



# FY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

CNMI OFFICE OF THE  
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL  
REHABILITATION

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT  
LIVING COUNCIL

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 [WWW.OVRGOV.NET](http://WWW.OVRGOV.NET)

 BUILDING 10839  
DELEGADO DRIVE, NAVY HILL

 BLDG. N4- ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT  
BLDG. N2- COUNSELING UNIT








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**James M. Rayphand**



## **Message from the OVR Director**

It is with great pleasure that I offer some thoughts on behalf of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) / Office of the Governor and the many people who make up the fabric of the vocational rehabilitation system in the CNMI.

At the heart of OVR's existence is a philosophy that recognizes and respects the contributions of all individuals. Ultimately, vocational rehabilitation is about people – of, for and by the people – including all of those who need the services, those employed to provide those services and the numerous others who volunteer to connect all the dots. It is my unwavering belief that the kinds of relationships we build with each other (whether it be with our clients, co-workers, community partners and/or volunteer council members) determine the strengths and/or weaknesses of our system. Stronger, healthier relationships with each other will no doubt translate to more meaningful opportunities for those we serve. And, “As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light of meaning in the darkness of mere being” (Carl Jung).

Though still less than a year now since I began my tenure with OVR, I can say with some certainty that we, as an organization, have taken great strides in our progress towards established priorities as jointly set forth by our State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the OVR staff. This report offers summary glimpses of our efforts to that end and hopefully a more informed view into the scope of our work. We have identified some clear needs that would improve our services and help us to sustain going forward, but I have no doubt (given our continued collaborative and supportive spirit) we will achieve all of our goals in due time.

# Continuation: Message from the OVR Director

On that note, collaborative working relationships among our Disability Network Partners (DNP) remain strong – to my knowledge no other State and/or Territory enjoys the same level of collaboration or familiarity among local agencies. Ideally, this translates to easier referrals and more efficient delivery of services to our constituents of people with disabilities.

Presently, we have the luxury of being fully staffed with some very conscientious co-workers, some of who have decades of experience in CNMI's vocational rehabilitation system and institutional knowledge that frankly we could not operate without. Additionally, we have a handful of newcomers on staff with brewing excitement about and clear appreciation for the unique privilege we have to do what we do. They bring with them a sense of newness or novelty and refreshing perspectives to meet our responsibilities head-on. "With great privilege, comes great responsibility."

Finally, from where I sit, as the current Director of OVR, there is an almost palpable sense of improved morale among the staff and everyone is doing what they know to meet their respective responsibilities. Among our next steps of sorts is the need to ensure proper cross-training and further tightening of our internal policies on delivery of client services.

I look forward to a comparative assessment between this and subsequent years to come.

Respectfully,

*Jimbo*





# The Heartbeat of OVR's Existence



## VISION

Our vision 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.

## MISSION

Our mission is to increase employment and promote independence among eligible individuals with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

## CORE VALUES

We embrace and value:

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

## PHILOSOPHY

We recognize and respect the contributions of all individuals as a necessary and vital part of a productive society.

# OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



**Honorable Arnold I. Palacios**  
Governor  
Office of the Governor



**State Rehabilitation  
Council (SRC)**



**James M. Rayphand**  
OVR Director



**Statewide  
Independent Living  
Council (SILC)**



**Arlene A. Yamagata**  
Case Services Manager



**Samuel F. Santos**  
Transition Specialist



**Elvira O. Seman**  
Data Analyst



**Lourdes C. Atalig**  
Fiscal Officer



**Jane M. Tudela**  
VR Counselor



**Rose B. Ichiuo**  
VR Counselor



**Raymond D. Diaz**  
VR Counselor



**Ann Marie Marciano**  
Office Clerk



**Joscelyn Sanchez**  
VR Counselor Aide



**Ally C. Santos**  
VR Counselor Aide



**Sherraine Flores**  
VR Counselor Aide



**McQueen U. Hiroichi**  
Administrative Clerk

# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## EMPLOYMENT



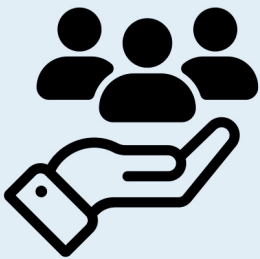
## Basic Support / Supported Employment

### Program Overview

Vocational Rehabilitation Services are individualized based on the consumer's unique circumstances and needs. Comparable services and benefits, a federal mandate, must fully be explored and applied to the maximum extent possible. If services are not available in the CNMI, then the next closest proximity (Guam) will be considered to ensure the timely provision of quality services.



# 01



# 02

### Types of Services

Examples of VR services include:

- Assessment to determine eligibility and needs
- VR counseling and guidance
- Job search assistance
- Job placement assistance
- Job retention services
- Training services (e.g., Work Experience & OJT)
- Assistive/rehabilitation technology
- Personal assistance services
- Postsecondary vocational and educational supports
- Transition, and more!

### Work Experience

Placed in an integrated work environment, consumers under the Work Experience Training Program (WETP) are provided training for up to 3 months. Requests for extension are assessed individually based on the unique circumstances of the case and approved by the OVR director. The consumer works 4 hours per day and not exceed 20 hours per week. The consumer/trainee and supervisor submit bi-weekly progress reports to OVR.



# 03



# CONTINUATION: PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## On-the-Job Training



On-the-job training (OJT) requires placement in a competitive and integrated work setting. OJT can be provided for a period of up to 6 months, depending on how long it will take for a work skill to be developed. Similar to the Work Experience Training Program (WETP), a request to go beyond 6 months will require strong justification and agreement by all parties.

Under the OJT program, consumers work anywhere from 6 to 8 hours per day not exceeding 40 hours per week. The employer will be reimbursed for consumer's gross wages. Reimbursements are processed as soon as the employer submits to OVR all OJT-related financial documents and monthly progress reports.



Partnerships with employers beyond OJT completion to include full-time employment (FTE) placement is the ideal outcome for our consumers who successfully complete their training program.

## No-Cost Business Services



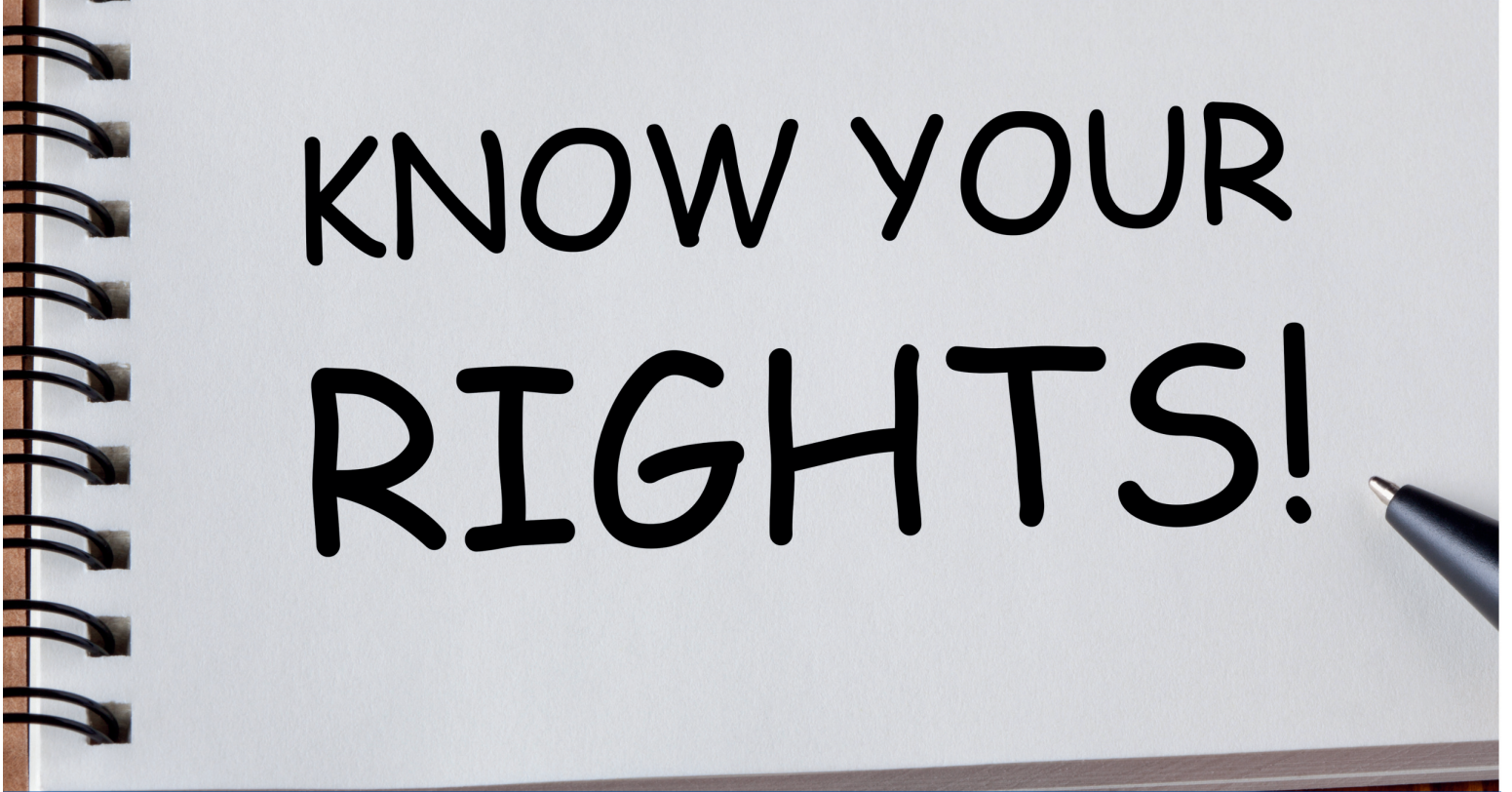
At OVR, consumers are our primary customers. But, did you know we also have a second customer base? Yes, and those would be employers! We also happily serve employers to help them meet their business needs.

