# 2026











# Centric Report

670-664-4263

indigenouscnmi.org

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## MISSION:

The Indigenous Affairs Office is committed to preserving, protecting, and perpetuating the languages, cultures, traditions, history, and indigenous heritage of the Chamorro and Carolinian/Refaluwasch peoples of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Through cultural education, community engagement, advocacy, and collaboration, the Office promotes indigenous representation and ensures that the heritage and values of the Marianas are preserved for future generations.



**Showcasing the Culinary Skills of our Chamorro Delicacy**

## OBJECTIVES:

To preserve and promote the languages, cultures, traditions, history, and indigenous heritage of the Chamorro peoples for future generations.

Strategic Goals

1. Preserve Indigenous Languages and Culture
2. Promote indigenous languages, traditions, cultural practices, and ancestral knowledge.
3. Strengthen Cultural Education and Awareness
4. Expand educational programs, community outreach, and public awareness of the history and heritage of the Marianas.
5. Promote Indigenous Representation
6. Encourage indigenous participation in government and private-sector decision-making, consistent with the Office's constitutional mandate.
7. Preserve the History of the Marianas
8. Support the documentation, translation, preservation, and distribution of the Commonwealth's comprehensive history.
9. Build Community Partnerships
10. Strengthen collaboration with traditional leaders, elders, youth, government agencies, and cultural organizations.
11. Improve Office Effectiveness
12. Enhance administrative operations, accountability, resource management, and annual performance planning.

Expected Outcomes

Through these priorities, the Indigenous Affairs Office aims to strengthen cultural preservation, increase public awareness, promote indigenous participation, expand community partnerships, and fulfill its constitutional responsibilities effectively.

Commitment

The Office remains dedicated to protecting and perpetuating the indigenous heritage of the Mari



**500 Sails launching of Ka'isa**

# Organizational Chart



**Honorable, David M. Apatang**
**GOVERNOR**



**Honorable, Dennis C. Mendiola**
**LT. GOVERNOR**



**Luella I. Marciano**
RESIDENT EXECUTIVE



**Melani T. Wennio**
PROGRAM MANAGER



**Blanche K. Chlarson**
IAO REPRESENTATIVE



**Nobert T. Rios**
CULTURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST

**Seasonal Cultural Pactitioners**

# Accomplishments

Sustaining Our Heritage, Shaping Our Future

I. PROJECTS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Green Peace Project – "Peace Over War": Adornment of WWII relics with local flowers to promote peace and remembrance.
- Friday Fish Fry Night Market: Launched a community event held on March 6 and 20, 2026. Supported our Farmers, Fishermen, Cultural Artists, and Food Vendors.
- Cultural Heritage Month 2026: Supported the 2nd Annual Bisita I Naftan I Mañanaina Siha, 2nd Annual Amot Trail, 2nd Annual Gift of Giving for Tinian and Rota children residing on Saipan due to their parents' medical needs, and continued partnership with CCLHS Teachers and NMC students.
- Community Outreach: Represented the Office of the Governor at the Rotary Club of Saipan Halloween distribution and donated candy to schools, youth centers, and community partners serving children from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.
- Cultural Preservation: Partnered with the NMI Museum & HPO on matters concerning the reinterment of ancient Chamorro artifacts and ancestral remains.

II. TRAVEL AND CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

- Indigenous Women Leadership Conference: Taipei, Taiwan, December 9–15, 2025; participated in Indigenous leadership and cultural knowledge exchange.

III. SPONSORSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Sponsored the I Tiningo' I Famalao'an Indigenous Women's Storytelling Project, WAO, and KKMP
- One of the major sponsors for the Miss Northern Mariana Islands Descent Beauty Pageant.
- Sponsored cultural participation at the Gilita Festival, Pika Festival 2026, Chief Aghuurub Day, and the 40th Anniversary of the 13th Fishermen Memorial Service.
- Sponsored the Chagi Fan Team CNMI for the 6th World Sling Cup and Team CNMI and CCVI Cultural Dance Group at the 24th Nippon Domannaka Festival in Nagoya, Japan.
- Sponsored two 500 Sails junior apprentices for the Voyage of the Maisu, supporting traditional navigation and Indigenous seafaring.
- Sponsored and supported the arrival of the Guam canoe team, Save the Music Foundation's 2nd Ukulele Recital Concert, and the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.
- Provided water, entertainment, and other support for community cultural events and activities.



