disabilities in the CNMI.
 - A. **Priority 1:** Provide access to high-speed broadband Internet access for OVR consumers.
 - B. **Priority 2:** Obtain RSA approval to utilize the establishment authority to refurbish two buildings for use as broadband Internet hubs and as sites to enhance OVR's ability to service consumers.
 1. **Strategy:** Utilize the establishment authority as authorized in 34 CFR 361.49 to refurbish existing OVR buildings for use as broadband Internet hubs.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment for CNMI's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth. The combination of surveys and interviews resulted in 270 people participating in the assessment. The project team at San Diego State University's Interwork Institute is confident that data saturation occurred across the multiple areas of investigation in the CSNA and is hopeful that the findings and recommendations will be utilized by OVR to inform future planning and resource allocation for the agency.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Protocols

CNMI CSNA 2017/18 Individual and Focus Group Interview Protocols

[Introductions/confidentiality/purpose statements]

Focus Group Protocol - Individuals with Disabilities:

Employment goals

- What barriers do people with disabilities in CNMI face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Transportation, education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

OVR Overall Performance

- What has your experience with OVR been like? What have been the positives and negatives?
- What services were helpful to you in preparing for, obtaining and retaining employment?
- What services did you need that were not available or provided and why weren't you able to get these services?
- What can OVR do differently to help consumers get and keep good jobs?

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from OVR? (prompts if necessary -- mobility, communication, structural)

CNMI Workforce Partners

- Has anyone had used or tried to use the services of The CNMI WIOA program?
Follow-up: What was that experience like for you? What can they do differently to better serve individuals with disabilities?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in CNMI preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- What can OVR do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
(Prompt if needed for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area and any other characteristics)
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for establishment of CRPs

- Have you received services from a CRP? If so, how was your service? How effective was it? What can be done to improve the future service delivery by CRPs?
- What programs or services should be created that focus on enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families, meeting basic needs and ensuring inclusion and participation? Of these services now in existence, which need to be improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive in CNMI?

Focus Group Protocol - Partner Agencies:**Employment Goals**

- What barriers do people with disabilities in CNMI face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from OVR?

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities

- What are the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
(Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area or other characteristics)
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for supported employment

- Please describe how effective the SE is in CNMI. What populations are receiving SE services?
- What SE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to meet the needs for SE?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in CNMI preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize OVR's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in CNMI?
- How well is OVR serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can OVR do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of individuals served through the CNMI WIOA program or WIOA system

- How effectively does the Workforce Center system in CNMI serve individuals with disabilities?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing services through the WIOA program? If so, what are they and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is OVR working in partnership with the WIOA program? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the Workforce Center's ability to serve individuals with disabilities in CNMI?

Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs

- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?

Focus Group Protocol – CNMI OVR staff:**Employment Goals**

- What barriers do people with disabilities in CNMI face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from OVR?

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities

- What are the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
(Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area or any other characteristics).
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for supported employment

- Please describe how effective the SE is in CNMI. What populations are receiving SE and CE services?
- What SE or CE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to meet the needs for SE or CE?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in CNMI preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize OVR's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in CNMI?
- How well is OVR serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can OVR do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of individuals served through the WIOA program

- How effectively does the WIOA program in CNMI serve individuals with disabilities?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing services through the WIOA program? If so, what are they and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is OVR working in partnership with the WIOA program? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the WIOA program's ability to serve individuals with disabilities in CNMI?

Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs

- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?

Appendix B- Individual Survey

CNMI 2023-24 CSNA - Individual Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Individual Survey

The CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is working collaboratively with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University (SDSU) in order to conduct an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities who live in CNMI. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the OVR State Plan for providing rehabilitation services and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with disabilities. The following survey includes questions that ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with disabilities. We anticipate that it will take about 12 minutes of your time to complete the survey. If you prefer, you may ask a family member, a personal attendant, or a caregiver to complete the survey for you. If you are a family member, personal attendant or caregiver for a person with a disability and are responding on behalf of an individual with a disability, please answer the survey questions based upon your knowledge of the needs of the person with the disability. Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous, that is, recorded without any identifying information that is linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey. If you have any questions regarding this survey or if you would prefer to complete this survey in an alternate format, please contact Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address: ccompton@sdsu.edu

Page Break

Q2 Where do you live in CNMI?