Some services to employers, which are completely free of charge, include:

- Disability awareness and sensitivity training
- Consultation, advice, guidance, and expertise on disability-employment matters (e.g., reasonable accommodations)
- Funding for OJT to help off-set the cost for providing training to an OVR consumer
- Information and referral to public agencies or community programs serving people with disabilities
- Sharing of information and resources to include how to maintain compliance with relevant regulations and/or laws

# INSTRUCTION ON SELF-ADVOCACY

Self-Advocacy is an important skill to learn at an early age. Know your rights and responsibilities that may be necessary for training or employment.



KNOW YOUR  
RIGHTS!

Learn how to effectively communicate, convey, and assert your own interests/desires. Learn self-determination skills such as to plan your own life, and pursue the things that are important to you.

Learn to advocate for any support services, including auxiliary aids, services, and accommodations that may be necessary for training or employment.

Understand how your disability impacts you and identifying strategies that will assist you at work, school, and socially.

Making informed decisions about whether or not to disclose your disability.



# COUNSELING ON COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING OR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS



**Island Training Solutions**  
Experience you can trust.

We have the information and guidance that leads to various training opportunities and post-secondary educational programs.

**Academic Planning**

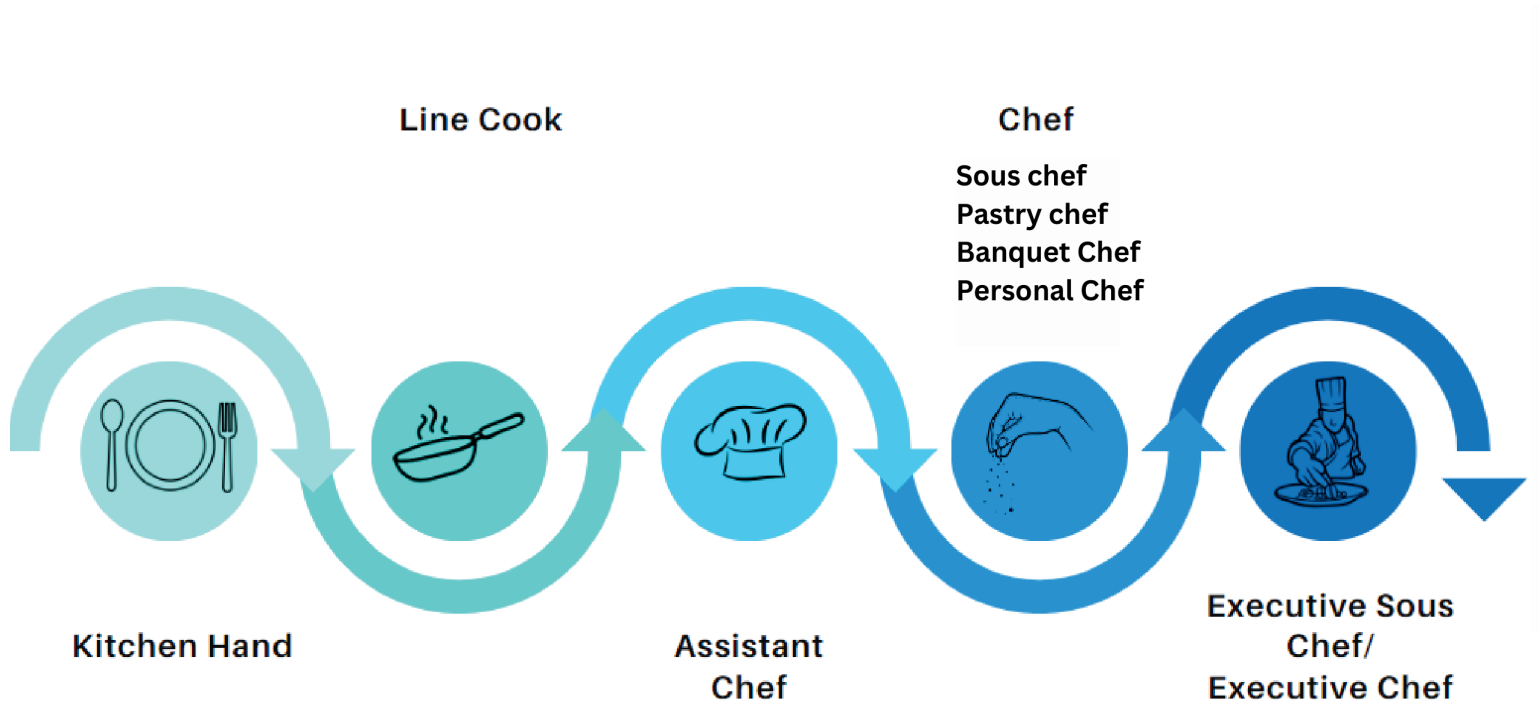
**Guidance on transitioning to College/Trade School**

**Guided counseling available in a group or individual setting**



# JOB EXPLORATION COUNSELING

## EXAMPLE OF A CHEF CAREER PATHWAY



**Not sure where to start?**

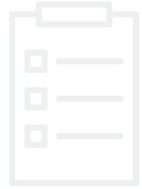
**Ask us, we have the resources to help guide you.**

**Gain information about careers**

**Explore career pathways**

**Learn what skills are needed for specific careers**

# WORKPLACE READINESS TRAINING



**Learn how to  
interact with  
supervisors and  
co-workers**

**How to  
prepare for  
a job  
interview**

**Making informed  
decisions about  
whether or not  
to disclose your  
disability**

# WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCE



**Opportunities to gain experience through paid/unpaid internships from our local community**

**Job shadowing- Learn what a typical day is like for your career choice**

**Connecting with a business mentor**

**Gain knowledge and skills with real work-life activities**

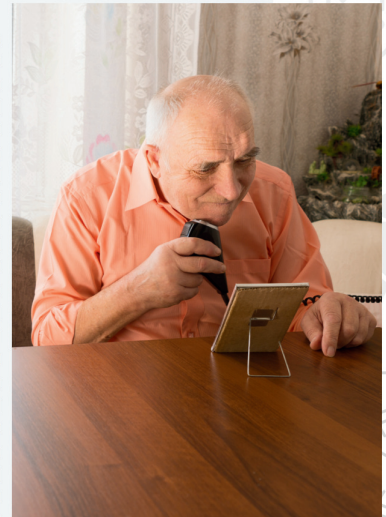


# Independent Living for Older Blind (ILOB) Program

ILOB is a federally funded program that provides a variety of independent living services to significantly visually impaired individuals to live as productively and independently as possible.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

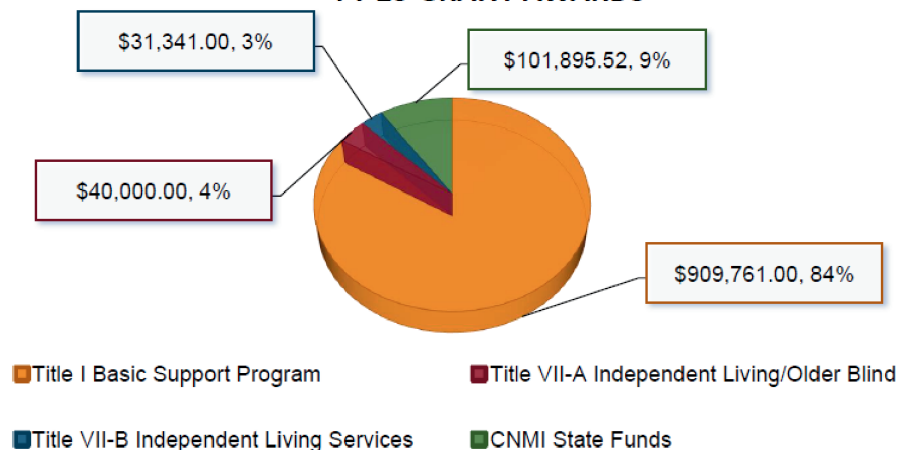
- 55 years or older
- Corrected vision of at least 20/70 in the better eye ( low vision)
- Unemployed or unable to gain employment



