



# CNMI CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

## FY 2025 CITIZEN-CENTRIC REPORT

OCTOBER 2024 - SEPTEMBER 2025

### COMMISSIONERS



### OUR MISSION

To dispense prompt, fair, and impartial resolutions of employee grievances and appeals and to develop and promulgate regulations and processes necessary to uphold the civil service personnel system, free from coercion and political influence, in the delivery of quality services to the people of the Commonwealth.



### OUR VISION

The Civil Service Commission represents the public interest in ensuring a fair and impartial civil service merit system, consistent with employment laws and regulations, free from coercion and political influence.



Raymond Muña  
Chairperson



J. Patrick Fitial  
Vice-Chairperson



Victoria Bellas  
Secretary



Richard Farrell  
Fiscal & Budget  
Officer



Michele Joab  
Member



Elvira Mesngon  
Member

### STAFF



Frances Torres  
Member



Joseph Pangelinan  
Director of Personnel



Teresa Borja  
Executive Assistant



Kadianne Mangarero  
Executive Secretary

### STRATEGIC GOALS



Safeguard  
Regulatory  
Compliance



Elevate  
Service  
Excellence



Reinforce  
Transparency  
and  
Accountability

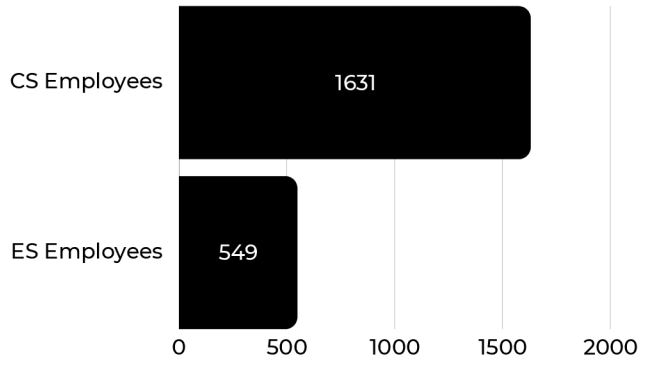


Value  
Employee  
Growth &  
Well-Being



Ensure  
Equity and  
Impartiality

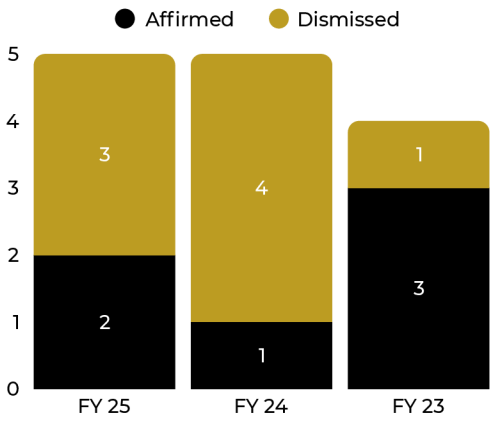
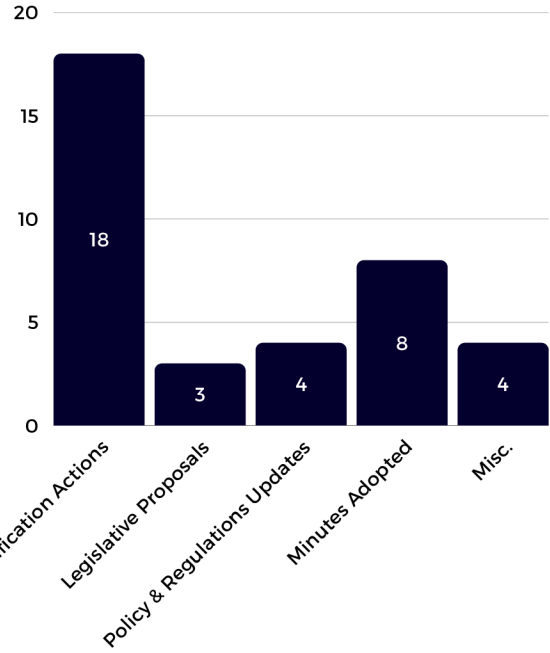
There are 1,631 civil service employees & 549 excepted service employees, total of 2,180 Government employees -- excluding the Judiciary branch (with the exception of 3 civil servants), Legislative branch, Municipal councils (with the exception of 1 civil servant), & Autonomous agencies.