- ☐ Saipan
- ☐ Tinian
- ☐ Rota
-

Q3 Which statement best describes your association with OVR? (select one response)

- ☐ I am a current client of OVR
- ☐ I am a previous client of OVR, my case has been closed
- ☐ I have never used the services of OVR
- ☐ I am not familiar with OVR
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Skip To: Q5 If Which statement best describes your association with OVR? (select one response) = I have never used the services of OVR

Skip To: Q5 If Which statement best describes your association with OVR? (select one response) = I am not familiar with OVR

Page Break

Q4 Why did you go to OVR for services (check all that apply)?

- ☐ I needed help finding a job
 - ☐ I was in danger of losing my job
 - ☐ I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education
 - ☐ I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies
 - ☐ I wanted help with technology skills/equipment
 - ☐ I needed money
 - ☐ I was told to by someone
 - ☐ I don't know
 - ☐ Other (please describe)
-

Q5

Demographic Information

Page Break

Q6 What is your age?

- ☐ under 25
 - ☐ 25-64
 - ☐ 65 and over
-

Q7 What is your primary race or ethnic group (check all that apply)?

- ☐ African American/Black
 - ☐ Chamorro
 - ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
 - ☐ Asian
 - ☐ Caucasian/White
 - ☐ Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - ☐ Hispanic/Latino
 - ☐ Other (please describe)
-
- ☐ I don't know
-

Q8 What is your language of preference for communication?

- ☐ English
- ☐ Chamorro
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Hawaiian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ American Sign Language
- ☐ Other (Please identify) _____

Page Break

Q9 Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disabling condition? (select one)

- ☐ Blind or visually impaired
- ☐ Intellectual Disability (ID)
- ☐ Developmental Disability (DD)
- ☐ Brain injury
- ☐ Spinal Cord injury
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- ☐ Deaf-Blind
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Mobility
- ☐ Physical
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ No impairment

Q10 If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- ☐ Blind or visually impaired
- ☐ Intellectual disability (ID)
- ☐ Developmental Disability (DD)
- ☐ Brian injury
- ☐ Spinal Cord injury
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- ☐ Deaf-Blind
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Mobility
- ☐ Physical
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ No impairment

Q11 Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).

☐

I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)

☐

I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)

☐

I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get

☐

I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits

☐

I do not receive Social Security disability benefits

Q12

Employment-Related Needs

The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

Q13 Please identify which of the following have been barriers to you getting or keeping a job?
(select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal Record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Lack of broadband Internet access
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues
- ☐ Lack of child care

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

Q14 What have been the top three barriers to you getting or keeping a job? (select three)

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal Record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Lack of broadband Internet access
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues
- ☐ Lack of child care

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

Q15 If you have experienced other barriers to getting a job not mentioned above, please list them here.

Q16

Barriers to Accessing OVR

The next several questions ask you about barriers to accessing OVR services.

Page Break

Q17 Please indicate which of the following have been a barrier to you accessing OVR services.
(select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of available transportation to the OVR office
 - ☐ Lack of broadband Internet access
 - ☐ OVR's hours of operation
 - ☐ Lack of information about available services
 - ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations
 - ☐ I have nobody that can help me access services
 - ☐ Language barriers
 - ☐ Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
 - ☐ Other difficulties with OVR staff
 - ☐ Difficulties completing the OVR application
 - ☐ Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
 - ☐ Other (please identify)
-

Q18 Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access OVR services?

☐ Yes (please describe) _____

☐ No

Q19 Where do you usually meet with your counselor?

