

Strategic Two-year State Workforce Investment Plan

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This Strategic Plan development resulted from a collaborative process involving the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Single State Workforce Investment Board's (SWIB) stakeholders including the SWIB members, WIA employees and administrators, WIA partners, and WIA Customers, with input from regional WIA colleagues and Workforce Development professionals. Information was also obtained from the community at large through public hearings scheduled on the three main islands of the CNMI (Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.)

The Governor's Single State Workforce Investment Board initiated the process for the development of this Strategic Plan in February of 2005 shortly after appointments were made in January 2005, and the need for the 2-Year plan was learned. To ensure maximum participation from all sectors of the CNMI communities, a variety of methods were used to obtain input in formulating the vision, values, mission, role and scope, goals, priority initiatives and other important items involved in this plan.

In February 2005, a Strategic Master Plan working team composed of SWIB members and key stakeholders met to identify critical issues that the CNMI SWIB team believed were key to the success of the WIA. Key members of the SWIB familiar with the process, key stakeholders, and members of the WIA staff and administration attended working sessions. Input received from the working sessions was used to compare against the Agency's previous five-year master plan and to guide the board on the direction it needed to take. The members began to identify and define a new set of the State Workforce Investment Board's and Agency's vision, goals, and priorities.

In March 2005, a team of SWIB members traveled to San Francisco to undergo the Strategic Planning Training offered by the US Department of Labor. A SWIB meeting was called to request for a consultant to be hired to assist in drafting the SWIB 2-Year Strategic Plan. The Board elected to hire a consultant to write the report and set the criteria for the scope of work and advertisement process. An emergency meeting was called to review the proposals from the consultants as well as select the top two who could perform the job within the time frame given. Continuous meetings were held to gather the information requested and to formulate the transfer of the information gathered during the working sessions to the consultant.

In May 2005, information gathered in the working sessions was officially transferred over to the consultant to begin the working draft. The consultant continued to work with the committee to develop a working schedule for the plan. The plan was then being circulated to key business associations and stakeholders for informal review, comments, and suggestions for improvement.

Public hearings were held on Saipan (May 11), Tinian (May 12), and Rota (May 13). Input from these key stakeholders were noted, reviewed, and aligned into the respective areas of the plan. A draft of the plan has received initial Region VI review and CNMI has benefited from crucial technical assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Labor Region VI key administrators in support of CNMI progress with plan development.

The plan received the Governor's approval and signature May 31. The Strategic Plan is now formally sent to the respective recipients in the USDOL.

Include (a) a discussion of the involvement of the Governor and the State Board in the development of the Plan,

Honorable Governor Juan N. Babauta, through his Special Assistant on Policies and Planning as well as the key CNMI SWIB members representing the Government were extremely supportive and highly involved in the development of the 2-Year State Plan and was well represented in all planning efforts. The Governor provided the SWIB the power and support to develop an effective and realistic two-year state plan. He assigned the board to conduct a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, public hearings, focus groups, and other planning components in order to help WIA improve the services provided for the CNMI. The Governor has assigned Mr. Jesse P. Stein, Executive Director of the CNMI Workforce Investment Agency, to be the direct contact for questions on the plan. Contact information for Mr. Stein is Telephone: 670-664-1758, email: gov.wia1@gtepacific.net.

and (b) a description of the manner in which the State Board collaborated with economic development, education, the business community and other interested parties in the development of the state Plan.

The SWIB called upon the key leaders in both private and public sectors to assist in the formulation of this plan. This was easily accomplished due to the fact that a majority of members of the CNMI State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) are composed of individuals that have multiple roles and high stature in the CNMI. These members serve on the CNMI's key planning councils, teams, task forces, committees, and other highly recognized and influential organizations, such as the CNMI Strategic Economic Development Council, Saipan Chamber of Commerce, Saipan Rotary Club, Workforce Management Improvement Planning Team, the Tourism District Revitalization Committee, the Northern Marianas College Strategic Management Team, Public School System, CNMI Legislature and most notable the Governor's Advisory Team. These key board members have collaborated with their respective associations and have been instrumental in providing information and insight in for the planning process. The members meet with their respective associations and solicited input and suggestions for improvement, which was then articulated into the plan.

2. Include a description of the process the State used to make the Plan available to the public and the outcome of the State's review of the resulting public comments.

The SWIB made the proposed plan available to the public by email or by providing hard copies of the plan to partner agencies, businesses, collaborators, consumers, and the general public. (A full listing of our stakeholders and collaborators can be found in Appendix 2.) Public hearings were announced through the media to each of the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota. Members of the public were provided a chance to review and comment on the respective sections.

Comments received were useful in learning the views of the general public, major business stakeholder groups, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, and the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands. Samples of the comments received are found at Appendix 3.

The comments were used by the SWIB to sharpen its focus on the needs of the Saipan, Tinian and Rota communities and their respective WIA staff, and to tailor upcoming summer youth programs in line with the Governor's vision and the evolving CNMI SWIB goals.

Information gathered through these mediums were compiled by the SWIB plan writer and submitted to the SWIB for review. The plan was further refined and organized into respective headings and reviewed once more. The main outcome of the process was an affirmative state plan that was a widely accepted by the public and stakeholders as a whole.

I. Describe the Governor's vision for a Statewide workforce investment system. Provide a *summary articulating the Governor's vision for utilizing the resources of the public workforce system in support of the State's economic development that address the issues and questions below. States are encouraged to attach more detailed documents to expand upon any aspect of the summary response if available and appropriate.*

CNMI Governor Juan N. Babauta's Vision is for the CNMI to become a globally recognized workforce that is educated, trained, and skilled with the character and work ethics needed to foster and sustain a demand driven and robust economy.

A. What are the State's economic development goals for attracting, retaining and growing business and industry within the State?

The CNMI has historically relied on three primary industries: government, garment manufacturing, and tourism, with the latter two as the driving economic force. Secondary industries include retail trade, construction, gaming, agriculture, and fisheries. Other than the relatively large hotels and garment manufacturers, the CNMI is an economy of small businesses mostly owned by foreign nationals.

The composition of the CNMI's labor force has changed dramatically over the past twenty years. At present, the CNMI is largely dependent on imported workers. According to the CNMI American Community Survey (ACS), conducted in April 2002, about eighty-three percent (40,620) of all persons 16 years of age and older were in the labor force on Saipan at the time of the survey. An estimated 39,414 persons were employed, while an estimated 1,207 persons (or 3 percent) of the total labor force was unemployed.

About ninety-one percent of all non-U.S. citizens in Saipan participated in the labor force while U.S. citizens' participation was 65 percent. U.S. citizens' unemployment rate of 6.9 percent was higher than the non-U.S. citizens' 1.6 percent unemployment rate, at the time of the ACS. Because group quarters were not included, the Chamorro was the largest single ethnic group at 28 percent of the total labor force in Saipan, followed closely by Filipinos at 26 percent, Chinese posted 25 percent, Micronesian represented 8 percent, Korean 4 percent, Caucasian 3 percent, Japanese 2 percent, and the rest from other ethnic group.

The above facts are major factors that led to the Commonwealth's economic development goals as set by the Commonwealth Economic Development Strategy as follows:

Goal 1: Human Resource Development

New employment opportunities will be available for CNMI residents and the CNMI's unemployment rate will be lower than the present rate of 3.2%.

Human resources are the single most essential component of economic development. The CNMI must move from hiring imported workers to attracting qualified local residents to work in the private sector. This goal is of great importance because a vast majority of highly skilled and educated local employees work for the CNMI government or are waiting to work in the public sector and thus leaves the private sector searching for imported workers. Preparing these individuals (through training and education) for the shift from public sector employment to

private sector employment coupled with working with key industries and business that will be able to provide competitive salaries and benefits for the shift are the keys to achieving this goal.

Goal 2: Industrial and Commercial Development

Work with public and private sector leaders to encourage sustainable industrial and commercial development that advances the long-term economic growth and development of the CNMI.

As mentioned above, other than the relatively large hotels and garment manufacturers, the CNMI is an economy of small businesses mostly owned by foreign nationals. Sustainable industrial and commercial development needs to be encouraged in view of the CNMI's vulnerability to external events. Research, Trade Missions, Business Summits, and other economic development strategies need to be conducted in order to diversify the ownership of businesses in the CNMI. Businesses and industries able to provide competitive salaries and benefits to CNMI residents will be prioritized.

Goal 3: Physical Development

Enhance and maintain the physical infrastructure of the islands and develop sound land-use policies that are consistent with community needs and desires that will bring the economic benefit to the people.

Economic development that adheres to sound land use policies consistent with community needs while providing long-term economic benefits would be encouraged. Capital improvement projects remain a very important priority throughout the CNMI. Improvements in education, health, public safety, public works, the private sector, and the overall community depend on availability of appropriate infrastructure to support them.

Goal 4: Preservation

Preserve the unique culture and environmental well being of the CNMI for the enjoyment of coming generations.

Finally yet importantly and due to the CNMI's dynamic growth, coupled with a vast majority of foreign business owners and imported workers, protection, maintenance and enhancement of the cultural and environmental well being of the people of the CNMI must be ensured. The CNMI's main competitive advantages are the natural beauty of the islands and the residents who care for them. Existing, new, and future businesses and industries being targeted will be thoroughly screened to insure that the CNMI's environment and culture are not hampered.

B. Given that a skilled workforce is a key to the economic success of every business, what is the Governor's vision for maximizing and leveraging the broad array of Federal and State resources available for workforce investment flowing through the State's cabinet agencies and/or education agencies in order to ensure a skilled workforce for the State's business and industry?

The Governor sees the CNMI SWIB and its WIA administering agency as a private sector-driven vehicle to facilitate the coordination of Federal and CNMI workforce resources towards meeting

the needs of the private sector for educated and skilled workers, local preference employment law, and the aspirations of individual residents to participate in a viable economic future.

The Governor's SWIB appointees comprise a diverse board with a mix of representatives including private sector businesses, business interest groups, cabinet agencies and divisions, secondary and post secondary education, and community-based organizations. This constituency gives the board broad reach to effectuate the Governor's vision across the workforce investment community, and provides for information exchange among the SWIB membership.

Through the board, dollars used will be identified and then maximized and leveraged to meet the common goal of an improved workforce system. The board is also well positioned to influence secondary impacts through the networking of SWIB members in their concomitant roles in the island community. The Governor is able to work through the SWIB and can avail of the numerous businesses, community, family and other interrelationships typical of small island settings. In the CNMI context a large majority of people are connected through personal acquaintances, business, community, religious, family, sports and schools and other affiliations. Frequently people like those represented on the SWIB and their respective workplaces served together on one or more boards, commissions, and committees and are well positioned to help communicate and coordinate policies and interests.

To ensure a skilled workforce for the State's business and industry, the Governor envisions a highly educated and trained workforce that is capable of exceeding the expectations of business and industry. The Governor has already started to devote \$20 million dollars of Capital Improvement Funding to build, renovate, and restore CNMI schools, so that the youth can have better facilities to study in.

The Governor is also working to accomplish the following:

- Ensure a skilled workforce for the State's business and industry
- Reduce unemployment and underemployment
- Create employment opportunities that match the skills or interests of the workforce.
- Provide appropriate training programs that fill the gap needed to upgrade the quality and diversity of jobs available.
- Minimize cyclical and seasonal effects on employment through greater diversification of the employment base.
- Work with business sector to accommodate and teach local residents what is needed to flourish in the particular employers' work sites and industry.
- Advocate 20% labor law compliance and better wages for local preference job categories.

C. Given the continuously changing skill needs that business and industry have as a result of innovation and new technology, what is the Governor's vision for ensuring a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce?

Through the Governor's administration, the CNMI is positioning itself as a regional education and training center. The Governor continues to promote activities and provide resources that will allow the workforce to be educated and trained to exceed the expectations of the highly dynamic and rapidly changing business environment. The Governor has already started to devote \$20 million dollars of Capital Improvement Funding to build, renovate, and restore

CNMI schools, so that the youth can have better facilities to study in. Progress is being made to establish the CNMI through the Northern Marianas College and other educational entities as a location for English speaking secondary and post-secondary education. The CNMI is steadily increasing access to US-based universities and colleges so that residents can have the opportunity to advance their education and increase their levels of training. The CNMI is now the regional hub for airport emergency response or animal search handler training.

In relation, the CNMI has just invested over \$3 million in tourism promotions, and the Governor has personally traveled to Japan to meet with top travel industry executives to press for better access to the CNMI. CNMI has become a unique approved destination for tourists from Mainland China with new direct flights from Shanghai and Guangzhou. Tinian is being positioned as a new gaming resort destination with the recent completion of a \$7 million international runway, while Rota is moving towards becoming a renowned site for ecotourism and investing \$10 million in airport expansion. With new fiber-optics infrastructure and increased industry competition the Governor is promoting, for the CNMI to become a platform for telecommunications-based industry.

The Governor signed Public Law 14-132 enacting a technical education program, written by SWIB board member, Congressman Justo Quitugua. Some key provisions of this law directs the Public School System to establish a technical education program including: appropriate vocational and technical education curriculum, starting with tourism/ hospitality industry, nursing assistant/ allied health and technology Cisco CCNA Certification and other programs; faculty training and development; Student performance measures; procedures for information exchange and curriculum collaboration with the Northern Mariana College and other executive departments and agencies and with business organizations; inter-agency agreements with other executive departments and agencies to facilitate the technical education program; designing the two-year on-the-job training to be equivalent to the two years of work experience required under the CNMI Nonresident Workers Act; monitoring mechanism to monitor effectiveness of the on-the-job training throughout the year years and to continue monitoring the employment of students for the first two years after completion of or graduation from the program; assessment of appropriate compensation of students who complete vocational education programs taking into consideration the prevailing wages of workers with comparable skills and experience in the CNMI, Guam, Hawaii, and in the mainland United States and others.

CNMI resources are being programmed to position the CNMI to take advantage of new businesses and technology, such as ocean-thermal energy, water purification, additional submerged fiber optic cable lines, ranging from routine operations of the CNMI labor, immigration, economic development, other line departments to special interagency working groups. CNMI budget supports are provided to the Public School System and Northern Marianas College for educational and physical infrastructure, and appointments to volunteer boards and commissions, the Governor supports a continuum of education and training opportunities including through partnership with the SWIB.

D. What is the Governor’s vision for bringing together the key players in workforce development including business and industry, economic development, education, the public workforce system, and faith-based and community-based organizations to continuously identify the workforce challenges facing the State and to develop innovative strategies and solutions that effectively leverage resources to address those challenges?

The Governor’s vision for bringing together key players in workforce development is to appoint competent and diverse SWIB members with a mix of representatives including private sector businesses, business interest groups, cabinet agencies and divisions, secondary and post secondary education, and community-based organizations. This constituency gives the board broad reach to effectuate the Governor’s vision across the workforce investment community, and provides for information exchange among the SWIB membership.

The board is also well positioned to influence secondary impacts through the networking of SWIB members in their concomitant roles in the island community. The Governor is able to work through the SWIB and can avail of the numerous businesses, community, family and other interrelationships typical of small island settings. In the CNMI context a large majority of people are connected through personal acquaintances, business, community, religious, family, sports and schools and other affiliations. Frequently people like those represented on the SWIB and their respective workplaces served together on one or more boards, commissions, and committees and are well positioned to help communicate and coordinate policies and interests.

Several members serve on the CNMI’s key planning councils, teams, task forces, committees, and other highly recognized and influential organizations. Important planning teams to note are the CNMI Strategic Economic Development Council, Saipan Chamber of Commerce, Saipan Rotary Club, Workforce Management Improvement Planning Team, the Tourism District Revitalization Committee, the Northern Marianas College Strategic Management Team, and many more. These key members have collaborated with their key associations and have been instrumental in providing information and insight in for the planning process. In addition, the SWIB continues to establish good collaborative relationships with the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands.

In one recent example WIA was able to replace its subsidized GED/ADI customer tutoring services through a federally funded provider that it learned of through partner collaboration.

E. What is the Governor’s vision for ensuring that every youth has the opportunity for developing and achieving career goals through education and workforce training, including the youth most in need, such as out of school youth, homeless youth, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents and other youth at risk?

The CNMI law provides for the unique institution of the CNMI Youth Congress. Through election, youth from all villages are brought together to express their views and take action through participation in government. The CNMI SWIB includes a representative from the Youth Congress. In the next two years, SWIB will be increasing its focus on education and training for at-risk and older youth, including teen parents.

The Public School System is also represented on the SWIB, and is also an active partner with WIA training programs as a cooperating agency. WIA also works with Division of Youth Services; Youth Community Centers; Juvenile Justice Task Force; Family Court and the Public School System.

Other efforts focused on youth will be to:

- Motivate young people to go into vocational training fields.
- Strengthen resources of vocational education programs so they may be more readily available.
- Continually re-orient educational and vocational training programs to meet changing occupational requirements and new growth opportunities.
- Expand educational and job-training opportunities as the primary objective providing the CNMI's labor force with those marketable skills sought by employers that provide above average wage rates.
- Increase Career Opportunities Awareness. Striving for activities and programs that will infuse interest in the academic side of education.
- Make WIA more accessible so customers know about the programs and services provided including the availability of training, education and job information through one-stop centers.
- Develop a Youth After-school Training Resource Center at the Civic Center Complex or another available location.
- Take lead role as catalyst to organize and coordinate career opportunity and vocational education activities such as career fairs, career exploration, take over days, school visiting guest speaker programs, and youth entrepreneurship.
- Develop website for WIA information, jobs, education, training, speakers. Look at US DOL web site as model.
- WIA in-house career exploration and guidance center:
- Provide clients immediate access to education, training, comprehensive career opportunities information, financial support, scholarships, entrepreneurship, civic, and volunteer opportunities.
- Create a mobile one-stop program, together with computerized enrollment capabilities.
- Youth Centers: Utilize existing community youth centers for mobile one-stop venues. Consider US Army funded centers (California model)
- Job Corps: Increase access to and participation in job corps programs beyond Hawaii, to Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington in order to increase number of participants and widen the range of vocational opportunities.
- Collaborate with Public School System Americorps Program to assist in information dissemination and other volunteerism components.
- Apprenticeships. Make connections with other institutions that offer apprenticeship programs such as Guam Community College, Northern Marianas College, U.S Accredited schools in the Philippines, maritime, shipyards, etc.
- Transportation: WIA supports OVR affordable public transportation initiative in support of client access to work, training, education, career information and other services. (United We Ride). Partner agencies include the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Public School System, Department of Public Works, Department of Health (Transitional Living Center, Medicaid), Office on Aging, State Rehabilitation Council, State Independent Living Council, Mayors' Offices, Workforce Investment Agency, Council on Developmental Disabilities, Head Start, and the Liaison Offices of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

II. Identify the Governor's key workforce investment priorities for the State's public workforce system and how each will lead to actualizing the Governor's vision for workforce and economic development.

Workforce investment priorities

1. Develop strong policies and procedures to quickly recognize and address workforce disruptions.
2. Provide for a strong private employer-led partnership among government agencies, businesses, and workers through the Workforce Investment Board.
3. Thoroughly assess modernization needs of the WIA program including upgrading facilities, technology, and providing the resources to build the capacity of staff to deliver professional services in a timely and efficient manner. Staff training and SWIB training are essential to the development of effective programs and collaboration with partners.
4. Continuous improvement of job, education, and training services delivery through strong partnerships among government agencies, and private business employers and CNMI workers.
5. Coordinate and streamline all Federal and CNMI workforce investment support using the concept of user-friendly, effective and resourceful one-stop career centers for easy access to services provided by WIA, PSS, NMC, vocational, technical and entrepreneurial education, and business vacancies.
6. Improve public information about and easy access to workforce development programs for the Commonwealths youth, aging, adult and displaced workers, and individuals with disabilities.
7. Develop better ways to learn about, forecast, and prepare our workforce for the modern economy and to meet the needs of our existing economy as defined by CNMI employers.
8. Support a major shift from government employment to private sector by fostering a strong, diverse and modern private economy that provides good wages, good working conditions and opportunities for advancement.
9. Advocate for better enforcement of laws and regulations supporting resident worker training and employment.
10. Collaborate to address issues on transportation that keep people from accessing education and work opportunities.

III. State Governance Structure

A. Organization of State agencies in relation to the Governor:

1. Provide an organizational chart that delineates the relationship to the Governor of the agencies involved in the public workforce investment system, including education and economic development.

Please refer to Appendix 5.

2. In a narrative describe how the agencies involved in the public workforce investment system interrelate on workforce and economic development issues and the respective lines of authority.

Although the organization chart indicates that agencies of the CNMI public workforce investment system are well dispersed, they are connected and coordinated through the CNMI SWIB.

The CNMI operates a single state workforce investment board due to the small scale of the CNMI. SWIB members are appointed by the Governor and serve for designated periods. The WIA Executive Director is also appointed by the Governor. The CNMI WIA also maintains liaison offices in Tinian and Rota with one staff member assigned to each office. These staff coordinate services between their respective island communities and the CNMI state-level office.

Except for private sector representatives most of the agencies are either directly under the Governor's direction, or are under boards and commissions that have representation comprised of gubernatorial appointments. As such the agencies interrelate as part of their routine activities, as directed by the Governor, or through direction through regular weekly cabinet meetings.

The Governor appoints, with Senate confirmation, court judges, including the Family Court, which deal with juvenile and status offenders, are administered as divisions of the Circuit Courts.

The Governor appoints, with State Senate confirmation, the CNMI Board of Regents, which has exclusive jurisdiction over the Northern Marianas College.

An elected Board of Education formulates policy and manages the public school system, which includes pre-K-12 schooling, Adult Education, and Family Literacy programs.

The Governor operates a scholarship office to coordinate and provide student aid supports. The scholarship office also operates a website (www.cnmischolarship.com) that lists scholarship opportunities, government jobs, links to chamber of commerce jobs, and internships.

B. State Workforce Investment Board

1. Describe the organization and structure of the State Board.

The CNMI SWIB was first established as the Job Training Partnership Act board. As this was done prior to December 31, 1997 the new Workforce Investment Act "grandfathered" to become

the present day CNMI SWIB. It's composition was brought into compliance with the WIA by gubernatorial appointment of the requisite membership composition.

The present board is operating on the basis of the previous JTPA Board. At present it has yet to formally adopt new organizational by-laws. It has prepared proposed by-laws and will take future action to implement them. As an interim measure, the SWIB uses the following organizational structure.

The present board is not familiar with the full rules and regulations of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. It is still working on formulizing and better understanding all aspects of the act. The board is accustomed to the old JTPA and its rules and regs. This will change as the board holds meetings to work on all regulations of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The proposed by-laws will be incorporated in the SWIB's monthly meetings to complete all plans for the two-year.

The CNMI Workforce Investment Board is comprised of members appointed by the Governor of CNMI consistent with membership requirements established by the federal Workforce Investment Act. The majority of members will be business leaders. Other members will include: the Governor; members of the CNMI Legislature; representatives of labor organizations; cabinet officers from relevant departments responsible for workforce development initiatives; other education, economic development and community leaders deemed appropriate by the Governor.

Some of the private business leaders and their industries such as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce will take the lead role of plans to create an effective economic development formula to increase investors and the employment opportunities. The public sector and other agencies will provide support & services in the development.

With the exception of legislative members, all Board members serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Legislative members serve at the pleasure of their respective presiding officers.

The officers of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board shall include a Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair are to be appointed by the Governor.

There is an Executive Committee comprised of the officers and no more than ten at-large representatives and be composed of a majority of business members. The at-large representatives of the Executive Committee shall be members of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board and shall be nominated by the Chair. At-large members are appointed for one-year terms and may serve multiple terms.

The Executive Committee shall have all of the authority of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board whenever Board action is required.

There will be at total number of three Standing Committees of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board, consisting of the members of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board who are appointed by the Chair and shall include the Director of the Workforce Investment Agency. These will be the Policy Management, Education and Training, and Marketing & Employment Committees.

The CNMI Workforce Investment Board may create as many other committees or task forces, as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board.

The CNMI Workforce Investment Board shall meet at once (1) every month or more if necessary in accord with a meeting schedule adopted by the CNMI Workforce Investment Board. Special meetings of the membership may be called by the Chair or the Governor or by the petition of at least ten members of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board.

All CNMI Workforce Investment Board, committee and other ad-hoc and/or special committee member meetings will be publicly announced and will comply with the CNMI's Open Government Act (Appendix 8).

All CNMI Workforce Investment Board, committee meetings will be conducted using Robert Rules of Order on issues requiring action.

At regular meetings of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board and committees, the Chair will provide opportunities for public comment with time constraints determined by the Chair as appropriate.

The Chair of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board, or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair, shall chair CNMI Workforce Investment Board meetings. In the absence of the aforementioned, the members present will select a chair for the meeting.

The committee Chair will chair committee meetings. In the absence of the Chair, committee members will select a Chair for the meeting.

The quorum for the CNMI Workforce Investment Board meetings shall be those members of the current CNMI Workforce Investment Board present and eligible to vote (at least seven voting members have to be present). The quorum for committee meetings shall be those members of the committee present and eligible to vote.

No proxy voting is allowed for CNMI Workforce Investment Board meetings or for any of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board's committees.

The CNMI Workforce Investment Board shall designate a site for maintaining all records of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board, including minutes of proceedings of all CNMI Workforce Investment Board meetings.

The CNMI Workforce Investment Board's Fiscal Year shall be October 1st through September 30th. Membership and appointment terms will be based on the fiscal year.

Staff support for the CNMI Workforce Investment Board's work will be administratively housed within the Workforce Investment Agency, Director's Office. The Director of the Workforce Investment Agency will be accountable to the CNMI Workforce Investment Board for work products of the staff. The CNMI Workforce Investment Board will, from time to time, review its staff requirements and make recommendations to the Governor concerning staff support for CNMI Workforce Investment Board work. The Director of the Workforce Investment Agency will be responsible for supplying financial information to the CNMI Workforce Investment Board related to resources available to support the work of the CNMI Workforce Investment Board.

The CNMI Workforce Investment Board, in conducting its business, will comply with CNMI and federal laws regarding conflict of interest. See the Conflict of Interest policy.

2. Describe the process used to identify your State Board members. How did the jurisdiction select Board members, including business representatives, who have optimum policy-making authority and who represent diverse regions of the State as required under WIA?

The Governor appoints business representatives to the SWIB from nominations by private sector organizations and individual applications. The newly constituted SWIB is formed from the original JTPA board in place since 1983. The Governor requests the Speaker of the House to appoint one member. The SWIB private membership represents tourism, agriculture, insurance, real estate, retail, private non-profits, and entrepreneurs. Representatives are also provided by the Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association.

Government representatives include the Executive Director of the CNMI WIA, Chief of the Department of Labor Employment Services Division, Public School System Vocational Education Coordinator, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Office on Aging Director, Director, Office of Personnel Management, Speaker of the CNMI Youth Congress, House of Representatives, and the Director of the Northern Marianas College Community Development Institute.

Two members of each chambers of the state legislature, and other persons appointed by the Governor who represent business leaders, locally elected officials, labor organizations, state agency heads, and individuals with experience in youth issues or Speaker of the Youth Congress.

3. Describe how the Board's membership enables you to achieve your vision described above.

CNMI SWIB has 19 board members with 10 members from the private sector. 9 members from government agencies to provide business-led but balanced collaboration in carryout activities to meet the CNMI vision. In the small islands setting comprising the CNMI such major representation carries significant influence. The board members are in frequent contact and often active in one or more of the many community groups and organizations such as the chamber of commerce, rotary, family gatherings, sports, government functions, other boards and commissions, etc.

This broad array of community representation provides the CNMI WIB and WIA opportunity for widespread, coordinated and comprehensive action.

As Governor's appointees, SWIB members are advocates of the Governor's vision. The active and high-level membership carries the influence and ideas of the WIB into their extensive community networks.

Conversely, members have diverse views and relationships with a variety of other community groups and interests. This enables them to express various community perspectives as part of their SWIB contributions.

By using their networks, WIB members convince others in the community to become champions for various aspects of the Governor's vision.

4. Describe how the Board carries out its functions. Include functions the Board has assumed that are in addition to those required. Identify any functions the Board does not perform and explain why.

The board holds monthly meetings. In practice, however, the board meets far more frequently and the more active members work in smaller work groups to provide for focused attention to necessary details and when rapid response is needed.

The CNMI Workforce Investment Board functions to:

- Create policy recommendations for the Governor related to the establishment and maintenance of an integrated, CNMI's workforce development system
- Serve as a focal point for addressing the major workforce development issues of CNMI
- Lead the strategic planning process for an integrated workforce development system, including guidance to the workforce investment boards for planning
- Create performance standards that identify and reward effective workforce development initiatives
- Coordinate the CNMI's workforce investment initiatives with the CNMI's economic development plan

The above is done through executive committee and standing committees assignments as listed in Section 3B.1 above.

5. How will the State Board ensure that the public (including people with disabilities) has access to Board meetings and information regarding State Board activities, including membership and meeting minutes?