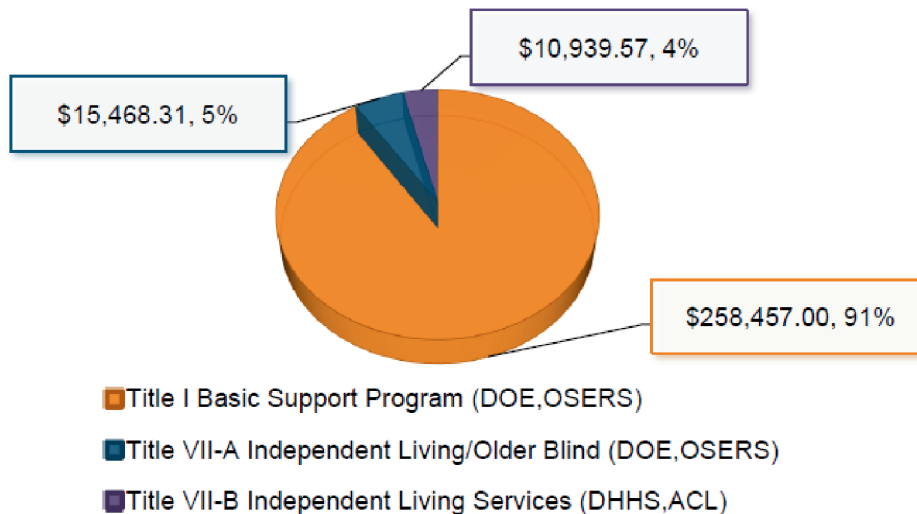
# FY 2023 STATE & FEDERAL

## Source of Funds & Expenses

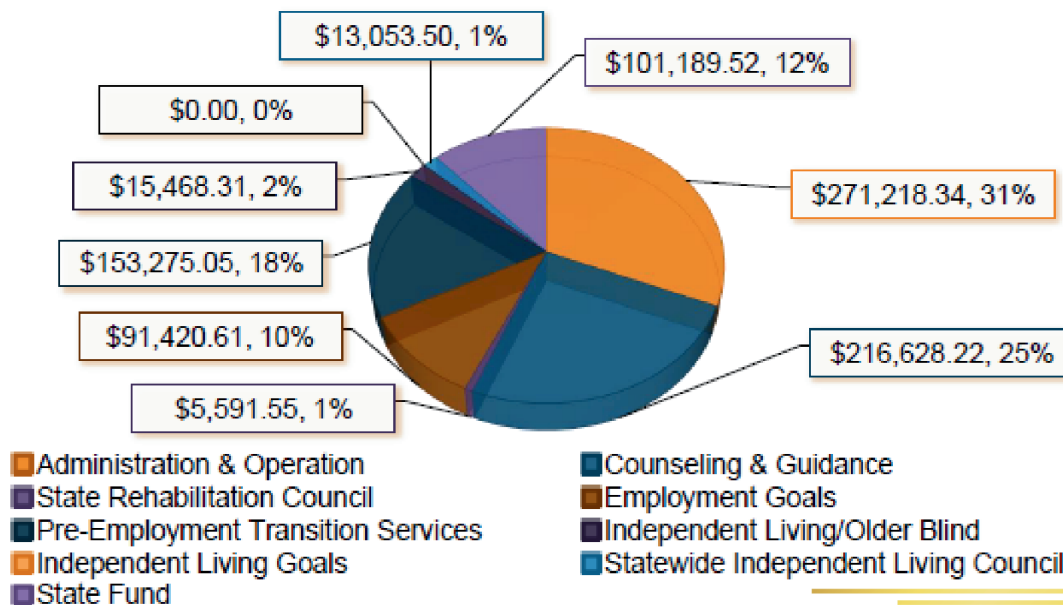
FY'23 GRANT AWARDS



FY'22 CARRY OVER

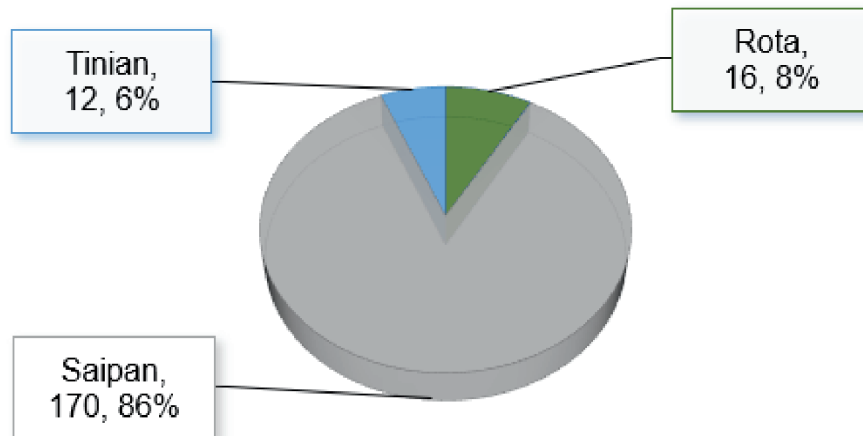


FEDERAL & STATE EXPENSES

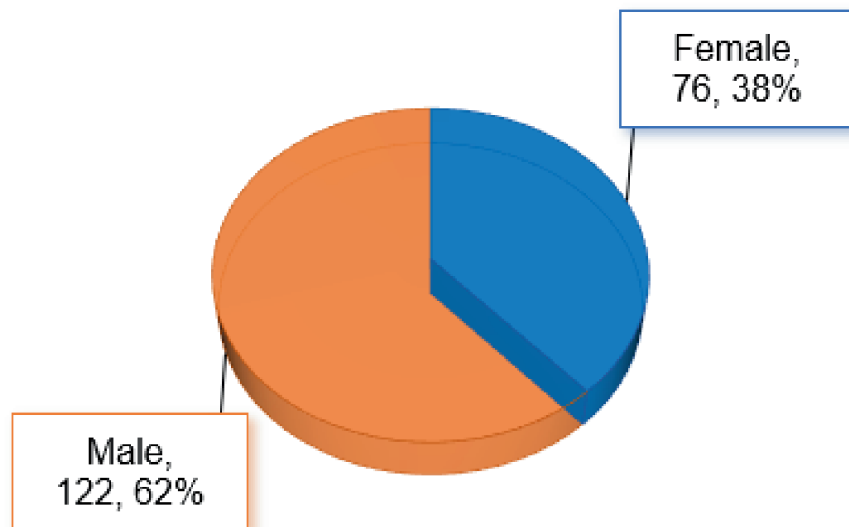


# Basic Support/Supported Employment FY 2023 Caseload

## ISLAND

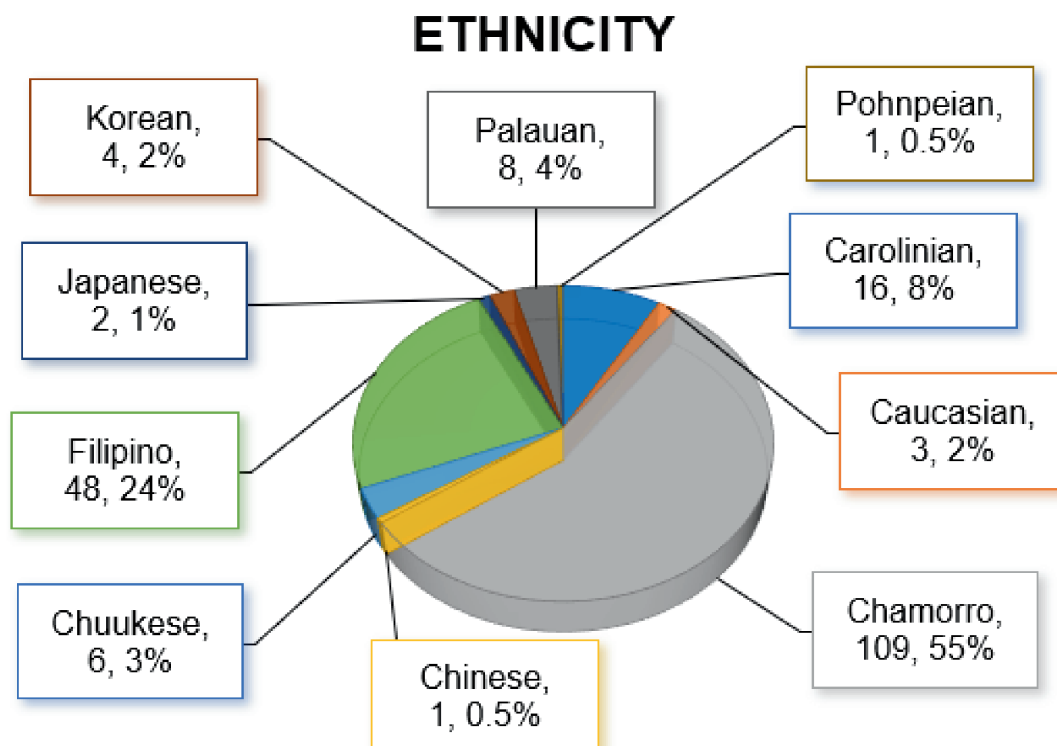
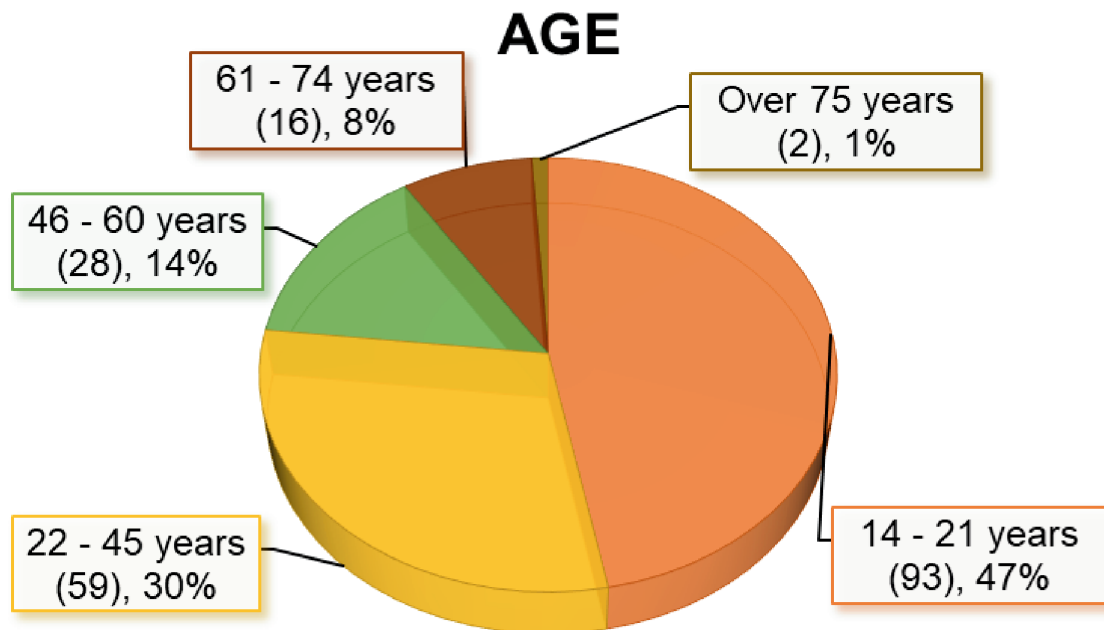