☐ I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school

☐ I go to a OVR office to meet with my counselor

☐ I meet with my counselor virtually

☐ I don't have a counselor

Q20 Which of the following OVR services have you received remotely (by phone, email or video conference) since the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Guidance and counseling (provided by my OVR counselor)
- ☐ Help looking for work or applying for jobs
- ☐ Help keeping a job
- ☐ Help understanding how work will impact my disability
- ☐ Assistive technology
- ☐ Other (please describe)

- ☐ I have not received any services from OVR remotely during the pandemic

Skip To: Q22 If Which of the following OVR services have you received remotely (by phone, email or video conferen... = I have not received any services from OVR remotely during the pandemic

Page Break

Q21 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services delivered remotely during the pandemic?

- ☐ Extremely effective
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Less effective
- ☐ Not effective at all

Page Break

Q22 Please tell us how you manage your money by choosing which of the following statements are true for you (select all that apply).

- ☐ I have a monthly budget
 - ☐ I have a savings account
 - ☐ I have a checking account
 - ☐ I invest my money
 - ☐ I have no specific way that I manage my money
 - ☐ I have no money to manage
 - ☐ Someone else manages my money for me
-

Q23 How do you feel about your current financial situation?

- ☐ I am doing well financially
 - ☐ I am doing OK financially
 - ☐ I am not doing well financially
 - ☐ I am in desperate need for money
-

Q24 If OVR offered financial education or skills training, would you be interested in receiving these services?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
-

Q25 How can OVR change their services to help you get a job?

Page Break

Q26 Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that OVR referred you to?
(This may include an assessment, preparing for or finding a job, job coaching, training, assistive technology or other services)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Skip To: Q32 If Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that OVR referred you to? (This may.. = No

Page Break

Q27 How effective were the services you received from the service provider or vendor?

- ☐ Very effective
 - ☐ Effective
 - ☐ Somewhat ineffective
 - ☐ Ineffective
-

Q28 How would you rate the quality of services you received from your service provider or vendor?

- ☐ Excellent
 - ☐ Good
 - ☐ Fair
 - ☐ Poor
-

Q29 How would you rate the responsiveness of your service provider or vendor?

- ☐ Excellent
 - ☐ Good
 - ☐ Fair
 - ☐ Poor
-

Q30 Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by OVR?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Q31 If there is anything else you would like to add about OVR, please write that in the space below.

Page Break

Q32

WIOA Job Center The next several questions ask you about experiences you may have had with the WIOA Job Center.

Page Break

Q33 Have you ever tried to use the services of the WIOA Job Center beyond an online account?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q44 If Have you ever tried to use the services of the WIOA Job Center beyond an online account? = No

Page Break

Q34 Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?

☐ Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)

☐ No

Q35 Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the WIOA Job Center (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Page Break

Q36 Did you go to the WIOA Job Center to get training?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q39 If Did you go to the WIOA Job Center to get training? = No

Page Break

Q37 Did you get the training that you were seeking?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q38 Did the training result in employment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Page Break

Q39 Did you go to the WIOA Job Center to find a job?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q41 If Did you go to the WIOA Job Center to find a job? = No

Page Break

Q40 Did they help you find employment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Page Break

Q41 Was the WIOA Job Center staff helpful?

- ☐ Yes, they were very helpful
 - ☐ They were somewhat helpful
 - ☐ No, they were not helpful
-

Q42 Were the services at the WIOA Job Center valuable?

- ☐ Yes, the services were very valuable
 - ☐ The services were somewhat valuable
 - ☐ No, the services were not valuable
-

Q43 Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the WIOA Job Center in serving individuals with disabilities?

- ☐ Very effective
 - ☐ Somewhat effective
 - ☐ No opinion
 - ☐ Somewhat ineffective
 - ☐ Very ineffective
-

Q44 Is there anything else you would like to add?

Page Break

Q45 This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback is valuable to OVR, thank you for completing the survey.