As mentioned earlier in Section 3B.1 above, all board meetings are advertised in local newspapers in advance stating the time and place of SWIB meetings. All meetings are held in public places where public access is readily available and ADA accessibility is provided under CNMI and Federal Law. Meetings are tape recorded and anyone may request to listen to the tape or to have transcripts of the board meetings.

6. Identify the circumstances which constitute a conflict of interest for any State workforce investment Board member including voting on any matter regarding the provision of services by that member or the entity that s/he represents, and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or his or her immediate family.

The CNMI SWIB is governed by the CNMI Government Ethics Code Act. Additionally, the bylaws of the CNMI WIB states: The CNMI Workforce Investment Board, in conducting its business, will comply with CNMI and federal laws regarding conflict of interest.

The Government Ethics Code Act states that a conflict occurs when an official's responsibilities, duties, or activities conflict with the officials' private interests whether they are of a business, family, social, or other nature.

The Act is applicable to all public officials, public employees, and former public employees and officials.

Refer to Appendix 6. for details of the CNMI Government Ethics Code Act

7. What resources does the State provide the board to carry out its functions, i.e., staff, funding, etc.?

Under the proposed Board by-laws, staff support for the CNMI Workforce Investment Board's work will be administratively housed within the Workforce Investment Agency, Director's Office. The Director of the Workforce Investment Agency will be accountable to the CNMI Workforce Investment Board for work products of the staff. Up to 5% of the total funding provided to WIA are used for administrative cost, including payment to staff members.

The CNMI provides an annual budget for the CNMI WIA of \$1,057,994 comprised of \$548,310 for personnel, \$509,684 for operations. . The WIA office, the Director and staff, and the salaries and expenses of all CNMI members of the SWIB are paid by the CNMI government. For the most part CNMI departments and agencies that compose the workforce investment system are funded by CNMI appropriations.

C. Structure/Process for State agencies and State board to collaborate and communicate with each other and with the workforce investment system at large.

1. Describe the steps the State will take to improve operational collaboration of the workforce investment activities and other related activities and programs outlined in the statute, at both the State and, as appropriate, local level (e.g., joint activities, memoranda of understanding or agreement, planned mergers, coordinated policies, etc.). How will the State Board and related workforce agencies eliminate any existing State-level barriers to coordination?

The CNMI WIA has met with the CNMI Secretary of the Department of Labor, the Director of CNMI DOL Employment Services, the Office of Youth Affairs and others together with the Federal counterpart from US Department of Labor Region VI.

The Executive Director reaches out to work place contacts to learn of employer needs, work place opportunities, concerns, recommendations and other information valuable exchanges.

The SWIB meets regularly and receives a briefing on WIA staff and other operational details.

At present there is an MOA for the Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act by Agencies between WIA, CNMI Department of Labor & Immigration (DOLI), CNMI Division of Employment Services, Public School System Vocational Education Program and Advance Development Institute, Northern Marianas College Vocation Education, Workforce and Community Development Program and Adult Basic Education/Family Literacy programs.

The SWIB plans to develop new master MOAs with all state workforce investment related agencies and to help pull together the various agencies in an effort to find common ground. Some of the work planned over the next two years to improve operational collaboration includes:

- Reorganization of the CNMI Workforce Investment Agency to reflect the new vision of the WIA Board.
- Staff training and SWIB training is essential to the development of effective programs and collaboration of partners.
- Executive Level (WIB Support)
- Assist Board develop reorganization plan
 - Support board policy implementation
- Efficiently report to WIB progress, barriers, new information, upcoming issues or events, program financials, by recruiting planner/grants writer.
 - Overall program (administration): Organize functional staff working groups to increase staff efficiency in operations, client counseling, client management, training and development, education and job placement.
Expand staff training to include training of those staff across agency lines who have similar jobs and/or responsibilities.
 - Operations Level: Outreach to public, training providers, employers.
Internal information sharing, staff development, administration and finance, statistical development, record keeping, grant management and reporting.
 - Client Counseling: Support client counseling staff to upgrade skill levels by providing for local and off-island training.
Integrate client counseling needs with established programs at NMC, PSS, private educational institutions and other providers.
 - Case Management. Reorganize and retrain case managers for greater efficiency and report/assistance with the major stakeholders.
- Training and Job Development for employees, for participants, for employers, and board members.
 - Staff development to include cross training of WIA staff for optimal efficient results.
- Education: Integrate education programs of NMC, PSS, private educational institutions and other providers with WIA training plans for participants to ensure positive and successful outcomes for WIA programs.
- Private Training: Find private sector training opportunities and pay for them to provide training to WIA clients, or pay clients to participate in training, or pay for specialized skills training for underemployed clients for improved standard of living and career outlook.
- Entrepreneurship: Help adult and dislocated workers create nontraditional work through self-employment opportunities by providing training, financial support, and/or market development.
- Partner with employment and training brokers to maximize the need for positive performance outcomes and continued employment.

2. Describe the lines of communication established by the Governor to ensure open and effective sharing of information among the State agencies responsible for implementing the vision for the public workforce system, between the State agencies and the State Workforce Investment Board, and between the State and the workforce system at large.

The Governor has weekly cabinet level contact with all Commonwealth Departments and many Division directors. As noted in numerous sections of the plan, in the small CNMI island setting

open and effective sharing of information is considered normal. The local scale also provides for frequent contact and information exchanges in a broad variety of circumstances.

3. Is the State promoting a collaborative cross-agency approach for both policy development and service delivery at the local level for youth? If not, explain the rationale and how the State intends to promote this kind of collaboration in the future in order to better meet the needs of youth within the context of the 21st century workforce.

As mentioned in many sections of the plan, the state does promote collaboration across agencies for both policy development and service delivery at the local level for youth. The state board has combined the efforts of aligning departments of youth services to WIA and addressing numerous issues of education curriculum that will enable students to better prepare for post-secondary education without the need of remedial courses.

Also, departments such as the Community Guidance Center, which deals with Teen Suicide and Teen prevention. Cross training will be provided to partners and collaborators to maximize all efforts.

4. How is the general public made aware of the workforce investment services offered and available?

Generally, the public is made aware through activities such as printing and distribution of promotional and marketing materials; purchases of ads for radio spots, TV and printed media; creation of WIA web page (scheduled to be finished by December 2005); inter-agency training and seminars highlighting WIA programs and services; activities supporting WIA's annual awareness week; memberships will be sought in professional organizations that provide opportunities for WIA information sharing; and annual retreats for the board members to increase their participation and effectiveness as SWIB board members.

Many WIA clients are also informed of WIA services as a result of formal referral processes and informal interagency coordination at the staff level.

IV. Economic and Labor Market Analysis: As a foundation for this strategic Plan and to inform the strategic investments and strategies that flow from this Plan, provide a detailed analysis of the State's economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context. Elements of the analysis should include the following:

A. What is the current makeup of the State's economic base by industry?

(source: Commonwealth Economic Development Strategy Profile of the CNMI's Major Industries)

The CNMI has historically relied on three primary industries: government, garment manufacturing, and tourism, with the latter two as the driving economic force. Secondary industries include retail trade, construction, gaming, agriculture, and fisheries. Other than the relatively large hotels and garment manufacturers, the CNMI is an economy of small businesses mostly owned by foreign nationals.

The following briefly describes the nature of the CNMI's three major industrial sectors.

Garment Manufacturing. The CNMI's ability to set its own labor laws in conjunction with qualified duty-free export privileges to the United States, gives it a comparative advantage in comparison to other Asian producing countries, in producing goods for export to America. The apparel manufacturing factories in Saipan began operations in 1983, shortly after the CNMI achieved its U.S. commonwealth status in 1978. However, global trade agreements, as in the elimination of worldwide quota systems into the U.S. domestic market on December 31, 2004, may have a dramatic impact on the CNMI's comparative advantage in apparel exports.

Total export value, based upon the Garment Certification Collection Fee, reached its highest collection point in 1999 at \$1.06 billion dollars. During the period from 1998 to 2002, the garment industry helped prevent an economic depression in the CNMI following the decline of the tourist industry as the Asian financial crisis unfolded. The garment industry has not been immune to the same forces of economics, and with an overall climate of global competitiveness in the industry, industry sales decreased about 20% thus decreasing tax contributions to the CNMI. Total sales in 2002 were \$823 million dollars.

In terms of the number of employees, the garment industry, with 31 factories in operation, was the largest industry on Saipan. Of the 41,217 people in the CNMI labor force in the fourth quarter of 2000, 17,573 were employed in the garment industry, with 90% of the positions filled by non-resident workers or guest workers. The garment industry is also credited to have created nearly 8,000 more jobs of which 1,700 are government positions. It has been illustrated, that as a result of those 17,573 employees in the garment industry, nearly another 8,000 jobs are created, with 1,700 of those being CNMI Government positions.

The garment industry's impact on the CNMI's economy is significant as it provides a second source of export income. Its links to U.S. markets instead of Japan and Korea, offer some economic diversification to the visitor industry. The industry also helps in lowering the cost of living by reducing transportation costs of imported goods.

While the garment industry has made significant contributions to the CNMI's economy, problems associated with the large labor-intensive industry have been documented. Real and/or perceived problems have been addressed to the point where the industry is now generally

regarded as a “model” for offshore garment manufacturing for major U.S. brand name buyers and retailers. The garment industry in the CNMI continues to implement programs and procedures to assure consumers, governments, and the public that the industry is socially and environmentally responsible.

CNMI leaders and the business community are now anticipating the potential void that would result as the garment industry continues to downsize due to global competition. The Governor’s Strategic Economic Development Council’s (SEDC’s) premise for the CNMI’s revenue generating power in the future was based entirely upon the belief that the industry will be totally phased out after the World Trade Organization’s quota elimination occurs on December 31, 2004. SEDC also attempts to address the lost revenue resulting from the decline in tourist arrival over the past few years.

Within the last year, the CNMI Administration has now replaced that inevitable variable with recommendations made by the SEDC and the apparel manufacturers’ association, to provide for the factories extended operations in the CNMI. Provided, however, that areas affecting the industry’s economics are addressed and changes are made to both local and federal governance to prolong production.

The CNMI Administration is creating an office within the Department of Commerce to monitor and evaluate industry trends. The office will also assist the CNMI Government’s effort to work with the U.S. Administration and the U.S. Congress to modify the special tariff treatment prerequisites to enhance the island’s factories’ competitiveness. In addition, plans are underway for better utilization of non-resident contract employees, and to prioritize training for local island residents. Furthermore, garment manufacturers have entered into partnerships with local and federal government offices to ensure continuation of the benefits from the industry.

In January 2005, some of the new WTO global trade stipulations and the Multi-Fiber Agreement take effect. Under the new trade rules, textile quotas will disappear but import duties will remain. Lifting quotas will open the door for other major producers of labor-intensive products to sell more textiles and garments to the United States, the European Union, and Japan. China’s entry into WTO could make it a major partner in the global marketplace. Because the cost of labor, especially in China, is much lower than in the CNMI, China’s ability to sell more may encourage Chinese manufacturers to increase their sales volumes overseas and drive down their production costs. CNMI needs to plan for these changes by exploring other markets in which the CNMI can effectively compete, once major producers such as China becomes a competitor.

In addition to the uncertainty faced by the garment industry in the CNMI, there has been limited foreign capital invested in the CNMI over the past year due, in part, to the financial meltdown in Asia in 1997-1998. Although most of the Asian countries bordering the Pacific have recovered from the fiscal crisis, foreign investment levels are not what they were in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The CNMI Government has taken an active role in addressing concerns over foreign investment, and in passing laws to offer incentives to investors such as the new tax abatement extension (for as long as 25 years) to new capital invested in the CNMI.

One of the most important issues facing the CNMI has been whether the United States will extend its immigration and labor laws in the CNMI. While that extension was a clear objective of the Clinton Administration, the Bush Administration has taken a partnership approach to the CNMI. Presently, the CNMI and the U.S. administration appear to enjoy a harmonious,

collaborative relationship that supports local initiative to address labor and immigration concerns.

Government. The CNMI government is considered as the second largest industry on Saipan. As reported in the CNMI American Community Survey: Fourth Quarter 2000, during the fourth quarter of 2000, the most recent data available, 3,577 persons were employed by the Government or 9.3 percent of the total employment (41,217). Of the total, U.S. and non-U.S. citizen permanent residents accounted for 93.7 percent or 3,350 positions. Since public sector work is not limited to public administration, the actual number of people employed by the CNMI government is much larger.

Due to higher wages and better benefits, many local residents favor working for the Government. U.S. citizens comprised over 81% of government workers, but less than 3.5% work in manufacturing and 3.3% in construction. Unlike Guam and Hawaii, there are no military bases in the CNMI. Most large-scale transient forces and troops are stationed in Guam and not in CNMI. Compared with Guam, the few military vessels that visit CNMI offer minimal economic impact.

With the decline in the economy, limited government funds are available. However, too much funds are being spent on government operations, especially payroll, with next to nothing being spent on maintenance and capital improvements for the future. CNMI Government has operated on a fiscal deficit from 1990 to 2000. The amounts range from 6.8 million in 1990 to \$80.6 million in 1998. An un-audited report compiled by the Department of Finance pegged the CNMI's cumulative unreserved fund balance deficit at about \$98.6 million in 2002.

Tourism. A large part of the CNMI's comparative advantage is its capacity to provide a taste of American life in the tropical Northwest Pacific Ocean, in close proximity to large Asian markets, which has translated into a growing tourist industry. The tourism industry's economic contributions include hotel occupancy taxes, gross receipts taxes, direct employment in the visitor industry, visitor expenditures, as well as indirect and induced employment and revenue.

Tourism remains a major contributor to local government revenues and employment for the islands over the past 25 years. It has grown with the increasing prosperity of Northeast Asia, particularly with Japan and later with South Korea. However, the CNMI tourism industry is in a critical stage, from rapid growth to rapid decline and now stagnation.

In 1996, CNMI welcomed 736,117 tourists, the most ever recorded. However, the weakening of Asian economies negatively impacted the industry and a year later, tourist arrivals fell to 694,797. In 2001, there were 444,281 tourists, at decrease of nearly 40% when compared with 1996 tourist arrivals, and a decrease of about 16% when compared with the previous year, 2000. In 2002, 475,169 tourists came to the CNMI, an increase of about 7% from the previous.

Major factors for the decline are travelers' apprehension for their safety after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, and more recently in Bali, Indonesia, as well as the recent war in Iraq. The recent global experience with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) also contributed to declining tourist numbers in the spring of 2003.

Hotel occupancy rates, reported by the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands (HANMI) since 1992, were at their highest in 1996 at 85.6 percent. For 2002, the average occupancy rate was 63 percent, a 16.4 percent increase over 2001 rates. The average daily room

rate was \$81 dollars, a 9% decrease from the previous year. Average room rate for the first quarter of 2003 was \$89, with hotel occupancy averaging 75 percent. At present, there are roughly 4,419 hotel rooms in the CNMI.

Tourist data show that Japan continues to be the CNMI's principal market. Market share from South Korea had registered an increased in arrivals with the resumption of air service by Korean Airlines. Arrivals from Korea, however, will most likely decrease as Korean Airlines ceased flying the Saipan route in March 2003. China and Taiwan are potentially large markets once air service to and from Saipan becomes available. The CNMI has applied with the U.S. Department of State for approved destination status for Chinese tourists. However, concerns over the issue of asylum and refugee processing in the CNMI need to be addressed and could be a factor in the review process.

B. What industries and occupations are projected to grow and/or decline in the short term and over the next decade?

It is anticipated that change in the garment industry resulting from the new trade rules and change in quotas would result in a drop in the tax base which in turn would have a detrimental impact on government finances. Currently taxes assessed to garment manufacturers and user fees from garment manufacturing amount to one-third of the CNMI Government's direct revenues. Garment industry taxes would be difficult to replace with revenues from other sources in the private sector. As a result occupations in the garment, related services, and government sectors are projected to decline.

At present the travel industry is continuing to improve after a series of setbacks caused by external factors. This sector is projected to grow over the next decade. In the short term there is concern over the impact of high fuel prices on airline transportation with carriers substituting smaller craft and one major airline warning of cessation of service to the CNMI, a major blow to the CNMI economy.

In line with tourism, the CNMI is positioning itself to become a regional education and training center. The Governor continues to promote activities and provide resources that will allow the workforce to be educated and trained to exceed the expectations of the highly dynamic and rapidly changing business environment. CNMI resources are being programmed to position the CNMI to take advantage of new industries expected to grow such as health care, technology, alternative resources such as ocean-thermal energy and water purification, and telecommunications with the addition of submerged fiber optic cable lines.

In establishing Free Trade Zone legislations to broaden the CNMI's economic base through diversification, the CNMI Legislature determined that the types of business, industrial and commercial activity that are in the best long term interests of the people of the CNMI are those that require significant capital investment, are low labor-intensive, have negligible impact on the environment, and are compatible with tourism. Illustrative examples of such types of desirable business activities would be: production of computer hardware and software, licensing and distribution of intellectual property, computer programming services, database storage and retrieval, financial and trade related services.

According to the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, a recent economic report, made possible by a grant by the United States Department of Interior, suggests that Saipan is poised to successfully develop the following types of industries:

- Financial Services Industry including trans-Pacific or intra-Asian trade, dollar denominated trust accounts, and securities exchange services.
- Free Trade Zone
- Captive insurance industry
- Data processing industry
- Software production industry
- Resource-based companies
- Small-scale commercial fisheries
- Pharmaceuticals
- Specialized higher or advanced education
- Retirement villages
- Forward deployment of US firms' Asian operations
- Store, transfer, and transshipment companies
- Telemarketing

C. In what industries and occupations is there a demand for skilled workers and available jobs, both today and projected over the next decade? In what numbers?

In addition to the industries and occupations listed in part b above, the construction industry creates a demand for skilled construction trades workers. In 2000 there were 2,785 persons employed in these occupations. The finance, insurance and real estate sector is also expected to grow. In 2000 there were 1,013 persons employed. The health care industry creates a demand for certified nurses, doctors, and other allied health fields. The CNMI is currently experiencing a shortage, for example, there are only 57 doctors available to serve the CNMI's 86,000 residents. Out of three hundred nurses at the local hospital, only 30% are local employees, the remaining nurses are guest workers hired to fill the void.

Industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs in the economy are Environmental/Bio Sciences; Telecommunications/Information Technologies; Health Sciences; Transportation Technologies; Culinary Arts, Restaurant Service and Management; Tourism and Hospitality; Eco-tours; Vocational Occupations and Agricultural occupations and services.

D. What jobs/occupations are most critical to the State's economy?

Although, the top three industries critical to the CNMI economy are 1. the tourism industry, 2. the garment industry, and 3. the CNMI government, there are no certain identification method to identify critical jobs, therefore the top ones most critical to the CNMI cannot be defined. However, the top three categories would be tourism service providers, garment merchandisers, and for the CNMI government, public protection, health care and educators.

For example in the CNMI government, the health care industry creates a demand for certified nurses, doctors, and other allied health fields. The CNMI is currently experiencing a shortage in these fields, for example, there are only 57 doctors available to serve the CNMI's 86,000 residents. In addition, Out of three hundred nurses at the local hospital, only 30% are local employees, the remaining nurses are guest workers hired to fill the void.

E. What are the skill needs for the available, critical and projected jobs?

Basic skills such as reading and mathematics, language development, computer training, and critical thinking skills are needed for all job fields. This is mentioned because the CNMI workforces including guest workers lack these basic skills. In order for the CNMI to meet the growing need for the industries above, these basic skills must be met.

Job and career skills such as resume preparation and interviewing, work skills such as timeliness, attendance, customer service, handling phones and faxes, how to get ahead or promoted, and continual learning are the skills that CNMI students, employees and prospective employees are considered to need.

Most importantly, as identified in the previous sections above, postsecondary education, professional skills and certifications are needed in the fields of accounting, computer programming, computer networking, nursing, tourism and hospitality management, refrigeration, bookkeeping, computer repair, electronics, and telecommunications, etc.

Many organizations and programs are in place to address skills, and they need to focus more on delivering the specific skills and the levels of skill proficiency, to ensure local resident workers are the most highly qualified candidates for job vacancies. Some of the skill needs include management and supervisory training, managing a culturally diverse workforce, employee development, performance appraisal and feedback for enhanced performance.

F. What is the current and projected demographics of the available labor pool (including the incumbent workforce) both now and over the next decade

Labor Force Population and Unemployment. The composition of the CNMI's labor force has changed dramatically over the past twenty years. At present, the CNMI is largely dependent on imported workers. According to the CNMI American Community Survey (ACS), conducted in April 2002, about eighty-three percent (40,620) of all persons 16 years of age and older were in the labor force on Saipan at the time of the survey. An estimated 39,414 persons were employed, while an estimated 1,207 persons (or 3 percent) of the total labor force was unemployed.

Based on the ACS, teens (15 to 19 year olds) and older adults (50 to 65 year olds and over) had lower labor force participation rates compared to young adults (20 to 49 year olds). Young adults had lower unemployment rates compared to older adults. Eight-nine (89) percent of Saipan's labor force was between the ages of 20 and 59 years of age.

About ninety-one percent of all non-U.S. citizens in Saipan participated in the labor force while U.S. citizens' participation was 65 percent. U.S. citizens' unemployment rate of 6.9 percent was higher than the non-U.S. citizens' 1.6 percent unemployment rate, at the time of the ACS. Because group quarters were not included, the Chamorro was the largest single ethnic group at 28 percent of the total labor force in Saipan, followed closely by Filipinos at 26 percent, Chinese posted 25 percent, Micronesian represented 8 percent, Korean 4 percent, Caucasian 3 percent, Japanese 2 percent, and the rest from other ethnic group.

Population Profile. The official 2000 census count by the U.S. Bureau of the Census is 69,221, representing a nearly sixty percent increase (60%) when compared to the 43,345 people present in 1990. This population growth took place in the islands of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian, but not in

the Northern Islands. (A more recent information, American Community Survey, 4/2000, for Saipan alone, showed that there were 67,011 individuals of whom 37,343 are females.)

Of the 69,221 people recorded by the 2000 Decennial Census, 62,392 lived on Saipan, 3,283 lived on Rota, 3,540 lived on Tinian, and six lived on the Northern Islands. Compared to five years ago, population density in Saipan increased to 1,342 persons per square mile while Tinian also increased to 90. Rota's population density during this same period declined to 100 persons per square mile.

The CNMI population was relatively older in 2000, compared to prior census years. The median age in 2000 was 28.7 years, compared to 27.4 years in 1990 and 19.7 years in 1980. The main reason for this shift in median age was the presence of a large guest worker population who were 20 to 44 years of age, compared to the CNMI-born population whose median age was 14.5 years. Almost 75 percent of the population was over the age of 18. Of the total CNMI population, 46.2 percent were male and 53.8 percent were female.

Approximately 35.9 percent of the population in 2000 was born in the CNMI, with the majority born outside of the CNMI. Of the 35.9 percent, approximately 90 percent of the population came from Asian countries (Philippines, China, Korea, Japan, Nepal, and Bangladesh). Close to 40 percent of the 90 percent from Asian countries, originated from the Philippines and China alone. In 1980, over 71 percent of the CNMI population was born in the Commonwealth. A majority of the births took place in Saipan.

In 2000, the Filipino ethnic group was the largest single ethnic group in the Commonwealth with 18,141 people, outnumbering indigenous Chamorros by nearly 3,392. This major demographic change was evident in Saipan where the majority of CNMI's population resided. Chamorro was still the most dominant ethnic group in Rota and in Tinian, although not as dominant as in previous census years. When the islands north of Saipan were inhabited, Carolinian was the most dominant ethnic group.

Household Income and Per Capita Income. Median family income in the CNMI, according to Census data in 1990 was \$21,275 compared to \$25,853 in 2000, a 22 percent increase in median income during the decade of the 1990s or 2.2 percent per year. During the same period, median household income also increased by 11 percent from \$20,644 in the 1990 Census, to \$22,898 in the 2000 Census. Although both median family income and median household income increased, the average sizes of both the family and household decreased. Average family size decreased to 4.16, as compared to 4.83 in the 1990 Census. Likewise, the average household size based on the 2000 Census was 3.66 in compared to 4.63 in 1990.

The 2000 Census also revealed that per capita income in 2000 was \$9,151, representing an increase of \$1,952 or 27 percent above the per capita income of \$7,199 in 1990. (The per capita income figure is the mean income computed for every man, woman, and child in a particular group. It is derived by dividing the total income of a particular group by the total population in that group.)

G. Is the State experiencing any "in migration" or "out migration" of workers that impact the labor pool?

The rapid pace of development in the CNMI, particularly on Saipan over the last decade, has created jobs that far outnumber the available local labor pool. As a result, the CNMI experiences an inflow of foreign-born guest workers and residents of regional Micronesian islands who are allowed unrestricted entry into the CNMI and other US areas.

CNMI law provides for a mechanism to allow foreign-born guest workers to enter the CNMI legally and work out the duration of two-year employment contract after which time they must exist the CNMI. In practice the contracts are renewed following each completed contract period. In general the exiting workers are replaced by new arrivals although the slowing economy may reduce this occurrence.

Provisions of federal law allow unrestricted entry of Micronesians to the CNMI and other US areas. Workers from these islands are considered local workers under CNMI law and are allowed to fill jobs that are either reserved for residents or as part of required 20% local hire provisions. Many workers have been attracted to the CNMI by the relatively higher wages offered in the CNMI and the high number of jobs offered by the garment and visitor industries.

To a lesser extent the number of foreign investments in the visitor and garment industries also account for a modest number of owner-investors, top management, and other key staff. Another peculiarity of the CNMI economy is that a relatively large number of employees are needed who speak the languages of the dominant visitor markets (Japanese, Korean, Chinese) and Chinese foreign guest workers populating the garment industry. Another minor factor is the presence of eight military pre-position ships that entail civilian crews, families, and support staff.

The expected slow-down of the garment industry, and the recent mass-layoffs and sudden closure of two factories on Saipan is expected should result in an outflow of guest workers under CNMI law that provides for repatriation of guest workers at the end of their employment. According to the CNMI Representative to the United States, the continuing presence of dislocated and dismissed workers in the CNMI, if nothing substantive is done in the form of immediate repatriation, will eventually create massive socio-economic problems which will impact CNMI's limited resources.

While CNMI law provides for repatriation of guest-workers, there are no similar provisions for Micronesians. Reductions in the garment industry labor force will affect relatively large numbers of this group that may result in increased competition for jobs desired by CNMI residents.

The levels of compensation are generally low by CNMI and US standards for most of the private sector positions. An increase in competition for these local jobs, a reduced demand for workers and potential for achieving better living conditions in the fifty states may lead to an outflow of resident workers to the CNMI's detriment.

Approximately 35.9 percent of the population in 2000 was born in the CNMI, with the majority born outside of the CNMI. Of the 35.9 percent, approximately 90 percent of the population came from Asian countries (Philippines, China, Korea, Japan, Nepal, and Bangladesh). Close to 40 percent of the 90 percent from Asian countries, originated from the Philippines and China alone. In 1980, over 71 percent of the CNMI population was born in the Commonwealth. A majority of the births took place in Saipan.

Of the 41,217 people in the CNMI labor force in the fourth quarter of 2000, 17,573 were employed in the garment industry, with 90% of the positions filled by non-resident workers or guest workers.

In 1996 736,117 tourists came to the CNMI and visitor expenditures of \$587.8 million supported an estimated 5,000 CNMI jobs. If this same ratio holds true, the current tourism labor force should number about 3,185 jobs based on the 530,395 tourists who visited the CNMI in 2004.

H. Based on an analysis of both the projected demand for skills and the available and projected labor pool, what skill gaps is the State experiencing today and what skill gaps are projected over the next decade?

At 97 percent employment, the CNMI labor market would appear to be in relatively good condition considering what it has been through in the past decade. According to the CNMI American Community Survey (ACS), conducted in April 2002, an estimated 39,414 persons were employed, while an estimated 1,207 persons (or 3 percent) of the total labor force was unemployed. As there does not appear to be numerically enough resident workers to fill the number of available jobs the employment rate should be at or near full employment.

There is need to increase the number of residents with high school degrees to ensure the basic fundamental skills are present. Residents with high school degrees need to continue their education with the goal of increasing the number of residents with two year, four year and advanced degrees to fill any number of available jobs that are vacant or currently filled by guest workers who have the requisite skills needed for the available positions.

To a large extent the CNMI economy will need to depend on the large guest worker population to maintain or increase the current level of economic growth. While individual resident workers will be able to replace individual guest workers over time, it is unlikely that resident workers will be able to replace the guest workers numerically, particular those performing work that is not desired by residents, and remove them from the CNMI. This presents an opportunity for more residents having college education to fill administration and management level positions provided that the necessary level of resident worker advocacy and enforcement occurs.

In order for residents to make the necessary investment in education and gaining experience needed to assume more of the available employment opportunities in the private sector the basic wage and compensation levels will have to be improved.

With the kind of work envisioned for the future through such mechanisms as the free trade zones there will be a need for broad basic skills (reading, writing, learning, science, math) resource management skills (finance, personnel), social skills (perceptiveness, coordinating, instructing, service, etc.) and technical skills (equipment repair, installation, O&M, programming).