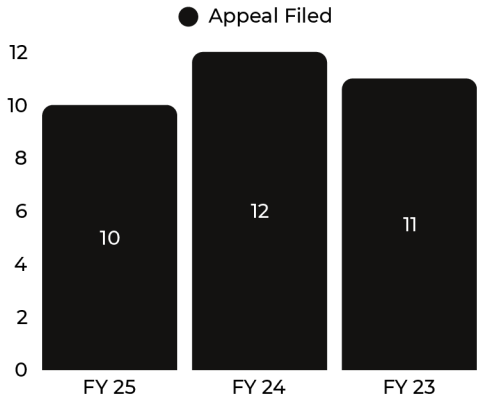
**APPEAL/GRIEVANCE STATUS**



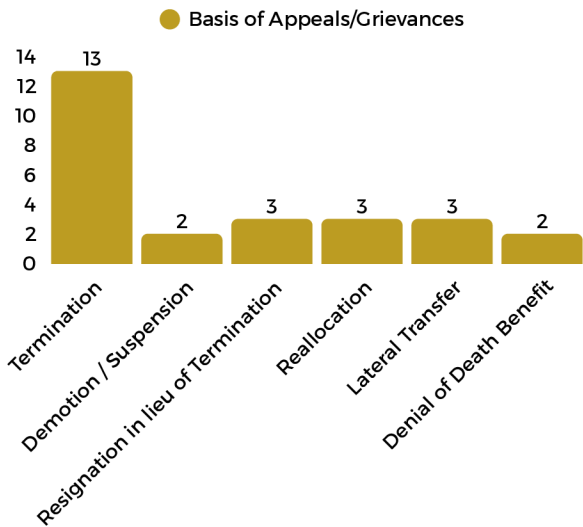
**KEY ADOPTIONS**



**Classification Actions:** Amendments to Minimum Qualification Requirements: two (2) class series— Firefighters I-III and Fire Crew Supervisor, and Surveying Class Series; **Pay Level Reassignments:** Reassigned four (4) positions to align with comparable roles—Directors of Employment Services and Motor Vehicles, Equipment Operators Class Series, and Dispatchers I and II; **New Position Establishments:** Established twelve (12) new positions including Compliance Supervisor, Utilization Review Supervisor, Program Education and Grants Manager, Enrollment Examiners I-III, and other critical roles.



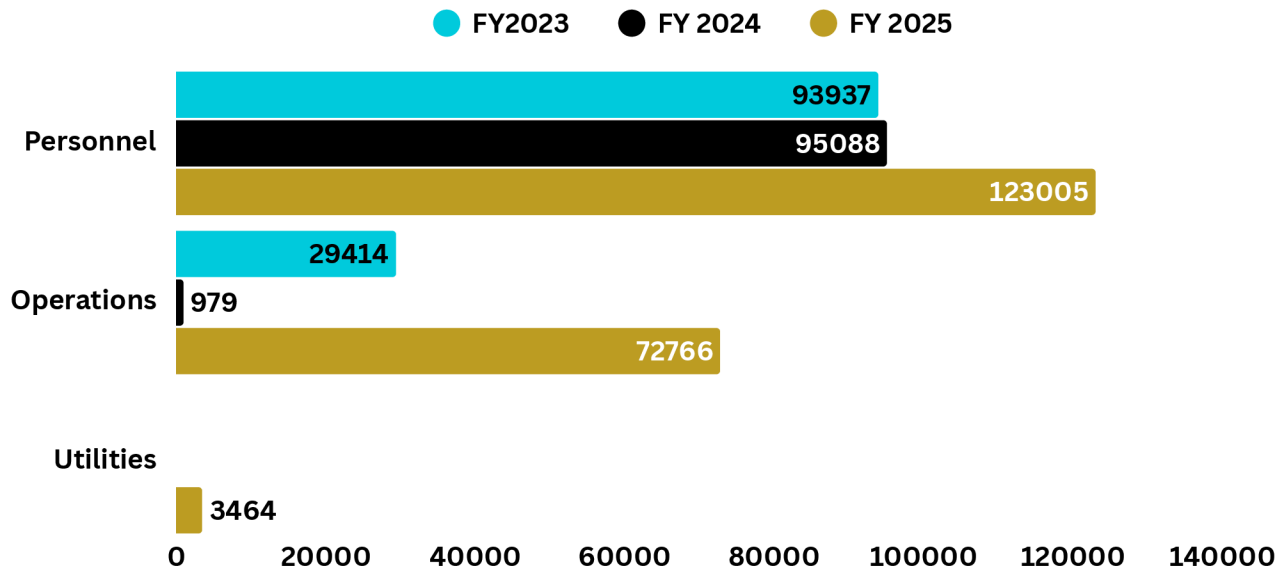
**Legislative Proposals:** Proposed amendments to three (3) public laws: PL 21-9 (clarifying salary definitions), PL 15-116 (expanding Family Sick Leave Act coverage), and PL 17-80 (modernizing the Civil Service Act).



**Policy and Regulation Updates:** Amended four (4) regulations/policies: General Provisions, Organization for Personnel Management, Employee Benefits and Services, and Training and Education Leave; Established a comprehensive listing of safety-sensitive positions across government.