**Community Outreach at the Rotary Club Halloween Activity Honorable David M. Apatang, Governor, distributing goodies to participants**



**Cultural Demonstration at NMC**



**Visited the Man Amko Center in Taiwan**

## 2027 PRIORITIES AND FUTURE INITIATIVES:

- Indigenous Cultural Center and Hall of Fame: Pursue sustainable funding and partnerships to advance this Constitution-mandated responsibility under Article III, Section 23(b), recognizing individuals who preserve and perpetuate Indigenous heritage.
- Amot Garden Restoration: Revive and restore the traditional medicinal garden as a community resource for cultural education, traditional healing knowledge, and intergenerational learning.
- Language and Cultural Preservation: Strengthen Chamorro and Carolinian (Refaluwasch) language programs, cultural education, youth engagement, and community partnerships.
- Sustainable Funding: Identify funding sources and partnerships to support IAO's mandated duties, cultural programs, and long-term initiatives.

## Our Commitment:

- To preserve, practice, promote, and perpetuate the languages, cultures, traditions, and Indigenous heritage of the Mariana Islands for future generations.

# Budget and Appropriations

| ACCOUNTS | Description | BALANCE |
|---|---|---|
| **General Funds** | $105,783.00Wages & Salaries | $87,702.65 |
| **Public Benefit** | $100,000 from DPL | $2,043.34 |
| **Marianas Visitors Authority** | $1,000.00 Donation (Friday Fish Fry Night Market) | Deposited into PB Account |
| **Century Tours INC** | $12,500.00 Public Benefit | Deposited into PB Account |
| **Smart Start** | $500.00 Public Benefit | Deposited into PB Account |
| **SL104 SLL 24-02** | $25,000 allocated to SAFA | $25,000.00 |
| **SL144 SLL 24-12** | $20,000 for IAO Cultural Heritage | 4,811.05 |
| **SL204 SLL 24-31** | $35,000 for Cultural Heritage Month | $29,708.00 |

The Indigenous Affairs Office (IAO) comprises four staff members: a Resident Executive, Program Manager, IAO Representative, and Cultural Outreach Specialist. Together, the team oversees the Office's administrative, programmatic, cultural preservation, and community outreach responsibilities.
To further strengthen its outreach efforts, the IAO engages Seasonal Cultural Practitioners to share and demonstrate traditional Chamorro knowledge, practices, and traditions at community events and through Office programs and projects. These practitioners play a vital role in promoting cultural awareness, preservation, and education, ensuring the continued perpetuation of Chamorro culture within the community.

| OBJECT | DESCRIPTION | EXPENSE |
|---|---|---|
| Professional Services | Cultural Practitioners /Sponsorship | $41,130 |
| Printing & Photo Copying | Business cards, Banners for Events & NGO | $2,491 |
| Supplies | Office Supplies | $7,996 |
| Operational Supplies | Project Operation | $3,063 |
| Advertising | Radio, Pacific Paradise | $11,400 |
| Food Items | Project Outreach | $12,065 |
| Fuel & Lube | Gas | $1,261 |
| Utilities | Sewer & Water | $1,247 |
| Repair | Vehicle Maintenance | $1,858 |
| Communications | Landline, Wifi & Cell Phone | $1,785 |
| Public Benefit | Creative Capital & D&W | $2,000 |
| | **TOTAL:** | **$86,296** |

- Most funds went to professional services and project supplies. Contributions also went to nonprofit organizations that advocate for, preserve, and celebrate Chamorro culture and, sometimes, Carolinian culture when requests are received.