I. Based on an analysis of the economy and the labor market, what workforce development issues has the State identified?

The CNMI's workforce development issues are identified in the Weaknesses and Threats components of the SWOT analysis below. Other issues are: 1. Dependence upon sectors that are more susceptible to economic downturns limits the ability of the CNMI to sustain economic growth at a level that is comparable with the rest of the region/world. 2. Limited land resources

constrain industrial location and expansion. 3. The education and skill levels of much of the labor force are not high enough to compete in a technological global economy. 4. Other factors are infrastructure problems, the lack of actual numbers of CNMI residents to fill jobs, and the unavailability of a reliable public transportation system that limits the ability of individuals targeted by WIA to avail of low cost transportation through a reliable system.

Despite these less than ideal conditions, the CNMI does have a number of strengths and opportunities to attract investments and sustain a viable economy. At the same time, the CNMI recognizes its weaknesses and the threats to its economic development. Some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are listed below:

Strengths

- Trading relationship with the U.S.
- Appeal as a tourist destination
- Proximity to Asian tourist and labor markets
- Right to export products duty free to the mainland
- Local authority over immigration and minimum wage
- Climate is tropical, ideal for tourism and retirement community industries
- Unspoiled environment
- Nearshore and offshore waters
- Access to a pool of cheap, literate, educated, and skilled labor force
- High degree of political stability
- Pleasant living environment with good housing, schools, and leisure facilities

Weaknesses

- Dependence on foreign labor
- Economy is dependent on local control of labor and immigration
- Infrastructure needs: Waste water systems are either non-existent or over-taxed; Solid waste disposal
- Article XII and land alienation issues
- Lack of available capital and other sources of financing
- Limited land resources constrain industrial location and expansion
- Air and Sea Ports: High costs of sea and air freight

- Economies of scale
- Lack of diversity
- Vulnerability associated with distance: suffer from higher transport costs due to remoteness and small values of cargoes carried
- Hampered from establishing competitive activities in profitable branches of manufacturing because of small, unskilled populations
- Gap in technological capabilities
- Cumbersome permitting process
- Lack of coordinating vision and mechanism; Inconsistency of policies

Opportunities

- Streamline procedures
- Privatization of infrastructure systems with an effective regulatory framework

Threats

- Proposed legislation to phase in federal immigration control and raise the minimum wage
- Removal of trade quotas
- Fall of Asian economies
- Security concerns and the threat of terrorists
- Islands are losing indigenous population and the economic sources of revenue that go with it.

J. What workforce development issues has the State prioritized as being most critical to its economic health and growth?

The CNMI's workforce development issues are identified in the Weaknesses and Threats components of the SWOT analysis above. The ones most critical and as stated above are:

1. Dependence upon sectors that are more susceptible to economic downturns limits the ability of the CNMI to sustain economic growth at a level that is comparable with the rest of the region/world.
 2. Limited land resources constrain industrial location and expansion. This includes the Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution that limits land ownership to individuals of CNMI descent.
 3. The education and skill levels of much of the labor force are not high enough to compete in a technological global economy.
 4. Major infrastructure problems, the CNMI lacks funding to upgrade its public utilities and public resources to sustain future development.
 5. The CNMI population of CNMI and US resident is very limited and is not sufficient enough to the over 40,000 jobs available, therefore an increase reliance of guest workers is employed.
 6. Unavailability of a reliable public transportation system that limits the ability of individuals targeted by WIA to avail of low cost transportation through a reliable system. The CNMI government is conducting research on the most appropriate system to implement here.
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V. Overarching State Strategies

A. Identify how the State will use WIA Title I funds to leverage other Federal, State, local, and private resources in order to maximize the effectiveness of such resources and to expand the participation of business, employees, and individuals in the Statewide workforce investment system

The CNMI currently lacks a single tangible system to identify all available federal, state, local and private resources. Many collaborations and partnerships occur in which resources immediately needed are shared between two agencies or partners at a time. The lack of a cohesive system prevents these resources to be shared amongst many agencies or partners at any given time. Common resources shared are human expertise, education, training, and access to markets, as well as access to information, facilities, and financial assistance.

By the end of 2006, the state will **be fully operational and functioning using** WIA Title I funds to conduct the following activities:

- Initiate the process to develop a cohesive resource management system, providing all WIA stakeholders readily and available access to these various resources.
 - Methods to be used for initiation are roundtable discussions and collaborative meetings with stakeholders, businesses, resource and service providers, and other interested participants.
 - Collaborate with current and future stakeholders to identify communal, informational and other resources available for use, and develop an agreement to access and maximize the effectiveness of such resources.
- Develop a Resource and Information Management Database to include all workforce investment system information, including:
 - Listing of Available Partners and the Resources they provide.
 - An resource inventory or checklist
 - A resource guide
 - A Skills Assessment or Evaluation
 - A Skills Gap Analysis or its equivalent
 - Economic Indicators
 - Workforce Information system
 - Other related information

B. What strategies are in place to address the national strategic direction discussed in Part I of this guidance, the Governor's priorities, and the workforce development issues identified through the analysis of the State's economy and labor market?

In order to achieve CNMI Governor Juan N. Babauta's Vision and align the CNMI with the national strategic direction of preparing the nation's workforce for the 21st century, the CNMI will need to address the following priorities and strategies to be implemented by the end of 2006:

1. Develop strong policies and procedures and align them to meet the most recent national and state standards and requirements.
 - A consultant will be hired to work with a team composed of key members of the SWIB, stakeholders, and workforce professionals to develop such policies and procedures.

2. Provide for a strong private employer-led partnership among government agencies, businesses, and workers through the Workforce Investment Board.
 - As mentioned earlier, key members of the SWIB have influential roles and ties within the community able to develop strategic partnerships. These board members will be requested to initiate a round table discussion to help identify how to strengthen the partnership between the various entities and WIA.
 - Economic Summits and New Business Development Conferences will be developed as a result of these partnerships.
3. Thoroughly assess modernization needs of the WIA program including upgrading facilities, technology, and providing the resources to build the capacity of staff to deliver professional services in a timely and efficient manner. Staff training and SWIB training are essential to the development of effective programs and collaboration with partners.
 - The current office facility was a government house converted in the late 90's into an office. This facility is no longer able to sustain WIA's current operations and client needs. A contractor will be hired to assess the building to address WIA's expansion needs, accessibility and most importantly client needs. The most feasible option between renovation and expansion or relocation will be determined and then followed.
 - Technology upgrades in the WIA office needs to be conducted. The office computer systems need to be upgraded and networked so the information management can be seamless; CNMI WIASRD can be accessed by all; the new CNMI WIA website can be housed; relevant and related work and client information can be shared amongst employees and clients, and most importantly, service provided to consumers will be improved.
 - WIA employees will be provided a professional development, training, or educational plan to build their capacity to deliver services in a timely and efficient manner.
 - Reorganize the CNMI Workforce Investment Agency to reflect the new vision of the WIA Board.
 - a. Reorganize the SWIB to include an Executive Level Assistant to support the board members and assist the board in the development of a reorganization plan as well as other duties.
 - b. Recruit full-time Information Manager, Counselor, Training Developer, Job Placement Officer, Planner, two additional Case Manager, and a Grants Writer.
 - c. Overall program (administration):
 - i. Organize functional staff working groups to increase staff efficiency in operations.
 - ii. Expand staff training to include training of those staff across agency lines that have similar jobs and/or responsibilities.
4. Continuous improvement of job, education, and training services delivery through strong partnerships among government agencies, and private business employers and CNMI workers.
 - Described earlier in Part I, sections B and C.
5. Coordinate and streamline all Federal and CNMI financial workforce investment support using the concept of user-friendly, effective and useful one-stop career centers for easy access to services provided by WIA, PSS, NMC, vocational, technical and entrepreneurial education, and business vacancies.

- A modified version of several one-stop concepts shown throughout the region and in several states will be researched, developed and implemented. Other factors associated with such activity can be found in section 5.A above.
6. Improve public information about and easy access to workforce development programs for the Commonwealths youth, aging, adult and displaced workers, and individuals with disabilities.
 - The WIA website scheduled to be completed in December of 2005 will be a medium capable of providing information about and easy access to workforce development programs. This website will be connected to all workforce investment stakeholders, partners, service providers and collaborators through links and dynamic web pages.
 7. Develop better ways to learn about, forecast, and prepare our workforce for the modern economy and to meet the needs of our existing economy as defined by CNMI employers.
 - Associated to section 5.A above, this priority will be brought to the attention of the members to develop such a system. A consultant or a partner agency will be hired to conduct the study.
 8. Support a major shift from government employment to private sector by fostering a strong, diverse and modern private economy that provides good wages, good working conditions and opportunities for advancement.
 - See section C below. The workforce system will realign itself with members of the private sector that are willing to provide jobs and occupations to CNMI residents that are competitive with the CNMI government. Studies on how the various wage tier systems in other pacific regions and states such as American Samoa and Florida can be implemented in the CNMI to achieve the goal.
 9. Advocate for better enforcement of laws and regulations supporting resident worker training and employment.
 - This will be done through our legislative members of the board. These members will create bills reflective of the current workforce needs and identify funding and look for alternative methods to support resident worker training and employment.
 10. Collaborate to address issues on transportation that keep people for accessing education and work opportunities.
 - Work with the CNMI Department of Commerce to assist in the process of providing a reliable source of public transportation.

C. Based on the State's economic and labor market analysis, what strategies has the State implemented or plans to implement to identify and target industries and occupations within the State that are high growth, high demand, and vital to the State's economy? The State may want to consider:

1. Industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs to the economy:

There are new opportunities to diversify and strengthen our economy. SWIB and WIA are developing a focused plan geared to identifying and supplying additional resources for preparing the CNMI's people to take advantage of those emerging opportunities. Industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs in the economy are Environmental/Bio Sciences; Telecommunications/Information Technologies; Health Sciences; Transportation Technologies; Culinary Arts, Restaurant Service and Management; Tourism and Hospitality; Eco-tours; Vocational Occupations and Agricultural occupations and services.

2. Industries that have a significant impact on the overall economy;

The CNMI has historically relied on three primary industries: government, garment manufacturing, and tourism, with the latter two as the driving economic force. Secondary industries include retail trade, construction, gaming, agriculture, and fisheries. Other than the relatively large hotels and garment manufacturers, the CNMI is an economy of small businesses mostly owned by foreign nationals. Each and every one of these industries have a significant impact on the economy. However, the CNMI's greatest asset is its natural environment and beauty. Businesses that will effect these assets will be limited.

3. Industries that impact the growth of other industries;

Industries that impact the growth of other industries within the CNMI are the ones that can export and import products to and from the CNMI. The CNMI and Pacific region depend heavily on shipping companies to bring in consumer goods. With the eventual loss of the garment industry, many of these shipping companies will raise the prices for products and services due to the lack of outbound cargo. This adverse effect will raise prices for consumer goods and eventually affect all the businesses throughout the CNMI and Pacific region.

4. Industries that are being transformed by technology and innovation that require new skill sets for workers; and/or

Industries that are being transformed by technology and innovation that require new skill sets for workers are film and media production and post-production, natural resource management using Geographic Information System (GIS) management systems, modernization of natural disaster tracking and information management, Hemodialysis technician training, and other major fields are now being sought out throughout the CNMI.

5. Industries that new and emerging and are expected to grow.

Industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs in the economy are Environmental/Bio Sciences; Telecommunications/Information Technologies; Health Sciences; Transportation Technologies; Culinary Arts, Restaurant Service and Management; Tourism and Hospitality; Eco-tours; Vocational Occupations and Agricultural occupations and services.

D. What strategies are in place to promote and develop ongoing and sustained strategic partnerships that include business and industry, economic development, the public workforce system, and education partners (K-12, community colleges, and others) for the purpose of continuously identifying workforce challenges and developing solutions to targeted industries' workforce challenges?

As mentioned earlier, CNMI SWIB has 19 board members with 10 members from the private sector. 9 members from government agencies to provide business-led but balanced collaboration in carryout activities to meet the CNMI vision. In the small islands setting comprising the CNMI such major representation carries significant influence. The board members are in frequent contact and often active in one or more of the many community groups and organizations such as the chamber of commerce, rotary, family gatherings, sports, government functions, other boards

and commissions, etc.

This broad array of community representation provides the CNMI WIB and WIA opportunity for widespread, coordinated and comprehensive action.

As Governor's appointees, SWIB members are advocates of the Governor's vision. The active and high-level membership carries the influence and ideas of the WIB into their extensive community networks.

Conversely, members have diverse views and relationships with a variety of other community groups and interests. This enables them to express various community perspectives as part of their SWIB contributions.

By using their networks, WIB members convince others in the community to become champions for various aspects of the Governor's vision.

Through the SWIB, WIA will involve and partner with many agencies, groups, associations, and individuals who work to identify workforce challenges, develop solutions for targeted industries' workforce challenges. Two main strategies that the SWIB and WIA do are to become members of these various associations, and collaborate with them to work towards a common goal. This common goal will be the improvement and effectiveness of the workforce investment system.

E. What State strategies are in place to ensure that sufficient system resources are being spent to support training of individuals in high growth/high demand industries?

SWIB and WIA are now using the Pilot Project System as a mechanism to provide resources to support training of individuals in high growth/high demand industries. Through the Pilot Project System, SWIB and WIA currently provide resources based on pilot project programs that are testing the best possible methods to satisfying the needs of both the individuals and high growth/high demand industries. Two of these pilot projects are:

- The Film and TV training program. WIA in collaboration with NMC and Talk-Story Studios designed an education and training program around the highly growing telecommunications industry. As mentioned earlier, telecommunications is becoming a major industry that the CNMI would like to develop. This pilot program will assist the WIB in identifying the areas of the sector that have the most potential.
- Hemodialysis Technician training program. WIA in collaboration with NMC and the Commonwealth Health Center designed a program to educate and train individuals interested in becoming a Hemodialysis technician. The CNMI was recently ranked number 3 in the world for adults with Type II diabetes, since this study has been conducted, the need for such technicians have been growing.

Other high growth and high demand industries can be identified through WIA's collaboration with NMC which presently offers instructional programs leading to a Baccalaureate Degree in Elementary Education and series of two-year Associate Degree in the following areas:

- Nursing
- Natural Resource Management
- Criminal Justice
- Film and Television Production

- Construction Trades
- Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
- Electrical Installation and Maintenance
- Liberal Arts (with emphasis on transferability to university)
- Emergency Medical Services
- Hospitality Management
- Business Administration, with an emphasis in one of the following:
 - Accounting
 - Business Management
 - Computer Applications
 - International Business
 - Office Technology Administration
 - Sales and Marketing

In several of the instructional fields mentioned above, the College also offers Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Achievement to students who successfully finish intermediate course work toward their associate degrees.

Beyond its traditional academic degree and certificate programs, the Northern Marianas College is committed to helping the CNMI develop and sustain economic growth through the NMC Community Programs and Services (COMPASS) Unit. The NMC COMPASS Unit facilitates lifelong learning by providing continuing education courses, short-term training programs, quality workforce education, and professional development training opportunities for government, business, industry, and other community organizations. The NMC COMPASS Unit's Vision is to "make NMC the center of community enrichment." Its unit's mission is to "provide affordable and accessible lifelong learning opportunities." Collectively, the six departments under the NMC COMPASS Unit strive to make NMC the center for learning by fostering the development of human potential, and the growth of public and private organizations through their various educational programs and services. The six programs housed under the NMC COMPASS Unit include the following:

- Adult Basic Education Program
- Community Development Institute
- Small Business Development Center
- Public Radio Station – KRNM
- University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
- Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Service

Through the Community Development Institute – CDI, the NMC COMPASS Unit offers lifelong learning opportunities, including workforce development training to upgrade public and private employee skills, as well as enrichment courses for everyone. The various programs housed under CDI include: Community Development Programs, NMC Employee Development Programs, Law Enforcement Academies, Personal Enrichment Programs, and Cooperative Extension Programs which facilitate baccalaureate and graduate degree programs in various fields of study in collaboration with U.S accredited colleges and universities. These cooperative agreements allow CNMI residents to earn a baccalaureate or even a master's degree from these U.S accredited institutions while continuing to live and work in the Commonwealth.

F. What workforce strategies does the State have to support the creation, sustainability, and growth of small businesses and support for the workforce needs of small businesses and micro-enterprises as part of the State's economic strategy?

SWIB and WIA are also using the Pilot Project System to provide resources to support the creation, sustainability, and growth of small businesses and support for the workforce needs of small businesses and micro-enterprises. SWIB and WIA currently works with the Northern Marianas College Small Business Development Center and the Commonwealth Development Authority to provide resources based on pilot project programs that are testing the best possible methods to support the creation, sustainability, and growth of small businesses and support for the workforce needs of small businesses and micro-enterprises. Two programs being tested are:

- The Film and TV training program. WIA in collaboration with NMC and Talk-Story Studios designed an education and training program around the highly growing telecommunications industry. As mentioned earlier, telecommunications is becoming a major industry that the CNMI would like to develop. This pilot program will assist the WIB in identifying the potential of participants to become entrepreneurs using this industry as a means of financial support.
- Boat Captain's License training program. WIA in collaboration with NMC and SBDC established this program to assist individuals interested in becoming a Boat Captain obtain their license. The CNMI is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, many individuals partake in ocean sports and boat captaining as a source of income. Licensed Boat Captain's earn a minimum of \$100 U.S. dollars per day.

G. How are the funds reserved for Statewide activities used to support and facilitate the achievement of the Governor's vision and address the national strategic direction identified in Part I of this guidance?

CNMI Governor Juan N. Babauta's Vision is for the CNMI to become a globally recognized workforce that is educated, trained, and skilled with the character and work ethics needed to foster and sustain a demand driven and robust economy. As the CNMI is aligning the Governor's vision to the national strategic directions, all funds will be dedicated to education and training to meet these objectives. In detail, up to 25 percent of the funds will be dedicated solely toward such purposes, however, in the event that the funds are lacking or will be needed in other areas, the SWIB and WIA reserves the right to reprogram funds to and/or from other sources.

H. Describe the State's strategies to promote collaboration between the public workforce system, education, human services, juvenile justice, and others to better serve youth that are most in need and have significant barriers to employment, and to successfully connect them to education and training opportunities that lead to successful employment.

SWIB and WIA will once again employ the services of a collaborative round table discussion to involve all members of the workforce system, government agencies, juvenile justice, and educational entities that are developed to better serve the youth and successfully connect them to education and training opportunities. This round table discussion will be implemented in the spring of 2006. A collaborative team including the Public School System, Northern Marianas College, the Department of Youth Services, CNMI Youth Congress, Members of several Youth-

ran organizations and WIA will be formed from the existing list of WIA partners and experts from each of the entities above will come together to help foster and train these high-risk individuals and move them in a positive direction. [Outreach to youth centers and community centers will continue throughout the year, providing a conduit between youth councils and State Board for programs relating to youth issues.](#)

Issues that will be addressed through the partnership are team building programs, building self-esteem, job search, work ethics, personal hygiene, grooming, resume writing, interviewing, training selection process, and cultural awareness.

I. Describe the State's strategies to identify State laws, regulations, policies that impede successful achievement of workforce development goals, and strategies to change or modify them.

SWIB and WIA strategies to identify the key laws, regulations, and policies that impede successful achievement of workforce development goals are to WIA will hire a consultant before December of 2005 to develop/strengthen policies and procedures to address the issues and other outstanding concerns as mentioned previously. The consultant will be asked to identify the barriers as specified in the Workforce Management Improvement Plan, and the Wage and Salary Review Board and come up with methods to address the following issues:

- The current level of our minimum wage, which is pegged at \$3.05 an hour;
 - A band-aid approach to improving this situation is that the CNMI Governor has issued an Executive Order requiring that all workers for businesses under contract with the CNMI government shall receive at minimum the federal minimum wage.
- Compensation levels and benefit packages amongst Public and Private sector employees.
 - Public sector employees have better compensation levels and benefit packages than private sector employees.
- Compensation levels and benefit packages between local resident workers, and guest workers.
 - Guest workers receive \$3.05 an hour plus paid benefits such as free housing, food, transportation, health care, utilities, garbage, and repatriation.
 - Local resident workers working the in the same position only receive the minimum wage of \$3.05 with no benefits.

In addition, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce will be consulted and will be asked to clarify its recommendation of a renewed consideration of a tiered wage system similar to the American Samoa and the state of Florida's model that would increase wages for classifications for which resident workers are qualified and available.d see whether achievement of workforce development goals are being impeded by current law.

J. If appropriate, describe how the State will take advantage of the flexibility provisions in WIA for waivers.

The CNMI will not be applying for waivers at this time, however, the CNMI reserves the right to employ its power to apply for waivers during the tenure of this plan.

VI. Major State Policies and Requirements. Describe major State policies and requirements that have been established to direct and support the development of a Statewide workforce investment system not described elsewhere in this Plan as outlined below.

Although WIA has been administrating services to clients based on the old JTPA policies, a fully modified plan will reflect to reflect WIA requirements, by the end of 2006, SWIB and WIA will employ a new set of State Policies and Requirements. Several components of the new state policies and requirements are currently being aligned with the national policies and requirements to ensure proper accountability and performance outcomes are being met. Futhermore, SWIB and WIA have formed the following committees to address such needs on Policy Management, Education and Training, and Marketing & Employment. Each committee will provide input and recommend suggestions and set performance measures to ensure that performance standards will be measured and met.

A. What policies and systems are in place to support information management, decision-making, integrated service delivery, and performance management? What policies and systems are in place to support necessary data collection and the appropriate tracking of participants, activities, and outcomes?

The CNMI does not have readily available policies to address the question above. A modified version is being used to collect information to feed into the Pacific WIASRD for reporting purposes. The SWIB Joint Committee on Policy Mangement and Education and Training will be devising a policy on maintaining a data collection system. Several regional entities and other state systems will be reviewed and a modified version of those systems will be employed in the CNMI. The SWIB will have a policy set on such system by December 2005.

B. What State policies are in place that promote efficient use of administrative resources to, eliminate duplicate facility and operational costs?

The CNMI is a Single State Workforce Investment Board. The administration of the program is run through a central office located on Saipan. On Rota and Tinian, WIA shares offices with the CNMI Department of Labor and employs only one individual on each island, however, information obtained or requested in these islands are still forwarded to the central office on Saipan for approval. Therefore, there are no duplication of administrative resources, and through collaboration, facilities and operational costs are kept relatively low.

Streamlining duplication of documents and records and to save cost, it is the practice of the WIA to ensure and monitor expenses. This will be added also into a new policy and procedure manual that will ensure maximum funding is allocated to training needs and education needs.

C. What State policies are in place to promote universal access and consistency of service throughout the jurisdiction?

At present, WIA runs an open door policy that provides opportunities for anyone in the community to apply for services. However, due to regulations, only qualified individuals that meet the requirements will be provided services.

In addition, given the fact that the WIA promotion and awareness of the agency's capability of providing assistance to almost all entities of the CNMI, collaboration of government agencies and private sectors are promoted through media and news release. The future of the CNMI WIA to invest portions of its funding is to provide a unique universal access to ensure all individuals in the business and community citizens are capable of accessing information anywhere that partners and stakeholders are located. This provides every opportunity for all to receive maximum information. An example of the medium to be used to provide such access is the WIA website scheduled to be completed by December of 2005.

Also related is the availability of WIA services on all three islands. The administration of the program is run through a central office located on Saipan. All Saipan staff are located together in one building. Tinian and Rota each have WIA staff officed within the satellite CNMI Department of Labor offices in order to provide needed liaison with main office based in Saipan and local services. This provides access of population centers to WIA services CNMI-wide. Continued improvement in developing true universal access and consistency of service to all WIA stakeholders is an ongoing endeavor.

D. What policies support a demand-driven approach, as described in Part I. "Demand-driven Workforce Investment System", to workforce development – such as training on the economy and labor market data for the workforce system at large?

WIA promotes itself as a partner to the private sector in ways of being members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, members of the Hotel Association and other smaller groups of association. Demand Driven is given the opportunity for business leaders to "take charge" and create efficient and effective measures of shaping the economy through resources and collaboration with the CNMI SWIB. It is in the interest of both the CNMI SWIB, Government, and the major stakeholders to shape our economy as we are facing difficult times at present.

As mentioned earlier, a new set of policies is being drafted to address such concept. However, the SWIB and WIA have been practicing such system for the past year. The demand-driven concept and the alignment between an entity's need for qualified human resources and WIA's ability to provide such resources has been recognized. The importance of recognizing such concept lies in the overall betterment of both the individual and the hiring entity. WIA invests its resources into preparing and placing individuals into jobs or careers that will improve the standard of living for the participant. This however does not happen unless the demand for such individual is available. Through partnership and maximized orientation, training, guidance and counseling, WIA will be able to provide such service.

Guidance on "demand-driven" services will be developed and incorporated in the new set of policies. In general, the CNMI is making the transition in focus from the government to the private sector and is beginning to implement a demand-driven ethic. Historically, the effort of case managers has been to attempt to find employers for job seeking clients based on the job-seekers' preferences. Suitable businesses are then contacted to let them know of client looking for employment at their company and forward their application. Interested companies are asked to partnering up with WIA to fund client training for in support of secured F/T permanent employment after 6 months. If training is not needed, job seeking clients are urged to apply directly to the company.

What is increasingly being understood is that the private sector needs to become the employer of choice, and in order to accomplish this the private sector must be engaged to define for the workforce system what their realistic needs are for the CNMI resident workers. While finding such suitable workers will be continued, it is increasingly clear that the entire system from school onward must be re-tooled to prepare CNMI residents to meet the needs of the private sector work place. In order to do this the SWIB is being entrusted to achieve this major course change.

E. What policies are in place or planned to ensure that the resources available through the Federal and/or State apprenticeship programs are utilized effectively and integrated within the larger workforce investment system?

The Federal and/or State apprenticeship program is a new program being explored by the CNMI. An initiation meeting was conducted with Guam Community College's Apprenticeship department, Northern Marianas College, as well as the U.S. DOL's Hawaii Apprenticeship office to work on the requirements for setting up such program in the CNMI. More meetings are being scheduled to create such program and finally implement it here. The target date for such implementation will be the summer of 2006.

The plan of ensuring Federal/State programs are utilized effectively is the CNMI SWIB members have met with the Department of Labor Hawaii's Apprenticeship Director. With this meeting, it is set to have the apprenticeship program incorporated into the Northern Marianas College to increase the interest of individuals with such programs that matches our available market. Certification of NMC through US DOL Bureau of Apprenticeship Training will provide international recognition of CNMI Apprentices after completion of NMC sponsored apprenticeships.

VII. Integration of One-Stop Service Delivery. Describe the actions the State has taken to ensure that partner agency programs are collaborating at the operational level.

The Wagner-Peyser Act is not applicable to the CNMI. As such the CNMI had previously opted not to establish a One-Stop delivery system to date as provided under the CNMI WIA State Plan for the Period July 2000 – June 30 2006.

The concept of the CNMI's One-Stop Service Center is one of the critical discussions that the CNMI SWIB has taken into account. There are many avenues of service delivery that is up for discussion; the concept of the CNMI One-Stop center is to have partners participate with the agreement of cost sharing and use of resources. The CNMI SWIB is working to promote this concept with main agencies such as OVR, CNMI DOL, PSS, NMC and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce. This will be included into the first two years that will be accomplished.

The One-Stop Service delivery model is also a new system that the WIA is working on creating for the CNMI. A team of SWIB and WIA members has been created to review and report on various models. Several options are being explored including a virtual One-Stop Service delivery model and/or a combined services model. Members of the SWIB visited the Guam AHRD/One-Stop Service Center to gather information and possible regional collaboration amongst the sister islands. The CNMI currently conducts a referral system through its partner agencies, however, after visiting the sites, the possibility of a one-stop service system may become a better alternative.

The CNMI is consistent with the requirement that these required programs must also be represented on workforce investment board.

There is currently an MOA between WIA, PSS, NMC that facilitates operational collaboration.

The coordination between WIA and Vocational Rehabilitation is accomplished through board level and staff level interaction.

The staff of the various CNMI agencies at the operational level are very limited in number and work in close coordination, functioning in a manner similar to ways envisioned under the one-stop program requirements.

A. What State policies and procedures are in place to ensure the quality of service delivery?

Again, new sets of policies are being drafted to ensure the quality of service delivery. SWIB and WIA have formed the following committees to address such needs on Policy Management, Education and Training, and Marketing & Employment. Each committee will provide input and recommend suggestions and set performance measures to ensure that standards of service delivery are being met.

No CNMI onestop programs are currently in place. As described above and in practice intake centers function as one-stop centers.

The guidelines of the following are in house policies, which are taken out of the 20 CFR.

1. Eligibility criteria on Adults/Dislocated and Youth.
2. Program structures

The implementation of policies for the following are to be completed in the first two years of the planning which will be assisted by region VI's technical assistance advisors.

