



Remedio C. Mafnas
Secretary of Commerce



CNMI Department of Commerce Fiscal Year 2025 Citizen Centric Report (CCR)

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Commerce is to drive sustainable economic growth in the Commonwealth by ensuring the preservation of local businesses and fostering the development of new enterprises. We are committed to creating the necessary conditions for long-term success by enhancing the business environment, attracting strategic investments, and upgrading infrastructure. Through data-driven strategies, streamlined processes, and collaborative partnerships, we aim to build a thriving economy that generates jobs, promotes innovation, and adapts to evolving challenges. Our focus is on measurable outcomes that contribute to a robust and inclusive economic landscape for all.

The Department of Commerce was originally created under PL I-8 (codified as I CMC § 2451) and later modified or reorganized through Executive Order 94-2 and 94-3, Section 302, with the separation of Labor and Immigration from the former Department of Commerce and Labor.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The Office of the Secretary of Commerce is responsible for the stimulation, encouragement and regulation of private investment, planning, coordinating, and promoting economic policy decisions of the executive branch to enhance commerce within the CNMI through partnership with other government agencies, non-profit organizations, private sector associations, and other key partners including outside the CNMI.

DIVISION DIRECTORS

- **DAVID R. MARATITA**
Director, Alcohol Beverage & Tobacco Control
- **JUSTIN H. ANDREW**
Director, Central Statistics Division
- **MARYANN BORJA-ARRIOLA**
Insurance Administrator, Office of Insurance Commissioner
- **DAVID S. PALACIOS**
Director, Enforcement & Compliance Division
- **FRANCISCO D. CABRERA**
Director, Workers Compensation Commission
- **JOHN DAVID A. REYES**
Registrar of Corporation

CONTACTS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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Registrar of Corporation

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DIVISIONS

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Central Statistics Division

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Economic Development Division

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Registrar of Corporations

- Streamline Registration Process: Implementing efficient procedures to reduce the time it takes for businesses to register and obtain necessary licenses, enhancing overall customer satisfaction.
- Developing resources that help businesses understand and comply with the Registrar of Corporations requirements, leading to higher compliance.
- Upgrading database systems for better tracking and management of corporate records, ensuring accuracy and accessibility of information;
- Building strong relationships with business owners, Government agencies, and the public, to foster collaboration and communication;
- Effectively handling challenges or crises that arise within the corporate sector, ensuring stability and trust in the registration process.

Enforcement & Compliance

- Continues to provide monitors for all weights and measures activities of all businesses in the CNMI to include petroleum companies and taxi operators;
- Continue to monitor reports from recycling companies pursuant to compliance requirements;
- Continue collaboration and assistance to the islands of Tinian and Rota on all matters.

Banking Division

- Ensure that all banking operations comply with local regulations, thereby avoiding penalties and maintaining the institution's reputation;
- Strategic vision in enhancing the banking institutions and customer relations.

Office of the Insurance Commissioner

- Continues to monitor the solvency of admitted insurers and complies with various reports and other filing requirements, which are published in the Commissioners' Annual Report and serve as a resource for the industry, business community, and consumers.
- Published the 35th Annual Report of admitted insurers with exhibits of premiums and losses by lines of business for property and casualty companies, life, and health.
- As a state member of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), the Office of the Insurance Commissioner continues to engage and participate in emerging trends and issues with other state regulators, achieving the following fundamental insurance regulatory goals in a responsive, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

Economic Development

- Attended the Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA);
- Discussions with the USDA FAS pertaining to the CNMI's trade barriers for preclusion from U.S. Free Trade agreements (Korea, Japan, Taiwan), Deputy Administrator of Programs. The discussion included opportunities and challenges regarding agriculture in the CNMI.
- Sponsored two (2) small business owners under the SBA – State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) FY2022 award to attend the Foreign Trade Mega-show in Bangkok; Business owners had the opportunity to increase their exporting capabilities by connecting with foreign buyers, networking with suppliers, and expanding their business acumen.
- Government savings of \$15K on personnel/fringe expenses and added \$8k in indirect costs to the General Fund STEP;
- Two (2) Successful Export Training Workshops to educate the community on creating an export plan, inclusive in marketing strategies;
- Local Farmers Food Purchase (LFFPA) awarded \$410K and will continue until July 2025. A total amount of \$285K worth of local produce will be distributed to the underserved population.

Central Statistics Division

- 2024 CNMI Labor Force Survey – Completion date expected end of September 2024;
- 2024 CNMI Prevailing Wage - Completed and can be accessed via the Department of Commerce Webpage.

GALLERY



CNMI Department of Commerce meets with NMC-CREES officials to discuss important initiatives that support local programs and development. It was a very productive meeting highlighting key priorities.



Photo op with U.S. - CNMI Delegate Kimberlyn King-Hinds at the Guam Business Class Lounge, a productive and inspiring discussion on CNMI's economic goals and collaboration efforts.



Department of Commerce Insurance officials met with the Northern Marianas Insurance Association (NMIA) to discuss current challenges, explore opportunities for collaboration, and address key insurance matters, including automobile tariffs, accessibility support for persons with disabilities, and other industry concerns.