Adopted minutes for eight (8) meetings.

**Other Activities:** FY 2024 Citizen-Centric Report; Finalized FY 2026 Budget; FY 2025 Election of Officers; and 2023-2024 Executive Assistant Evaluation; and FY 2024-2027 Strategic Plan Roadmap - Phase 1.



In Fiscal Year 2025, the Commission received increased funding to better serve the workforce.

#### Hearing Officer Services

Originally, the budget only covered staff salaries with minimal funding for day-to-day operations. Through persistent advocacy with the administration, **the Commission secured additional funds to hire a hearing officer**—a critical need for processing cases. While this funding arrived mid-year, the Commission has since begun holding hearings and making progress on the caseload.

#### Meeting Operational Needs

With the increased funding, the Commission was able to pay for essential operations including:

- Office rent
- Communications systems
- Utilities

#### Investment in Staff Development

After a three-year pause, the Commission provided end-of-year training for Tinian and Rota employees. Due to limited funding, Tinian and Rota staff have not received ongoing training opportunities, while Saipan employees continue to receive regular professional development. The lack of travel funds has made it difficult to deliver necessary training across all islands. This training is essential for ensuring consistent, quality service throughout the Commonwealth.

#### Looking Forward

Should the Commission continue to receive necessary funding and resources, it will maintain hearing officer services and professional development opportunities across all islands. Additionally, the Commission will retain legal counsel to ensure all personnel matters are addressed promptly, particularly regarding legal compliance. This legal support will also cover regulations, policies, laws, and bills related to personnel issues.

## Two Critical Challenges We Face

## 1. Insufficient Funding for Hearing Officer Services

The Commission is currently managing 25 active cases affecting civil service employees. Fifteen (15) of these cases have carried over from previous years, including two (2) "legacy cases" that have remained open for more than seven (7) years. We know these delays impact real people and their livelihoods.

Without consistent funding for an independent hearing officer, we cannot move cases forward at the pace our employees deserve. Court appeals have also sent cases back to us for retrial, further straining our limited resources. These delays are unacceptable, and we are actively lobbying the Legislature and Administration for dedicated funding and working with legislators to pass bills that ensure reliable hearing officer services.

## 2. Lack of Independent Legal Counsel

The Commission needs its own dedicated legal counsel to effectively serve our employees. Legal counsel is critical for analyzing proposed regulations, bills, and public laws; ensuring compliance with existing laws and regulations; issuing legally sound notices to employees about regulatory requirements; and addressing ongoing personnel matters with proper legal oversight. While hearing officers adjudicate cases, legal counsel ensures the regulatory framework we operate within is sound, compliant, and clearly communicated.

## Moving Forward

We are actively seeking resources from both the Legislature and Administration to secure these two key services— independent hearing officer and independent legal counsel. Beyond advocacy, we have submitted a legal service request to explore whether we can move cases forward without traditional hearing officer services while we work to obtain proper funding.

However, the reality is clear: **everything starts with the necessary resources.** Without dedicated funding for these essential services, the challenges we face will continue to impact our employees who depend on us. **Our goal remains unwavering: to provide fair, legally sound, and timely service—** but we need the services to make that possible.

The outlook for FY 2026 is deeply concerning. The CNMI is facing a significant budget shortfall that is forcing cuts across all government agencies, and the Civil Service Commission is not exempt from these challenges.

## What This Means for Our Services

These budget constraints threaten to cripple our ability to fulfill our core mission. Without adequate funding, we face:

- **Service disruptions:** We risk halting critical hearing officer services once again, bringing case resolutions to a complete standstill
- **Communication breakdowns:** Even basic operational needs like rental, landlines and internet services are at risk

**Case backlogs:** The 25 active cases awaiting resolution could face indefinite delays, leaving employees in limbo limbo.

## Impact on Our Workforce

The financial crisis affects not only our operations but also the dedicated public servants who make government work. Current and potential measures include:

- **Frozen compensation:** All within-grade increases, merit awards, reallocation, and reclassification; and other compensation pay have been suspended
- **Reduced earnings:** Salary reductions and decreased work hours have already been implemented
- **Potential furloughs and RIF:** If revenues don't recover, furloughs and reductions in force may become unavoidable.

## The Broader Consequence

These challenges create a cascading effect that weakens employee morale, increases turnover, and diminishes the productivity of the entire government workforce. When the Civil Service Commission cannot operate effectively, every employee who depends on fair, timely employment decisions suffers.

## Our Commitment

Despite these obstacles, we remain committed to advocating for the resources necessary to serve the people of the CNMI and ensure fair treatment for all government employees. We will continue working with the Legislature and Administration to find solutions that protect both our mission and our workforce.