1. Creation of the One-Stop Center
2. Creation of Eligible Training Providers Listing (ETPL)
3. Creation of the Local Master Training
4. Creation of Agriculture and Farmers
5. Creation of Business Entrepreneurship Program
6. Creation of Youth Building Learning Skills

B. What policies or guidance has the State issued to support maximum integration of service delivery for both business customers and individual customers?

The newly constituted SWIB with strong private sector leadership and participation is already having a positive effect of improved receptivity for business customer needs and the understanding the service for individuals must be improved across the board.

The SWIB continues to develop its authority and take action to understand and become involved in better service integration. In addition to regular oversight of the WIA program and efforts to coordinate among its constituent agencies and business affiliations, and has been previously mentioned, the SWIB will be developing and incorporating the policies that will ensure business customers and individuals will receive maximum service delivery within the first two years of the planning.

As mentioned earlier and throughout the plan, SWIB and WIA have formed the following committees to address such needs on Policy Management, Education and Training, and Marketing & Employment. Each committee will provide input and recommend suggestions and set performance measures to ensure that standards of service delivery are being met.

C. What actions has the State taken to develop and promote models and strategies for local use that support integration?

The CNMI SWIB has taken a positive role of becoming the sidearm of disability issues. With the strong collaboration with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, issues of employing people with disability and providing and sharing knowledge with other private business in regards to federal regulations and commitment for the individuals to be employed has stepped up even greater.

1. To promote more models, such important issues are the Victims of Domestic Violence, which greatly depend on their abusers and the abusers having the "Power and Control" technique.
2. To promote to reduce the dependency of Federally funded assistance of Food Stamps by building career minded goals that can be attainable to individuals.

Again, new sets of policies are being drafted to ensure the quality of service delivery. SWIB and WIA have formed the following committees to address such needs on Policy Management, Education and Training, and Marketing & Employment. Each committee will provide input and

recommend suggestions and set performance measures to ensure that standards of service delivery are being met.

~~D. (Guam only) How does the State use the funds reserved for Statewide activities (as per §129(b)(2)(B) and 134(a)(2)(B)(v) of the WIA) to assist in the establishment and operation of One-Stop delivery systems?~~

VIII. Administration and Oversight of the Workforce System, Including Service Providers

A. Provider Selection Policies

1. Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes that have been and will be used at the State level to award grants and contracts for activities under title I of WIA, including how potential bidders are being made aware of the availability of grants and contracts.

The CNMI Department of Finance Division of Procurement and Supply regulations govern all procedures for the award of contracts in accordance with CNMI law. Refer to Appendix 7 (www.dof.gov.mp) for details. The regulations provide for competitive bidding, request for proposal, expedited procurement, sole source, purchase order as allowable procurement methods.

The process in general requires formal newspaper advertisement of requests for competitive proposals and bids for contracts that would exceed \$10,000. Procurements in the below \$2,500 do not require formal advertisement; procurements between \$2,500 and \$10,000 require three vendor quotations.

Review committees evaluate and rank responses and interviews are held with respondents deemed potentially capable of accomplishing the work scope. An award is then made and a contract stating the scope of work, cost, performance period, deliverables and standard contract procedures including dispute and grievance procedures, etc., is routed for signature of Procurement and Supply, Department of Finance, Attorney General, Contracting Agency, Governor and Vendor. The vendor is then given a formal notice to proceed.

The award of grants, such as Title I of WIA, by the CNMI recipient agency to another CNMI entity between government agencies may be considered to be non-competitive and outside of the procurement process, in cases where the sub-grant, pass-through or other device is envisioned in the original grant award. This process is evolving to include third parties such as community-based organizations as a relatively recent occurrence and is executed via Memorandum of Agreement signed by the CNMI grantor agency, recipient organization, Department of Finance, and Attorney General.

Grants to third-parties and individuals are not frequent occurrences and the practice varies by agency but in general the process for sub-grant award is to publish newspaper advertisement announcing the availability of grants for a desired activity and to invite interested organizations or individuals to make a grant proposal. Selections are made by a review committee based on responsiveness of the proposal. Progress payments are made via purchase order or contract in accordance with a payment schedule.

2. Identify the policies and procedures for determining eligibility of training providers, including how historical and current performance information will be collected and used to determine continuing eligibility, and discuss any plans for improvement.

No formal policies and procedures for determining eligibility of training providers have been adopted for the CNMI as reflected in our previous state plan. Training is divided between

education and professional development and hands-on apprenticeship type of training in the general workforce. The SWIB and WIA currently rely on the CNMI Board of Regents policies on licensing of eligible postsecondary education and professional development training as a guide to determine eligibility. This policy can be found in Appendix 10. No formal guides have been established for hands-on apprenticeship types of training.

The availability of education and professional development training providers in the small CNMI setting is extremely limited and their capabilities are well known. The established educational and professional development training providers consist of the Northern Marianas College and Public School System in the public sector and the International Business and Professional College in the private sector. Their eligibility is in general based on their successful historic performance and their formal accreditation status set by the appropriate U.S. based accreditation standards, and respective board policies and procedures.

The Northern Marianas College is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges- (WASC). The Northern Marianas College, and the International Professional and Business College, a private training business, are licensed by the CNMI Board of Regents. New post-secondary and adult education training providers who wish to conduct business must gain approval from the CNMI’s Board of Regents for Post-Secondary Education, housed at the Northern Marianas College and receive a license to provide educational services in the CNMI. The Board of Regents would maintain performance information and consider it as part of the accreditation license renewal process.

As for the hands on apprenticeship types of training, many businesses and agencies are solicited to provide such training. Selection for such trainers are done on the basis of job or occupations available and as requested by WIA participants. Many of the WIA stakeholders participate in such delivery method.

From time to time new training providers emerge, whether by individuals with a particular skill or a new arrival, a small business with a service for sale, an organization addressing a community needs, short term workshops, etc. In order for them to conduct business they are also required to have a business license. Government acquisition of their services would require contract or purchase order in accordance with the through the CNMI procurement process as described above. The success rates would be maintained on file by the CNMI Procurement Division and be known to contracting. Vendor files are considered to be public information accessible by anyone upon request.

The decision to use their services would result from either a proposal solicited by a workforce agency, or an unsolicited proposal from an interested training service vendor. Proposals involving WIA would be reviewed by the WIA director and the SWIB and the board would decide whether to proceed with a procurement.

It will be necessary for WIA to establish an interagency working group and possibly engage legal counsel to develop prototype agreement forms and pursue interagency approval including the active involvement and approval by the Attorney General and Department of Finance.

8.1	The SWIB committee on Education and Training will develop linkages between the workforce system and the CNMI Board of Regents for the purposes of workforce training	03 / 2006
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	policy standardization and coordination.	
8.2	The SWIB committee on Education and Training will draft recommended policy and procedures for determining of <u>eligibility of workforce training providers</u> , benchmarks, performance measures and related standards for SWIB approval.	06 / 2006
8.3	Using SWIB-approved policy, the SWIB committee on Education and Training will inventory all CNMI training service providers in consultation with all workforce services, assess their performance suitability, advertise in newspapers seeking statements of interest for potential service providers, and prepare an <u>categorical list of approved training service providers</u> for board adoption. The list will include government, private, non-profit, faith-based and other community-based organizations. Categories of training services will include Adult, Displaced Worker, Youth, At-Risk, and other targetted groups. The Task will also identify gaps in available training services.	09/2006

3. Describe the procedures the Governor has established for providers of training services to appeal a denial of eligibility, a termination of eligibility, or other action by the Board or workforce agency. Such procedures must include the opportunity for a hearing and time limits to ensure prompt resolution.

The Governor, through the CNMI Board of Regents, has established formal procedures addressing determination of post-secondary and professional development eligibility, hearing procedures and decision-making time frames. Refer to Appendix 10. The SWIB will work with the CNMI Board of Regents to ensure necessary procedures are in place as part of Task 8.1.

4. Identify the criteria used to assess the type and availability of youth services and activities, including the criteria used to identify effective and ineffective services and providers of such services.

Presently there are no formal criteria in place within the CNMI SWIB. However, youth workforce services training providers presently consist of Public School System and the Northern Marianas Community College for alternative education ABE/GED programs. Their effectiveness is formally evaluated through their respective accreditation processes.

As part of Task 8.1–3 SWIB will identify the types of available youth services and activities and gaps in available services, coordinate youth workforce training policy and develop policy and procedures for workforce training effectiveness.

5. Identify the jurisdiction’s primary service providers and contractors, including those utilized repeatedly and consistently and those with contracts of a significant dollar amount.

The Public School System’s Advance Development Institute and the Northern Marianas Community College Adult Basic Education programs are the two primary providers for alternative education used by over 50% of customers. WIA utilizes NMC basically as sole source provider both for education and training for adults, dislocated and youth consumers and is the largest financial recipient.

<i>Service Provider</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>WIA Expenditure type</i>
Northern Marianas College Alternative - ABE	ongoing	Textbooks/Testing

Northern Marianas College Academic	ongoing	Tuition
Northern Marianas College Computer Literacy	custom	Significant (\$45,000)
NMC/ CHC –Hemodialysis Training	custom	Significant (\$64,000)
NMC Pacific Rim Film Academy	custom	Significant (\$256,000)
Public School System Advanced Development Inst.	ongoing	Textbooks
International Business & Professional College	custom	Tuition
CNMI Department of Labor	Empl. Svcs.	None
CNMI Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation	Empl. Svcs.	None
Pacific WIASRD Training Providers		

Other training providers for hands-on and apprenticeship types of training can be found in the Pacific WIASRD.

B. How will the jurisdiction build the capacity of service providers to achieve higher outcomes and to support performance excellence and continuous improvement of the workforce system? Discuss any strategies that are or will be used to assess and improve the capacity of service providers and contractors, including the development of appropriate policies and procedures.

The CNMI is beginning a process of strengthening its service provider system. This is being accomplished through the action of a newly appointed SWIB that is taking seriously its responsibilities to reform the workforce system and change its direction to a demand-driven system supporting private sector workforce needs.

Existing and potential service providers and their performance suitabilities will be determined through Tasks 8.1 – 8.3 as described above. The next step will be to ascertain performance improvements. This will be done though Task 8.4:

8.4	The SWIB will conduct a conference among all CNMI workforce service providers to increase mutual awareness of existing workforce services, determine opportunities for new service deliveries to meet identified gaps in CNMI workforce services, disseminate funding and resource availability information, and consider best practices from within and outside the CNMI. Consideration should be given to making this an annual conference to maintain currency.	12/2006
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C. Regional Planning

1. Describe any projects or strategies planned or carried out in concert with other Pacific jurisdictions to improve service delivery, increase access to needed services, and otherwise improve administrative and operational functioning of the workforce investment system.

The CNMI is one of several Pacific jurisdictions that comprise the US Department of Labor Region VI Pacific division. Through this it participates in all regional activities under USDOL auspices. This includes training, periodic conferences, the Pacific WIASRD database system, technical assistance for planning, financial management and others.

The Executive Economic Summits is the network for government and business leaders to address and monitor economic development in the Pacific region. Additionally, the Governors of the CNMI, Guam, Hawaii and American Samoa network through the Pacific Basin Development

Council which also provides liaison with a number of Federal agencies, universities, NGOs, consultants and other types of technical assistance providers. CNMI is also part of the important regional bodies including the Association of Asian Pacific Island Legislatures and the Pacific Islands Development Bank. The CNMI also collaborates with Guam WIA and Guam Community College.

Two example of regional planning is when the CNMI collaborated with the Guam AHRD to assist the CNMI in developing the Pacific WIASRD and National Emergency Grant. Guam AHRD through Mr. Jaime Rodriquez to assist and train our specialists in setting up the Pacific WIASRD. Since then, the CNMI is now able to report recorded information to USDOL through the Pacific WIASRD. In addition, Guam AHRD lent the CNMI Mr. Alfredo Antolon, Jr. to assist in the development and writing of the CNMI's National Emergency Grant. Through this assistance, the CNMI was awarded the NEG grant and is now capable of securing similar grants.

D. One-Stop Policies

1. Who are the key players and partners in the jurisdiction's workforce investment system insofar as the actual provision of services to individual and employer customers?

As mentioned earlier, the CNMI does not currently have a One-Stop Policy. However, efforts are being made to develop such policies. Key CNMI players that would be involved in the policy are the Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands. These two industry groups partner with the SWIB and a number of their individual business members partner with WIA to provide OJT and work experience training sites.

At the institutional level, as stated previously, the Northern Marianas College and the Public School system provide services to directly to individuals through alternative, academic, vocational and custom training programs. NMC also provides local small business support through the NMC Business Development Center. Other support is provided through the Community Research Extension Educational Services (CREES)

The International Business and Professional College is the major private technical services training provider

The Department of Labor, Division of Employment Services and Training is the key government agency involved with private sector job placement. It is the lead agency responsible for enforcement of resident worker employment levels within businesses that employ nonresident workers.

Other service providers for individual customers are the PSS Americorps, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Office on Aging, and Job Corps.

There are three agencies with economic development responsibilities. These are the Governor's Office, the Commonwealth Development Authority, and the Department of Commerce Economic Development Division. DOC also houses the Central Statistic Division.

Refer to Sections III.A.1 and A.2 for further details about the CNMI workforce system components.

2. Describe how the services provided by partners in the workforce investment system are and will be coordinated and made available to customers. Include how the jurisdiction ensures “seamless” service provision such that the services provided to customers flow clearly from one to the next without the customer having to overcome administrative hurdles during the transition from a service provided by one partner or entity, to a service provided by another.

Services are provided by partners in the workforce system through arrangements adapted over time. Under this system, WIA customers are referred to NMC/ABE or to PSS/ADI to acquire their equivalency diplomas, which is the basic requirement for employment. Customers with disabilities who are unable to fulfill this requirement are referred to OVR to receive assisted technology and to get them “job ready” and then are ready for WIA to refer them for employment. After customers attain their diplomas, they are now either ready for employment or ready to receive additional training for the type of job they are interested in. Their applications are forwarded to companies or government agencies for the interviewing and selection process.

This process will become more effective when the WIA online system is implemented. This is scheduled to occur in December 2005.

~~**3. (For Guam) How will the jurisdiction consolidate and otherwise utilize Wagner-Peyser Act funds to avoid duplication of core services. What strategies or plans exist to better align the services of the Guam Employment Service with Guam’s Agency for Human Resource Development?**~~

4. What strategies exist to identify issues or obstacles within the workforce system at large that either need or would benefit from technical assistance?

The CNMI recognizes that it needs to focus efforts in creating a true one-stop system that is useful in the CNMI context. The present strategy to consider technical assistance is informal consultation among SWIB and agency staff in a basic needs assessment process. The iterative process it has used in developing a strategic plan has been a first concrete step taken in needs assessment.

The SWIB is continuing to organize and work to determine what must to be done to transform the CNMI workforce system in line with the workforce investment act and current realities. This is made difficult by limited resources and the multiple responsibilities of an appointed but largely volunteer board and a WIA staff that is nearly overwhelmed by day to day responsibilities and program implementation.

The SWIB is presently planning a board, partner and agency staff retreat to take place following completion of the strategic planning process. This is considered necessary to enable the affected parties to step back and focus their attention on the needs identified through this process.

5. The WIA statute requires partners in the workforce investment system to collaborate in the development of Memoranda of Agreement (or Memoranda of Understanding), which would specify partner roles, responsibilities, and

relationships. A required element in these agreements is a description of the methods of referral that will be used to coordinate partner services.

a. Identify and describe the Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) that currently exist across partner entities. If MOAs have not been utilized or have not been utilized across partner entities, what other types of agreements exist or are planned to ensure partner responsibilities and the consistent and quality treatment of customers? If no formal agreements exist, how will the jurisdiction ensure the necessary coordination among partner entities?

There is one cross-partner MOA dated in 2002 between WIA, SWIB, Northern Marianas College, Public School System, Department of Labor and Immigration and approved by the Attorney General and the CNMI Governor. (See Appendix 4.). The Agreement enables WIA to accord training and employment services through secondary and post secondary institutions and other CNMI service providers and provides for agency-specific supplemental agreements.

8.5	The SWIB will determine needed changes with the existing MOA and need for additional MOAs between WIA and other CNMI entities to facilitate improvements in the overall workforce system and to implement system change arising from the the two year strategic plan. The SWIB Policy Management Committee will be responsible for completing this task. This task may entail procurement of legal services to prepare a suitable Agreement format that is workable in the CNMI.	12/2005
8.6	After determining needed changes and necessary additional MOAs The SWIB Policy Management Committee will form a working group with representatives from all agencies with which MOAs are necessary and together will prepare draft MOA forms and achieve consensus as to the text needed for approval of the MOA by each signator entity. The process must include key representatives from the Attorney General and Department of Finance.	03/2006
8.7	MOA will be signed by all entities.	06/2006

b. Identify and describe procedures to resolve impasse situations (or bottlenecks) in developing and/or adhering to written Memoranda of Agreement.

Section XI of the MOA specifies the procedures for resolving disputes. In brief the provision calls for the SWIB to mediate the dispute and give parties the opportunity to be heard, and then to issue a recommendation. Thereafter the Governor has final authority to resolve the issues.

Another major problem is the need for a stable funding agreement procedure such as for payments via MOA, indefinite quantities contract, open purchase order, etc., that results in prompt acceptance of eligible clients referred by WIA and ensures that timely payments to partner entities occurs smoothly.

8.8	SWIB will form a working group to work with Department of Finance to find solutions to known bottlenecks in the procurement and payment of services. This will need to be resolved before MOAs can be successfully developed.	12/2005
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c. Describe current methods of referring customers to activities and services provided by partner entities, including the jurisdiction’s plan for improving the current process.

The MOA (Appendix 4) referral clauses provides for

- WIA to initiate referrals of participants to the agencies indicating the name of participants and types of training to be provided;
- DOLI to provide participant referrals that lack minimum qualifications for training; and,
- NMC-Vocational Education to accept participants presenting a signed referral issued by WIA to receive the training services specified.

The referral process will be improved through Tasks 8.5 – 8.7.

The SWIB has determined that new investments in staff training, management, provision of networked computerized workstations within the WIA office must take place as soon as possible. It may also be necessary to increase case worker and case manager staffing. These steps should enable WIA to rationalize the overall referral process and greatly improve performance results.

8.9	SWIB Education and Training Committee will work with CNMI Office of Personnel Management to complete a staff development plan. The plan will identify the number of needed staff needed to implement the Two Year Strategic Plan, determine any needed CNMI and Federal (DOL & other) government approvals to achieve the staffing needs, and improve WIA services delivery. The plan will also identify training needs for staff development. SWIB Education and Training Committee will provide written instructions from the Governor to implement the staff development plan.	12/2005
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The next major need is to improve the intake, registration, client, service provider database and then to fully process, track, and close individual cases.

8.10	The SWIB Policy Management Committee will organize and conduct a workshop with WIA staff to chart an accurate and understandable flow chart of WIA office processes and how they can best function. The workshop will also define the need for computer workstations and software (including WIASRD), internet access, work space and other staff supports for an acceptable level of service for plan implementation.	12/2005
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8.11	The SWIB Policy Management Committee will approve a budget to implement staff supports identified in Task 8.10 and direct the Executive Director to complete the necessary procurement.	03/2006
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E. Oversight/Monitoring Process -- Describe the current monitoring and oversight process utilized by the jurisdiction. Include any formalized, written policies and procedures created to guide and otherwise support the process, as well as the following:

1. Describe how service providers and contractors are monitored. Specific information could include staff responsible, frequency of monitoring, areas of focus (e.g., financial, training quality), how results are communicated to the provider, how the information is utilized by the agency and what type of follow-up is provided. If the current process is not specified, how does the jurisdiction carry out its oversight role?

Although no formal policies and procedures have been adopted to oversee this process, the SWIB provides oversight of the WIA office and programs. SWIB meetings are being organized to include provisions for an executive director report to the board that will include financial and activity performance reports at each regular board meeting.

Procedures for service provider and contractor monitoring are contained within the existing MOA and standard provisions of individual contracts. In general, this is accomplished with on-site visits by WIA staff to ensure compliance of the training agreement monitors Service providers. On-site visits presently are expected to be conducted at least on a monthly basis. Both service providers and WIA clients are required to fill out weekly evaluation forms of the performances of both the trainees and the service providers. These forms are submitted to the Case Managers for further review. Financial and Training quality are determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the training plan and the numbers of participants involved.

The current MOA provides for:

- WIA to perform on-site monitoring to evaluate the progress of the training program.
- DOLI to provide monitoring on the hiring practices of qualified participants as mandated under the preferential hiring statute;
- NMC Vocational Education to track participants' progress towards completion of educational goals; and
- PSS-vocational education to monitor student attendance and progress in courses offered at the various public high schools.

2. Given the increased emphasis on accountability, what plans are there to modify and otherwise improve policies and procedures related to monitoring and oversight?

The monitoring process will be improved through the completion of Tasks 8.5 – 8.7 designed to revise and implement new MOA among all government workforce agencies.

8.12	The SWIB Policy Management Committee will ensure that the planned development of a comprehensive policy and procedure set contains locally appropriate monitoring and oversight processes. The process should provide for a general Agreement framework that can be simply and quickly executed.	12/2005
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F. Grievance Procedures. Attach a copy of the State’s grievance procedures for participants and other affected parties (including service providers).

The CNMI Grievance Procedure has been established in the current Five Year Plan. Pages 27–32 attached as Appendix 9.

G. Describe the following State policies or procedures that have been developed to further facilitate effective workforce investment systems

1. What performance-related information and other criteria will be used to select on-the-job and customized training providers? What performance-related information and other criteria will be used to select providers of work experience?

Criteria to select OJT and customized training providers has not been developed. Criteria has not been developed to select work experience providers. Successful on-the-job training performance is unsubsidized OJT and customized training continued employment after WIA’ customers are certified. Companies should continue in-house training to promote building job skills after WIA

exits the customers as should customers who need to be gainfully employed after 6 months to 1 year of training. Gainful employment should be the outcome for these customers. A formal policy will be developed by December of 2005.

2. To what extent does the jurisdiction use its authority to transfer up to 20% of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams to further support workforce system goals and to otherwise utilize limited resources efficiently and effectively?

The CNMI has not used this authority. The SWIB will be consulting with the Governor to advise him of strategies and ensure that this portion is used effectively.

3. What strategies or practices are planned or utilized to remain “current” regarding available community resources so that customers are provided with complete, accurate, and up-to-date information on a variety of social services and related resources while at the same time providing the State workforce agency with additional sources of referral that could improve and increase the range of services offered? If the jurisdiction has not engaged in any kind of formal “resource mapping,” how are possible opportunities to leverage limited resources identified?

The process of remaining current with regard to workforce service providers will be improved by successful completion of Task 8.4.

A number of CNMI agencies, including the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Developmental Disabilities Council have published service directories that detail the range of available services for their constituent groups.

8.13	Based on the results of Task 8.4, WIA will publish and disseminate a directory of all workforce service providers within the CNMI and a description of the any associated federal resources. The directory will show linkages or networks. The directory will be available on the WIA website and contain active hyperlinks to any CNMI and federal agency listed having online resources.	03/2007
8.14	The SWIB Education and Training Committee will develop a method to collect and disseminate the various training opportunities that are made available by CNMI government agencies and private sectors for the purpose of providing better access to workforce staff development training opportunities. This information will be made accessible through the WIA website to be established by December 2005.	06/2006

4. Identify any specific target groups that are or will be considered when designing and delivering services within the context of limited federal dollars, national strategic priorities, and State workforce goals. Include any policies or strategies related to displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, older workers, those with disabilities, and others with multiple barriers to employment and training. (including Non-traditional training for low-income individuals).

At present the CNMI and the SWIB has not taken a position related to displaced homemakers, non-traditional training for low-income individuals, older workers, or disabled individuals.

The SWIB recognizes that the CNMI is faced with a number of unique challenges and will need to exercise careful consideration of how CNMI resources can be expended to meet CNMI priorities in line with federal priorities.

The SWIB is currently concerned with preparing to meet the potential for displaced resident workers from the garment industry, and an emerging threat to workers in the travel industry related to reduced airline capacity.

The board also want to focus better on meeting needs of single parents and at-risk and out-of-school youth and find ways to prepare them and increase interest in stable, gainful private sector employment opportunities.

8.15	The SWIB Employment and Marketing Committee will establish a work group to identify new, mainstream, nontraditional or other opportunities for serving displaced homemakers, non-traditional training for low-income individuals, older workers, or disabled individuals	06/2006
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While not considered non-traditional training in the national meaning, the SWIB is looking for ways to make local cultural activities more entrepreneurial and better able to provide gainful self-employment. These include “talaya” (net weaving for fishing), Local herbal medicine, basket weaving, “mwarmwar” (floral head dresses) making, bead work, wood carving, fishing and agricultural.

8.16	The SWIB Employment and Marketing Committee will meet with the NMC Business Development Center and Commonwealth Development Authority to find available services to support improved livelihoods from traditional practices. The Committee will also consider ways to integrate traditional practitioners into the tourism workforce market.	09/2006
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IX. Service Delivery -- Describe the approaches the State will use to provide direction and support to the workforce system, including service providers and contractors, on the strategic priorities to guide investments, structure business engagement, and inform service delivery approaches for all customers. Activities could include:

A. Service Delivery Approaches and Strategies:

1. Describe the process by which an individual customer flows through the workforce system (i.e., client or participant flow), beginning with the intake process and through exit and subsequent follow-up. Include in the description of the process those services routinely provided and considered key or primary services.

The applicants complete an application with all relevant supporting documents and provide it to the intake clerk. The intake process lets the applicant know right away if they are eligible for services. After they are deemed eligible, the applicant is advised their application will require certification by a job development specialist then forwarded to a case manager. The case manager will inform the applicant the name of their assigned case manager and schedule an objective assessment interview to determine WIA service needs of the applicants.

The main service needed for most WIA clients is to acquire a high school diploma and how to enroll in an alternative education program to gain their high school equivalency. Although employment is the primary goal, most applicants need the high school diploma to be employed. After they enroll in an alternative education program, the case manager will follow up on employment opportunities once the client is ready to attain the diploma. A job development program is not currently made available for clients that are nearing high school equivalency and need soft skills development to get ready for the workplace.

The case manager follows up with clients before they graduate to transition them into the work experience program or into OJT or customized training with a prospective employer. The case manager also always promotes continuing education, such as pursuing postsecondary education part time and how to avail of all financial aid resources. The client can be employed full time receiving low wages while attending part-time at NMC to acquire an A.A. degree. Once the client has received WIA services and has completed the alternative education, has done the 6-month work experience program and is gainfully employed full time, WIA can exit their application. If the client continues to need training in particular programs to upgrade skills for work, then they are kept on as active clients. GED/ADI, the Work Experience Program (WEP) and the IBPC computer training use up most of the Youth and Adult Funding.

Current Practice

Intake Process:

1. Applicants complete an application form and submit all required and supporting documents to the intake clerk.
2. Application is then reviewed and Eligibility is determined.
3. When deemed eligible, the applicant is referred to the Job Development Specialist for Job Certification.

4. The applicant is then assigned to a case manager.
5. The case manager will then schedule an objective assessment interview and determine the WIA service needs of the applicant.

Objective Assessment Interview:

1. Applicant's education level is evaluated.
 - If the applicant lacks a high school diploma, they are enrolled in an alternative education program to gain their high school equivalency diploma or General Education Degree (GED).
 - While enrolled in an alternative education program, the case manager will follow up on employment opportunities to link the client to once the client is ready to attain the diploma.
 - If the applicant has a high school diploma, then the case manager will begin to seek employment opportunities for the client, or will be further assessed for post-secondary educational opportunities and/or skill development.
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Follow Up, Job Placement, and Exit:

1. The case manager follows up with clients before they graduate from the alternative education program or the post-secondary educational opportunity and/or skill development courses to transition them into the work experience program or into OJT or customized training with a prospective employer.
2. The case manager also always promotes continuing education, such as pursuing postsecondary education part time and how to avail of all financial aid resources. The client can be employed full time receiving low wages while attending part-time at NMC to acquire an A.A. degree.
3. Once the client has received WIA services and has completed the alternative education, has done the 6- month work experience program and is gainfully employed full time, WIA can exit their application.
4. If the client continues to need training in particular programs to upgrade skills for work, then they are kept on as active clients.

Proposed Practice

1. Applicants complete an application form and submit all required and supporting documents to the intake clerk.
2. Application is then reviewed and Eligibility is determined.
3. When deemed eligible, the applicant will be assigned to a case manager who will administer an educational, knowledge and skills assessment, to determine further skill development needs.
4. Upon completion of the assessment, the applicant is referred to a career counselor to determine his/her short and long term career interests.
5. The applicant will then be requested to choose several career exploration opportunities and is then exposed to these careers via demonstrations, video, job site visits, and other methods of introduction.
6. The applicant will be required to work with the WIA Job Development Specialist and/or Job training professional to refine the individual's communications, personality development, work ethics, resume writing, interview, and job searching skills.