GALLERY



NAIC Western Zone Chair and Texas Insurance Commissioner Cassie Brown and CNMI Secretary/Commissioner Remedio Mafnas conversating about the proposed Western Zone meeting to be held in Saipan during the 2025 Commissioners' Mid-Year Roundtable.



Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) Deputy Secretary Angel Demapan and OIA Field Representatives Harry C. Blanco visited the CNMI Department of Commerce and met with Secretary Remedio C. Mafnas and division managers to discuss federal grant funding opportunities, tariff concerns, and other areas of cooperation aimed at supporting the Commonwealth's economic initiatives.



Photo (Left to Right): Dixon Kwon, PSD, Remedio C. Mafnas, Secretary, David M. Apatang, Governor, and Robert Salta, EOY Awardee.

- 2023 CNMI Census of Agriculture – Data collections on all three (3) Islands completed. The USDA will publish a report in the summer of 2025.
- 2022 CNMI Economic Census- The Economic Census Report has been published. The Report can be found on the U.S. Census Bureau page: <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/economic-census/data/tables/island-areas.html>

Alcohol Beverage & Tobacco Control

- Fiscal Discipline: Reduced operational costs by 25%, saving \$373,000 for the revolving account.
- Licensing & Compliance: Processed 697 licenses (Alcohol: 396, Tobacco: 176, Betelnut: 125) and conducted 225 inspections to ensure safe and compliant establishments.
- Public Safety Response: Addressed 43 hotline calls, issued 38 warnings, and enforced 5 citations related to vape products.
- Community Outreach: Delivered 14 school and PTSA presentations on youth vaping, plus 1 workshop for betelnut distributors under Public Law 24 02.
- Capacity Building: Certified 430 individuals in responsible alcohol and tobacco sales/service.

Workers' Compensation Commission

- The WCC One-Stop Processing sections continue to provide efficient and effective public services; assistance with the WCC programs, Registrar of Corporations.
- Continues to Certify Employers' Business Licenses;
- Continues to be vigilant with all businesses in addressing the requirements for workers' compensation insurance coverage;
- Process and review all filed workers' compensation claims and monitor benefits;
- Recently completed draft to change claims benefit pursuant to P.L. 6-33 for the Secretary of Commerce approval;
- Continues to monitor and review all license carriers with their SDF 2% quarterly filings;
- Continues to provide public information and education about the WCC program.
- Continues collaboration and assistance to the islands of Tinian and Rota on all related matters.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Collaborated and assisted the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the publication of the CNMI Gross Domestic Product report for 2020 estimates;
- Successfully published the NMI 2023 Prevailing Wage Study Report;
- Assisted the Census Bureau in launching the Economic Census
- Collaborated with the U.S. Census Bureau for the release of the Demographic & Housing Characteristics File report;
- Successfully Published the NMI 2024 Prevailing Wage Study Report.
- Completed data collection for the Census of Agriculture on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian;
- Assisted the U.S. Census Bureau in the Data Review and publication of the CNMI Economic Census Report;
- Successfully launched and conducted the CNMI 2024 Labor Force Survey on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian
- The additional goal of the LPPA is to foster a new generation of farmers to strengthen the local food supply chain.
- Paid out \$175K in produce sales to farmers directly, supporting DLNR agriculture efforts.
- Economic Development Division, competed nationally and was awarded 1 of 65 highly sought-after Economic Recovery Corps (ERC) Fellows. The contract is for 30 months, which started in February 2024.
- Successful collaboration with the CNMI Drug Enforcement Task Force and CNMI Revenue Collection Task Force

CHALLENGES

Limited Staffing Capacity

- The Department continues to operate with minimal personnel across multiple divisions, resulting in heavier workloads and slower turnaround for licensing, regulatory reviews, and program implementation. This constraint affects the department's ability to fully meet its service goals and respond promptly to public and business needs.

Insufficient Funding Support

- Budget limitations remain a major concern, restricting the department's ability to upgrade

systems, enhance public services, and carry out outreach and compliance activities. Several planned initiatives have been delayed or scaled down due to unavailable or reallocated funds.

Outdated Office Equipment and Technology

- Many divisions still rely on aging computers, printers, and filing systems that hinder productivity and data accuracy. The lack of modern tools and digital infrastructure limits efficiency, transparency, and timely reporting.

