



# A REPORT TO OUR CITIZENS

FISCAL YEAR 2019

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

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## Mission

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

## Vision

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

## VR Portion of the Unified State Plan 2017-2020 Program Goals

The CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) reviewed and jointly approved the following goals and priorities. The goals and priorities incorporated the findings of the FY 2014-2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the VR portion of the Unified State Plan.

### Goal 1

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

### Goal 2

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

### Goal 3

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

### Goal 4

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

### Goal 5

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



# OUR PROGRAMS

## No-Cost Services To Businesses

- Consultations regarding reasonable job accommodations for a newly hired employee or one who has acquired a disability.
- Disability Employment Training, such as Disability Awareness, Sensitivity Training, Americans with Disabilities Act (Title I-Employment), etc. Training can be customized to meet the needs of businesses.
- Recruitment and retention of qualified job applicants/employees with disabilities.

**Funding for on-the-job (OJT)** is available to employers through OVR to help off-set the cost for providing training to an OVR consumer.

## Services to Individuals and Veterans with Disabilities

Services may include a combination of the following:

- Vocational guidance and career counseling.
- Restoration (physical/mental).
- Vocational and other training services.
- Rehabilitation technology, including assistive technology services, assistive technology devices, and rehabilitation engineering.
- Job placement into suitable employment.
- Occupational tools and equipment.
- Personal assistance services such as personal attendant, interpreter, reader and scribe.

*There is a financial needs test at OVR, so you may be required to contribute to the cost of some services.*

## Independent Living Older Blind Program (ILOB)

Our ILOB Program provides independent living services to individuals with visual impairment (20/70 in the better eye) aged 55 years and older to assist them in maintaining their independence at home and in their communities.

Services are individualized and cater to the specific needs and Independent Living (IL) goals of the individual.

***INDEPENDENCE is the goal!***

## Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS)

PreETS is provided to students with disabilities who meet the following:

1. Between the ages of 16-21 years.
2. Enrolled in high school and is receiving Special Education Services, or is in college, or participating in another educational program.

### Pre-ETS services include:

- Job exploration counseling.
- Work-based learning experiences.
- Counseling on postsecondary (college) options.
- Work readiness training.
- Instruction on self-advocacy.

