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## CITIZEN CENTRIC REPORT ~ FISCAL YEAR 2019



# CNMI OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

## MISSION

The Office of the Attorney General provides legal counsel and representation to Commonwealth government and its agencies on many issues vital to the people's interest. These issues include the protection of children from abuse and neglect, preservation of the environment, protecting the Commonwealth's financial assets, the protection of consumers, and public safety.



## WHO WE ARE

THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (OAG) IS CONSTITUTIONALLY CREATED PURSUANT TO THE NMI CONSTITUTION, ART. 11I, § 11 AS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IS HEADED BY AN ATTORNEY GENERAL ELECTED TO A FOUR-YEAR TERM. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IS THE CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER OF THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- PROVIDING LEGAL ADVICE TO THE GOVERNOR AND EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS INCLUDING PUBLIC CORPORATIONS AND AUTONOMOUS AGENCIES;
- REPRESENTING THE COMMONWEALTH IN ALL LEGAL MATTERS AND;
- PROSECUTING VIOLATIONS OF COMMONWEALTH LAW

## DIVISIONS AND UNITS OF THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

- CIVIL DIVISION
- CRIMINAL DIVISION
- SOLICITOR'S DIVISION
- OFFICE OF CONSUMER COUNSEL
- ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION
- ATTORNEY GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION
- CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT UNIT
- SPECIAL PROSECUTION UNIT
- VICTIM WITNESS ADVOCACY UNIT
- INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UNIT

## CONTACT US

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Caller Box 10007  
Saipan, MP 96950  
WEBSITE: [www.cnmioag.org](http://www.cnmioag.org)

Civil Division:	237-7500
Criminal Division:	237-7600
Investigative Division:	237-7630
Victim Witness Advocacy Unit:	237-7602

## Our Progress

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Negotiated settlements with plaintiffs who brought tort claims against the Commonwealth in the following categories: Medical Malpractice (4); Procurement (1); Civil Rights (3)
- Negotiated settlement in the Luta Mermaid matter for full repayment of public funds wrongly received
- Brought suits to enforce Commonwealth Law and uphold the NMI Commonwealth Constitution including:
  - Suit against developer who amended permit application to reduce development activity and avoid regulatory requirements only to later build in excess of originally propose activity
  - Suit against multiple developers for building and/or occupying structures without building permits and/or occupancy permits
- Favorable decision from the NMI Supreme Court upholding the constitutionality of the Government Liability Act which protects government employees from tort liability for negligent actions occurring within the scope of their employment. See *Elameto v. Ramsey*, 2018 MP 15
- Favorable decision from the U.S. District Court dismissing a case brought by a physician seeking admitting privileges at CHCC. See *Ramsey v. Muna et. al.* 14-CV-00021 Order Granting Defendants’ Motions to Dismiss (D. NMI December 21, 2018)
- Favorable decision from the NMI Superior Court dismissing a complaint for failure to serve the Commonwealth in conformance with the NMI Rules of Civil Procedure. See *Ana S. Teregeyo v. Commonwealth of the*

*Northern Mariana Islands (Order of Dismissal March 13, 2019)*

### ACTIVITIES:

DIVISION/UNIT	FY2019
<b>CIVIL DIVISION</b>	
Agencies Served	70
Procurement Contract Review	578
Personnel Contract Review	1,138
Legislative Comments and Advice to Departments and Agencies	2,124
Litigation	58
Appeals	12
<b>CRIMINAL DIVISION</b>	
Criminal – Felony	127
Criminal – Misdemeanor	166
Juvenile	46
Traffic	4,312
Appeals	1
<b>INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION</b>	
Penal Summons – Served	66
Witness Summons – Served	36
Bench Warrants – Served	4
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION</b>	
Apostilles	231
Certifications	510
Notary Public – New Applicants	23
<b>CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT UNIT</b>	
Active Cases	323
Closed Cases	20
<b>VICTIM WITNESS ADVOCACY UNIT</b>	
Victims Served – Criminal	394
Victims Served – Civil	217


## Our Finances

### BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES:

BUDGET	FY2019
<b>GENERAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$2,818,015.00</b>
Personnel	\$2,592,199.00
Operations	\$225,816.00
<b>FEDERAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$254,865.00</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$3,072,880.00</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION COLLECTIONS</b>	
Apostilles	\$11,550.00
Certifications	\$25,500.00
Notary Public	\$1,800.00
<b>TOTAL COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>\$38,850.00</b>
<b>CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS</b>	
Collected and Distributed	\$365,589.11
Tax Rebate Offsets	\$45,329.95
<b>TOTAL COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>\$410,919.06</b>

## REPORT PUBLIC CORRUPTION

Public Corruption is a breach of trust by local officials or government employees, who undermine our Commonwealth's overall safety, the public trust, and confidence in our local government. If anyone has any information about wrongdoings by a public official or government employee, please submit a tip online at [www.cnmioag.org](http://www.cnmioag.org) or contact our Investigative Division at 237-7630


HOTLINE



Visit our website at: [www.cnmioag.org](http://www.cnmioag.org)

## What's Next

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### HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Opioid Crisis:** The Civil Division has partnered with Attorneys General from several states across the U.S. in negotiation a settlement with several pharmaceutical companies including Purdue Pharma LP, the maker of OxyContin
- **Tobacco Master Settlement:** We are in discussion with major tobacco companies to settle several years of disputed payments under the Master Settlement Agreement
- **Water Contamination:** We have engaged and are working with specialized outside counsel to pursue litigation against manufacturers of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), chemicals found in non-stick cookware, fabric coatings, and firefighting foam, which have made their way into our groundwater and put the public at risk
- **Generic Drugs:** The Civil Division recently joined 52 other states and territories bringing an action in the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut against Teva Pharmaceuticals and 21 other generic drug manufacturers for antitrust and consumer protection act violations

### KEY INITIATIVES FOR 2020:

- Continue to provide legal advice and guidance to the Executive Branch, Departments and Agencies and to represent the Commonwealth in the trial court and on matters currently on appeal
- Continue to support all law enforcement though meeting and training by means of academy or in service
- Focus on illegal business practices that hurt our consumers and other businesses; implement consumer awareness programs and investigate consumer complaints.
- Continue to foster a non-partisan position on all matters brought to our attention
- Continue to promote and ensure an open and transparent government
- Continue to improve and strengthen the Criminal Code
- Continue to work on new procurement regulations for the government and provide training to agencies
- Continue to explore solutions to mental health issues in the criminal justice system
- Continue to collaborate with DPS and DYS to address juvenile delinquency issues in the Commonwealth

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Do you like this report? Would you like to see other information? Please let us know by contacting Carla T. Hocog, Public Information Officer at 237-7500 or email [carla\\_hocog@cnmioag.org](mailto:carla_hocog@cnmioag.org)