7. Upon completion of the above steps, and if the applicant requires further educational development, the applicant will be referred to the Northern Marianas College for an alternative high school diploma (if necessary), or technical training in the career of choice or if qualified enrolled in post-secondary educational program in the field of choice.
8. The case manager will begin to seek employment opportunities in the private sector for the client.
9. The client will then be provided an opportunity to participate in a work experience program or be placed in a six month on the job training or customized training program with a prospective employer.
10. The client then exits the program if he/she is gainfully employed.

2. How will the services provided by each of the partners and entities involved in the workforce investment system be coordinated and made available? Include a description of the referral process in general and, in particular, the policies or provisions that direct providers of workforce and related services when their services are not available, appropriate, or they are otherwise unable to meet a customer's needs.

Formal Memorandums of Agreements will be made to coordinate and identify the roles of each respective partner and entity involved in the workforce investment system. Formal policies and procedural steps will be designed and implemented by the end of 2005. In the event that services may not be available to meet the consumers needs, WIA will work with regional entities to try to provide the much needed service for the applicant and others in similar situations.

3. How are WIA youth formula programs integrated into the larger workforce investment system?

The current practice for integrating WIA youth formula programs into the larger workforce investment system is done through the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program. Existing as well as new stakeholders, businesses, and industries are contacted to provide Work Experience and Training opportunities for qualified youths. Through these contacts, the participating youth are provided job descriptions, job-training plans, exposed to various occupations, and are provided an opportunity to explore and participate in a potential career field. Through this exposure, exiting high school seniors who have experienced the summer employment and training program have an insight on the job functions, culture, and working environment at the job placement site. Upon successful completion of the program and the availability of full-time positions and funding, several youths have been able to maintain a permanent position in the companies or agency that they received training in.

9.1	Youth formula programs will be diversified to provide continued training in various career fields and other professional development opportunities.	3 / 2006
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4. Describe the jurisdiction's approach to marketing and outreach to potential partners and consumers of workforce services. Include outreach efforts and approaches targeted to the following:

a) new businesses or industry sectors;

Since the CNMI is relatively small in size and population, the public, stakeholders, new businesses and industry sectors are well informed about the programs and services WIA has to offer. Marketing and outreach to potential partners and consumers of workforce services is done using the following mediums:

1. Media advertisements via radio, newspapers, television, direct calls, and by December 2005 a new website and emailing system;
2. Messages and information is spread through the Word of Mouth method, testimonials, and success stories;
3. Direct contact through introductory and/or outreach meetings; and
4. WIA created brochures, flyers, and other informational publications.
5. Partner and collaborator referral.

b) community colleges not currently involved or formally involved in the delivery of workforce services;

The Northern Marianas College (NMC) is the CNMI's only accredited post-secondary institution and the main provider for alternative and post secondary education, workforce development, as well as personal and professional development opportunities. The International Business & Professional College (IBPC) is a private provider for alternative education and training certification and is also involved in the delivery of workforce services. However, through regional collaboration with NMC, other community colleges such as the Guam Community College, and several of the community colleges in the the University of Hawaii system will be employed to conduct training services for WIA participants.

c) populations that may be specifically targeted by the jurisdiction;

The CNMI is a member of the Pacific jurisdiction partnership. Governor Juan N. Babauta of the CNMI, Governor Felix Camacho of Guam, President Tommy Remengesau of Palau, and Governor Robert Ruecho of Yap established a yearly summit entitled the Chief Executive Summit to develop strong bonds and commitment towards addressing the issues surrounding the Pacific Jurisdiction. Included in the meetings are methods of sharing resources and information towards meeting common goals.

Potential clients are a mix of ethnicities including Micronesian from FSM, Republic of Palau, and Republic of the Marshall Islands, indigenous Chamorro and Carolinians, and other ethnic groups.

Information is targeted at our transient populations from within the Pacific region and US mainland. One WIA goal is to target and provide basic employment survival skills that will benefit participants wherever they are.

Information is made available through radio, television, printed materials, news media, word-of-mouth, school presentations, community presentations, board members, chamber of commerce and other outlets.

d) out-of-school and at-risk youth, consistent with the Administration's national strategic direction; and

This summer 2005, DYS juvenile offenders and at-risk PSS students are being targeted, and plans call for 70% of the youth summer program funding to be spent to address this population. This means out of school youth (OSY) will have first priority to receive employment opportunities. Staff is currently working with Tan Holdings (non-apparel) to place those OSY and 18 and above to transition from the 6 week summer program into a 6 months program under the WEP and then to transition them into permanent full time positions to replace non-resident workers whose contracts have expired based on dialogue initiated at the SHERM workshop.

e) other populations (e.g., dislocated workers)

WIA staff connect those eligible clients who have been laid off the garment industry to assist with transition to other jobs immediately. The number of individuals qualifying for WIA assistance has been relatively low due to the fact that 90% of the garment industry workers are composed of guest workers. In addition, the case load and other projects responsibilities significantly limits the time to go to the employer to negotiate hiring these dislocated workers.

WIA takes a proactive approach to potential dislocation of workers by meeting with affected businesses and offering WIA assistance. This has been recently demonstrated after the sudden closure of two garment factories.

Information is also made available through radio, television, printed materials, news media, word-of-mouth, school presentations, community presentations, board members, chamber of commerce and other outlets.

B. Workforce Information – A fundamental component of a demand-driven workforce investment system is the integration and application of the best available State, local, and regional workforce information including, but not limited to, economic data, labor market information, census data, private sources of workforce information produced by trade associations and others, educational data, job vacancy surveys, and information obtained directly from businesses.

1. What workforce information is routinely collected by the State to inform and improve the workforce development system, including the design and delivery of program services?

As mentioned earlier, the CNMI currently lacks a single tangible system to identify all available federal, state, local and private resources. Many collaborations and partnerships occur in which resources immediately needed are shared between two agencies or partners at a time. The lack of a cohesive system prevents these resources to be shared amongst many agencies or partners at any given time. Common resources shared are human expertise, education, training, and access to markets, as well as access to information, facilities, and financial assistance.

What is readily available are the Ten and midyear census data that is collected and made available for policy development. The CNMI Department of Labor maintains statistics on number of nonresident workers employed by occupational job titles and industries. The Public School System annually reports student population both in public and private schools identifying numbers and ages of students and youth who have graduated or otherwise left the school system without graduating.

Limitation to data available are timeliness, accuracy, accessibility and capability to integrate the information in useful ways. CNMI would like to become part of the US DOL O-Net services.

CNMI struggles to find ways to formulate locally meaningful plans for the overall improvement on the collection and appropriate use of statistical information for planning and policymaking purposes.

2. Describe how the State currently and plans to utilize and integrate workforce information into its strategic planning and decision-making. Include a description of how the information is used for strategic goal-setting.

The state used the available information as references in developing this state plan. Goals were developed to address the needs for information management and data gathering. In relation, specific numbers of out of school and at-risk youth, dislocated workers, long-term unemployed and underemployed adult target group are not available, the WIA Board prioritizes and provides services especially for these target groups. With the available information on the number of potential participants within each target group the Board will reserve a percentage of each funding stream to develop programs for these target groups.

3. Describe how the State currently and plans to utilize and integrate workforce information into service design and delivery.

a. What policy direction or guidance is given to providers and contractors?

Due to the lack of formal policies and reliable information, the state has been relying on the old JTPA polices modified to meet WIA standards as the guide. NMC, IBPC and PSS design and provide formal training programs for the participants. WIA currently works with NMC, IBPC and PSS in providing formal training programs. WIA currently works with less than 20 private employers and government agencies in supported job training exclusive of summer training programs. All together there are approx. 200 WIA clients are involved with these providers. In addition there are 162 National Emergency Grant participants temporarily employed in government agencies.

Work experience, customized or on the job employment training programs are implemented through Assurance Letters. These contain position descriptions, training goal outlines, and performance measures as agreed between the employer, trainee and WIA. These include OJT for training clients, any needed training that WIA will provide.

The policy and guidance is provided with respect to available WIA programs, its parameters, goals and target groups.

All WIA activities are done in conformance with established guidelines, including 20CFR 652, CNMI laws, and other local regulations.

b. How is workforce information used to enlighten and improve career guidance?

Available workforce information will be used in the orientation process of new clients. This information will be made available to all clients with respect to proper career guidance and counseling, and employment opportunities. This includes existing vacancies, emerging industries regionally and nationally, vocational and higher education opportunities. Additionally this information can be of use in needs assessment and structuring needed training. Another approach being used by WIA is to use the workforce information from regional and state side agencies to provide career guidance and training plans.

c. How is information used to inform and direct case management, job development and related program functions, whether those activities are contracted out or provided in-house?

As mentioned earlier, SWIB will restructure the WIA office to make the program more responsive to available information. Case Managers will be requested to use available information to foster in-house staff information exchange. Staff development and other routine functions to improve overall case management will be conducted to reflect the information and needs of the community.

Under the Nonresident Workers Act, job vacancy announcements must be submitted to WIA and OVR prior to announcement for determination whether an existing or potential client is available for the position. Interested clients are informed of the vacancy and referred for job application.

4. Describe the approach the State will use to disseminate accurate and timely workforce information to businesses, job seekers, and employment counselors, in easy to use formats that are readily accessible and at remote locations such as libraries, schools, worksites, and at home.

As stated earlier, the CNMI is relatively small in size and population, the public, stakeholders, new businesses and industry sectors are well informed about the programs and services WIA has to offer. Marketing and outreach to potential partners and consumers of workforce services is done using the following mediums:

1. Media advertisements via radio, newspapers, television, direct calls, and by December 2005 a new website and emailing system;
2. Messages and information is spread through the Word of Mouth method, testimonials, and success stories;
3. Direct contact through introductory and/or outreach meetings; and
4. WIA created brochures, flyers, and other informational publications.
5. Partner and collaborator referral.

Also related is that the CNMI Department of Commerce publishes statistical reports that include workforce information and makes the information available through its statistical division website (www.commerce.gov.mp) The data is collected on a regular basis by the CNMI Department of Labor Division of Employment Services and Training. The publications are intended to be annual but it is not always possible to produce the information consistently.

Presently the latest published information is dated 2003 although it is believed that more current information is available by request from the statistics section or the DOL/DEST personnel. The information is also believed to be provided for use by and dissemination through statistical service sections of PSS, DOL/DEST, Vocational Rehabilitation, NMC and other pertinent service providers.

As CNMI progresses toward One-Stop types of services the WIA will develop practical means to make locally relevant information available to employment and employer clients.

~~**5. (For Guam Only) Describe how the State's Workforce Information Core Products and Services Plan is aligned with the WIA State Plan to ensure that investments in core products and services support the State's overall strategic direction for workforce investment.**~~

~~**6. (For Guam Only) What is the State's strategy for using the national electronic tools currently available, such as America's Career Information Network and Career Voyages? Describe how State workforce information products and tools are coordinated with the national electronic workforce information tools. If there is little or no coordination, explain why and discuss plans and strategies to better align the State and national systems.**~~

C. Adults and Dislocated Workers

1. Core Services.

a. Identify and describe the core services available for adult and dislocated worker customers.

The Workforce Investment Act requires that Core Services must be provided at all One-Stops. While the CNMI continues to progress toward realistic one-stop services it does provide and cover a range of services to the extent staff resources permit, such as:

- intake and orientation to CNMI workforce services
- eligibility determination
- initial assessment of skill and abilities
- access to job vacancy listings
- job search and placement assistance
- access to information on job skills requirements
- information on providers of vocational rehabilitation activities
- access to list of eligible training providers
- information on availability of supportive services

Additional services are provided on a case by case basis depending upon individual needs of the participant.

b. Describe State strategies and policies to ensure adults and dislocated workers have universal access to the minimum required core services as outlined in the WIA statute.

WIA collaborates with NMC, PSS and other educational institutions to provide professional career guidance and counseling services.

The main core service for adults to the NMC GED/ABE or PSS ADI programs. Since a high school diploma is required for 99% of the companies requesting WIA applicants, enrollment to get an equivalency diploma is the first step taken before or after the assessment. Where they go from here is determined by case manager after the assessment. The client will be identified as eligible for WEP or OJT after acquiring the diploma and application will be forwarded to a company or agency requesting for such applicants.

9.2	The SWIB Education and Training Committee will assess the best means for delivering one-stop services consistent with the island setting. The committee will be responsible for determining whether the existing facilities are adequate or must be replaced; whether a mobile (e.g. mini-van) or rotating (from community center to community center); or whether an on-line service network is appropriate.	6 / 2006
9.3	The SWIB will make a decision and work with the Governor to ensure implementation of best option resulting from Task 9.2	9 / 2006

~~**c. (For Guam Only) Describe how the State will ensure the three-tiered service delivery strategy for labor exchange services for job seekers and employers authorized by the Wagner-Peyser Act includes: (1) self-service, (2) facilitated self-help service, and (3) staff-assisted service, and is accessible and available to all customers**~~

~~**d. (For Guam Only) Describe how the State will integrate resources provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and WIA Title I for adults and dislocated workers, as well as resources provided by workforce system partners, in order to deliver core services.**~~

e. Describe the process of moving from core to intensive services, including any criteria utilized for decision-making.

After the client has been in GED or ADI for approx. 4-6 months and is committed to acquiring the diploma, case managers should start providing other core services such as job search techniques, soft skills training, job development, etc. to give the client tools to succeed in placement after the diploma is attained. There should be continuous core services provided to insure the client has optimized skills needed to find employment.

Intensive services are provided after an applicant is determined eligible for WIA assistance as determined through the intake process.

The nature of intensive services is determined by the specific needs of the applicant ranging from job referral, job placement, job training, and educational assistance.

The criteria consists of the individual's goal, occupational requirements necessary to meet that goal, educational requirements needed to meet that goal, and any specializations required by employers if any.

2. Intensive Services.

a. Identify and describe the intensive services available for adult and dislocated worker customers.

Intensive Services are available to adults and dislocated workers who have completed one Core Service and are still unable to gain employment OR who are employed and have been determined in need of services to get a better job in order to gain self-sufficiency. Intensive Services include individual career planning, resume preparation, job clubs, career counseling, internships, and comprehensive assessments. Basic education, ESL, and basic computer literacy are also sometimes considered Intensive Services.

In the CNMI intensive services consists of ABE, GED, ADI, computer literacy coursework provided by NMC and IBPC through an MOU.

Intensive services include the work experience program where the client is placed for training at the place of business with the condition that after 3-6 months of training and good performance, client will have a permanent full time job. The case manager requires a monthly assessment from the trainee and the supervisor to track performance. OJT is the same, 6 months is used as training with the intent of a permanent full time position after that. Customized training is like OJT with the same objective in mind.

b. Describe State strategies and policies to ensure adults and dislocated workers who meet the criteria in §134(d)(3)(A) receive intensive services as defined.

In the absence of a one-stop career center at present it is the practice of the CNMI WIB to provide intensive services for those unable to obtain employment through core services to eligible individuals through collaboration with other agencies including PSS ADI, and the NMC ABE and GED programs.

c. Describe the process of moving from intensive to training services, including any criteria utilized for decision-making.

In the CNMI once intensive services is completed, individuals move on to training services. NMC GED/ABE and PSS/ADI are core services. IBPC and NMC CDI computer literacy are intensive services. In CNMI intensive and training services can be concurrent.

A client could be enrolled in IBPC and working full time under our work experience or OJT program. There are clients who find work on their own and receiving intensive services. There are clients who are working full time and receiving core services.

3. Training Services.

a. Identify and describe the training services available for adult and dislocated worker customers.

Training Services are available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who have completed one Intensive Service and still can not obtain employment leading to self-

sufficiency. To access training, a client must demonstrate possession of the necessary skills to complete a training program.

CNMI provides work experience program, customized training program and the on-the-job training program. In addition the CNMI WIB is expanding the training services in collaboration with the Bureau of Apprenticeship program to be implemented in the CNMI.

b. Describe the Governor's vision for increasing training availability, access and opportunities for individuals including the investment of WIA Title I funds and the leveraging of other funds and resources.

i. Describe innovative training strategies used by the State to fill skill gaps.

Innovative training strategies used to fill skill gaps are done through the employment of Pilot Project programs. As mentioned earlier, the pilot programs are used to determine the best methods of training to fill skill gaps. Other methods are:

- Government and private sector employees encouraged and supported in their training needs through the CNMI Postsecondary Financial Assistance funded through local appropriations.
- WIA provided customized training for allied health specialists needed for new medical facilities currently under construction. This will provided local trained employees when the facilities open and minimized or eliminate need for employment of nonresident workers. Other areas of concentration are construction trades, and the film and television academy.
- Recently CNMI has begun to focus on the Junior State Achievement program. One major hotel has donated \$50,000 to support distinguished CNMI youth who have qualified to attend JSA programs in prestigious US universities. The US DOL has also just approved supports for an additional group of CNMI Youth eligible under WIA guidelines.

ii. Describe strategies and approaches used by the State to focus training resources on high-growth, high-demand occupations. (Include the jurisdiction's plan for committing all or part of WIA Title I funds to training opportunities in high-growth, high-demand, and economically vital occupations.)

CNMI strategy is to work through with NMC and IBPC and to take advantage of unique training opportunities as they arise. This will be done through pilot programs as well. As mentioned earlier, pilot programs are already being implemented to focus on training resource on high-growth, high demand occupations.

iii. Describe the State's current or planned use of WIA Title I funds for the provision of training through apprenticeship.

CNMI will use WIA Title 1 funds to assist in the set up of a US DOL Bureau of Apprenticeship Training certification system for the CNMI. In addition, WIA will collaborate with NMC to maintain such program.

iv. Describe any strategies to engage faith-based and community-based organizations, including any planned use of WIA Title I funds to support the incorporation of such entities into the State's overall training strategy.

WIA is open to working with any faith-based and community organization and currently collaborates with the Ayuda Network as a member of the SWIB. Engagements with any suitable service provider would be considered through written proposals to the WIA Board. WIA is presently considering a proposal from the Saipan Chamber of Commerce for the provision of one-stop service center. These organizations can also be considered for custom training services where appropriate. Community Youth Centers are also being considered as WIA one-stop centers. WIA will be collaborating with the community youth centers to offer WIA services to all qualified youth and future clientele.

v. Describe how adult and dislocated worker customers obtain access to training services, including any criteria used for decision-making.

WIA workforce services are available to any eligible clients. Information about training services is available throughout the CNMI workforce system, and interested applicants access the service gateway through the WIA office or outreach locations when needed.

c. On-the-Job (OJT) and Customized Training. Based on the outline below, describe the State's major directions, policies and requirements related to OJT and customized training.

i. Describe the Governor's vision for increasing training opportunities to individuals through the specific delivery vehicles of OJT and customized training.

As stated previously and through the Governor's administration, the CNMI is positioning itself as a regional education and training center. The Governor continues to promote activities and provide resources that will allow the workforce to be educated and trained to exceed the expectations of the highly dynamic and rapidly changing business environment. Providing private business leaders the opportunity to be involved with the CNMI SWIB and WIA has greatly expanded by support from agencies within the office of the Governor. This also strengthens the partnership of both public and private leaders. Although, more collaboration from business leaders to become stakeholders of WIA will be implemented, the CNMI SWIB will continue to provide the awareness to all private and public stakeholders.

ii. Describe how the State:

• Identifies OJT and customized training opportunities;

The state uses the available workforce information to contact business customers to inform them of workforce services and ascertain whether the OJT and customized training opportunities may exist with the employer worksite. This also provides an opportunity to discuss the individual business and general industry needs that can be addressed through the workforce system.

This process provides businesses an opportunity to tap first hand training and other needed resources provided by WIA through client-based improvement through training and education opportunities. By ascertaining business interest and commitment to provide the training, this also provides opportunity for clients to assess and understand more of the employer needs.

In addition, the state develops pilot programs based on the high-growth, high-demand, new and emerging businesses and industries to create OJT and customized training opportunities.

• *Markets OJT and customized training as an incentive to untapped employer pools including new business to the State, employer groups;*

As stated earlier, the CNMI is relatively small in size and population, the public, stakeholders, new businesses and industry sectors are well informed about the programs and services WIA has to offer. Marketing and outreach to potential partners and consumers of workforce services is done using the following mediums:

1. Media advertisements via radio, newspapers, television, direct calls, and by December 2005 a new website and emailing system;
2. Messages and information is spread through the Word of Mouth method, testimonials, and success stories;
3. Direct contact through introductory and/or outreach meetings; and
4. WIA created brochures, flyers, and other informational publications.
5. Partner and collaborator referral.

As the new vision of “Demand Driven” is introduced, associations such as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Island will become the marketing support group by encouraging members to be a part of the stakeholders.

Businesses that become stakeholders will be recognized by award incentives and publications of their outstanding support for employing above the 20% requirement enforced by the Department of Labor. By providing these incentives, a commitment of growth within the economy will ensue.

• *Partners with high-growth, high-demand industries and economically vital industries to develop potential OJT and customized training strategies;*

Again, and as previously stated, the state develops pilot programs based on the high-growth, high-demand, new and emerging businesses and industries to create OJT and customized training opportunities. By identifying these high-growth, high-demand industries, the SWIB would be able to enter partnerships that provide pilot programs and solution-based programs to become effective and efficient to support the industries demand.

• *Taps business partners to help drive the demand-driven strategy through joint planning, competency and curriculum development; and determining appropriate lengths of training, and*

Existing SWIB relationships, such as the participation of the Chamber of Commerce as a SWIB member, provide for a built-in partnering that advances the demand-driven strategy among the SWIB and its interrelationships with the larger community.

The CNMI typically involves the business in any number of boards and commissions, including the CNMI Board of Regents governing the Northern Marianas College, Public School System,

The SWIB plans to provide orientation and service information that will encourage business partners in the planning process of employment with collaboration of professional institutions to provide the curriculum development and the appropriate length of training.

• Leverages other resources through education, economic development and industry associations to support OJT and customized training ventures.

There has been a recent trend in providing internships within government agencies such as the Office of Public Auditor, the Commonwealth Development Authority and the Marianas Visitors Authority. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has also been offering a summer internship program as well as scholarship opportunities for staff to obtain master's degrees. While these are not private sector jobs, they are in important government agencies with reputation for great service and well-established relationships with education, economic development and industry associations.

d. Work Experience. Based on the outline below, describe the State's major directions, policies and requirements related to Work Experience.

i. Describe the Governor's vision for increasing training opportunities to individuals through the specific delivery vehicle of Work Experience.

As stated previously and through the Governor's administration, the CNMI is positioning itself as a regional education and training center. The Governor continues to promote activities and provide resources that will allow the workforce to be educated and trained to exceed the expectations of the highly dynamic and rapidly changing business environment. The vision of the Governor of increasing training opportunities for those who have little skills or no skills would be to expand the training provided by the institutions that can provide and work with private businesses to identify job opportunities and skills needed to fulfill employment. By providing such opportunities, the Governor ensures all CNMI residents that are qualified for WIA funding stream will also benefit from this training. Again, this can be done through pilot programs and other solutions based programs.

ii. Describe how the State:

• Identifies Work Experience opportunities;

The state identifies work experience opportunities in three ways. The primary way is for individual clients to work through case managers to define desired career goals and for case managers to seek out appropriate opportunities. The second way is for private providers to identify their needs and to seek out appropriate applicants through agency contacts and public advertisements. The third way is to identify large populations that would benefit from a work experience program, such as displaced homemakers, and to target the population by developing appropriate opportunities.

• Markets Work Experience as an incentive to untapped employer pools including new business to the State, employer groups;

WIA has established itself as the referral agency of the CNMI. Through the referrals from the Department of Labor, word of mouth, and various written and oral advertisements WIA has tapped the untapped employer pools. Providing employers with individuals whom have very

limited skills, we encourage the growth and relationship between employer and employee to bridge the gap of having training conducted by the employer.

- ***Partners with high-growth, high-demand industries and economically vital industries to develop potential Work Experience strategies;***

The SWIB along with Staff of WIA are looking into new investors to arrive in the CNMI that are likely to be high-demand, high-growth and economically vital. The main method used is through the pilot program system in which industries have the opportunity to work and train with WIA clients. Information of all business ventures will be assisted through the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and the Department of Commerce. The visits will most likely be conducted by the Governor and communicated through WIA and State Board members.

- ***Taps business partners to help drive the demand-driven strategy through joint planning, competency and curriculum development; and determining appropriate lengths of Work Experience activities, and***

WIA is able to tap partners and associates such as Saipan Chamber of Commerce, NMC, and SHRM memberships to help develop and determine appropriate lengths of activities under WIA. Involvement of the Chamber and other associations pertaining to employment and job skills will greatly enhance the understanding of how to create effective program tailored to those specific industry. The method used will be through round table discussions and summits.

- ***Leverages other resources through education, economic development and industry associations to support Work Experience.***

Through various MOU's and MOA's with different agencies (PSS, NMC, etc.) WIA is able to look to these agencies when WIA alone is not able to provide all the necessary services needed by an individual. Other resources to be identified are the agencies that are already funded to coincide training services that are similar to WIA training that do not need to be duplicated.

4. Service to Specific Populations.

a. Describe the State's strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the State's workforce investment system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, women, minorities, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals and people with disabilities.)

To ensure a full range of employment and training programs and services, the SWIB is developing policies to ensure that what is available on the island of Saipan is also available on the islands of Tinian and Rota. Also staff members of WIA participate in community information sessions, local news releases, and TV ads.

b. Describe the State's strategy for integrating and aligning services to dislocated workers provided through the WIA rapid response, WIA dislocated worker, National Emergency Grants (NEGs) and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

programs. Does the State have a policy supporting co-enrollment for WIA and TAA? Does the State have a policy supporting co-enrollment for WIA and NEG participants? If co-enrollment is not a specific strategy utilized to leverage minimal resources, how does the State assure the full range of possible services to dislocated workers?

The CNMI recently applied for the National Emergency Grant to assistance in natural disaster. By knowing more of the application process, we can prepare more of our dislocated workers to temporary employment through these funding. Policy to support co-enrollment will be strengthened further within the first two-years. The Governor and the SWIB will be working to ensure that the agencies within the Administration will identify all resources and to implement these resources into the policy.

c. How is the State's workforce investment system working collaboratively with business and industry and the education community to develop strategies to overcome barriers to skill achievement and employment experienced by the populations listed in paragraph (a.) above and to ensure they are being identified as a critical pipeline of workers? (Include specifically how the jurisdiction is working collaboratively with community colleges.)

This has been started in 2002 and dubbed as the Workforce Management Improvement Plan. NMC, WIA and Business industry leaders that collaborate with the SWIB will maximize all potential avenues to ensure that the industries identified will coincide with the education training needed to prepare the workforce for employment. The community to avail to such programs and providing the awareness to individuals of low-income families will increase the responsibility of both private and public sectors to work together. An update of the Workforce Management Improvement Plan will be conducted by the end of 2006.

d. Describe how the State will ensure that the full array of One-Stop services are available to individuals with disabilities and that the services are fully accessible.

The State's responsibility pertaining to individuals with disability will be to provide every opportunity for agencies and stakeholders to better understand how individuals with disability can contribute to the economy as well as to provide a community support to families of disability. The CNMI will strengthen this with identifying the business leaders that support and believe in individuals with disability can contribute to the local economy. One-stop services will be able to disseminate information to employment as well as educational needs.

The CNMI Developmental Disabilities Council provides for self-advocacy training that is structured to inform the individual and families the range of available services and what is needed to fully avail of the services by individuals with disabilities. The DD community is also working towards similar one-stop centers where needed services can be found to minimize the confusion and difficulties of obtaining support services.

e. How will the State ensure that the remediation services and activities are sufficient in terms of preparing citizens for further training or jobs in demand occupations?

The State will ensure that services and training activities are sufficient by working along with the private business and identifying the capability of the industry needs. Business leaders and the SWIB will be working to determine the amount of training and individuals needed for the industry. By having the business leaders become more involve in the participation of workforce employment, this will ensure the state to view and monitor the local workforce that is needed.

5. Priority of Service

a. What procedures and criteria are in place for the workforce system to give priority of service to public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals for intensive and training services if funds for adult employment and training activities are determined to be limited?

Currently, a good portion of WIA's main promotions are targeted towards these clientele. WIA works cooperatively with agencies that provide public assistance to low-income individuals and request for referral of these clients to WIA are being made. Although no formal procedures and criterias have been made, WIA will involve these agencies to develop them.

The WIA has been working with the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs that assist in their program to provide public assistance to low-income individuals and is collaborating with the WIA of ensuring their recipients are also provided the opportunity to avail to the program by orientation and informational services during their bi-weekly meetings with the recipients.

b. What policies and strategies does the State have in place to ensure that, pursuant to the Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law.107-288), that priority of service is provided to veterans (and certain spouses) who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for all employment and training programs funded by the U.S. Department of Labor?

No formal policies and strategies have been put in place to address such act. However, the State has been in compliance with the PL 107-288. In addition, the SWIB is aware of the continued support of the U.S. in Iraq and as the CNMI citizens that have also gone to war, the state and the lawmakers have ensured that returning soldiers whom are employed within the public and private sector will retain his or her employment. The Legislature; CNMI Department of Labor; The Office of Military and Veteran Affairs are working with each other to provide the services needed. Other services are being looked into to serve spouses of those in the military.

c. What policies and strategies does the State have in place to ensure that WIA Title I youth funds are utilized efficiently and effectively throughout the program year (and not dedicated exclusively or primarily for summer programs)?