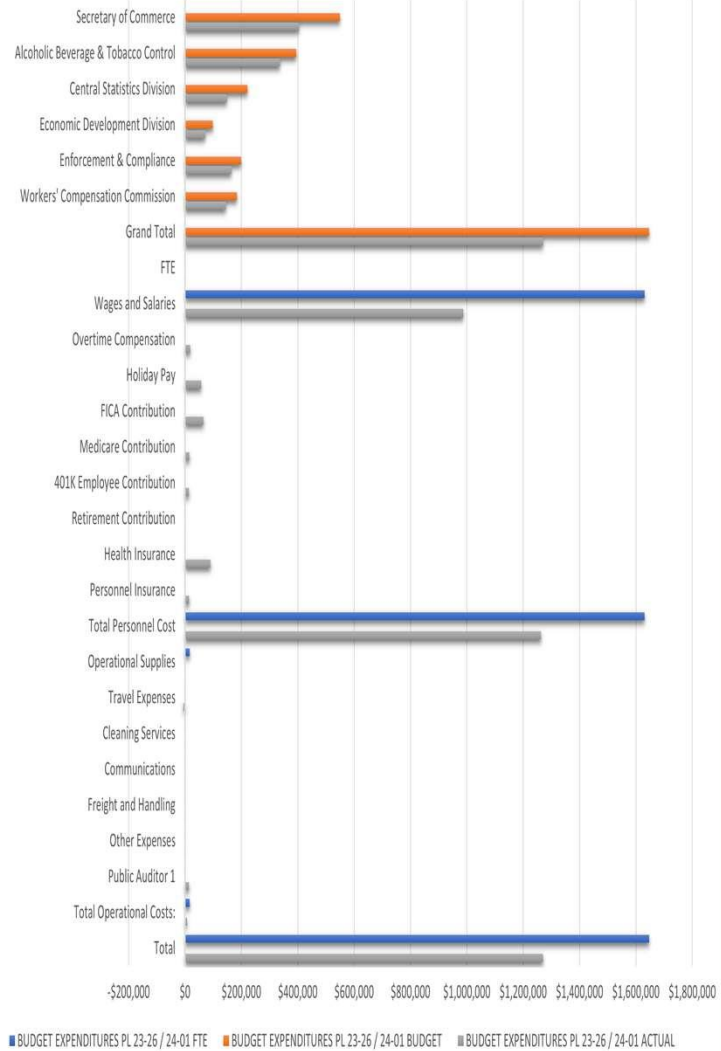
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

BUDGET EXPENDITURES

Detail Allocation of Budget and Actual Expenditures by Division	PL 23-26 / 24-01		
	FTE	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Secretary of Commerce	15	\$ 549,407.00	\$ 403,897.15
Alcoholic Beverage & Tobacco Control	17	\$ 394,849.00	\$ 336,495.06
Central Statistics Division	6	\$ 221,789.00	\$ 148,550.23
Economic Development Division	2	\$ 98,111.00	\$ 71,679.08
Enforcement & Compliance	5	\$ 198,623.00	\$ 164,807.30
Workers' Compensation Commission	4	\$ 183,938.00	\$ 144,823.52
Grand Total	49	\$ 1,646,717.00	\$ 1,270,252.34

Detail Allocation of Budget and Actual Expenditure	PL 23-26 / 24-01		
	rev-BUDGET		ACTUAL
FTE	49		39
Wages and Salaries	\$ 1,630,413.00		\$ 987,516.47
Overtime Compensation	\$ -		\$ 17,998.77
Holiday Pay	\$ -		\$ 57,672.33
FICA Contribution	\$ -		\$ 65,786.58
Medicare Contribution	\$ -		\$ 15,416.07
401K Employee Contribution	\$ -		\$ 13,688.18
Retirement Contribution	\$ -		\$ -
Health Insurance	\$ -		\$ 90,303.70
Personnel Insurance	\$ -		\$ 14,515.37
Total Personnel Cost	\$ 1,630,413.00		\$ 1,262,897.47
Operational Supplies	\$ 16,304.00		
Travel Expenses	\$ -		\$ (6,367.75)
Cleaning Services	\$ -		\$ -
Communications	\$ -		\$ -
Freight and Handling	\$ -		\$ -
Other Expenses	\$ -		\$ -
Public Auditor 1	\$ -		\$ 13,722.62
Total Operational Costs:	\$ 16,304.00		\$ 7,354.87
Total	\$ 1,646,717.00		\$ 1,270,252.34

BUDGET EXPENDITURES



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

SERVICES	FY 23		FY 24		FY 25	
	ACTIVITIES	REVENUES	ACTIVITIES	REVENUE	ACTIVITIES	REVENUE
Alcoholic Beverage & Tobacco Control	1,959	\$250,455.00	2291	\$229,889.00	1,453	\$255,444.00
Banking	160	\$24,550.00	365	\$21,449.00	135	\$20,933.00
Enforcement & Compliance	483	\$45,374.00	546	\$35,757	534	\$31,585.00
Office of the Insurance Commissioner	767	\$33,400.00	929	\$31,525.00	851	\$30,175.00
Registrar of Corporation	3,290	\$571,316.33	4053	\$545,866.96	6,060	\$477,967.17
Workers' Compensation Commission	6,345	\$53,316.00	2709	\$75,514.58	2,689	\$58,000.00
Rota - Commerce	531	\$10,010.00				
Tinian - Commerce	250	\$21,490.00	370	\$47,165.00	370	\$47,165.00
TOTAL	13,785	\$1,009,911.33	11,263	\$987,166.54	12,092	\$921,269.17

SERVICES	FY 23 ACTIVITIES	FY 24 ACTIVITIES	FY 25 ACTIVITIES
Central Statistics Division	153	167	127
Economic Development Division	87	170	225
TOTAL	240	337	352

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

