



A REPORT TO OUR CITIZENS

FISCAL YEAR 2020

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.

OVR Executive Director's Message



Welcome to the CNMI Office of the Governor-Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). Our staff of more than 13 employees is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities through meaningful employment, community integration and independent living. We serve clients through several programs, which include: Basic Support/Supported Employment (BS/SE), Independent Living for Older Blind (ILOB), Pre-Employment Transition Services, and Self-Employment.

At OVR, we don't just want to help you get a job, we want to also help you plan and achieve a satisfying career path. Every job seeker has unique needs, skills and challenges, so we adapt our services to meet those needs, build out skills, and address those challenges. Services can include assessment, helping you to figure out what you really want to do, talking about your goals and barriers to finding employment, and assistance for purchasing items related to work.

For more than four decades, our services to people with disabilities in the CNMI have resulted in countless lives improved, dreams realized, and accomplishments achieved. Although we have made great strides toward providing equal employment opportunities, much work remains to be done. As part of this continuing effort, we encourage businesses to increase access and opportunities for workers with disabilities, support disability inclusion in the workplace and understand the values that people with disabilities bring to the workforce. No person should face unnecessary barriers to success, and no person with a disability should be limited in their desire to work.

Regardless of which program serves you, excellence is a promise we will work hard to fulfill every day. Thank you for visiting and allowing us to serve you.

Our website is a starting place to learn more about our program and services. Please contact us at 322-6537/38 or email maryann@ovrgov.net, if you or someone you know is in need of our services.



PROGRAMS OFFERED

No-Cost Services For 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 work experience training (WET) & on-the-job (OJT) is available to employers through OVR to help off-set the cost for providing training to an OVR consumer.



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Pre-ETS 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.

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 technological 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 (20/60 in the better eye, with corrections) 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.

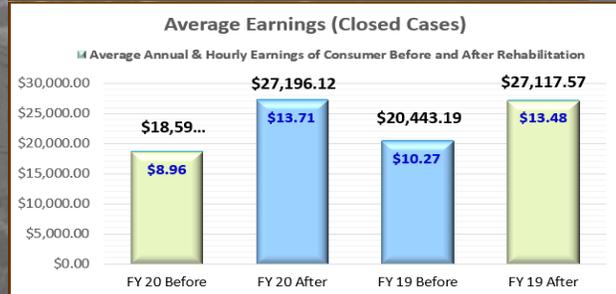
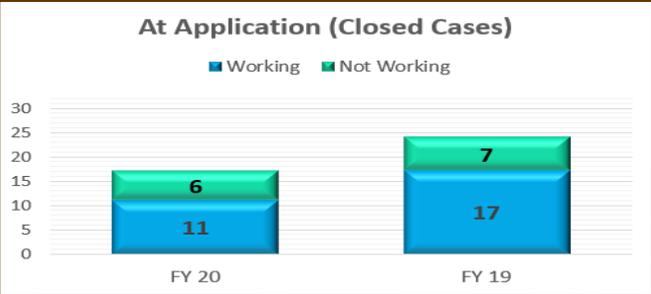
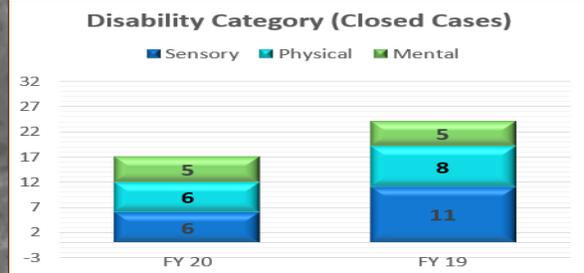
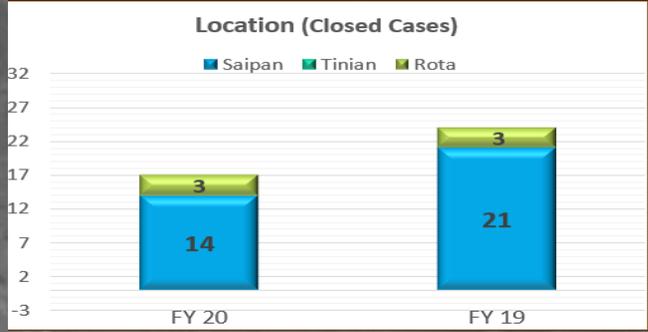
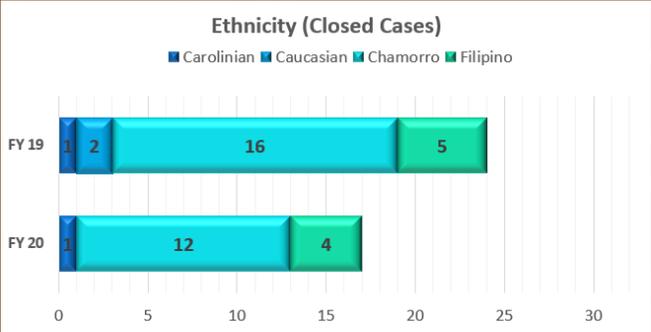
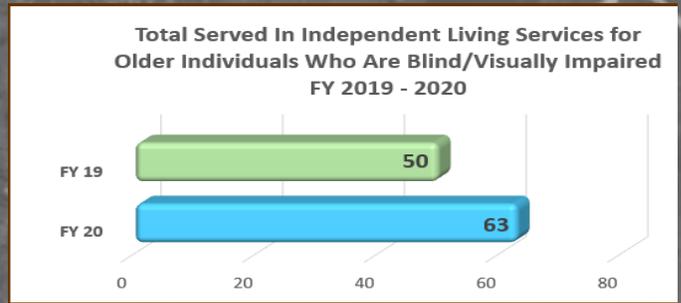
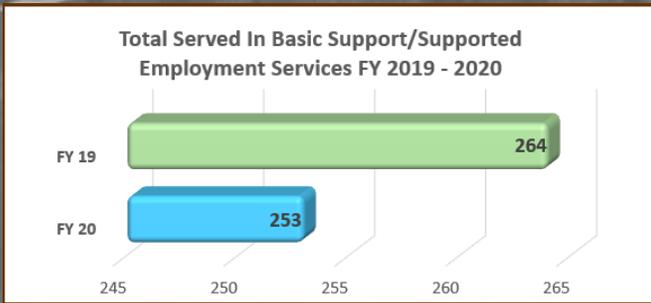
INDEPENDENCE is the goal!