## GENDER



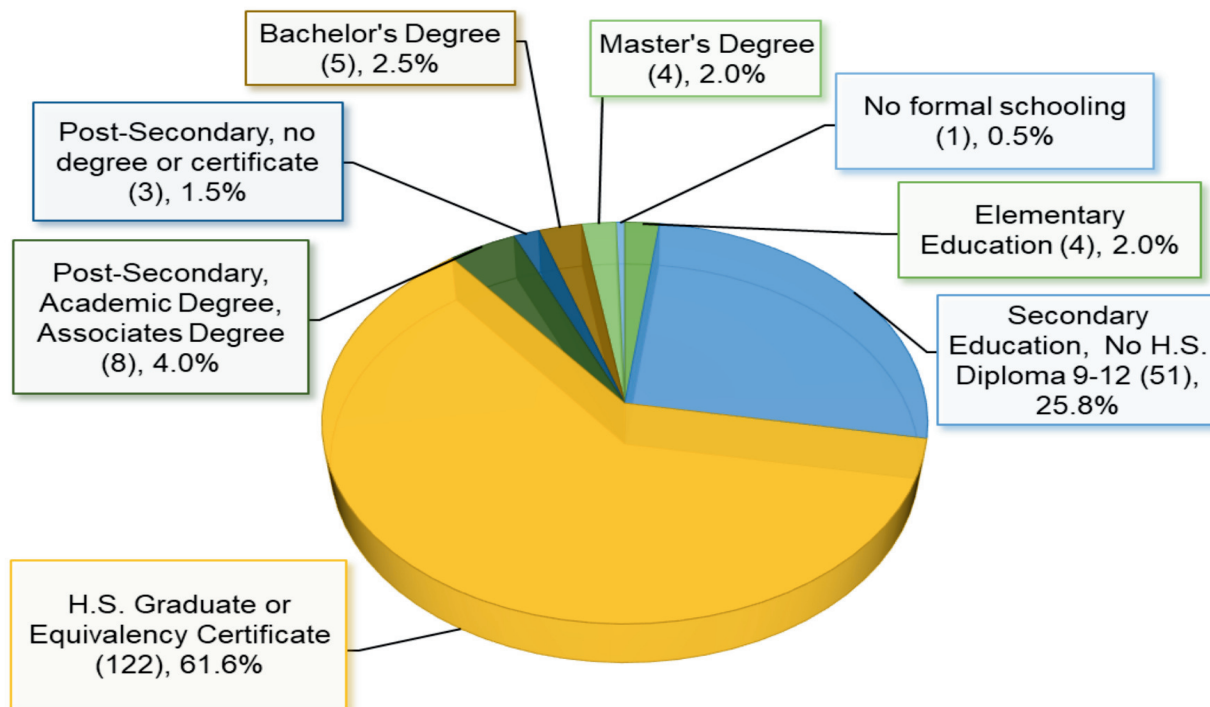


# Basic Support/Supported Employment FY 2023 Caseload

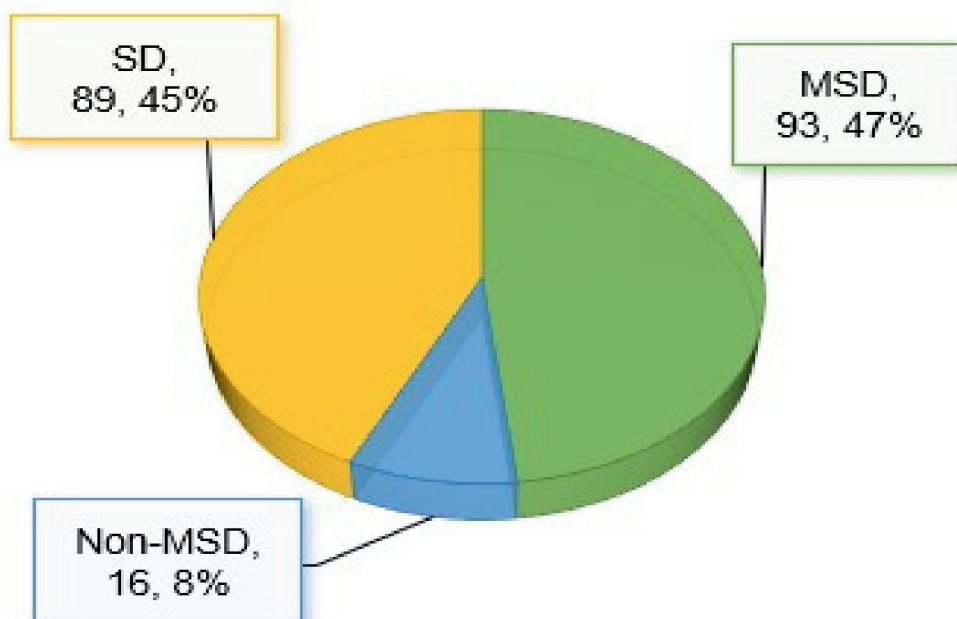


# Basic Support/Supported Employment FY 2023 Caseload

## EDUCATION AT APPLICATION

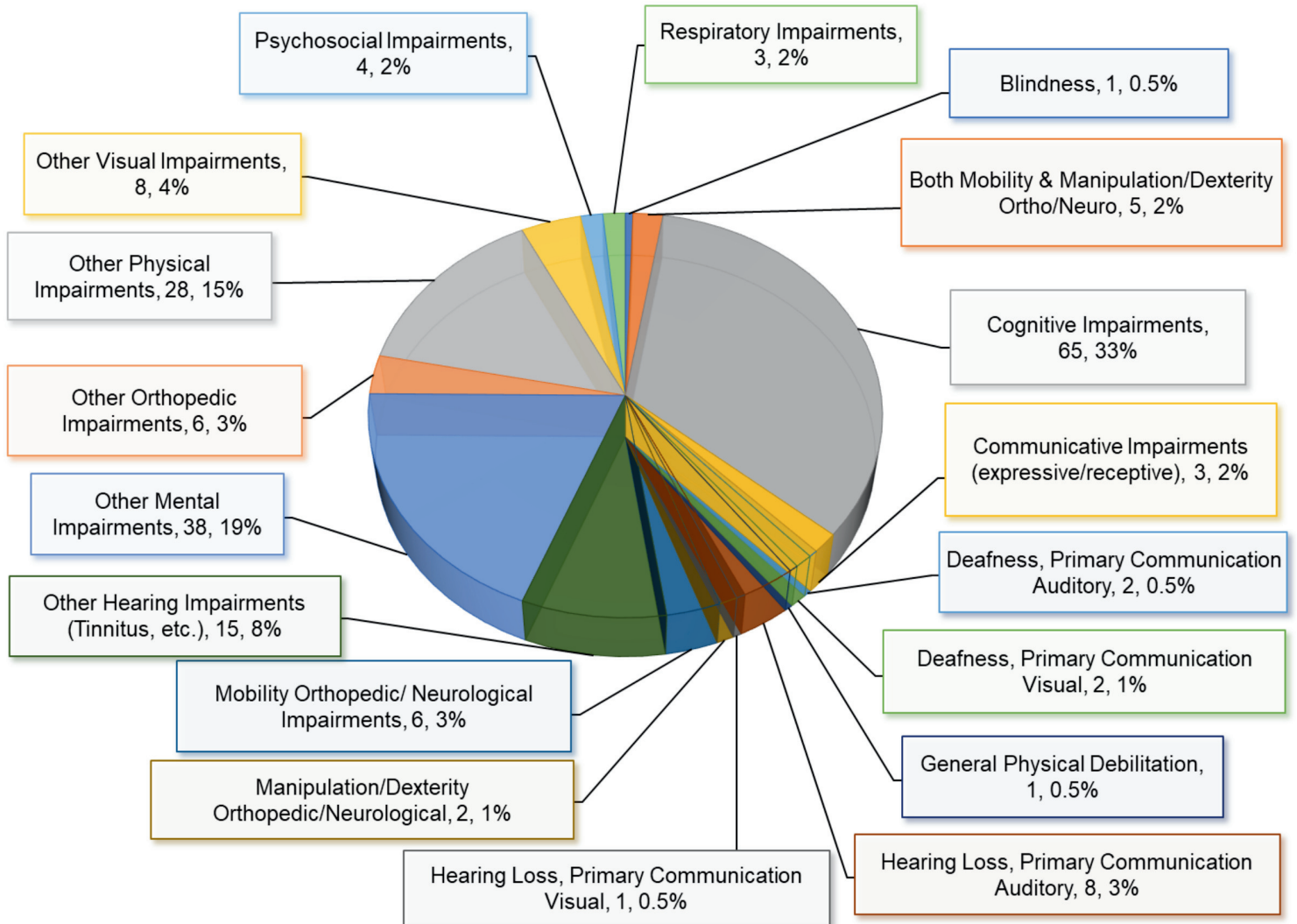


## DISABILITY LEVEL



# Basic Support/Supported Employment FY 2023 Caseload

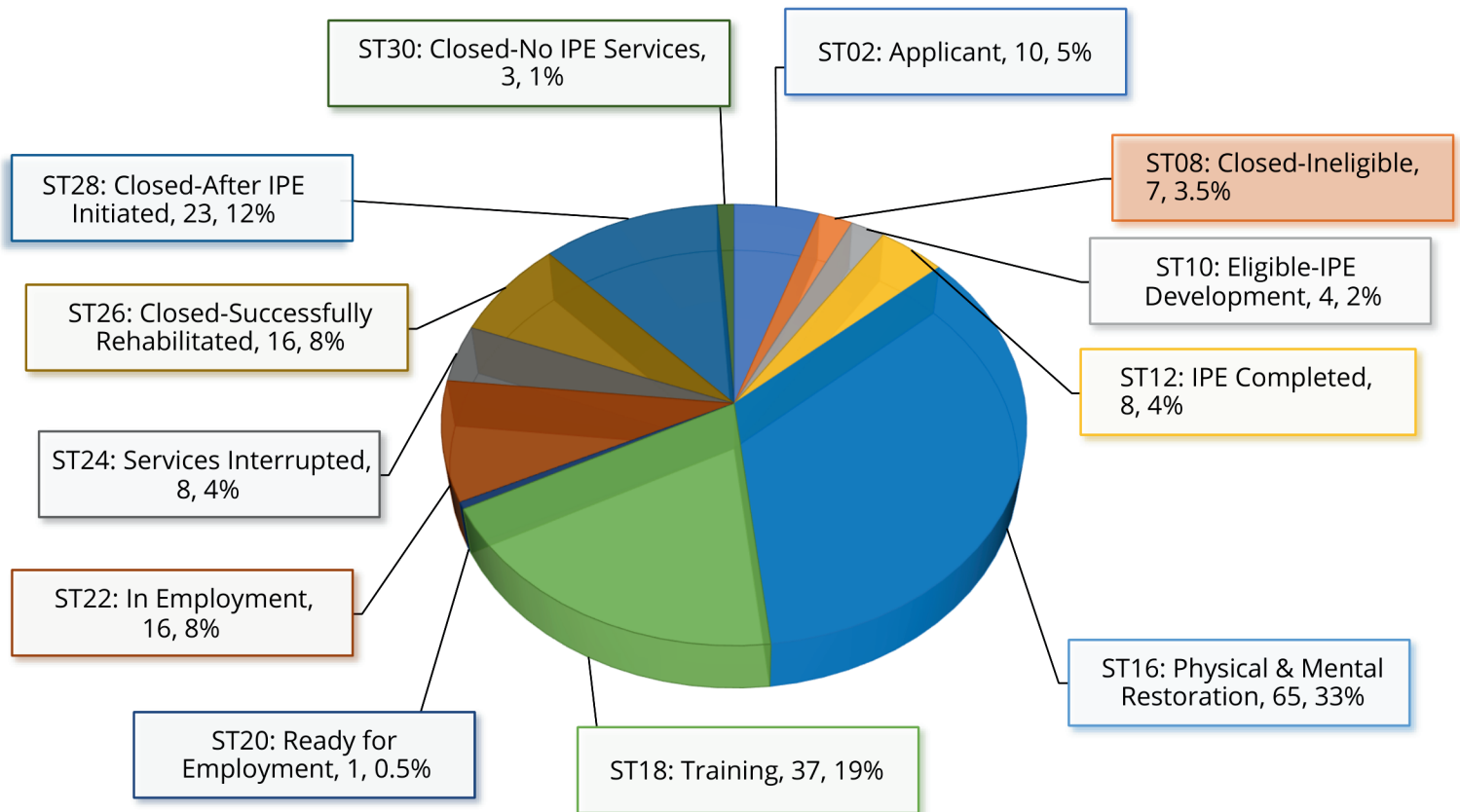
## PRIMARY DISABILITY





# Basic Support/Supported Employment FY 2023 Caseload

## CASE STATUS OF ALL CASES AT THE END OF THE PERIOD



### AVERAGE EARNINGS

	Before	After
Average Annual Earnings of Consumer Before and After Rehabilitation	\$15,504.91	\$23,877.52
Average Hourly Wage of Consumer Before and After Rehabilitation	\$7.67	\$11.48

### CASELOAD FOR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR FY 2023

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS	TOTAL
Basic Support Services/Supported Employment Services	198

### CASELOAD FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING/OLDER BLIND PROGRAM FOR FY 2023

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM	TOTAL
Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who are Blind/Visually Impaired	11

# CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Applicant Satisfaction Survey - Phase I

Results for Fiscal Year 2023 (October 01, 2022 to September 30, 2023)