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix C: Community Partner Survey

Appendix B- Individual Survey

CNMI 2023-24 CSNA - Individual Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Office of Vocational

Rehabilitation Individual Survey

The CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is working collaboratively with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University (SDSU) in order to conduct an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities who live in CNMI. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the OVR State Plan for providing rehabilitation services and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with disabilities. The following survey includes questions that ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with disabilities. We anticipate that it will take about 12 minutes of your time to complete the survey. If you prefer, you may ask a family member, a personal attendant, or a caregiver to complete the survey for you. If you are a family member, personal attendant or caregiver for a person with a disability and are responding on behalf of an individual with a disability, please answer the survey questions based upon your knowledge of the needs of the person with the disability. Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous, that is, recorded without any identifying information that is linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey. If you have any questions regarding this survey or if you would prefer to complete this survey in an alternate format, please contact Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address: ccompton@sdsu.edu

Page Break

Q2 Where do you live in CNMI?

- ☐ Saipan
- ☐ Tinian
- ☐ Rota
-

Q3 Which statement best describes your association with OVR? (select one response)

- ☐ I am a current client of OVR
- ☐ I am a previous client of OVR, my case has been closed
- ☐ I have never used the services of OVR
- ☐ I am not familiar with OVR
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Skip To: Q5 If Which statement best describes your association with OVR? (select one response) = I have never used the services of OVR

Skip To: Q5 If Which statement best describes your association with OVR? (select one response) = I am not familiar with OVR

Page Break

Q4 Why did you go to OVR for services (check all that apply)?

- ☐ I needed help finding a job
 - ☐ I was in danger of losing my job
 - ☐ I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education
 - ☐ I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies
 - ☐ I wanted help with technology skills/equipment
 - ☐ I needed money
 - ☐ I was told to by someone
 - ☐ I don't know
 - ☐ Other (please describe)
-

Q5

Demographic Information

Page Break

Q6 What is your age?

- ☐ under 25
 - ☐ 25-64
 - ☐ 65 and over
-

Q7 What is your primary race or ethnic group (check all that apply)?

- ☐ African American/Black
 - ☐ Chamorro
 - ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
 - ☐ Asian
 - ☐ Caucasian/White
 - ☐ Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - ☐ Hispanic/Latino
 - ☐ Other (please describe)
-
- ☐ I don't know
-

Q8 What is your language of preference for communication?

- ☐ English
- ☐ Chamorro
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Hawaiian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ American Sign Language
- ☐ Other (Please identify) _____

Page Break

Q9 Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disabling condition? (select one)

- ☐ Blind or visually impaired
- ☐ Intellectual Disability (ID)
- ☐ Developmental Disability (DD)
- ☐ Brain injury
- ☐ Spinal Cord injury
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- ☐ Deaf-Blind
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Mobility
- ☐ Physical
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ No impairment

Q10 If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- ☐ Blind or visually impaired
- ☐ Intellectual disability (ID)
- ☐ Developmental Disability (DD)
- ☐ Brian injury
- ☐ Spinal Cord injury
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- ☐ Deaf-Blind
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Mobility
- ☐ Physical
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ No impairment

Q11 Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).

☐

I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)

☐

I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)

☐

I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get

☐

I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits

☐

I do not receive Social Security disability benefits

Q12

Employment-Related Needs

The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

Q13 Please identify which of the following have been barriers to you getting or keeping a job?
(select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal Record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Lack of broadband Internet access
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues
- ☐ Lack of child care

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

Q14 What have been the top three barriers to you getting or keeping a job? (select three)

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal Record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Lack of broadband Internet access
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues
- ☐ Lack of child care

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

Q15 If you have experienced other barriers to getting a job not mentioned above, please list them here.

Q16

Barriers to Accessing OVR

The next several questions ask you about barriers to accessing OVR services.

Page Break

Q17 Please indicate which of the following have been a barrier to you accessing OVR services.
(select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of available transportation to the OVR office
 - ☐ Lack of broadband Internet access
 - ☐ OVR's hours of operation
 - ☐ Lack of information about available services
 - ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations
 - ☐ I have nobody that can help me access services
 - ☐ Language barriers
 - ☐ Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
 - ☐ Other difficulties with OVR staff
 - ☐ Difficulties completing the OVR application
 - ☐ Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
 - ☐ Other (please identify)
-

Q18 Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access OVR services?