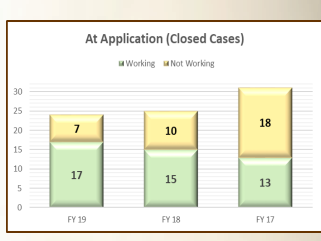
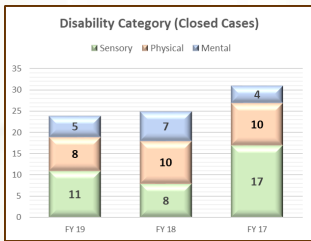
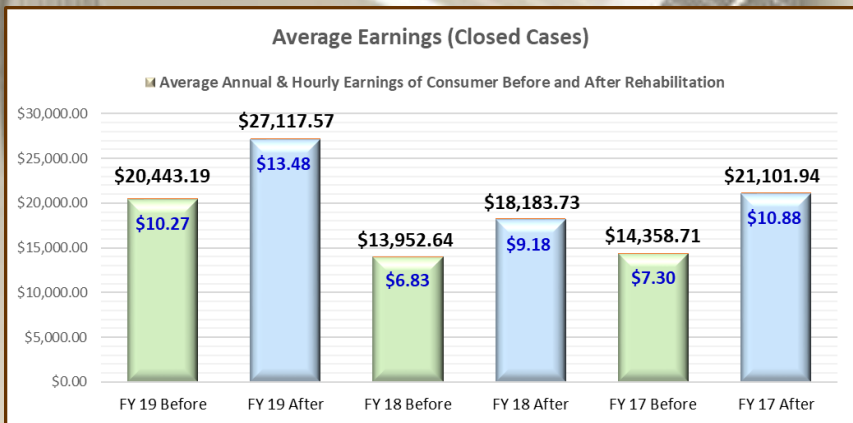
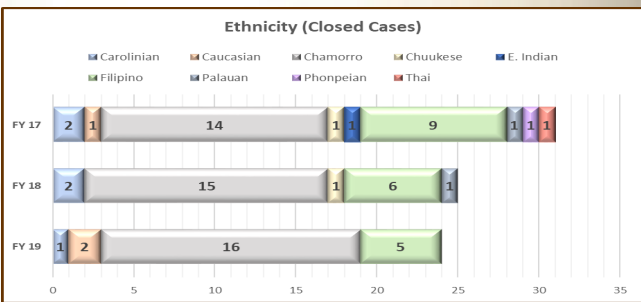
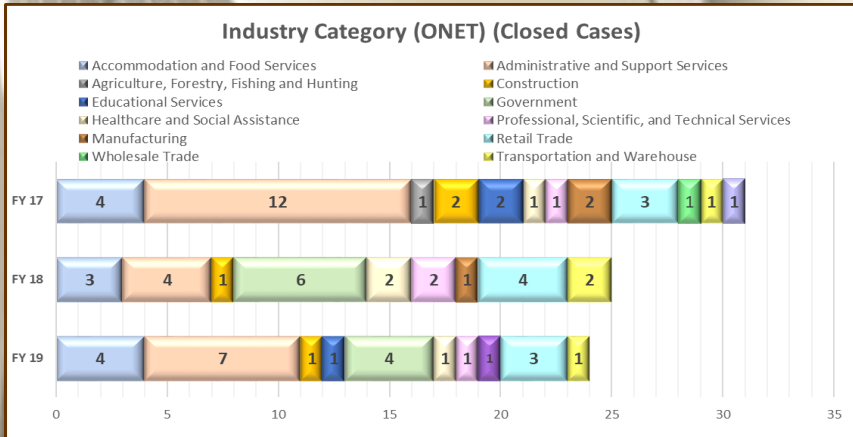
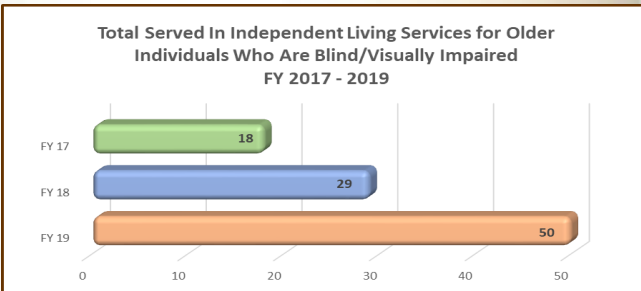
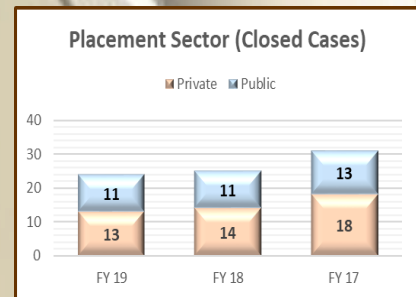
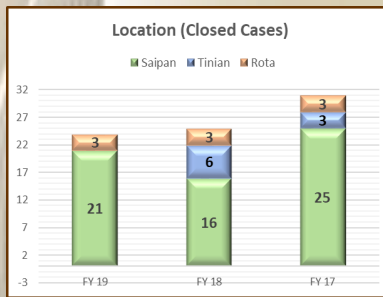
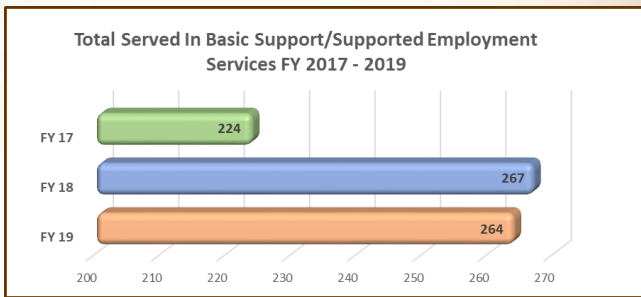
## Independent Living Services (ILS)

The ILS program grant is funded through the Administration for Community Living, and provides resources that supports the work of the State Independent Living Council (SILC) as well as provides funds for activities reflected in the approved State Plan for Independent Living. Funds are allocated, through a contract, to the Center for Living Independently (CLI) to provide Independent Living Services to people with disabilities in the CNMI. CLI is required to provide five core services.