## TIMELINESS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

		Yes	No	No Ans.	Total:
1	The Orientation started on time.	51	0	0	51
		100%	0%	0%	100%
2	The presentation was easy to understand.	50	1	0	51
		98%	2%	0%	100%
3	The OVR staff was easy to contact.	50	1	0	51
		98%	2%	0%	100%
4	The OVR staff treated me in a professional manner.	51	0	0	51
		100%	0%	0%	100%
5	The OVR staff was responsive in answering my questions and concerns.	51	0	0	51
		100%	0%	0%	100%
6	I know what services OVR offers and how to apply for those services.	51	0	0	51
		100%	0%	0%	100%

## QUALITY OF SERVICES

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
7	Please rate the quality of services you received from OVR.	49	2	0	0	0	51
		96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	100%
8	Please rate the courtesy and respect you received from the OVR staff.	46	5	0	0	0	51
		90%	10%	0%	0%	0%	100%
9	Please rate the accessibility of the OVR facilities.	40	6	0	0	5	51
		78%	12%	0%	0%	10%	100%
10	Please rate the chance of you recommending OVR services to someone else.	44	5	0	0	2	51
		86%	10%	0%	0%	4%	100%

NOTE: 51 out of 51 (100%) Applicants participated in the Phase I Survey (October 01, 2022 to September 30, 2023).

**CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Consumer Satisfaction Survey - Phase II**

Results for Fiscal Year 2023 (October 01, 2022 to September 30, 2023)

**TIMELINESS OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

		Yes	No	No Ans.	Total:
1	I felt the OVR staff was respectful and helpful.	11	0	0	11
		100%	0%	0%	100%
2	My VR plan for services was based on my skills and abilities.	11	0	0	11
		100%	0%	0%	100%
3	I received services that I needed.	11	0	0	11
		100%	0%	0%	100%
4	I benefited from services that I received.	11	0	0	11
		100%	0%	0%	100%
5	Services were provided in a timely manner.	11	0	0	11
		100%	0%	0%	100%
6	I am satisfied with the quality of services I received from OVR.	11	0	0	11
		100%	0%	0%	100%

**QUALITY OF SERVICES**

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
7	The ability to reach my counselor or another OVR staff member within one business day.	9	1	1	0	0	11
		82%	9%	9%	0%	0%	100%
8	My counselor's ability to clearly explain services available to me.	10	0	1	0	0	11
		91%	0%	9%	0%	0%	100%
9	My counselor's ability in listening to my needs and concerns.	11	0	0	0	0	11
		100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
10	My counselor's ability in involving me in making decisions about the services I needed.	9	1	1	0	0	11
		82%	9%	9%	0%	0%	100%
11	My counselor's ability in involving me in choosing service providers.	8	2	1	0	0	11
		73%	18%	9%	0%	0%	100%



12	The services in helping me get or keep a job.	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
		8	2	1	0	0	11
		73%	18%	9%	0%	0%	100%
13	Your counselor's overall performance in assisting you.	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
		8	1	1	0	1	11
		73%	9%	9%	0%	9%	100%
14	The quality of services you received from OVR.	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
		8	2	1	0	0	11
		73%	18%	9%	0%	0%	100%
15	The chance of you recommending OVR services to someone else.	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Ans.	Total:
		10	1	0	0	0	11
		91%	9%	0%	0%	0%	100%

NOTE: 11 out of 16 (69%) Consumers participated in the Phase II Survey (October 01, 2022 to September 30, 2023).

**“Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection.”**  
**~Mark Twain**

CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
**Applicant Satisfaction Survey - Phase I ILOB**

Results for Fiscal Year 2023 (October 01, 2022 to September 30, 2023)

**TIMELINESS OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No Ans.</b>	<b>Total:</b>
1	The orientation and materials were easy to understand.	2	0	0	2
		100%	0%	0%	100%
2	The OVR staff was easy to contact.	2	0	0	2
		100%	0%	0%	100%
3	The OVR staff treated me in a professional manner.	2	0	0	2
		100%	0%	0%	100%
4	My questions were answered clearly and quickly.	2	0	0	2
		100%	0%	0%	100%
5	I understand what OVR can do for me.	2	0	0	2
		100%	0%	0%	100%

**QUALITY OF SERVICES**

		<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>No Ans.</b>	<b>Total:</b>
6	Please rate the quality of services you received from OVR.	2	0	0	0	0	2
		100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
7	Please rate the courtesy and respect you received from the OVR staff.	2	0	0	0	0	2
		100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
8	Please rate the accessibility of the OVR facilities.	2	0	0	0	0	2
		100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
9	Please rate the chance of you recommending OVR services to someone else.	2	0	0	0	0	2
		100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Note: 2 out of 8 (25%) Applicants participated in the ILOB Phase I Survey.

**“Just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn’t mean he lacks vision.”**  
 ~Stevie Wonder

# SRC Chair Message



Håfa Adai and Tirow! As we reflect on another year of collaboration and progress within the CNMI State Rehabilitation Council, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, stakeholders and partners, I am honored to share with you the collective achievements in the latest Annual Report. This document not only captures our dedication but also serves as a testament to the positive impact we've made on the lives of individuals with disabilities in our community.

Throughout the year, our dedicated members and partners have worked together to advance the mission of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Rehabilitation Council. We continue our effort towards advocating for inclusive employment opportunities, enhancing accessibility, and supporting innovative programs.

As we navigate the challenges and celebrate the successes outlined in this report, let us renew our commitment to fostering an inclusive and empowering environment for all. Together, we can continue to break down barriers, promote equal opportunities, and ensure that individuals with disabilities have the support they need to achieve their goals.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Governor's Administration for their continued support. A huge shout out to OVR Director, Mr. Jim Rayphand, and his entire team for all the amazing work that they do. Thank you to all our stakeholders and partners for their dedication and collaboration throughout the year! Your support has been instrumental in our shared success, and I look forward to our continued partnership in the service of those who rely on our programs.

We are stronger, together!

May this Annual Report inspire us to build upon our accomplishments and propel us toward an even more inclusive and accessible future.

Preston O. Basa

Chairperson, CNMI State Rehabilitation Council



# SRC Membership

FY 2023

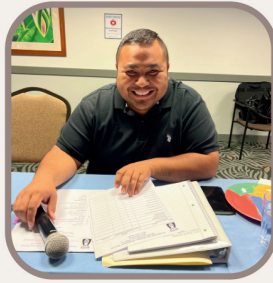
CATEGORY	MEMBER NAME
Individuals' representative	Darlene Aldan, <b>Fiscal Officer</b> (resigned 5/6/23)
Parent training and information center	Junnie Masga
Client Assistance Program	Gregory P. Borja, <b>Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Committee Chair</b>
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	Jane M. Tudela
Community rehabilitation program service provider	Mystica Kaipat
Business, industry and labor	Benjamin S. Babauta, <b>Vice Chairperson &amp; Employment &amp; Marketing Committee Chair</b>
Disability advocacy group	Romeo Cuellar
Disability advocacy group	Estella Cabaobas
Individuals' representative	Angelica Corina A. Aguon
Recipient of VR services	John Allen Cabrera, <b>Fiscal Officer &amp; QA/QI Committee Chair</b> (3/23/23 appt.)
Recipient of VR services	Emeterio Fitial, <b>Secretary</b>
Rota representative	Antonelli M. Rosario, <b>Transition &amp; Assistive Technology Committee Chair</b>
State educational agency	Preston O. Basa, <b>Chairperson</b>
State Workforce Investment Board	Velma Palacios (7/18/23 to present) Victoria Benavente
Designated State Unit director	James M. Rayphand (2/13/23 to present) Arlene Reyes
Business, industry, and labor	Irene Holl, <b>Vice Chairperson, Employment &amp; Marketing Committee Chair</b> (resigned 1/17/23)

The CNMI State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) supports the mission of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to increase employment and promote independence among eligible individuals with disabilities throughout the CNMI.

# FY 2023 SRC Accomplishments



**Preston Basa**  
**Chairperson**



**Benjamin Babauta**  
**Vice Chairperson**



**John Allen Cabrera**  
**Fiscal Officer**



**Emeterio Fitial**  
**Secretary**



**Irene Holl**  
**Vice Chairperson**  
**(Resigned 1/17/23)**



**Darlene Aldan**  
**Fiscal Officer**  
**(Resigned 5/6/23)**



- Conducted four (4) general membership meetings with a quorum each time:
  - December 20, 2022 at Lao Lao Bay Golf & Resort
  - March 23, 2023 at Saipan World Resort
  - June 29, 2023 at Aqua Resort Club
  - September 21, 2023 at Saipan World Resort
- Chairperson Preston Basa appointed chairpersons to the following standing committees:
  - Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Committee: Gregory Borja and John Allen Cabrera (appointed 3/23/23)
  - Employment and Marketing Committee: Irene Holl and Benjamin Babauta
  - Transition and Assistive Technology Committee: Antonelli Rosario
- Supported and joined OVR in the celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month on October 5, 2022 and September 28, 2023
- During their December 20, 2022 1st general membership meeting, the SRC recommended that OVR reach out to former consumers (cases closed in ST 28 and ST 30) if they would be interested in re-applying for VR services. OVR accepted and implemented this recommendation in the months that followed.



# FY 2023 SRC Accomplishments


- The full Council, during their 2nd general membership meeting on March 23, 2023, ratified and approved OVR's revised policy on Post-Employment Services.
- SRC continued to support the inclusion of "Employer Forum" on their general membership meeting agenda in an effort to develop and strengthen rapport and collaboration with OVR's business partners.
- The SRC ensured the following successful vacancy appointments and/or re-appointments:
  - James Rayphand, DSU Director, appointed on 2/22/23
  - Angelica Aguon, Individuals' Representative, re-appointed on 3/17/23
  - Gregory Borja, Client Assistance Program, re-appointed on 4/19/23
  - Preston Basa, State Educational Agency, re-appointed on April 19, 2023
  - Velma Palacios, State Workforce Investment Board, appointed on 7/18/23
- The SRC recommended the following individual to Honorable Governor Arnold I. Palacios for appointment to the Council:
  - Mr. Pedro Arriola to represent Business, Industry and Labor
- Supported the Disability Sportsfest that was held on July 14, 2023 at the Marianas High School gymnasium.
- During the Council's 3rd general membership meeting held on June 29, 2023, the full Council received an informal training provided by OVR Director Jimbo Rayphand on the following topics:
  - SRC goals and some key functions of the Council and its collaborative work with OVR as an advisory board, and
  - VR State plan goals
- QA/QI Committee Chair John Allen Cabrera conducted research and shared with the SRC during their 3rd general membership meeting held on June 29, 2023 that OVR as of said date had a total of five (5) CAP cases with the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI).
- Reviewed Council member attendance and approved the justified removal of member(s) accordingly.
- Approved the FY 2024 Resource Plan (\$30,850) during SRC's joint 4th general membership meeting with the SILC on September 21, 2023.
- SRC, through Chairperson Preston Basa, recommended that OVR attach a listing of the case statuses with their definitions to data reports for discussions during the general membership meetings moving forward.





