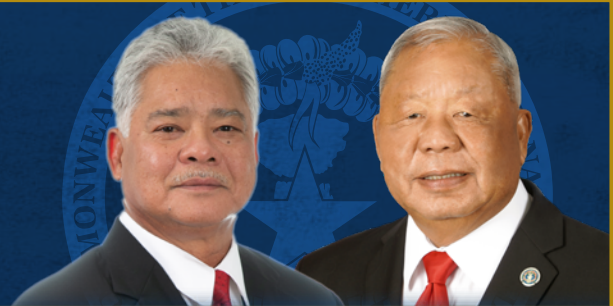


# OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE LT. GOVERNOR

# CITIZEN-CENTRIC REPORT 2024



## About The Office

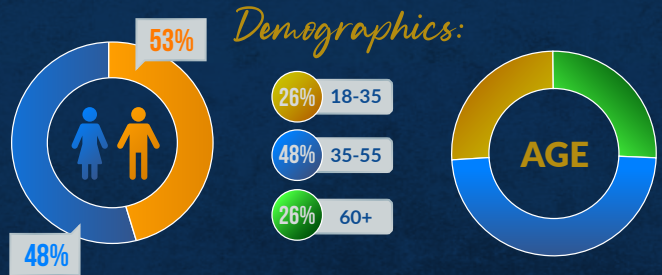
The Office of the Governor is the chief executive office of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and manages the executive branch of the Commonwealth Government. The Office of Administrative Services, operating under the Office of the Governor, plays a key role in supporting the administration's operations and initiatives.

As they head into their third year in office, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lieutenant Governor David M. Apatang continue to lead the CNMI with dedication and commitment.

## Strategic Goals

The goals of this administration are to restore transparency, effectiveness, and accountability in government.

In doing so, the Office of the Governor and Lt. Governor will advance strategic goals that include growing and diversifying the CNMI economy, modernizing and improving the efficiency of government services, strengthening partnerships with federal agencies and regional entities, protecting the vulnerable, implementing programs that protect and sustain the CNMI's natural resources, expediting ongoing and new infrastructure projects and growing renewable energy programs, bolstering healthcare services, and expanding digital equity and inclusion.



## Vision

Provide high-quality and efficient public services in a manner that promotes accountability, transparency, and trust.



## Operational Structure

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor continue to lead the Office of the Governor and Office of the Lieutenant Governor, respectively. Over the past year, their administration has successfully appointed highly qualified individuals to key positions. These appointees now serve as division secretaries, board members, directors, special assistants, and in other roles directly reporting to the Governor, playing integral parts in advancing the administration's priorities.