Again, no formal policies and strategies have been adopted to reflect such goal, however, the State and the Governor has appropriated some local funding through public law to provide assistance to youth activities and WIA activities. The SWIB is working to maximize all local funding for meeting requirements of the Title I Youth Funds. Given that policies will need to be placed on this issue, the SWIB will be addressing this with the Governor. As mentioned earlier, afterschool programs and year-round education and training opportunities will be provided.

D. Rapid Response. Describe how Rapid Response services are provided with the funds reserved under section 133(a)(2).

1. Identify the entity responsible for providing Rapid Response services, including contracted relationships. Describe the services provided and how Rapid Response activities involve Chief Elected Officials. If Rapid Response activities are shared or contracted out, describe the functions of the State workforce agency relative to contractors and other entities.

The Workforce Investment Agency and the State Workforce Investment Board serves as the direct guidance to assist and provide to the Governor in notifying him of Rapid Response funds in cases of plant closures, Mass lay-offs and Natural Disasters. The WIA office carries this responsibility and provides the assistance.

The CNMI Department of Labor which monitors and direct guidance of possible plant closures and mass lay-offs would be notifying all agencies of possible businesses to close down. In turn, the Workforce Investment Agency would be alerted and given the information and work closely with the department.

2. Describe the process involved in carrying out Rapid Response activities.

a. What methods are involved in receiving notice of impending layoffs (include WARN Act notice as well as other sources)?

Because of the close collaboration with the government agencies, notices of impending layoffs would be through direct communication and partner agency meetings.

b. What efforts are made to ensure that rapid response services are provided, whenever possible, prior to layoff date, onsite at the company, and on company time?

Again, the CNMI has utilized the rapid response once due to Super Typhoon Chaba, in regards to mass layoffs in Garment and other major industries, the majority of workers are non-resident workers, which the WIA office will not provide assistance to. The CNMI is addressing this issue of non-resident workers and to continuously get trained locals to fulfill these positions.

c. How is the business community engaged in Rapid Response services? What is the jurisdiction's strategy for ensuring that the business community communicates with the State workforce agency prior to business closures and/or layoffs?

There is no jurisdiction-wide rapid response service. The Garment Industry Association membership has agreed to notify the CNMI government in advance of future garment plant closures.

d. What services are included in Rapid Response activities? Does the Rapid Response team provide workshops or other activities in addition to general informational services to affected workers? How do you determine what services

will be provided for a particular layoff (including layoffs that may be trade-affected)?

This is an area that would be in the working of the first two-years. By knowing the number of non-resident workers that each industry has, the SWIB and the WIA will be working with the industry leaders to have an effective strategy of replacing and preparing local workforce in those industry.

3. How does the State ensure a seamless transition between Rapid Response services and One-Stop activities for affected workers?

As stated above, the CNMI SWIB will be implementing several strategies of having an effective One-Center. The WIA carries the responsibility of representing the Governor and the SWIB in ensuring a seamless transition between Rapid Response workers and agencies that have possible employment opportunities.

4. Describe how Rapid Response functions as a business service? Include whether Rapid Response partners with economic development agencies to connect employees from companies undergoing layoffs to similar companies that are growing and need skilled workers. How does Rapid Response promote the full range of services available to help companies in all stages of the economic cycle, not just those available during layoffs? How does the State promote Rapid Response as a positive, proactive, business-friendly service, not only a negative, reactive service?

Rapid Response as a business service provides employers to avail to the services of affected workers to both view possible employees and have the opportunity to receive training to secure retention. As stated above, this method has not been done for mass layoffs, but through natural disaster, which occurred recently. The SWIB and the Private Business Stakeholder will work on to create a strategy that upon the need to utilize rapid response in the near future, the implementation of transition to employment will be included.

5. What other partnerships does Rapid Response engage in to expand the range and quality of services available to companies and affected workers and to develop an effective early layoff warning network?

With the effect workers and for WIA to expand the services, the partnership of educational institutions will be included to provide quality services that can ensure businesses are aware of what is provided to affected workers in the transition stages.

6. What systems does the Rapid Response team or apparatus use to track its activities? How does this system inter-relate with the system used to track WIA participants, NEG participants, and Trade program participants?

Both Rapid Response team and the WIA Staff work to identify those affected by unemployment and agencies that are hiring create effective measure to ensure possible employment requirements are met. By involving both the public sector and the private sector of potential qualified individuals ready for employment, the teams are given the priority of from the department of labor to collaborate and provide first hand interviews to potential employers.

7. Are Rapid Response funds used for other activities not described above?

The rapid response funds have not been used as of this report. The NEG funding is used to also provide assistance to participants to further their skills.

E. Youth. ETA's strategic vision identifies youth most in need, such as out of school youth and those at risk, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents, and homeless youth as those most in need of service. State programs and services should take a comprehensive approach to serving these youth, including basic skills remediation, helping youth stay in or return to school, employment, internships, help with attaining a high school diploma or GED, post-secondary vocational training, apprenticeships, non-traditional training, and enrollment in community and four-year colleges.

1. Describe the general flow of WIA youth program participants beginning with intake through and including exit and follow-up. Pay particular attention to those program design components not included in the previous description of customer flow offered in Section IX.A.I. of the strategic plan.

From the intake process, they are treated as any other applicant. They will go through the same process to ensure eligibility. Depending on the applicant, in school or out-of-school youth will be given different services. The concentration for the CNMI SWIB would be to provide programs for out of school youth to assist them in strengthening their academic skills and provide employment to ensure that the at risk youth do not fall out of the radar screen.

The in school youth, are not exited until the one year follow-up is performed and the youth is following their chosen career path. As for the out of school youth, usually they are placed on plan gaps in order for them to complete their alternative high school. They will be exited once they have completed the objective goals and follow up is conducted once a month.

2. Describe the jurisdiction's youth program design framework, including approaches and related policies regarding assessment, remediation and any minimum requirements or criteria to access all or specific youth services.

The framework is to provide services with out of school youth opportunities to excel and achieve desired goals that are attainable. The assessment is a partnership of the educational institution and the Division of Youth Services in provide guidance to WIA as to the capability of effective training programs.

3. Describe the jurisdiction's strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need as described above. Include any State requirements and activities to assist youth who have special needs or barriers to employment, including those who are pregnant, parenting, have limited English proficiency, or have disabilities. Include how the State will coordinate across entities responsible for workforce investment, foster care, education, human services, juvenile justice, and other relevant resources as part of the strategy such as faith-based and community-based organizations.

The SWIB will improve on the services by working along side the educational institution to strengthen the Guidance and Counseling portion. WIA staff must also be trained on counseling methods and guidance. By this we are able to understand more of the type of assessment needed and the capability of paving the way to success. Tools needed to be trained are the basic and occupational skills, work experience skills, support services and developmental needs.

Academic and Occupational learning should be included by providing business partners to talk to youth and to encourage youth to strengthen their knowledge on Math and English skills. Invite business partners to conduct job shadowing and mentoring to have the youth in the environment of career.

Summer Employment and year round the business partners to create and assist in Job Fairs of the CNMI will improve work experience. By identifying all industries, this enables a youth to think for themselves as to the career of their choices.

4. To what extent, if at all, has the jurisdiction referred youth program participants to the Job Corps facility located in Hilo, Hawaii? Discuss any plans to incorporate Job Corps into the jurisdiction's overall strategy for serving youth.

The CNMI has been placing individuals with interest to Job Corps program. The SWIB truly believes that the program has great benefits to those individuals that have no experience and that the program has indeed been committed to CNMI. The number of youths is limited by the available slots for CNMI. To overcome this, the CNMI wants to work with the states of California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington and try to secure additional slots.

The CNMI SWIB is also working to increase the allowed participants for the CNMI and is collaborating with the Hawaii Job Corps.

5. Describe how the jurisdiction plans to utilize WIA Title I youth funds, including those reserved for Statewide activities, to support the vision for serving youth both efficiently and effectively so that limited WIA resources are maximized. Examples of activities include:

a. How funds will be used to promote cross agency collaboration

Funds to be utilized would be for cross agency training and partnership. This would a more comprehensive understanding of just what agency that deals with youth that are incarcerated need and type of support.

b. How funds will be used to develop new models of alternative education leading to employment?

Expanding the development of new models, the SWIB intends to explore out of the box method by collaborating with states and other pacific jurisdictions to share models that have been successful in their region or territory.

c. How funds will be used for the remediation of basic skills, including efforts to engage the K-12 education system so the workforce system is perceived as a resource for understanding the skills youth need in the workplace.

The SWIB will be working with the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education to improve the basic skills need to those that are having difficulties understanding Basic English or math. The encouragements to improve in these areas are of importance to the SWIB as they work also with the private industry leaders to match the needed occupational skills.

d. How funds will be used to develop demand-driven models with business and industry working collaboratively with the workforce investment system and education partners to develop strategies for bringing these youth successfully into the workforce pipeline with the right skills.

The CNMI is a small community that leaders of both the private and public sector meet frequently in public areas. By better understanding the demand driven model, we can continuously communicate and formulate strategies in just about anywhere we meet. This is one of our greatest assets that we are strengthening and improving on. The support of both private and public sector to work with the WIA to develop an effective pipeline to knowledge will be improved.

e. How funds will be utilized to ensure that youth programs are year-round and not limited to summer programs only.

The CNMI's funding stream for the Youth programs has increased for the 2005 year. From the past, we were not able to have an effective year round program. The 2005 to 2007 year will be to have a program to ensure the private sector plays a major role of the job shadowing and education system to prepare the youth through career counseling and informational services that will tie both the education and employment stream together.

F. Business Services. (§§112 (a) and 112(b)(2).) Provide a description of the State's strategies to improve the availability and quality of services to employers, including a description of how the jurisdiction intends to:

1. Determine employer needs.

The SWIB, which involves private business leaders, will conduct presentations and various private sector industry meetings to understanding the barriers of employing locals to the workforce. By providing the private business to be involving more to the employment and economic portion, the SWIB will be able to focus greatly on the shortage of local manpower needs. A jobs skills assessment and analysis will be conducted to determine exactly what type of employee an employer, business, or industry needs. This will be aligned to the type of employee

available in the CNMI. The gap between the two will be determined and then focused on through pilot programs.

2. Integrate business services to employers with the One-Stop system. (For Guam, include how Wagner-Peyser services are integrated with business services.)

The CNMI will work with the Chamber of Commerce as an integral part of one-stop services as they develop.

3. Identify and take advantage of applicable federal tax credit programs. (Include a brief discussion of federal tax credit programs the jurisdiction has or is currently utilizing.) How will the current or planned use of federal tax credit programs be incorporated into the State's overall strategy and approach?

In general, federal tax credits are not applicable under the CNMI tax code. The CNMI has two tax incentive programs of interest. Under the Qualifying Certificate Tax Incentives program investors who meet certain criteria, including hiring and training and advancement of resident workers receive abatements from various CNMI taxes.

The Educational Tax Credit enables private businesses to make equivalent quarterly contributions to a public or private school of their choice in lieu of paying business gross revenue tax payment to Treasury . This tax credit by private businesses shows support by both private and public sectors to combine effective measures of supporting educational institutions.

4. Describe how the State includes Rapid Response as a viable business service in its overall workforce investment strategy.

Please refer to section above on Rapid Response.

G. Innovative Service Delivery Strategies

1. Describe any innovative service delivery strategies the State has or is planning to undertake to maximize resources, increase service levels, improve service quality, achieve better integration or meet other key State goals. Include in the description the initiative's general design, anticipated outcomes, partners involved and funds leveraged (e.g., Title I formula, Statewide reserve, employer contributions, education funds, non-WIA State funds).

As this will be the first two-years of the planning strategies, implementation of effective programs and the working relationship of the business leaders and the public sectors that hold high authority such as the educational institutions and the SWIB, Governor and the cabinet members will be following the implementation plan of the first two-years.

The WIA office and the Division of Employment services along with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will provide the leadership and the goals to achieve.

H. Strategies for Faith-based and Community Organizations

Enhancing outreach opportunities to those most in need is a fundamental element of the demand-driven system's goal to increase the pipeline of needed workers while meeting the training and employment needs of those most at risk. Faith-based and community organizations provide unique opportunities for the workforce investment system to access this pool of workers and meet the needs of business and industry.

1. Provide an overall description of the faith-based and community organizations within the jurisdiction and the possible range of services, including supportive services, they can or may be able to provide.

Karidat, GUMA (HOUSE of HOPE) Esperanza, and the Domestic Violence Intervention Center are organizations that the SWIB will work collaboratively to improve and assist those that are considered low-income and needing assistance. One of the most critical parts of our society is that victims of abuse are greatly depended on their abusers for support and the abusers knowing how to apply the "Power and Control" technique to have the victim stay.

This is our system to involved all agencies and sectors to provide victims to expand on higher education and employment training that will give confidence to victims not to be dependent of the abuser, but to know the capabilities that resources are there to avail from.

Collaboration from these Faith base organizations and government agencies with guidance counselors and career path counselors will be strengthen.

Other community based organizations are the Community Youth Centers. These centers will be contacted to serve as WIA service centers to contact with and promote services to youths and the members of the respective communities. There are over ten community centers throughout the islands.

2. Describe how the jurisdiction will increase the opportunities for participation of faith-based and community organizations as committed and active partners in the workforce delivery system.

Faith-based community leaders must become knowledgeable of the resources and to become members of the committee in the workforce system. By providing the organizations to be committed and become active partners, they can also improve on the quality of service they provide.

As mentioned above, other community based organizations are the Community Youth Centers. These centers will be contacted to serve as WIA service centers to contact with and promote services to youths and the members of the respective communities. There are over ten community centers throughout the islands.

3. Describe how the jurisdiction will expand the access of faith-based and community-based organizations' clients and customers to the services offered by the workforce investment system.

The services offered to clients of faith base organizations are to provide the understanding and commitment of both SWIB and the organizations under an understanding of roles and areas of responsibility that both can achieve. By identifying needs assessment and knowledge sharing, this can become a reachable goal. As mentioned above, other community based organizations are the Community Youth Centers. These centers will be contacted to serve as WIA service centers to contact with and promote services to youths and the members of the respective communities. There are over ten community centers throughout the islands.

4. Describe the jurisdiction’s strategy and approach for educating faith-based and community organizations about the attributes and objectives of the demand-driven workforce investment system.

Faith and community-based organizations will be provided the opportunity to address issues of community and family barriers, which was stated above. By providing and guiding the informational resources and vision of the State Plan, Incorporating the Demand Driven concept to these organizations will provide clients of these organizations ways to reduce and eliminate barriers that have prevented them from ever reaching personnel goals.

5. Describe how the faith-based and community-based resources offered and available can be strategically and effectively used to leverage limited WIA program funds and help meet the objectives of the Workforce Investment Act.

Disadvantaged low-income is the Governor’s vision “Is to foster a robust economy that would provide opportunities to the CNMI people.” By this vision the SWIB has the foundation to build upon that is going to tie all areas of the e3 concept.

The CNMI SWIB for this State Plan has become so involved with important issues that the CNMI is facing at this present time. It is this first two-years, that an effective and efficient system will be created that will guide all private and public leaders to understand the Demand Driven and the e3 concept. With the technical assistance from partners of both local and regional sectors, the CNMI stands to improve the services of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to its full purpose.

X. State Administration

A. What technology infrastructure and/or management information systems does the jurisdiction have in place to support workforce investment activities such as a system to facilitate case management and service delivery across programs, web-based self service and other tools for customers, fiscal management systems, etc.? Describe any plans and strategies to develop new program and administrative systems to improve overall system performance.

At present the Pacific WIASRD database is the only formal system in place. It's use is limited by it's installation on one computer workstation. It is used for reporting to Region VI and the SWIB. Concurrent with better development of the WIASRD, CNMI uses an internal management information system that is a combination of simple Excel database and manual filing systems. The current practice is based on prior procedures and practical measures the staff have developed to the unique circumstances of an island setting.

Listed earlier as a Priority, WIA will thoroughly assess modernization needs of the WIA program including upgrading facilities, technology, and providing the resources to build the capacity of staff to deliver professional services in a timely and efficient manner. Staff training and SWIB training are essential to the development of effective programs and collaboration with partners.

- The current office facility was a government house converted in the late 90's into an office. This facility is no longer able to sustain WIA's current operations and client needs. A contractor will be hired to assess the building to address WIA's expansion needs, accessibility and most importantly client needs. The most feasible option between renovation and expansion or relocation will be determined and then followed.
- Technology upgrades in the WIA office needs to be conducted. The office computer systems need to be upgraded and networked so the information management can be seamless; CNMI WIASRD can be accessed by all; the new CNMI WIA website can be housed; relevant and related work and client information can be shared amongst employees and clients, and most importantly, service provided to consumers will be improved.
- WIA employees will be provided a professional development, training, or educational plan to build their capacity to deliver services in a timely and efficient manner.
- Reorganize the CNMI Workforce Investment Agency to reflect the new vision of the WIA Board.
 - a. Reorganize the SWIB to include an Executive Level Assistant to support the board members and assist the board in the development of a reorganization plan as well as other duties.
 - b. Recruit full-time Information Manager, Counselor, Training Developer, Job Placement Officer, Planner, two additional Case Manager, and a Grants Writer.
 - c. Overall program (administration):
 - i. Organize functional staff working groups to increase staff efficiency in operations.
 - ii. Expand staff training to include training of those staff across agency lines that have similar jobs and/or responsibilities.

CNMI plans to establish a WIA website that is expected to be online in December 2005. Under Task 8.9 – 8.11 SWIB will ascertain additional system and staff needs and complete action by end of March 2006.

B. Describe the jurisdiction’s plan for use of the funds reserved for Statewide activities to improve the current infrastructure or develop new supportive infrastructure and related systems.

The State will use funds under WIA §128(a)(1) to support the statewide activities required under Sections §129(b)(2) and 134(a)(2)(B). These consist of required activities and allowable activities, as follows:

Required Statewide workforce investment activities are:

- (a) Required rapid response activities, as described in § 665.310;
- (b) Disseminating: (1) The State list of eligible providers of training services (including those providing non-traditional training services), for adults and dislocated workers; (2) Information identifying eligible providers of on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training; (3) Performance and program cost information about these providers, as described in 20 CFR 663.540; and (4) A list of eligible providers of youth activities as described in WIA section 123;
- (c) States must assure that the information listed in paragraphs (b)(1) through (4) of this section is widely available.
- (d) Conducting evaluations, under WIA section 136(e), of workforce investment activities for adults, dislocated workers and youth, in order to establish and promote methods for continuously improving such activities to achieve high-level performance within, and high-level outcomes from, the Statewide workforce investment system. Such evaluations must be designed and conducted in conjunction with the State and Local Boards, and must include analysis of customer feedback, outcome and process measures in the workforce investment system. To the maximum extent practicable, these evaluations should be conducted in coordination with Federal evaluations carried out under WIA section 172.
- (e) Providing incentive grants: (1) To local areas for regional cooperation among Local Boards (including Local Boards for a designated region, as described in 20 CFR 661.290); (2) For local coordination of activities carried out under WIA; and (3) For exemplary performance by local areas on the performance measures.
- (f) Providing technical assistance to local areas that fail to meet local performance measures.
- (g) Assisting in the establishment and operation of One-Stop delivery systems, in accordance with the strategy described in the State workforce investment plan. (WIA sec. 112(b)(14).)
- (h) Providing additional assistance to local areas that have high concentrations of eligible youth.
- (i) Operating a fiscal and management accountability information system, based on guidelines established by the Secretary after consultation with the Governors, chief elected officials, and One-Stop partners, as required by WIA section 136(f).

Allowable Statewide workforce investment activities include:

- (a) State administration of the adult, dislocated worker and youth workforce investment activities, consistent with the five percent administrative cost limitation at 20 CFR 667.210(a)(1).
- (b) Providing capacity building and technical assistance to local areas, including Local Boards, One-Stop operators, One-Stop partners, and eligible providers, which may include: (1) Staff development and training; and (2) The development of exemplary program activities.

- (c) Conducting research and demonstrations.
- (d) Establishing and implementing: (1) Innovative incumbent worker training programs, which may include an employer loan program to assist in skills upgrading; and (2) Programs targeted to Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities.
- (e) Providing support to local areas for the identification of eligible training providers.
- (f) Implementing innovative programs for displaced homemakers, and programs to increase the number of individuals trained for and placed in non-traditional employment.
- (g) Carrying out such adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities as the State determines are necessary to assist local areas in carrying out local employment and training activities.
- (h) Carrying out youth activities Statewide.
- (i) Preparation and submission to the Secretary of the annual performance progress report as described in 20 CFR 667.300(e).

C. Performance Management, Measurement and Accountability. Improved performance and accountability for customer-focused results are central features of WIA. To improve, States need not only systems in place to collect data and track performance, but also systems to analyze the information and modify strategies to improve performance. In this section, describe how the State determines the success of its strategies in achieving its goals, and how the State uses this data to continuously improve the system.

The CNMI will continue to develop its system infrastructure so that generated data can be accessed and used by WIA, SWIB and other workforce service participants. Current plans to improve the infrastructure and staff capacity are described in X. A. above.

Additionally, the newly constituted SWIB is more fully implementing its oversight function by obtaining WIASRD reports, participating in regional and training activities, and initiating requirements for executive director reports at each regular SWIB meeting.

By taking action to require the receipt of performance information in a consistent format on a regular basis, the SWIB will be able to understand the current progress, make any necessary adaptations to the workforce system operations and better exercise its oversight function in a more effective manner.

1. Identify any goals or objectives for the workforce system at large that are established to track the jurisdiction's progress toward meeting its own strategic goals and implementing its vision for the workforce investment system, including:

a. Broad goals or system measures for the workforce investment system;

- Improve the workforce information system to all sectors.
- Implement proven strategies that other jurisdictions have found successful.
- Creating successful programs to meet the needs of individuals.
- Providing private businesses qualified workers in their respective industry.
- Increasing the funding level to meet long range planning and programs.

b. Goals for target groups or special populations, including youth;

- Improving the services to youth from other jurisdictions that reside in the CNMI
- Provide solid programs to meet the needs of individuals with disability
- Provide more security and confidents to targeted groups that need services.
- Provide the guidance and to ensure the targeted groups are provide the opportunity to rise above the poverty level.

c. Goals related to economic development and engagement of the private sector;

- Provide the private business leaders to shape the CNMI economic development by implementing and settings goals for the WIA to accomplish towards local employment
- Public sector support for private industries that provide local employment to the local unemployment residents
- Promote private led business sectors in the Educational and Vocational fields
- Provide the community the activities of private sectors involvement to shaping the economic development of the CNMI

d. Goals established for service providers and whether or not those goals include all providers or specific providers (e.g., specific goals for youth program providers);

- Develop a complete listing of existing and potential service providers within the CNMI;
- Develop MOAs with service providers willing and able to provide services needed for targetted client categories.
- Work out expedient procedures with Department of Finance to simplify payment procedures and improve confidence between CNMI clients and service providers.

i. Describe how service providers are held accountable for outcomes and results consistent with the jurisdiction's overall strategic direction and vision. Include specific performance measures and, if established, performance levels or targets.

There is currently no uniform jurisdiction-wide system of performance measures, performance levels or targetting. The present practice is to provide project-specific measures through individual agreements. Both service providers and WIA trainees must fill out weekly evaluations to determine the progress of the training program.

The performance results obtained by each service provider is monitored by the Executive Director. The Executive Director provides this information to SWIB who provide oversight function.

ii. If no performance measures are established for providers and contractors, how can the jurisdiction ensure a consistent level and quality of service? If no measures are established, describe the jurisdiction's process or approach for holding providers accountable for specific results.

The process described above provides the basis for holding providers accountable for specific results on an individual or project basis. The primary control available to ensure service levels and quality are the fiscal controls of each agreement.

The CNMI SWIB recognizes there is need for substantial improvement over current levels of performance. Through Task 8.2 the CNMI SWIB is retaining a consultant to develop a uniform policy and procedure set that will include a system to measure performance. Under Task 8.5 – 8.7 the existing MOA will be revised and a new MOA template will be developed that will incorporate the newly developed policy and procedure set for use in all future agreements.

iii. If performance measures are established for providers and contractors, identify the measures and any target levels set or expected. Also include a description of how the specific measures were identified and associated goal-setting (e.g., level of provider involvement in establishing measures and levels).

Performance levels to be incorporated into existing and future agreements will be established by the SWIB working with the policy consultant to be retained for this work. Through Task 8.4 a proposed annual service provider conference will provide opportunity for information exchange and consideration of best practices. Service providers will be Individual service providers will also have input in the process of establishing any individual agreements they may be participating in.

2. Describe the jurisdiction's data collection and reporting guidelines and processes that are currently or planned to be in place to track progress against measures and goals.

a. Tracking System Performance. Describe what data will be collected from the various One-Stop partners and how the Statewide system will have access to the information needed to continuously improve.

Tracking data will be developed as the CNMI progresses with instituting an appropriate one-stop service.

b. Tracking Program Performance. Describe how the jurisdiction is using and plans to utilize information from the Pacific WIASRD to inform program design and delivery.

CNMI plans to more fully utilize WIASRD by making it available through networking with additional workstations and to seek technical assistance to work out technical problems staff are encountering. Improvements are intended to be accomplished through Tasks 8.9 – 8.10.

c. Tracking Provider Performance. Describe the reporting process for service providers and contractors, including frequency of required reports, how the information is transmitted, required data elements and formats. Also include a description of how the jurisdiction will ensure that the data contained in provider reports is accurate and complete and how provider reports “feed into” the jurisdiction's program reports provided to ETA (i.e., the Pacific WIASRD).

Both service providers and WIA trainees must fill out weekly evaluations to determine the progress of the training program. This information is provided to the case managers and is then uploaded into the Pacific WIASRD for reporting purposes.

3. Describe how the data will be shared and expectations for its use

a. How will the workforce system at large, including the public, have access to performance information?

As the CNMI develops and implements comprehensive improvements described throughout this plan, relevant standardized information will be produced in a transparent and accessible manner. The results of these system changes will be accessible to the public through the WIA website. Information will also be more readily available to WIA staff and workforce partners who will be better able to disseminate information through direct and ongoing contact with workforce customers. Planned annual conferences involving the workforce community will provide further opportunities for performance information access.

This will be in addition to the present methods of information sharing. At present, WIA prepares quarterly reports for US DOL. This information is considered public and available to anyone upon request at present. In addition, WIA receives funding via annual legislative appropriation and is subject to legislative oversight including the preparation and provision of information necessary for annual justification of its funding levels. As WIA progresses with development of its website, this information will become available on-line. Individual contracts and associated performance information at the Department of Finance Procurement and Supply Division is available to anyone upon request.

b. What corrective actions (including sanctions and technical assistance) will the jurisdiction take if performance of service providers falls short of expectations? How will the jurisdiction use the review process to reinforce the strategic direction of the system? c. Describe the steps taken to support implementation of the new program reporting system (Pacific WIASRD and related database application). Include new policies, procedures and/or processes established.

WIA first needs to establish its basic policies and procedures. Because of the very limited existing and potential number of service providers available locally, pragmatic actions will be necessary to address needed corrections while improving the existing pool of service providers. In addition, WIA is able to avail of any new service providers through advertised requests for proposals for new needed services, by widening the network of service providers to include those not traditionally utilized, and to seek out alternative service providers best able to address new and emerging service needs.

D. Administrative Provisions

1. Describe the steps taken by the jurisdiction to ensure compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements outlined in Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act.

In August 2000, the U.S. Department of Labor issued its, "State Guidance for Developing Methods of Administration" required by regulations implementing Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998."

WIA is adopting the following policy for inclusion in its new 2-year WIA State Plan, as follows:

- All services will be provided in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following:
 - 1) Workforce Investment Act,
 - 2) Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended,
 - 3) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),
 - 4) Age Discrimination Act,
 - 5) Title IX of the Education Act,
 - 6) Nontraditional Employment for Women Act, and
 - 7) Applicable CNMI laws.
- One-Stop Job Centers will have accessible services and resources. There will be effective signage and a safe environment. Clients with limited English will have interpreters. All One-Stop Job Centers will be equipped to accommodate persons with disabilities.

XI. Assurances

1. The State assures that it will establish, in accordance with section 184 of the Workforce Investment Act, fiscal control and fund accounting procedures (including the timely reporting of accrued expenditures) that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds allotted to the jurisdiction.

2. The State assures that it will comply with section 184(a)(6), which requires the Governor to, every two years, certify to the Secretary, that –

a. the State has implemented the uniform administrative requirements referred to in section 184(a)(3) regarding compliance with uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements;

b. the State has at least annually monitored workforce entities, including service providers, to ensure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements as required under section 184(a)(4); and

c. the State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with section 184(a)(3) pursuant to section 184(a)(5).

3. The State assures that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in section 134 of the Workforce Investment Act, and the activities authorized in chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 US code. The State assures that it will comply with the veterans priority established in the Jobs for Veterans Act.