☐ Yes (please describe) _____

☐ No

Q19 Where do you usually meet with your counselor?

☐ I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school

☐ I go to a OVR office to meet with my counselor

☐ I meet with my counselor virtually

☐ I don't have a counselor

Q20 Which of the following OVR services have you received remotely (by phone, email or video conference) since the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Guidance and counseling (provided by my OVR counselor)
- ☐ Help looking for work or applying for jobs
- ☐ Help keeping a job
- ☐ Help understanding how work will impact my disability
- ☐ Assistive technology
- ☐ Other (please describe)

- ☐ I have not received any services from OVR remotely during the pandemic

Skip To: Q22 If Which of the following OVR services have you received remotely (by phone, email or video conferen... = I have not received any services from OVR remotely during the pandemic

Page Break

Q21 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services delivered remotely during the pandemic?

- ☐ Extremely effective
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Less effective
- ☐ Not effective at all

Page Break

Q22 Please tell us how you manage your money by choosing which of the following statements are true for you (select all that apply).

- ☐ I have a monthly budget
 - ☐ I have a savings account
 - ☐ I have a checking account
 - ☐ I invest my money
 - ☐ I have no specific way that I manage my money
 - ☐ I have no money to manage
 - ☐ Someone else manages my money for me
-

Q23 How do you feel about your current financial situation?

- ☐ I am doing well financially
 - ☐ I am doing OK financially
 - ☐ I am not doing well financially
 - ☐ I am in desperate need for money
-

Q24 If OVR offered financial education or skills training, would you be interested in receiving these services?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
-

Q25 How can OVR change their services to help you get a job?

Page Break

Q26 Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that OVR referred you to?
(This may include an assessment, preparing for or finding a job, job coaching, training, assistive technology or other services)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Skip To: Q32 If Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that OVR referred you to? (This may.. = No

Page Break

Q27 How effective were the services you received from the service provider or vendor?

- ☐ Very effective
 - ☐ Effective
 - ☐ Somewhat ineffective
 - ☐ Ineffective
-

Q28 How would you rate the quality of services you received from your service provider or vendor?

- ☐ Excellent
 - ☐ Good
 - ☐ Fair
 - ☐ Poor
-

Q29 How would you rate the responsiveness of your service provider or vendor?

- ☐ Excellent
 - ☐ Good
 - ☐ Fair
 - ☐ Poor
-

Q30 Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by OVR?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
-

Q31 If there is anything else you would like to add about OVR, please write that in the space below.

Page Break

Q32

WIOA Job Center The next several questions ask you about experiences you may have had with the WIOA Job Center.

Page Break

Q33 Have you ever tried to use the services of the WIOA Job Center beyond an online account?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q44 If Have you ever tried to use the services of the WIOA Job Center beyond an online account? = No

Page Break

Q34 Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?

☐ Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)

☐ No

Q35 Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the WIOA Job Center (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Page Break

Q36 Did you go to the WIOA Job Center to get training?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q39 If Did you go to the WIOA Job Center to get training? = No

Page Break

Q37 Did you get the training that you were seeking?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q38 Did the training result in employment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Page Break

Q39 Did you go to the WIOA Job Center to find a job?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q41 If Did you go to the WIOA Job Center to find a job? = No

Page Break

Q40 Did they help you find employment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Page Break

Q41 Was the WIOA Job Center staff helpful?

- ☐ Yes, they were very helpful
 - ☐ They were somewhat helpful
 - ☐ No, they were not helpful
-

Q42 Were the services at the WIOA Job Center valuable?

- ☐ Yes, the services were very valuable
 - ☐ The services were somewhat valuable
 - ☐ No, the services were not valuable
-

Q43 Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the WIOA Job Center in serving individuals with disabilities?

- ☐ Very effective
 - ☐ Somewhat effective
 - ☐ No opinion
 - ☐ Somewhat ineffective
 - ☐ Very ineffective
-

Q44 Is there anything else you would like to add?

Page Break

Q45 This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback is valuable to OVR, thank you for completing the survey.

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.

End of Block: Default Question Block