## Cabinet Members

- |   |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Oscar M. Babauta</b><br>Special Assistant - Administrative Services                  | <b>Barbara Sablan</b><br>Special Assistant - Women's Affairs                               | <b>Virginia Villagomez</b><br>Special Assistant - Office of Management and Budget                        | <b>Delbert T. Pua</b><br>Special Assistant - Youth Affairs                                 | <b>Pamela C. Sablan</b><br>Executive Director - CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities                     |
| <b>Elizabeth S. Balajadia</b><br>Acting Director - Office of Planning and Development   | <b>Leila F. Staffler</b><br>Secretary - Department of Labor                                | <b>Paul Tenorio</b><br>Executive Director - Criminal Justice Planning Agency                             | <b>Teresita Santos</b><br>Secretary - Department of Public Lands                           | <b>Therese Ogunoro</b><br>Administrator - Substance Abuse, Addiction and Rehabilitation Program                |
| <b>Ray N. Yumul</b><br>Secretary - Department of Public Works                           | <b>Remedio C. Mafnas</b><br>Secretary - Department of Commerce                             | <b>Joseph M. Pangelinan</b><br>Personnel Director - Office of Personnel Management                       | <b>Anthony I. Macaranas</b><br>Commissioner - Department of Public Safety                  | <b>Vicenta Borja</b><br>Acting Administrator - Commonwealth Medicaid Agency                                    |
| <b>Alfreda Camacho Maratita</b><br>Special Assistant - Public Transportation            | <b>Patrick C. Guerrero</b><br>Officer - Public Assistance Office                           | <b>Arlene Kay A. Yamagata</b><br>Director - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation                          | <b>Frances Sablan</b><br>Executive Officer - Veterans Affairs                              | <b>Charlotte R. Flores</b><br>Acting Special Assistant - Substance Abuse, Addiction and Rehabilitation Program |
| <b>Tina Sablan</b><br>Special Assistant - Climate Policy and Planning                   | <b>Christopher Concepcion</b><br>Managing Director - Marianas Visitors Authority           | <b>Mildred S. Camacho</b><br>Administrator - Scholarship Office  | <b>Luella I. Marciano</b><br>Resident Executive - Indigenous Affairs                       |  |
| <b>Tracy B. Norita</b><br>Secretary - Department of Finance                             | <b>Glen Hunter</b><br>Special Assistant - Broadband Policy & Development                   | <b>Felix Nogis</b><br>Executive Assistant - Carolinian Affairs   | <b>Douglas Hartig</b><br>Public Defender - Public Defender Office                          |  |
| <b>Eliceo D. Cabrera</b><br>Administrator - Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality | <b>Franklin R. Babauta</b><br>Special Assistant - Homeland Security & Emergency Management | <b>Juan A. Pua</b><br>Commissioner - Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services                   | <b>Anthony C. Torres</b><br>Commissioner - Department of Corrections                       |  |
| <b>Sylvan O. Igisomar</b><br>Secretary - Department of Lands and Natural Resources      | <b>Edward C. Camacho</b><br>Special Assistant - Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs    | <b>Epiphanio Cabrera Jr.</b><br>Grants Administrator - Office of Grant Management & State Clearinghouses | <b>Francisco M. Rabauliman</b><br>Secretary - Department of Community and Cultural Affairs |  |

# 2024 CITIZEN-CENTRIC REPORT PROGRESS



As they entered their second year of leadership, the Administration has consistently aimed to advance the Commonwealth's progress, demonstrating resilience and adaptability in the face of ongoing challenges. Governor Palacios and Lt. Governor Apatang remain steadfast in their commitment to meaningful development, prioritizing initiatives that strengthen our communities, improve public services, and promote sustainable growth. Their vision and dedication continue to guide the Commonwealth toward a more prosperous and secure future through:

## Maintaining *Fiscal Responsibility*

The Governor and Lt. Governor remain committed to stabilizing government finances and addressing outstanding fiscal challenges. To promote fiscal discipline, several initiatives have been implemented to enhance revenue collection, improve efficiency, and address prior spending practices. A key milestone in these efforts is Governor Arnold Palacios' recent signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) Board Chair Janice Tenorio, significantly reducing the central government's outstanding liabilities to the CUC.



## Cultivating *More Investments into the CNMI*

The administration is actively fostering investment in the CNMI to drive economic growth. Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang recently toured Atkins Kroll Saipan's new \$23 million Toyota and Lexus dealership, a significant local investment that underscores the CNMI's economic expansion. The administration also announced a groundbreaking partnership with Google to establish the CNMI's first transpacific fiber optic cable, "Proa," boosting global connectivity and regional resilience. Additionally, the Governor and Lt. Governor have engaged in discussions with airlines and the CNMI Ports Authority to improve air travel logistics and fee structures, enhancing the CNMI's accessibility and appeal to tourists.

## Committing to a *Sustainable Future*

Through the signing of the Green Growth Initiative—a comprehensive sustainable development plan aimed at addressing climate change, pollution, and biodiversity—and the Blue Planet Climate Agreement, affirming the CNMI's commitment to a 100% renewable-energy future, Governor Palacios and Lt. Governor Apatang have taken significant steps toward a cleaner, more sustainable CNMI. These initiatives have paved the way for a range of innovative clean energy projects that will drive long-term environmental and economic resilience in the Commonwealth.



## Building *Relations with Federal Partners*

The Governor and Lt. Governor have focused on strengthening federal partnerships to enhance the CNMI's infrastructure, economy, and disaster response capabilities. Recent discussions with FEMA leadership, including Administrator Deanne Criswell and Region 9 officials, highlighted the need to advance infrastructure projects and improve emergency preparedness. Meetings with U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland centered on securing funding for various economic initiatives, while conversations with leaders from the Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration explored MARAD funding opportunities. Additionally, engagement with the U.S. House Committee on Defense Appropriations aimed to broaden congressional awareness of the CNMI's economic and defense priorities. These initiatives underscore the administration's commitment to securing vital federal support for the CNMI's long-term resilience and development.