4. The State assures that no funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.

5. The State assures that it will comply with the grant procedures prescribed by the Secretary (pursuant to the authority at section 189(c) of the Act) which are necessary to enter into grant agreements for the allocation and payment of funds under the Act. The procedures and agreements will be provided to the State by the ETA Office of Grants and Contract Management and will specify the required terms and conditions and assurances and certifications, including, but not limited to, the following:

•General Administrative Requirements:

-29 CFR part 97 --Uniform Administrative Requirements for State and local Governments (as amended by the Act)

-29 CFR part 96 (as amended by OMB Circular A-133) --Single Audit Act

-OMB Circular A-87 --Cost Principles (as amended by the Act)

•Assurances and Certifications:

**-SF 424 B --Assurances for Non-construction Programs-29 CFR part 37 --
Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and regulation) 29 CFR §
37.20**

-CFR part 93 --Certification Regarding Lobbying (and regulation)

**-29 CFR part 98 --Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and Suspension
Certifications (and regulation)**

•Special Clauses/Provisions:

**Other special assurances or provisions as may be required under Federal law or
policy, including specific appropriations legislation, the Workforce Investment
Act, or subsequent Executive or Congressional mandates.**

**~~6. (For Guam Only) The State certifies that the Wagner-Peyser Act Plan, which is
part of this document, has been certified by the State Employment Security
Administrator.~~**

**~~7. (For Guam Only) The State certifies that veterans' services provided with
Wagner-Peyser Act funds will be in compliance with 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41 and 20
CFR part 1001.~~**

**~~8. (For Guam Only) The State certifies that Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor
exchange activities will be provided by merit-based public employees in
accordance with DOL regulations.~~**

**9. The State certifies it has developed this Plan in consultation with local elected
officials, the business community, labor organizations and other partners.**

**10. As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of
Labor under Title I of WIA, the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully
with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following
laws:**

**-- Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which prohibits
discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race,
color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief,
and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully
admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any
WIA Title I--financially assisted program or activity;**

**-- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits
discrimination on the bases of race, color and national origin;**

**-- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits
discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;**

**-- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits
discrimination on the basis of age; and**

**-- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits
discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.**

**The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR part 37 and all
other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to
the grant applicant's operation of the WIA Title I-financially assisted program or
activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIA**

Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

11. The State assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act (and, in the case of Guam, the Wagner-Peyser Act) and their regulations, written Department of Labor Guidance implementing these laws, and all other applicable Federal and State laws and regulations.

Name of WIA Title I Grant Recipient Agency:

**ATTACHMENT A
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DESIGNEES AND PLAN SIGNATURES**

Name of WIA Title I Grant Recipient Agency: CNMI Workforce Investment Agency
Address: Caller Box 10007
Saipan, MP 96950

Telephone Number: 670-664-1700/5
Facsimile Number: 670-322-7333
E-mail Address: <gov.wia1@gtepacifica.net>

Name of State WIA Title I Administrative Agency (if different from Grant Recipient)

Address:

Telephone Number:
Facsimile Number:
E-mail Address:

Name of WIA Title I Signatory Official: Jesse P. Stein, Executive Director
Address: Caller Box 10007
Saipan, MP 96950

Telephone Number: 670-664-1700/5
Facsimile Number: 670-322-7333
E-mail Address: <gov.wia1@gtepacifica.net>

Name of WIA Title I Liaison:

Address:

Telephone Number:
Facsimile Number:
E-mail Address:

(GUAM ONLY) Name of Wagner-Peyser Act Grant Recipient/State Employment Security Agency:
Address:

Telephone Number:
Facsimile Number:
E-mail Address:

Name and title of State Employment Security Administrator (Signatory Official):

Address:

Telephone Number:

Facsimile Number:

E-mail Address:

As the Governor, I certify that for the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the agencies and officials designated above have been duly designated to represent the jurisdiction in the capacities indicated for the Workforce Investment Act, Title I (and, for Guam only, Wagner-Peyser Act grant programs). Subsequent changes in the designation of officials will be provided to the U.S. Department of Labor as such changes occur.

I further certify that we will operate our Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs in accordance with this Plan and the assurances herein.

Typed Name of Governor:

Juan Nekkai Babauta

Signature of Governor:

Date:



05/31/05

Attachment B. Program Performance Measures for the Pacific Jurisdictions

For the Pacific Jurisdictions, outcomes are exit-based – in large part, due to the absence of UI wage records. For each of the three funding streams (adults, dislocated workers, youth) there are two types of performance measures: *employment-related outcomes* and *secondary outcomes*. The reason for the latter distinction lies in the uniqueness of the Pacific insofar as what clearly constitutes a positive outcome.

Data are captured on the Pacific WIASRD, the program report format designed specifically for the Pacific. Actual, aggregate performance is reported each quarter in absolute figures (not percentages).

The 16 common performance measures utilized for the Pacific jurisdictions are as follows:

~~For Adults and Dislocated Workers:~~

- A. Employment-Related Measures
 - 1. Entry into unsubsidized, non-subsistence employment
 - 2. Entry into subsistence employment
- B. Secondary Outcomes
 - 3. Average hourly wage at exit for those employed (non-subsistence) at exit
 - 4. Secondary school diploma attainment
 - 5. Attainment of credential or skills certificate other than a secondary school diploma or its equivalent
 - 6. Entering or returning to further education or training at exit

~~For Adults and Dislocated Workers:~~

- A. Employment-Related Measures
 - 7. Entry into unsubsidized, non-subsistence employment
 - 8. Entry into subsistence employment
- B. Secondary Outcomes
 - 9. Average hourly wage at exit for those employed (non-subsistence) at exit
 - 10. Secondary school diploma attainment
 - 11. Attainment of credential or skills certificate other than a secondary school diploma or its equivalent
 - 12. Entering or returning to further education or training at exit

For Youth: (Measures don't distinguish youth by school status or younger/older status)

- A. Employment-Related Outcomes
 - 1. Entry into unsubsidized, non-subsistence employment
 - 2. Entry into subsistence employment
- B. Secondary Outcomes
 - 3. Secondary school diploma attainment
 - 4. Attainment of Credential or skills certificate other than a secondary school diploma or its equivalent

Appendix 1. CNMI Strategic Two-Year Workforce Investment Strategy

Vision

Human resources are the single most essential component of economic development. With this vision Governor Juan N. Babauta works to foster and sustain a robust economy and increasing opportunities for CNMI residents to enter the private sector and achieve a better standard of living as a result.

Goals

1. Work with public and private sector leaders to encourage sustainable industrial and commercial development that advances the long-term economic growth and development of the CNMI.

- Maintain existing firms and cultivate diversified industries
- Maintain a business environment conducive to the birth, sustenance, and growth of suitable industry and commerce
- Involve all sectors of our community in support of economic development plan.
- Strengthen the education and training opportunities and resources.
- Support individual self-sufficiency by promoting entrepreneurship.

2. Maximize and leverage the broad array of Federal and State resources available for workforce investment flowing through the State's cabinet agencies and education agencies in order to:

• **Ensure a skilled workforce for the State's business and industry**

- Reduce unemployment and underemployment
- Create employment opportunities that match the skills or interests of the workforce.
- Provide appropriate training programs that fill the gap needed to upgrade the quality and diversity of jobs available.
- Minimize cyclical and seasonal effects on employment through greater diversification of the employment base.
- Work with business sector to accommodate and teach local residents what is needed to flourish in that employers work site and the industry.
- Advocate 20% Labor Law Compliance.

3. Maximize efficiency and improve work force development resources to increase incomes of local residents.

- Motivate young people to go into vocational training fields.
- Strengthen resources of vocational education programs so they may be more readily available.
- Continually re-orient educational and vocational training programs to meet changing occupational requirements and new growth opportunities.

- Expand educational and job-training opportunities as the primary objective providing the CNMI’s labor force with those marketable skills sought by employers that provide above average wage rates.
- Increase the number of workers who can earn higher, family wage incomes.
- Support legislation to increase the minimum wage level that takes into consideration the equivalent costs of nonresident employment and provides for hourly rate that provides same hourly pay and benefit.
- Work with the CNMI Department of Labor to enforce Public Law 9-71, allowing resident employees to be paid comparable wages and benefits paid to non-residents.

4. Ensuring a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce and reduce the need for guest workers

- CNMI WIA supports the “Demand Driven” concept and the power of E3– Education, Employment, and Economic Development.
- Appoint strong and independent boards with diverse private sector participation such as CNMI Workforce Investment Board and the NMC Board of Regents, interagency coordination through memorandum of agreements, and the establishment of one-stop centers.
- Encourage government employees to enroll in educational and other professional development courses to improve their work skills through paid training, tuition, scholarships, and other incentives.
- Encourage private sector employers to employ eligible WIA participants and encourage its employees to avail of education and training opportunities offered through WIA services.
- Ensure that individuals have all access to opportunity and success and to meet the private industry needs of local employment.
- Streamline and reduce the duplication of services by utilizing available funding resources that will help maximize the one-stop center.
- Modernize the WIA’s office technology capabilities to increase performance and accountability as well as increase community access to WIA’s services.
- Monitor federal program changes to ensure maximum opportunities for participation.

5. Bringing together the key players in workforce development including business and industry, economic development, education, the public workforce system, and faith-based and community-based organizations to continuously identify the workforce challenges facing the State and to develop innovative strategies and solutions that effectively leverage resources to address those challenges.

- The Governor prioritizes private leadership by appointments of private business to be part of the CNMI State Workforce Investment Board because of the need to address issues of economic development and the changing economy. The CNMI SWIB-comprised of private business representatives provide the Governor the issues surrounding economic development.
- Members of such businesses as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce (SCC) and the Hotel Association of the Northern Marianas Island (HANMI) play that vital part of our economy. With the anticipated phasing out or potential shut down of the Garment Industry, the CNMI placed priorities on the development of Tourism and other sustainable industries.

- Co-Sponsor the Marianas Roundtable Summit targeting business issues relating to economic development and employment.
- Coordinate semi-annual private sector agencies job fairs.
- Organize a Training Registry/Scheduling tracking system with all stakeholders to keep track and refer available training resources and opportunities.
- Begin a Guest Speaker Program at each WIB meeting with public participation.
- Develop designated speaker program modeled after CNMI Ayuda Network that maintains a list of available speakers by topic for ready referral, especially those who need workers and who would offer to partner in the education and training of potential and on-board workers.
- Develop a WIA ‘Best Friends’ Recognition and Incentives Program, to honor all key stakeholders working and partnering with WIA including the work sites, the employee, and the work site employee providing best support to a successful outcome.
- Initiate annual WIA Awareness Week including an annual WIA Employer recognition program focusing on partnering companies and most supportive key company staff. Annual WIA participant recognition program.
- Provide recognition for best practices for adult, youth and displaced worker participants.

6. Ensuring that every youth has the opportunity for developing and achieving career goals through education and workforce training, including the youth most in need, such as out of school youth, homeless youth, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents and other youth at risk.

- The Governor has identified the Workforce Investment Agency as the lead agency for addressing youth employment and training issues.
- Increase Career Opportunities Awareness. Striving for activities and programs that will infuse interest in the academic side of education.
- Make WIA more accessible so customers know about the programs and services provided including the availability of training, education and job information through one-stop centers.
- Develop a Youth After-school Training Resource Center at the Civic Center Complex or another available location.
- Take lead role as catalyst to organize and coordinate career opportunity and vocational education activities such as career fairs, career exploration, take over days, school visiting guest speaker programs, and youth entrepreneurship.
- Develop website for WIA information, jobs, education, training, speakers. Look at US DOL web site as model.
- WIA in-house career exploration and guidance center:
- Provide clients immediate access to education, training, comprehensive career opportunities information, financial support, scholarships, entrepreneurship, civic, and volunteer opportunities.
- Create a mobile one-stop program, together with computerized enrollment capabilities.
- Youth Centers: Utilize existing community youth centers for mobile one-stop venues. Consider US Army funded centers (California model)
- Job Corps: Increase access to and participation in job corps programs beyond Hawaii, to Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington in order to increase number of participants and widen the range of vocational opportunities.
- Collaborate with Public School System Americorps Program to assist in information dissemination and other volunteerism components.

- Apprenticeships. Make connections with other institutions that offer apprenticeship programs such as Guam Community College, Northern Marianas College, U.S Accredited schools in the Philippines, maritime, shipyards, etc.
- Transportation: WIA supports OVR affordable public transportation initiative in support of client access to work, training, education, career information and other services. (United We Ride). Partner agencies include the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Public School System, Department of Public Works, Department of Health (Transitional Living Center, Medicaid), Office on Aging, State Rehabilitation Council, State Independent Living Council, Mayors' Offices, Workforce Investment Agency, Council on Developmental Disabilities, Head Start, and the Liaison Offices of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

7. Workforce Investment Board supports investments in staff development in-house and interagency.

- Reorganization of the CNMI Workforce Investment Agency to reflect the new vision of the WIA Board.
- Staff training and SWIB training is essential to the development of effective programs and collaboration of partners.
- Executive Level (WIB Support)
- Assist Board develop reorganization plan
 - Support board policy implementation
- Efficiently report to WIB progress, barriers, new information, upcoming issues or events, program financials, by recruiting planner/grants writer.
 - Overall program (administration): Organize functional staff working groups to increase staff efficiency in operations, client counseling, client management, training and development, education and job placement.
Expand staff training to include training of those staff across agency lines who have similar jobs and/or responsibilities.
 - Operations Level: Outreach to public, training providers, employers.
Internal information sharing, staff development, administration and finance, statistical development, record keeping, grant management and reporting.
 - Client Counseling: Support client counseling staff to upgrade skill levels by providing for local and off-island training.
Integrate client counseling needs with established programs at NMC, PSS, private educational institutions and other providers.
 - Case Management. Reorganize and retrain case managers for greater efficiency and report/assistance with the major stakeholders.
- Training and Job Development for employees, for participants, for employers, and board members.
 - Staff development to include cross training of WIA staff for optimal efficient results.
- Education: Integrate education programs of NMC, PSS, private educational institutions and other providers with WIA training plans for participants to ensure positive and successful outcomes for WIA programs.
- Private Training: Find private sector training opportunities and pay for them to provide training to WIA clients, or pay clients to participate in training, or pay for specialized skills training for underemployed clients for improved standard of living and career outlook.

- Entrepreneurship: Help adult and dislocated workers create nontraditional work through self-employment opportunities by providing training, financial support, and/or market development.
- Partner with employment and training brokers to maximize the need for positive performance outcomes and continued employment.

Workforce investment priorities

1. Provide for a strong private employer-led partnership among government agencies, businesses, and workers through the Workforce Investment Board.
2. Thoroughly assess modernization needs of the WIA program including upgrading facilities, technology, and providing the resources to build the capacity of staff to deliver professional services in a timely and efficient manner. Staff training and SWIB training are essential to the development of effective programs and collaboration with partners.
3. Continuous improvement of job, education, and training services delivery through strong partnerships among government agencies, and private business employers and CNMI workers.
4. Coordinate and streamline all Federal and CNMI financial workforce investment support through the creation of user-friendly, effective and useful one-stop career centers for easy access to services provided by WIA, PSS, NMC, vocational, technical and entrepreneurial education, business vacancies.
5. Improve public information about and easy access to workforce development programs for the Commonwealths youth, aging, adult and displaced workers, and individuals with disabilities.
6. Develop better ways to learn about, forecast, and prepare our workforce for the modern economy and to meet the needs of our existing economy as defined by CNMI employers.
7. Support a major shift from government employment to private sector by fostering a strong, diverse and modern private economy that provides good wages, good working conditions and opportunities for advancement.
8. Advocate for better enforcement of laws and regulations supporting resident worker training and employment.

Appendix 2. CNMI SWIB Partners, Stakeholders, and Customers

Since 2004 the CNMI's SWIB and the Workforce Investment Agency have stepped up the promotion and awareness activities for the community and the businesses to address the U.S. Department of Labor's e3. Through these activities, WIA has seen an increase in private businesses and government agencies requesting for services from the program. WIA predicts that the upcoming years 2005-2006, more private businesses will seek out WIA and become involved in the programs and services through collaboration and partnership in providing an effective system of the local labor workforce. Stakeholders and Partners associated with WIA are:

CNMI SWIB Stakeholder and Partners:

Government Agencies:

CNMI Department of Labor
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Department of Employment Services
Office of Personnel Management
Northern Marianas College
Office of Aging
Department of Education/Public School System
14th Legislature Rep. Chairman on Health and Education
CNMI Youth Congress
Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Private Business Stakeholders:

CNMI Duty Free
Moylan's Insurance
Niizeki International Saipan
Kan Pacific
Pacific Island Club
AIUP Commercial Underwriter
Calvo's Development, Inc.
Ayuda Network
Saipan Chamber of Commerce
HANMI Association

Also refer to the Pacific WIASRD Reports for service providers.

Appendix 3. Summary of Public Hearing Commentary

In Saipan, the central issue was the need to transition from government to private sector employment. Comments included the need for finding the jobs with high wages that residents want; and, the need to prepare for the time soon when government employment could not be sustained any longer and many residents would find private sector the only recourse. There was also discussion of whether an overall increase in the minimum wage was warranted when there were relatively fewer residents who would benefit in view of the major cost increases that were projected to occur with across the board increases and whether a tiered system like America Samoa's made more sense. There was also concern over funding limitations for nurses training at Northern Marianas College, and the interest of one individual in rejoining the workforce after several months as a stay at home dad. The individual, who had applied for WIA services the preceding week, was referred to an employer the following day, while SWIB members present were able to discuss measures for customized training that would address the needs of individual nursing students and their budget needs were subsequently addressed by legislative action.

The theme of the Tinian hearing comments could be summarized as the need for enforcement of existing local preference laws and existing opportunities to develop linkages with Japanese technical schools. The enforcement issue pertained to the experiences of several Tinian high school graduates who could not find work in the CNMI with decent wages with one ending up leaving home to work in Guam, and others who entered the military and are serving in Iraq. The commenter felt that enforcement of existing local employment preference laws would have avoided this outcome, and the personal anguish the families were experiencing. There was also the suggestion that existing contacts with the Japan Auto College operated by retired Toyota, Honda, and Mercedes Benz employees be pursued. The college had offered two students to attend the school in Japan, which teaches intensive Japanese language and auto repair technology including business ownership. The college was also offering to send a retired professor to teach in the CNMI. SWIB board members obtained contact details and agreed to further consider the opportunities. There was consideration of what role WIA should take with regard to enforcement of CNMI laws, resulting in the view that the board could increase its advocacy for enforcement. The issue of how to achieve greater wages in the private sector given the low minimum wage, the nonresident guest worker program and high expectations created by better wages and benefits through government employment remains a dilemma.

For Rota the discussion focused on making closer ties between the WIA island staffer, the program and Northern Marianas College, and trying out a locally innovative summer job training with week-long structured orientation, shift of work sites from government to private, and high need occupations like nursing at Rota Health Center, and teaching (tutoring and Japanese student program). One private participant expressed her need for paid employment while she completed her GED in September, with the result that suitable arrangements were made for the individual to assist with administration of the summer youth program provided she concurrently proceeded with her GED.

Saipan Public Hearing Issues **May 11, 2005 6:30-8:45pm**

Alex Sablan/Saipan Chamber of Commerce: Guam apprenticeship program. Guam Contractor's Association runs successful apprenticeship program with top 6 construction firms with US DOL

involvement. Those same 6 firms do business here. WIA should work to extend this program to CNMI.

CNMI now has in effect mini-hatch Act that requires government contractors to pay U.S minimum wage rate of \$6.25 hour.

Lynn Knight/Hotel Association NMI/DaiIchi Hotel: Prefer to delete references to raising minimum wage. At most CNMI should identify job categories that residents want, reserve those for residents and increase the wage rate for those categories only.

DaiIchi Hotel would pay higher wages but presently very high power and water utility rates are impacting ability to pay higher rates.

Alex: With regard to minimum water we should look to other US Pacific Island areas. American Samoa has an 18-tiered wage level. In effect we currently have a multi-tiered wage rate with different rates paid for housekeeping, farm, fishing, construction industries. We should seriously consider facing this situation and implement similar system as American Samoa and pay different wage rates in CNMI.

Lynn Knight: First find out what jobs residents want to have; find out what age residents begin to get work experience (indicating residents are not getting early experience and therefore are entering the adult job market at minimum wage rate levels when they should already have some job experience and be able to enter adult job market with experience and earn a higher starting wage.

Alex Sablan: Regarding enforcement of the 20% local worker requirement in NRW Act. What is the inventory of the resident available skill sets? What is the total number of available jobs? We can get that information from the nonresident worker inventory.

This information should be categorized, databased and made known to employees.

Work ethics has to be an important training component. DaiIchi training manager has very good powerpoint presentation on this topic.

Nursing program at NMC has 36 students to be enrolled but only enough funds for instructors for 20 students. Funds are needed to pay instructors to accept the additional 16 nurse trainees into the program. Commenter expressed disbelief that the proposed Hemo training program would be implemented because NMC did not follow through with several previous agreements.

WIA funds cannot be used for nonresidents or to pay NMC salaries, but WIA can fund individual training costs for eligible clients. A similar program is under development between WIA, NMC and CHC for new hemodialysis center.

Alex Sablan: We need to dust off the Workforce Management Improvement Plan. The current 5500 government employees cannot be sustained with the current and future revenue declines CNMI is experiencing.

We must plan for resulting transition from government employment to private sector.

The private sector is at a competitive disadvantage with the government over benefits paid to government workers. This factor will be reduced when government employees are in effect forced to transfer to private sector. Preparation is needed.

If we look at Hay Report there were more or less 42000 jobs (in 1998); there were 12,000 US citizens in workforce, 5000 in government, leaving roughly 30,000 jobs filled by nonresident workers.

Need to systematically address the conflict between government and private sector.

Marianas Roundtable conference is opportunity for WIA to initiate WIA Friends recognition program.

Two members of the 'public' were present.

One person had applied for WIA services one week earlier. He had been laid off from printing job in January and had been home worker for 4 children while spouse worked. Had previous experience in food and beverage. Wanted to try paralegal training. WIA staff took follow-up information. (The following day it was reported that he had been referred to DHL and WIA would follow-up)

One person affiliated with NMC nursing program wanted to follow-up on earlier contact with WIA about funding for nursing program instructors. WIA expressed interest to work with her to arrange for a suitable way for WIA to provide training for individual nursing trainees. It was said he had gotten the attention of the WIA board.

Public Attendees

- Alex Sablan, President Saipan Chamber of Commerce
- Lynn Knight, President Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands
- Bryan Manabet, WIA applicant interested in WIA enrollment
- Nursing Instructor seeking WIA support for nurse trainees

WIA Attendees

Patrick Calvo, David Attao, Juan Tenorio, Ed Salas, Justo Quitugua, Jesse Stein, Laurent Chong, Lucy Sablan.

Observations

Saipan Theme: Need for finding the jobs with high wages that residents want. Need to prepare for the time soon when government employment could not be sustained any longer and many residents would find private sector the only recourse.

Tinian Public Hearing Issues

May 12, 2005 6:30-8:30 pm

We hear same litany over and over again; these are nice words but missing the real issue. If we expect a student to become a carpenter they must be compensated with a decent wage - \$12-17 hour; Here they pay \$3.05

The trick used is to announce a job at \$3.05 and the contract is for \$3.05, but after a short period when government does not monitor it is changed to for example \$12 hour. They know the government will not be diligent.

Unannounced monitoring and inspection is extremely lax. Law requires employers to train local workers but it does not happen.

At the Hafadai Hotel union labor case it was found that NRW there were being paid \$9.33 hour minimum wage when workers average wage is calculated to include all support costs.

More laws will not solve the problem. How can WIA advocate change and train so that people will see that education and training and private sector work can have impact.

For example one child was rejected for job at a Hafadai hotel for that reason that he did not speak Japanese. But in fact the applicant had lived in Japan and attended school there for two years. My son had a degree and for six months could not find a job until DFS hired him to work in Guam and he moved from CNMI to Guam.

How do we justify Federal funding when there is an abundance of local jobs? We want to see WIA advocate how to improve wages and benefits and see hiring for local jobs.

As a US citizen I should have first access to jobs rather than citizens of Japan, Philippines, China and other countries.

Now our children are in Iraq. And it is now personal. We want our children back. We are telling them they are not good enough when we hire other citizens instead of our children.

Can WIA work with agencies to advocate enforcement?

At MPLA we had WIA trainees but it was too much time and effort to do again. The kids were learning a bad work ethic. WIA does not enforce proper ethics. Program itself is instilling bad work ethics; encourages kids to want government jobs because they see that they do not have to do anything.

If you work in the private sector you learn the meaning of work. If you are not done with your work you do not go home.

Enforcement is needed. Immigration is alerting employers they are coming to inspect; we are own worst enemy.

WIA should exercise caution on businesses they work with. Work with private employers that help the community. Hotels can be close-knit. Hotel owners are afraid of unions if many residents become employed.

DFS has shown that locals can do it.

If locals are there the employers cannot get away with things they get away with now.

Presently NRW are part of the system – the back of the house – too powerful; there is a back door network and locals are always outside.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce mostly consists of locally owned businesses while most of hotel association members are foreign owned.

Japan Auto College. This college is made of retired Toyota, Honda, and Mercedes Benz employees. It also has agent with schools in England. It offers two students to attend the school in Japan.

It also has language institute; they have met with us and want to have two students from here. One is there now; when he masters the Japanese language then he can attend the Auto College. They also have a retiring instructor that they are willing to send to teach here. Tinian may be too small but Saipan, MHS, is ok.

JSA has six Tinian students participating. Two are paid with DOI funds and four from local funds.

If WIA employee is low income can WIA pay for bus service? Supportive services can pay for day care, transportation to have positive outcome, self-sufficiency.

We want to be flexible and broad and reach every employee we can and get education and training to be pursued.

Need to see the carrot - \$15 hour – Same housing as NRW, Kids want instant gratification, an equal playing field.

Need to address this. We ask kids where they want to work and they say work for the government.

CNMI has guaranteed slots for academically qualified applicants at each branch military academy. Military academies should be considered as important career development option. It is a complete university degreed education.

Educators must have higher sense of purpose. We will always need to have guest workers but we also need to have a level playing field.

Instead of training for auto mechanics and then come back to \$3.05 hour wages, the trainee can instead start business after training is complete.

Japan Auto College is immaculately clean. Not a spot of oil. They learn auto mechanic basics; learn how to be in business, then how to own it.

Livestock is another; orchid and fruit cloning, animal livestock. Kids must be very proficient with science and math background.

Tinian High School is sister school with Hiroshima school.

Public Attendees

- Florine Hofschneider (florineh41@hotmail.com). PSS, Tinian HS Principal 433-9270/9251.
- Debora Fleming, Fleming Corp. 433-3232 (Deborah@hotmail.com)
- Connie Camacho, Dept. Labor – Tinian 433-433-3700/3715 (conniecamacho@hotmail.com)

WIA Attendees

Patrick Calvo, David Attao, Juan Tenorio, Ed Salas, Justo Quitugua, Jesse Stein

Observations:

Tinian Theme: Enforcement and linkages with Japanese technical schools.

There is heart-felt anguish over inability of residents to have good jobs especially that it is resulting in youth leaving the CNMI and high risk of Iraq war casualties.

Need for follow-up on Japan Auto School details from Florine Hofschneider (florineh41@hotmail.com).

Could WIA play an advocacy role like NMPASI, or is there similar back-up support for WIA like NMPAS is for DD Council and UCED?

Could WIA provide self-advocacy / assertiveness training similar to what DD Council is doing (Ed Roberts Partners in Policy-making Islands-style in the Pacific)?

Is there a role for unionism for resident workers?

Should advocacy of enforcement be made a priority?

Is there a way to find some high paying jobs and get program working with those employers. Develop a WIA reputation for groundbreaking successes, no matter how small.

Jobs that have high value no matter where they are... nurses, teachers, boat captains,

Can WIA work with CDA to facilitate business start-ups for WIA clients who have completed particular training coursework?

Tinian Call-a-Ride van may be more useful on Saipan or privatized by an owner-operator with disability. Possibly some role with mobile one-stop center concept.

Rota Public Hearing Issues

May 13, 2005 6:30-8:30 pm

MVA should be made part of WIA with its Rota and Tinian membership representation.

Parishioners from Sinpalu, Songsong, others can become part of WIA network as faith-based organizations.

We are excited about WIA and how can NMC Rota partner. Students will have economic gains. But it is like a dance. We have a good time but it forgotten about tomorrow. It is for a short

duration. We must have the students get on the treadmill for the long term. We must shift the thinking from the short term to the long term.

College is responsible for education and training but needs help from other agencies. But it is good to partner with WIA.

The idea is to put the workforce into action without proper orientation is the wrong way. These innocent kids need a job to get paid. But we are charged with making lifetime benefits, to put the kids on a training path – OSHA, heavy equipment operator training. We are killing these kids slowly – wasting their time.

We are the ones driving this process...but what gear are we in?