Independent Living Services (ILS)

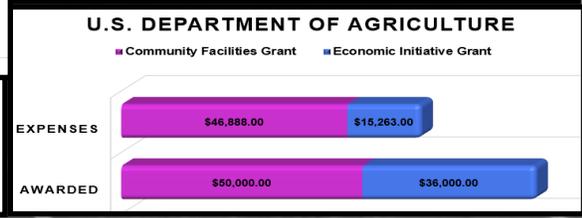
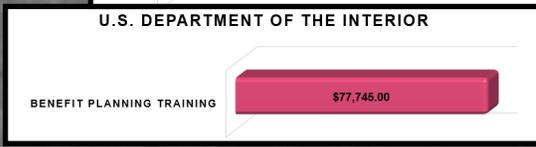
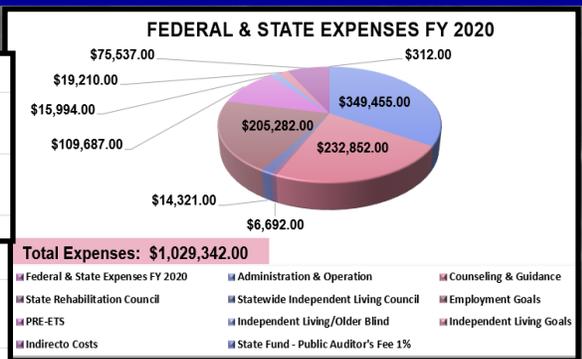
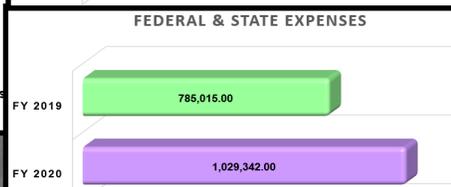
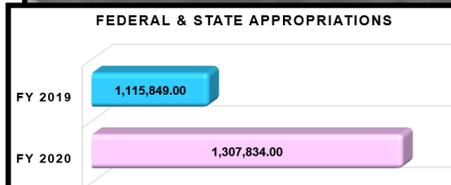
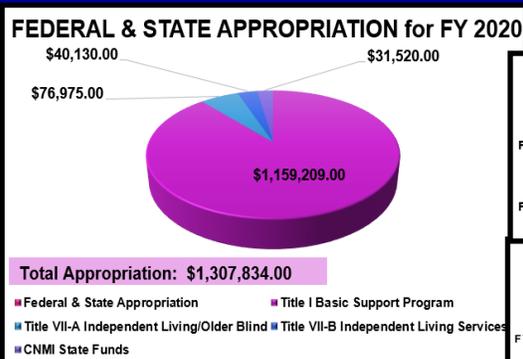
The ILS program grant is funded through the Administration for Community Living, and provides resources that supports the work of the State Independent Living Council (SILC) as well as provides funds for activities reflected in the approved State Plan for Independent Living. Funds are allocated, through 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.

DATA REPORT



FINANCES



SUCSESSES & NEEDS



WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

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

- United States Department of Agriculture Community Facilities Grant Award in the amount of \$50,000.
- United States Department of Agriculture Economic Impact Grant Award in the amount of \$36,000.
- Office of Insular Affairs Benefit Training Program Grant in the amount of \$77,745
- Completion of the WIOA tri-annual Unified State Plan.
- Fully serving all three islands of the CNMI for VR Services
- Self-Employment for consumers have been launched with more to come.

Completions of grants for:

- Training of OVR staff in becoming Certified Benefits Planners.
- Obtaining a vehicle for Counseling Services

IDENTIFIED NEEDS

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.

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.

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.