# 2024 CITIZEN-CENTRIC REPORT PROGRESS

## Strengthening Ties with the *Department of Defense*

Amid a complex geopolitical environment, the administration has prioritized strengthening the CNMI's infrastructure and economic strength through active collaboration with U.S. defense leaders. Recent discussions with senior officials focused on key initiatives, including Air Force operations and Department of Defense projects that enhance the CNMI's infrastructure, healthcare, and regional partnerships. Additional talks addressed expanding energy resilience, port development, and military readiness across the CNMI, alongside new contracting opportunities for local businesses. Through these efforts, the administration aims to fortify the CNMI's strategic role and foster economic stability in alignment with broader U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific.



# 2024 CITIZEN-CENTRIC REPORT FINANCES

The revenues for the Office of the Governor and the Office of the Lt. Governor were determined by P.L. 23-09. The following itemizes the expenditures of the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Lt. Governor and the Administrative Services Office

Office of the Governor	
Wages & Salary	\$371,133.70
Operations	\$80,752.16
Fringe	\$122,860.23
Public Auditor	\$6,947.82
Contribution	\$5,000.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$586,693.91</b>

Office of the Lt. Governor	
Wages & Salary	\$410,902.03
Operations	\$52,304.70
Fringe	\$108,104.79
Public Auditor	\$5,559.21
Contribution	\$249.91
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$577,120.64</b>

Administrative Services	
Wages & Salary	\$364,847.91
Operations	\$44,540.02
Fringe	\$150,631.38
Public Auditor	\$6,132.94
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$566,152.25</b>

# WHAT'S NEXT?



## Staying on course to *Economic Recovery*

The Governor and Lt. Governor are deeply committed to building strong partnerships across the private, nonprofit, and public sectors to fast-track progress toward a robust and sustainable economy. Decisions made now must be future-focused, grounded in data, and aligned with a shared vision of prosperity for our community. Whether by diversifying CNMI's tourism market, attracting global investments, or strengthening our infrastructure, the Administration remains dedicated to implementing impactful, long-term economic policies that benefit the CNMI for generations to come.



## Focusing on *Workforce Development*

Workforce development is a top priority for the Governor and Lt. Governor as the CNMI grapples with workforce shortages that hinder economic growth. A key initiative is the recent MOU signing with Governor Arnold Palacios, Broadband Policy and Development Special Assistant Glenn Hunter, and representatives from the CNMI Department of Labor, Northern Marianas College, Northern Marianas Technical Institute, and Island Training Solutions. This partnership aims to prepare the workforce in fiber-optic technology for the upcoming Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program projects. Additionally, the CNMI Department of Labor is launching targeted programs to strengthen the workforce in specific occupations, further supporting our economy.

## Continuing *902 Consultations*

While the initial round of consultations pursuant to Section 902 of the Covenant between the CNMI and the United States Federal Government concluded on Saipan, Governor Arnold I. Palacios remains dedicated to advancing these discussions between the CNMI and the United States, led by Assistant Secretary Carmen G. Cantor of the U.S. Department of the Interior, who serves as the Special Representative of the U.S. President, appointed by the Biden Administration.

Understanding the significance of sustained and meaningful dialogue, Governor Palacios is dedicated to continuing this momentum. These sessions will provide further opportunities to address the unique needs of the CNMI and to explore cooperative solutions that support long-term progress for the region.



## Advancing on *Infrastructure Projects*

The administration is dedicated to ensuring the timely completion of infrastructure projects and is actively working to eliminate unnecessary delays. Having successfully finalized major road improvement initiatives and begun groundbreaking for several additional road and facility projects, the Governor and Lt. Governor are focused on advancing projects toward completion. Projects such as the Garapan Revitalization Project, which aims to enhance accessibility, modernize the area, and elevate the aesthetic appeal of the tourist district. To maintain this momentum, the Governor and Lt. Governor are collaborating closely with relevant agencies, prioritizing the acceleration of project timelines, securing reimbursements for typhoon and disaster-related expenses, and actively pursuing grants to support new infrastructure initiatives.