# FY 2023 SRC Accomplishments

- SRC, through Vice Chairperson Benjamin Babauta, supported OVR's MOU with the Northern Marianas Technical Institute (NMTech) with a signing that took place on February 28, 2023 at the school campus.
- Supported and attended Family Fun Day in celebration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities spearheaded by the Center for Living Independently on December 3, 2022.
- Some members of the SRC supported and/or attended activities highlighting 2023 Autism Awareness Month.
- SRC incurred the following expenses per their approved FY 2023 Resource Plan:
  - Total of \$2,633.80 for venue rental of four (4) general membership meetings
  - Total of \$750.00 for venue rental supporting Autism Society's proclamation signing event
  - Total of \$290.00 represents advertising cost of public notices for two (2) general membership meetings
- Elected SRC Officers for FY 2024 during the joint SRC and SILC 4th general membership meeting on September 21, 2023:
  - Chairperson: Antonelli Rosario
  - Vice Chairperson: Preston Basa
  - Fiscal Officer: Emeterio Fitial
  - Secretary: John Allen Cabrera
- SRC members who were recognized as Champions of Equal Opportunity by the Council on Developmental Disabilities and the CNMI Disability Network Partners during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March, 2023 were:
  - John Allen Cabrera as Saipan Advocate of the Year
  - Benjamin Babauta as Saipan Community Member Advocate of the Year



***“Do the best you can until you know better.  
Then when you know better, do better.”  
~Maya Angelou***





## SILC CHAIR MESSAGE

---

*Hafa Adai and Tirow,*

My name is Nicolas Torres, and I have had the great pleasure of serving as the chairperson for the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) of the CNMI for this past fiscal year 2023. While serving as chairperson, I have learned many new things and was able to meet and network with some of the most passionate service providers, employers, and advocates who promote disability inclusion in the CNMI. It has been an exciting experience to attend conferences with other self-advocates with disabilities who share the same goal of living independently within their communities.



I want to extend my greatest appreciation to SILC, its members, and the Center for Living Independently in the CNMI (CLI) for the warm welcome and fervent guidance for me to serve as chairperson. I also would like to commend the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) for their continued efforts to promote independence and employability to individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. I look forward to working with the SILC this upcoming fiscal year for more fun and engaging activities for the disability community.

*Un Dangkulo Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase. Ghilison. Thank you.*

# SILC Membership

FY 2023

## CATEGORY

## MEMBER NAME

Director of a center for independent living

Mary Susan Satur, **Secretary**

Parent or guardian

Carla San Nicolas

Parent or guardian

Marlene Cabrera

Advocate

Nicolas DLC. Torres, **Chairperson**

Advocate

Hannah L. Igisaiar

Private business representative

Estanislao K. Benavente, **Fiscal Officer**

Private business representative

Michael R. Guerrero

Organization that provide services representative

Preston I. Saralu

Rota representative

Martha B. Hocog, **Vice Chairperson**

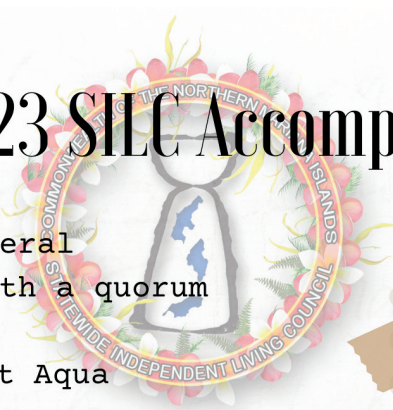
Designated State Entity director

James M. Rayphand

**It is the mission of the CNMI Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to serve individuals with significant disabilities in the CNMI and, to promote independence, productivity, integration and inclusion of such individuals into society. The Council supports the independent living philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and advocacy.**



# FY 2023 SILC Accomplishments



- Conducted four (4) general membership meetings with a quorum each time:
  - December 15, 2022 at Aqua Resort Club
  - April 14, 2023 at Aqua Resort Club
  - June 28, 2023 at Aqua Resort Club
  - September 21, 2023 at Saipan World Resort
- Notified the Tinian Mayor's Office to consider nominating Mr. Felipe Aquino, Jr. to Honorable Governor Ralph DLG. Torres for appointment to fill a vacancy (Tinian Representative) on the SILC.



Martha B. Hocog  
Vice Chairperson

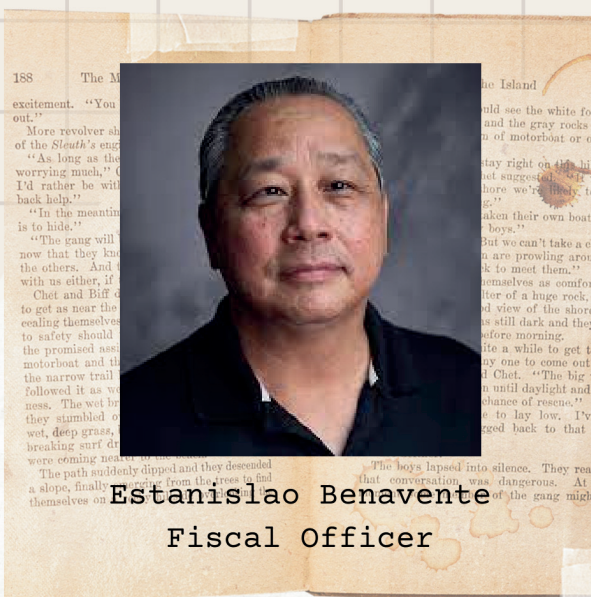


Nicolas Torres  
SILC Chairperson

- Supported and joined OVR in the celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month on October 5, 2022 and September 28, 2023.
- Participated and supported Family Fun Day in celebration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities at the Tanapag Youth Center on December 3, 2023.
- During their meeting on November 28, 2022, the SILC Executive Committee reviewed their accomplishments report for inclusion in the FY 2022 annual report.
- During their 1st general membership meeting on December 15, 2022, the SILC elected Ms. Martha Barcinas as their Vice Chairperson.

- SILC Secretary Mary Susan Satur attended the SILC Congress Conference held at Little Rock, Arkansas on March 6-8, 2023.
- Participated in and supported Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month activities in March, 2023.





**Estanislao Benavente**  
Fiscal Officer

- During their 2nd general membership meeting held on April 14, 2023, the full Council acted on the following:
  - Ratified and approved their revised SILC by-laws to include the removal of sergeant-at-arms position from the list of officers
  - Elected Mr. Estanislao Benavente as their Fiscal Officer
- SILC Secretary Mary Susan Satur hosted the OVR informational session and outreach at the Center for Living Independently (CLI) on June 16, 2023.
- SILC members received SILC 101 Training on June 28, 2023, which was virtually facilitated by Ms. Paula McElwee. Members found the training "informative."
- SILC Secretary Mary Susan Satur took the lead in finalizing a draft State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

- The Council ensured the following successful vacancy appointments and/or re-appointments:

- James Rayphand, DSE Director, appointed on 2/22/23
- Michael Guerrero, Private Business Rep, appointed on 4/12/23
- Preston Saralu, Service Provider Organization, appointed on 4/12/23
- Nicolas Torres, Advocate, re-appointed on 6/30/23
- Hannah Igisaiar, Advocate, re-appointed on 6/30/23



**Mary Susan Satur**  
Secretary

- During their 4th general membership meeting on September 21, 2023, together with SRC, the SILC approved their \$25,971 resource plan for FY 2024.
- At every CLI event in the CNMI, the SILC, through a banner display, was always recognized & represented.



# FY 2023 NDEAM AWARD RECIPIENTS

National Disability Employment Awareness Month



**JOETEN  
SUPERSTORE**



**TINIAN WESTERN LODGE**



**JOETEN  
SUPERSTORE**



**JJ&K**



**TINIAN**



**ROTA**



**Tinian Ice & Water, Inc.**

"TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE"



VR Counselor **Rose Ann B. Ichiuo** presents certificates to our Tinian Employer Partners in celebration of NDEAM.



**Tinian Western Lodge**



**Tinian Mayor's Office**



**Tinian Ice & Water, Inc.**



**Tinian DPW**



VR Counselor **Jane M. Tudela** obliges for a photo with our Saipan Employer Partners recognized as part of our NDEAM celebrations.



**Joeten Superstore**



**Green Meadow School**





★ JJ&K Company



★ ★ ★  
From left to right:  
Saipan Southern High School  
Marianas High School  
Kagman High School



★ ★ ★  
From left to right:  
August Supermarket  
Joeten-Kiyu Public Library  
Hyatt Regency Hotel





VR Counselor **Jane M. Tudela** presents a certificate of appreciation to our Rota Employer Partner recognized in celebration of NDEAM.