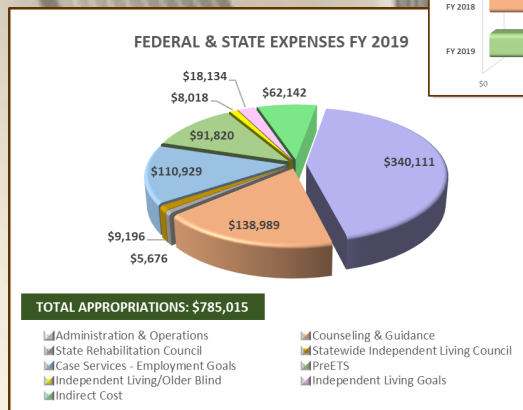
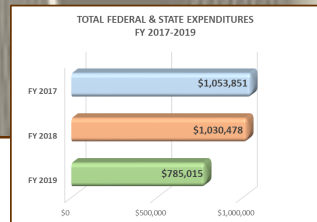
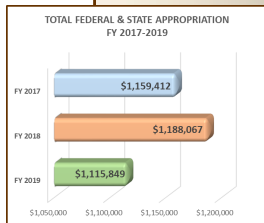
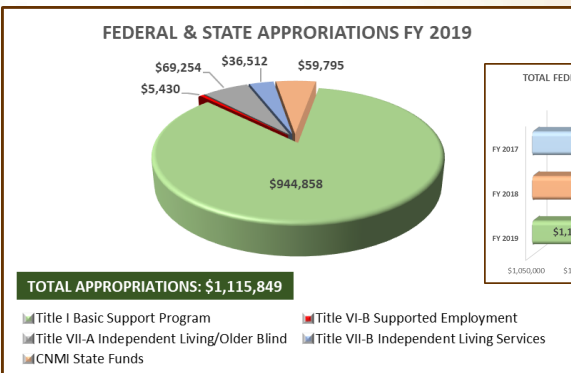
1. Information & referrals.
2. Independent living skills training.
3. Peer counseling.
4. Individual & systems advocacy.
5. Transition from institutions or postsecondary life.



# OUR DATA



# OUR FINANCES



# FUTURE OUTLOOK

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) will promote continual improvement, best practices, and innovative processes using your feedback as our guide. As we begin a new year, we pledge to always serve our community by adhering to the mission and vision of our agency and making sure that every voice is heard and valued.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the staff of OVR who continue to expand their knowledge and implement new approaches to benefit our consumers. The dedication demonstrated daily from the staff is a reflection of the success we are celebrating in this report.

## WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON

Consistent with OVR goals and priorities, the program will continue to promote competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in our community. Current key projects for FY 2020 include:

Building capacity in the areas of;

- Pre-Employment Transitions Services providers.
- Identifying or recruiting of possible Community Rehabilitation Providers.
- Increasing of supports and services offered to employers.
- Completion of the required CSNA update.
- Working with WIOA partners to complete the tri-annual Unified State Plan.

Completions of grants for:

- Training of OVR staff in becoming Certified Benefits Planners.
- Obtaining a vehicle for the Counseling Services Unit.
- Upgrading of computers/hardware that are over a decade old.

## IDENTIFIED NEEDS

The CNMI OVR will continue its efforts to maintain or develop cooperative arrangements or agreements with various local, State, Federal agencies and entities for referrals, training, services, facilities utilization, potential cost-sharing, and advocacy activities.

The 2017-2020 Unified State Plan utilized information gathered in our 2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to help inform the development of OVR's Unified State Plan.

Itemized below are a few of the needs of individuals with disabilities and the recommendations offered to OVR based on the results of the CSNA:

- The need for work incentive counseling and benefits planning remains a major need in CNMI. OVR needs to ensure that all SSA beneficiaries, especially young people, have access to benefits planning so that they can help counter the fear of benefits loss through work.
- OVR should continue to try and develop individual service providers to provide common service needs like job placement and job coaching.
- The Pre-Employment Transition Services program needs to be marketed to students and parents so that they are familiar with the possible activities and the purpose of the program.
- OVR and the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) program should target a set number of co-enrolled individuals with disabilities to share funding for training and employment services. The concept of shared or braided funding is viewed positively by both organizations, but it was difficult to identify any concrete examples of this in CNMI.
- In order to increase the level of direct service to Tinian and Rota, the core partners should consider cost-sharing for an employee that can be paid by the Mayor's office and each agency could share a percentage of the individual's salary and allocate that percentage of work time for the program accordingly.