**Saipan Employer Partners Recognized During UCEDD's Employer Training at Lao Lao Bay Golf & Resort**



From Left to Right:



Center for Living Independently

Kinpachi Restaurant



Division of Youth Services

Delta Management





# SUCCESS STORY:

## Maria's Story



When Maria was in high school, she experienced difficulty with math and grasping new information. She also had to learn to isolate noises so she can focus and concentrate better. In school, Maria frequented the resource room for additional guidance and support. At this time, she also learned to manage her stress with the use of a stress ball and Samsung tablet. To help with isolating noises, she found using headphones worked best.



During her junior year in high school, Maria reached out to OVR to help her carve a path towards professional fulfillment. She was interested in gaining some work experience and OVR helped to coordinate this training with the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs where she worked as an Office Clerk. Talk about a crash course in adulting! Maria enjoys meeting new people and embraces her learning and growing with each passing day.



Fast forward to the fall of 2020 and Maria is meaningfully employed at Herman's Modern Bakery as an Admin Assistant and a Cookie Decorator. She enjoyed the decorating part of her job and actually considers herself a budding artist. To this day, Maria continues to enjoy decorating cookies and gets paid for it, too!

So what's her secret to success? According to Maria, it's all about "being kind and respectful to everyone." Wise words indeed!



# OVR, SRC & SILC Highlights: FY 2023 in Pictures



OVR, SRC & SILC meet for an executive committee meeting on 9/14/23



Governor Palacios and Lt. Governor Apatang join OVR, SRC & SILC for the NDEAM Proclamation Signing on 9/28/23



Celebrating NMC Interns Amelia Cabrera and Shianne Santos (seated, 3rd & 2nd from right) during last day at OVR



OVR Director Jimbo Rayphand welcomes DOL's Manny Iguel (3rd from right) to talk about job placement



SRC Chair Preston Basa with OVR's Ann Marie Marciano during October 2022 NDEAM



OVR consumers take a tour of the new Crowne Plaza Hotel organized by VR Counselors Rose Ichio, Jane Tudela, and Ray Diaz on 5/11/23



SILC general membership meeting at Aqua Resort Club on 12/15/22



SRC Vice Chair Benjamin Babauta supports October 2022 NDEAM



SILC & CLI Support October 2022 NDEAM in Rota



# OVR, SRC & SILC Highlights: FY 2023 in Pictures



Former Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig proudly celebrates October 2022 NDEAM



OVR ladies join the government-wide 2023 Labor Day Picnic



OVR's Arlene Yamagata and Joscelyn Sanchez (center) engage in a business engagement with our Public Health, Immunization, and WIC partners



SRC general membership meeting at Aqua Resort Club on 6/29/23



Dr. Jessica B. Taylor of the Public School System CTE Program is a collaborator during the 2022 NDEAM Conference in Tinian.



OVR Acting Director Elvira Seman in a meeting with the DNP to discuss collaboration



VR Counselors Jane Tudela (seated) and Ray Diaz represent OVR at DOL Job Fair



OVR staff at the October 2022 NDEAM celebration



SILC member Hannah Igisaiar receives a certificate of completion from UCEDD



# OVR, SRC & SILC Highlights: FY 2023 in Pictures



SILC Secretary Mary Susan Satur (2nd from left) join OVR Director Jimbo Rayphand in planning for 2023 NDEAM



NMC Interns Shianne Santos and Amelia Cabrera present to their professor & classmates about OVR



JJ&K manpower company's Teresa Cruz (2nd from right) with OVR staff during a successful business engagement (OJT partnership)



OVR staff conduct business engagement with Tinian Director of Commerce Susan Perez (left)



OVR staff donate to the December 2022 Toys for Tots campaign



Thank you for the memories, VR Counselor Shana Iguel, and wishing you the very best in all your future endeavors!



OVR staff welcome CHCC Mobile Clinic Team led by Joe Ada (standing, 3rd from right) for an info session on 6/14/23



OVR staff at the October 2022 NDEAM celebration



WIA Director Frances Torres addresses both OVR and WIA staff during a joint professional development session at PIC on 7/12/23



# History of the CNMI OVR Logo

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

The outer circle represents Networking, Collaboration, and Cooperation, ingredients necessary for any program's success. The "O" also stands for Office. We realize that OVR management and staff alone cannot possibly achieve its mission of increasing employment and promoting independence among eligible individuals with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. To ensure that the goals and objectives continue to be met and that there is a high level of consumer satisfaction, OVR must rely on the collaboration and cooperation of the State Rehabilitation Council, consumers and their families, employers and businesses, disability-related agencies and organizations, and the entire community.

As the saying goes: There is strength in numbers and, the more people, businesses, agencies and organizations join in the effort of improving the quality of life for all our island residents, we will indisputably witness even better and greater things to come.







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

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

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

The acronym CNMI stands for Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

## 1. Instruction on Self-Advocacy

**Know your rights and responsibilities**

Self-Advocacy should start at an early age. Being able to assert your needs and interest/ desires in school, work, and community.

Learn about the agencies and organizations in our community that is here to help you succeed.

**and more!**



## 2. Job Exploration Counseling

**Gain information of what careers are available, and understanding the skills needed for employment**

Explore career pathways

Learn about what kind of jobs are available here in CNMI and what to expect.

**and more!**



## 3. Work-Based Learning Experience

**Gain real life work experience**

Job shadowing- Spend a day with a mentor and see what a typical day is like at work

Paid/unpaid internship

**and more!**



## 4. Counseling on Comprehensive Transition or Post-Secondary Educational Programs

**Guidance on colleges/trade schools, certifications on Employment/ Education**

Tell us your goal and we can provide guidance on how to reach your goal.

**and more!**



## 5. Workplace Readiness Training

**Understand the skills that are needed for the job**



We're here to help you gain soft skills, employability skills, or job preparation skills.

Learn what it takes to get hired

**and more!**



# Consumer Photos



## Pictures are worth a 1,000 words:

**Top left:** OVR consumer Pedro Pinault (2nd from right) of Tinian is enjoying his OJT at the Dog Control Program. Pictured with him are his supervisor, Michael Borja (left), OVR Counselor Rose Ann Ichio, and co-workers (center).

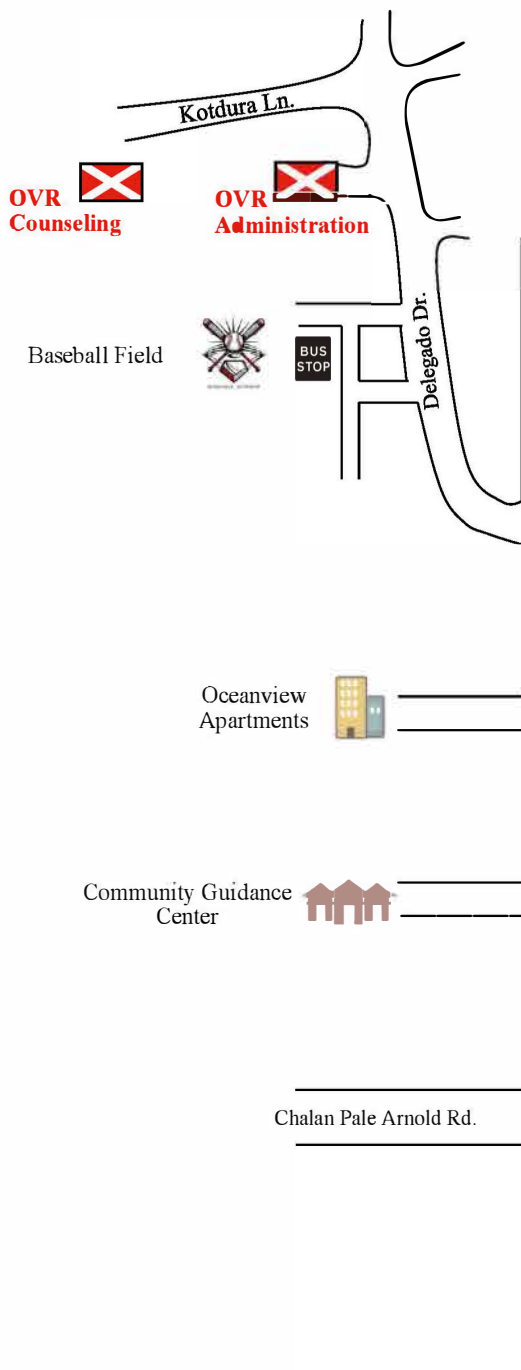
**Top right:** Pedro Pinault proudly points to a certificate he received upon completing IRT-CNMI Health together with his colleagues.

**Bottom right:** Crowne Plaza staff welcomes OVR consumers and counselors to Crowne Plaza during a field trip to learn about the newly-opened hotel.

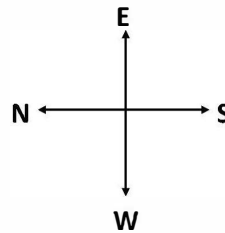
**Bottom left:** Crown Plaza staff and management address the OVR team regarding their OJT job skills familiarization program on May 11, 2023.

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## Navy Hill



Grace Christian's Academy



Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation



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