For employment training programs we need to have job descriptions.

For our work experience training we call it service learning. For example environmental program has three 20-hour sessions in math, environmental science, and English. We teach the expectation of the work place. We make a contract between NMC, the student and the employer with job description, performance expected by employer, waiver of liabilities, etc.

Need to move WIA jobs from government bush cutting to private sector: Cape Air, hotels, and car rental. Also hospital, and tutoring for students.

Japan student program; let WIA trainees work with Japanese students; help each other learn.

June 20th, have one week orientation training with students and employers, work ethics.

Farming is big on Rota now that we have become food processing. Aquaculture is also starting with shrimp, tilapia, escargot, coconut crab, Giant clams.

We are teaching kids how to do make preservatives, jams. We do not throw away fruit anymore. It is being used for jam and being sold at the airport. Farm products like star apple are unavailable.

Home economics and sewing. We are teaching sewing and teaming up with seamstress shops in Songsong.

Year long adult training

Have a job fair and invite the employers and potential student trainees. Have the employers interview and have the students compete for the jobs, not just assign them. Let the kids gain self-respect because they were chosen as best for a particular job.

At DLNR we had student trainees in drafting and surveying. We set up a training plan and then had our staff do the training and had evaluations. Am impressed with the new thinking shown in these goals. Like the idea of job fair, applications and interviewing for jobs.

I am working on my GED. I need experience but I need a money job. If I can get a job I do not need my GED. (the discussion was not clear but the point was that there was dilemma that she

needed get her GED but also needed to have job now. But that if she got the job now she would not need her GED anymore. The outcome was that WIA would agree to provide 6-month job experience at NMC campus while she completed here GED in September then WIA would work with her on the next steps for further education and training. It was said she had gotten the attention of the WIA board.

There is need for evaluation of the summer project. There should not be further support for government work sites that did not provide useful training. WIA wants to make investments where it is worthwhile.

There is a need for supportive services in transportation.

Public Attendees

- Ms. Barcinas, Adult enrolled in ABE/GED with WIA support services.
- Joe Rosario, MPLA and representing Mayor of Rota
- Severina O. Atalig- NMC Campus Administrator

WIA Attendees

Patrick Calvo, David Attao, Juan Tenorio, Justo Quitugua, Jesse Stein

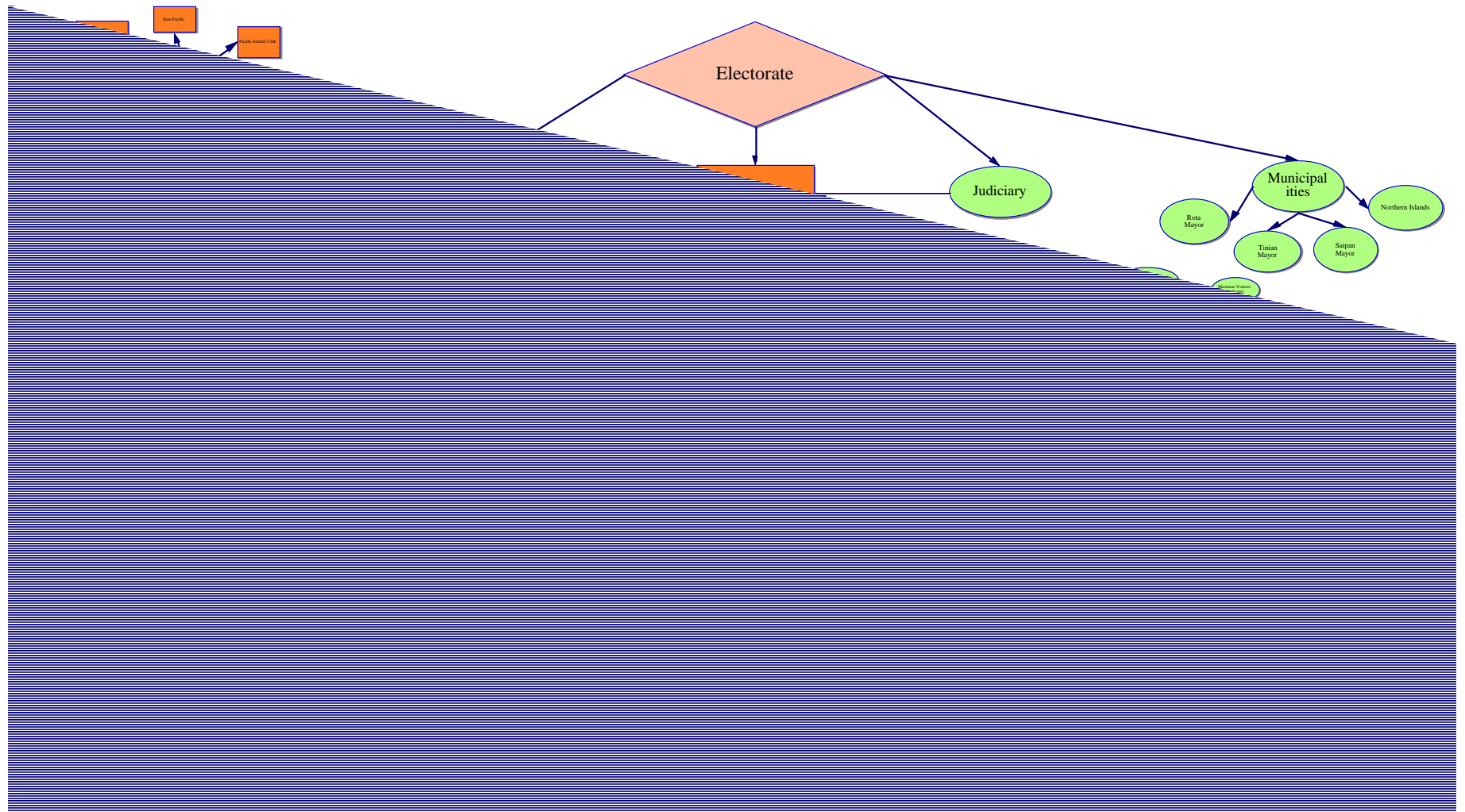
Observations

Rota theme: Innovative summer job training with week-long structured orientation, shift of work sites from government to private, and high need occupations like nursing at Rota Health Center, and teaching (tutoring and Japanese student program)

Appendix 4. MOA dated in 2002 between WIA, SWIB, Northern Marianas College, Public School System, Department of Labor and Immigration and approved by the Attorney General and the CNMI Governor.

(8 pages – refer to 4cnmimoa.pdf)

Appendix 5. Organizational Chart of CNMI Workforce System



Appendix 6. The CNMI Government Ethics Code Act

(from CNMI Office of Public Auditor (www.opacnmi.com))

CNMI Government Code of Ethics Act

Definition of Terms

Administrative Action A decision on, or proposal, consideration, enactment or making of any rule, regulation, or other official non-ministerial action or non-action by any executive department, or by any public official or public employee of an executive department, or any matter which is within the official jurisdiction of the executive branch.

Commonwealth Government Any administrative unit, board, commission, committee, department, division, executive branch, independent agency, judiciary, legislature, political subdivision, public corporation, or public school system of the Commonwealth.

Compensation Money, thing of value or other pecuniary benefit received or to be received in return for, or as reimbursement for, services rendered or to be rendered.

Doing Business Any one or any combination of sales, purchases, leases or contracts to, from, or with the Commonwealth or any Commonwealth agency in an amount in excess of \$5,000 in any twelve consecutive months.

Expenditure A payment, distribution, loan advance, deposit, or gift of money or anything of value.

Financial Interest Any interest as a result of which the owner currently receives or is entitled to receive in the future more than \$5,000 per year; * Any interest with a cost or present value of \$5,000 or more; or * Any interest representing more than 10% of a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, firm, enterprise, franchise, organization, holding company, joint stock company, receivership, trust, or any legal entity organization for profit; provided, however, financial interest shall not include:

1. any interest of the spouse of an official or employee which interest is related to the spouse's independent occupation, profession or employment;
2. any ownership through purchase at fair market value or inheritance of less than 1% of the shares of a corporation, or any corporate subsidiary, parent or affiliate thereof, regardless of the value of or dividends on such shares, if such shares are registered on a securities exchange pursuant to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended;
3. the authorized compensation paid to a public official or public employee for his office or employment;
4. any economic benefit provided equally to all residents of the Commonwealth;
5. a time or demand deposit in a financial institution;
6. an endowment or insurance policy or annuity contract purchase from an insurance company.

Gift A payment or enrichment to the extent that consideration of equal or greater value is not received. The term includes a rebate or discount in the price of anything of value unless the rebate or discount is made in the ordinary course of business to a member of

the public without regard to that person's status as a candidate. The term does not include the following:

* Informational material such as books, reports, pamphlets, calendars, or periodicals.

* A gift that:

1. is not used; and 2. no later than thirty (30) days after receipt, is returned to the donor or delivered to a charitable organization and is not claimed as a charitable contribution for tax purposes.

* A gift from an individual's spouse, child, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, parent-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, nephew, niece, aunt, uncle, or first cousin or the spouse of that individual, if the donor is not acting as the agent or intermediary for someone other than a person covered by this paragraph. * A devise or inheritance. *

A personalized plaque or trophy with a value that does not exceed five hundred dollars (\$500). * A campaign contribution required to be reported under the Government Ethics Code Act.

Immediate Family An unemancipated child residing in a candidate's household, a spouse of a candidate, or an individual claimed by that candidate or that candidate's spouse as a dependent for tax purposes.

Loan A transfer of money, property, or anything of value in exchange for an obligation, conditional or not, to repay in whole or in part.

Person An individual, proprietorship, firm, partnership, joint venture, joint stock company, syndicate, business trust, estate, company, corporation, association, club, committee, organization, or group of persons acting in concert.

Public Employee An individual who is an appointed employee of the Commonwealth Government, whether part-time or full-time.

Public Official Any person holding any elected office of the Commonwealth or any appointed, non-employee member of the Commonwealth Government, including members of boards, commissions, and task forces.

Relative A person who is related to an official or employee as spouse or as any of the following, whether by blood or by adoption; parent, child, brother or sister, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepfather or stepmother, stepson or stepdaughter, stepbrother or stepsister, half-brother or half-sister.

Filing Statement of Financial Interest

Certain government officials and employees are required to file verified Financial Disclosure Statements in order to disclose any possible conflict of interest in performance of their official duties.

The information required to be provided is not intrusive into privacy matters. Most of the information required, such as land records and business licenses, is already in the public domain, and annual income is not required to be reported.

Who Must File?

* **Elected Commonwealth officials** are required to file such a Statement when they take the oath of office. * **Persons subject to confirmation** by the Legislature are also required to file when their names are submitted for confirmation. * **Appointed officials** (or those in an acting capacity) must file a Statement before beginning duties. *

By May 1 of every year, the following individuals must file such a Statement for the previous year unless they have already filed one:

* **All appointed and elected officials and judicial officers**, including members of boards, task forces, and other CNMI instrumentalities. * **All government employees who receive additional compensation** for services rendered to, or as an independent contractor for, the Commonwealth government.

What Happens If You Miss a Filing Deadline or Refuse to File?

Civil Penalty

Persons required to file a Financial Disclosure Statement before May 1 should take this deadline seriously. Under the Ethics Code Act of 1992, a person who fails to file a properly completed and verified statement within the time required is subject to a civil penalty of **\$10 a day** for each day the delinquency continues. The Office of the Public Auditor refers the names of all persons not paying late filing penalties to the Attorney General who may file suit to collect these fines. The payment of the penalty does not, however, relieve a person of the obligation to file a Statement.

Misdemeanor

In addition, a person who refuses or knowingly fails to file a Statement or who provides false or misleading information is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of between \$500 and \$1,000, imprisonment, or both. For a public official, this could also result in removal from office.

Top Executive Branch Officials and Members of Boards and Commissions

Persons hired or appointed for any of the following positions (department head, deputy department head or division head in the executive branch, or commissioner, chairman or member of a Commonwealth commission or board), who refuse or fail to file a statement of financial interests when due:

* will not be paid any salary, per diem, or travel expenses until they comply. *
are guilty of a misdemeanor if it occurs after taking office, punishable by a fine of between \$500 and \$1000, and will be removed from office if compliance is not made within 30 days after the Statement is due.

Governor, Lieutenant Governor, And Legislators

If the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or a legislator, refuses or fails to file a Statement when due, they:

* forfeit and will not be paid salary, per diem, or travel expenses after the due date until compliance, and * are guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of between \$500 and \$1000.

What Recourse is Available For a Late Filer?

Request for Extension - A filer may obtain one 30-day extension for filing the statement by filing with the Public Auditor, not less than 10 days before the statement is due, a declaration of intention to delay filing. A declaration for extension must be accompanied by a \$50 non-refundable fee payable to the CNMI Treasurer. Failure to declare in time will constitute a violation, and the provisions for late filing will apply.

File an Appeal - A person who is assessed a civil penalty for failing to file a statement of financial interest, may submit an affidavit (a sworn statement of alleged facts) stating the reasons and circumstances for late filing or non-filing of the statement. The Public Auditor will determine appropriate actions based on the affidavit submitted.

Using a Blind Trust

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, a public official may transfer all or a portion of his assets, which must be marketable, to a trustee for the duration of his service. The trustee will have full authority to manage the trust, keep the trust's assets confidential from the public official, and report any breach of confidentiality.

Verification

Financial Disclosure Statements must be verified by a Notary Public. This means that reporting individuals must, in the presence of a Notary Public, sign and swear under oath that the contents of their Statements are true. The Notary Public then affixes his/her signature and seal verifying that the sworn statement was signed in his/her presence. A Notary Public is available for such verification, at no cost, in the Office of the Public Auditor.

Forms

All reporting individuals must file using OPA Form EC-101. The form is available here in Acrobat format.

[Download OPA Form EC-101 for Calendar Year 2004 \(110K\)](#) [Download OPA Form EC-101 for Calendar Year 2003 \(165K\)](#). [Download OPA Form EC-101 for Calendar Year 2002 \(168K\)](#). (www.opacnmi.com)

You must have the Acrobat reader installed to view the form. If you do not have the Acrobat reader, click on the Acrobat icon to get it.

Political Campaign Activity

Each CNMI Government employee needs to be aware of the rules that limit permissible political activity. The following list is intended to remind individuals of the kind of activity that they **can** and **cannot** engage in.

What kind of political activity is allowed?

A CNMI civil servant:

1. may **vote** for the candidate of his/her choice, 2. may **express opinions** on all political subjects and candidates, 3. may **be a member** of any political party, organization, or club, and 4. may **make voluntary contributions** to a political organization for its general expenditures.

What kind of political activity is prohibited?

Public officials or public employees:

1. shall not use **public funds, time, personnel, or equipment** for political activity unless that use is authorized by law or is incidental to a legally authorized or required activity. For example, they *shall not* at any time circulate any petition, including a nominating petition, in a government office, 2. shall not **discharge, promote, demote, or change the status or compensation** of any other official or employee or promise or threaten to do so: * for making or not making any contribution for a political objective, * because of the official's or employee's political actions or beliefs, * because of the official's or employee's failure to take any political action, * because of the official's or employee's support or non- support of a candidate seeking elective office, a political party, an initiative, or referendum.

3. shall not **hand over** to other officials or employees any **money or other thing of value** to promote any political objective. 4. shall not **use** their office or influence to: * **interfere with an election**, or affect its results, or * **coerce the political action** of any person or party.

5. shall not be **obliged to contribute** to any political fund or to render any political service nor will they be removed for refusing to do so. 6. shall not be **pressured or coerced** into political activities or support for political parties or candidates by threats to their employment. 7. shall not **solicit or receive** political contributions from anyone while on government time on government property, or in government offices. 8. shall not **campaign** for any candidate for public office during official working hours. 9. shall not **promote or oppose legislation** relating to programs of departments without the official sanction of the proper departmental authority.

Neither a **candidate for election, a public official, nor a public employee** shall **solicit or assess any contribution** from any member in the Civil service.

Running for office?

CNMI employees become official candidates for office when the Board of Elections certifies their candidacy. At that time, all such employees who are not elected officials must take **annual leave or go into a leave without pay status**.

Gifts and Gratuities

As a general rule, acceptance of a gift by a public official or public employee from persons, other than from a spouse, children or specified other relatives, is unethical and not allowed. There is good reason for this! In serving the public interest, both public officials and public employees are expected to be free from the influence of private or business interests.

What is a Gift?

A "**Gift**" means a payment or enrichment where consideration of equal or greater value is not received. It includes a rebate or discount in the price of anything unless it is made in the ordinary course of business to a member of the public. The following **are not gifts** and may be accepted:

- * informational materials such as books, reports, pamphlets, calendars, or periodicals, * something received that is not used but within 30 days is either returned to the donor or delivered to a charitable organization, and is not claimed as a charitable contribution for tax purposes, * something received from a spouse, child, or other specified relatives, unless they are an intermediary for someone else, or * a personalized plaque or trophy with a value not exceeding \$500, an inheritance, or a reportable campaign contribution.

Acceptable Gifts

Public service awards, commercially reasonable loans, reportable political contributions, and reasonable hosting furnished in connection with a public event, appearance, or ceremonies related to the CNMI business may be accepted unless given either anonymously, or with a mutual understanding that any public official/employee/contractor's vote, action, decision, or judgement, would be influenced.

A gift may be accepted on behalf of the CNMI by any official or employee, or their spouse or minor child, provided they report it to the Office of the Public Auditor and the Director of Finance who will add it to the inventory of CNMI property.

Unacceptable Gifts

- * Persons shall not give an anonymous gift to any public official or public employee, or to a spouse or minor child of them, nor shall any of them solicit or accept any such gift. * Persons shall not give or offer to give anything of value including a gift, favor or promise of future employment, to any CNMI public official, public employee, or contractor, or to their spouses or minor children, (nor may any of them accept anything of value) where there is a mutual understanding that votes, official actions, decisions or judgments of that official, employee, or contractor concerning CNMI

business would be influenced, unless it involves a non-monetary gift with a value of less than \$50. * Persons with an economic interest in a CNMI business service or regulatory transaction shall not give any gift to any CNMI judicial officer or public employee (or to their spouse or minor child) whose decision or action may substantially affect such transaction; and such officers/employees shall not accept any gift other than an occasional non-cash item or service with a value of less than \$50 or a gift from a relative. * Public officials/employees, business associates, or immediate family members shall not solicit or accept anything of value from someone:

1. regulated by or providing goods or services to their government entity; 2. who has offered, or has expressed an intention, to provide travel expenses, goods or services to a member of their government entity; or 3. who previously was regulated by, or who provided goods and services, to their government entity when that thing was promised, offered, or received within one year of the end of the relationship between the donor and the government.

Soliciting or Receiving Money for Advice or Assistance?

Public officials, public employees, and their spouse or minor children:

* shall not solicit or accept any thing of value, in return for advice or assistance on matters concerning CNMI operations or business. * may, however, accept compensation for services wholly unrelated to their CNMI duties and responsibilities when rendered as part of their non-CNMI employment, occupation or profession.

Acceptance of Honoraria

Public officials/employees **shall not accept:**

* an honorarium for a speech or article, unless the subject matter of the speech or article is unrelated to their responsibilities. * an honorarium of more than \$1000 exclusive of travel and subsistence expenses for any speech, article, or honoraria totaling more than \$10,000 in any calendar year.

Public officials or employees are not considered to have accepted an honorarium if it is paid to a charitable organization selected by the payor from a list of five or more charitable organizations provided.

If you are offered a gift and have any doubt about whether you should accept it, you should consult with the Public Auditor.

Conflict of Interest Public office is a public trust to be protected from the danger of conflict of interest. A conflict occurs when an official's responsibilities, duties, or activities conflict with the officials' private interests whether they are of a business, family, social, or other nature.

To Whom Does It Apply?

All public officials, public employees, and former public employees and officials, must comply with conflict of interest restrictions.

Restrictions on Use of Position or Office

Public officials/employees *shall not*:

* **use their office/staff** to seek employment or conduct business. * **use their position** to obtain private gain or advantage for themselves, a relative, or an entity in which they have a present or potential financial interest. * **disclose or use confidential information** that is not generally available to the public for their own or another person's financial benefit. * **participate in transactions** that they may substantially influence if they know that a relative, friend, or associate has a substantial financial interest in them. If the Public Auditor finds that such a violation occurred, he may cancel the transaction if the public interest would be served and if an innocent third party would not be adversely affected. * **use public funds, time, or equipment** for their own private gain, *unless* authorized by law.

Restraints on Votes, Deliberations & Discussions

* Public officials *shall not* participate in, vote on, influence or attempt to influence an official decision if they, or the business they are associated with, have a financial interest or can potentially benefit from the matter, unless the interest or benefit is incidental to their position or would normally accrue to them in their profession, occupation, or class. * Public officials may however participate in a discussion or vote on a decision if the only financial interest or benefit is incidental or would normally accrue to them in their profession, occupation, or class.

Other Restraints

Public officials/employees *shall not*:

* participate in any matter which will affect the financial interests of an individual or organization with which they are negotiating future employment. * use public funds, time, or equipment for political activity unless it is authorized by law or is incidental to a legally authorized or required activity. * appear as advocates or attorneys for another person before a Commonwealth entity. They may however appear for themselves, immediate family, principal employer, or on a purely ministerial matter. * represent anyone whom they have represented for a fee or other consideration within the preceding 12 months. * have a business partnership with anyone who provides representation before the Commonwealth government for a fee or other consideration. * authorize or request another person on their behalf to perform an act prohibited by the conflict of interest provisions of the Ethics Code. * participate in obtaining a public contract in which they or immediate family members have an interest.

A **public member of a board, commission, or council** may represent a client or constituent before a Commonwealth entity only after first filing a financial disclosure statement stating the services rendered. A disclosure statement is not necessary for purely ministerial matters that do not require discretion.

Post Employment Restrictions

Former public officials/employees:

* shall not assist in any judicial, legislative, or administrative proceeding if they previously participated personally and substantially in it while in office or employed by the Commonwealth. * shall not for **one year** after public employment or office assist or represent anyone in a business transaction involving the Commonwealth if they participated personally and substantially in it while in office or employment. * shall not disclose or use confidential information that is not generally available to the public for their own or another person's financial benefit.

Voiding Contracts

Violations of the Ethics Code will be addressed by the Court. In addition, **the Public Auditor may cancel or rescind any contracts** where public officials or employees participated in a transaction involving their government entity:

* where they should reasonably have known that their participation substantially influenced the transaction, and * if they knew that someone with whom they had a family, personal, financial, or other non-business relationship had a substantial economic interest in the transaction.

Complaints of Ethics Violations An ethics violation occurs when a public official or employee or other individual initiates or takes an action that is contrary to the principles embodied in the Government Ethics Code Act. These principles are described under Conflict of Interest, Gifts & Gratuities, Financial Disclosure, and Political Activity.

The Act designates the Office of the Public Auditor to receive complaints of violations, and authorizes OPA to investigate and take action as appropriate.

Initiation of Complaints

Anyone may report possible violations to the Office of the Public Auditor in writing, in person, or by using the OPA Hotline at anytime of day or night:

The Public Auditor uses discretion in deciding whether to investigate or to act upon a complaint. If the Public Auditor decides not to investigate, he should state the reasons in a written report. The Public Auditor will send a copy of any such complaint concerning a legislative official or employee to the Legislature within two days of receipt.

Actions on Complaints

* Before the conclusion of any investigation, the Public Auditor will give notice to the person under investigation of the substance of the complaint and an opportunity to provide written information including names of witnesses he wishes to be interviewed. *

At the conclusion of his investigation, the Public Auditor will prepare a written report that includes a summary of the investigation, a complete transcript of any

proceeding, and any recommendations for administrative or legal action. * If the Public Auditor notifies a person that a complaint is pending, the notification along with any recommendation for corrective action should be in writing with a copy sent to the Governor.

Reporting on Complaints

* If the Public Auditor determines that the complaint is not sustained, he will state so in his report and notify the person investigated, as well as any other person specifically informed of the investigation. * Where corrective action is needed, the report will be sent to the appropriate parties. If the report concerns: 1. a public employee, the report will be sent to the head of the public entity where the employee works; 2. a department head or appointed official, the report will be sent to the Governor; 3. a legislative employee, the report will be sent to the legislator for whom the employee works; 4. an elected official, the report will be sent to that official and the Governor; and 5. the Governor or Lt. Governor, the report will be made public.

* Persons receiving a recommendation will, within 30 days, advise the Public Auditor of action taken on the recommendation, or provide a statement of reasons why they decline to implement the recommended action.

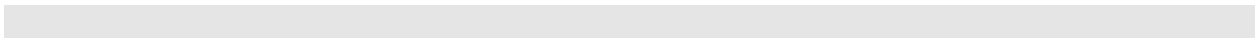
Confidentiality

* **Complaints** to the Public Auditor's Office **will be confidential** except as necessary to carry out the Public Auditor's duties or to enable others to consider and act on the Public Auditor's notices and recommendations. * The Public Auditor's Office may, however, comment publicly on the disposition of its requests and recommendations and publish summary opinions so long as an opinion does not identify the person complained against or the specific transaction.

Sanctions

* Any employee found to have furnished false or misleading information to the Public Auditor with the intent to mislead will be subject to employment sanctions including discharge. * Any non-elected official, employee, or contractor who fails to provide documents or information requested by the Public Auditor will be subject to employment sanctions including removal from office or cancellation of contract rights. * Any person found guilty by a court of furnishing false, misleading, or incomplete information to the Public Auditor with the intent to mislead will be subject to a fine of not more than \$500. -----

Note: The above text is not a complete analysis of the Ethics Code and is intended as a guide only -- See the **Government Ethics Code** for more specific reference.



Appendix 7. CNMI Procurement Regulations

**DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE CNMI
PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS February 23, 2001.**

(59 pages)

**(available from : www.dof.gov.mp
also refer to - [7cnmiprocurementregs.pdf](#))**

Appendix 8. CNMI Open Government Act

(12 Pages – Refer to 8opengovernmentact.pdf)

Appendix 9. CNMI Grievance Procedure from Five Year Plan Pages 27–32

(7 pages – Refer to 9grievancepolicy.pdf)

Appendix 10. CNMI Board of Regents Policy Licensing Of Postsecondary Educational Institution

LICENSING OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO OPERATE IN THE CNMI

001 Constitutional and Statutory Authority

The CNMI Constitution, Article XV, Section 2, § (a) establishes that the Board of Regents “shall formulate policy relating to the higher education needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands” (CNMI).

2 CMC, Title 3 Div. 1, Chap. 3, Art. 2, § 1316 (k) authorizes the Board of Regents to serve as the official coordinating agency for all postsecondary education within the Commonwealth, with power to license, limit, and regulate all postsecondary educational activities offered by any public or private agency.

Therefore, in accordance with its constitutional and statutory mandates, the Board of Regents sets forth the following policies, regulations, and procedures regarding the licensing of postsecondary educational institutions to operate in the CNMI.

002 Definitions

- (a) “Board” shall mean the Board of Regents, which is the official coordinating agency for all postsecondary educational activities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- (b) “License” shall mean the granting of permission, by the Board of Regents, for a postsecondary educational institution to operate in the CNMI for a period of not less than three years.
- (c) “Provisional License” shall mean the initial granting of permission, by the Board of Regents, for a postsecondary educational institution to operate in the CNMI for a period of one year, during which time outstanding requirements for obtaining a license must be met.
- (d) “Postsecondary institution” shall mean a public or non-public (not-for-profit or for-profit) postsecondary educational institution offering courses or programs beyond high school leading to a certificate or a degree.
- (e) “Out-of-state institution” shall mean any college, university, community college, technical institute, or the equivalent that awards an associate or higher degree and is controlled by a public or private body organized outside the CNMI.
- (f) “Distance education” shall mean that there is physical separation of the instructor and student. The means of communication can be in many forms including paper correspondence, video, audio, teleconference, Internet or any combination thereof.

- (g) “Course” shall mean a college-level course offered for credit with specific curriculum, educational objectives, and course requirements.
- (h) “Certificate or degree program” shall mean a sequence or combination of courses which, upon satisfactory completion thereof, leads to the award of an educational certificate, diploma, or degree.
- (i) “Physical presence in the Northern Mariana Islands” shall be evidenced by securing all legal permits and documents required for operating in the CNMI and showing proof of arrangements for use of physical facilities which will house the institution, including its educational activities.

003 Required License

A license is required for any postsecondary education provider, except as provided for under 004, that

- offers or conducts one or more courses or certificate/degree programs, or
- offers or conducts training toward a vocational end, or
- offers an educational credential.

A license is also required for any out-of-state institution (including any distance education provider) that has a physical presence in the Northern Mariana Islands, except as provided for under 004 (e).

004 Exclusions

The license requirements laid out herein shall not apply to

- (a) offering of a short course or seminar in which instruction for the segment takes no more than twenty classroom hours;
- (b) offering of courses or programs on a military installation solely for military personnel or civilians employed on such installation;
- (c) training that is exclusively for self-improvement or personal enrichment and is non-vocational and non-credit bearing;
- (d) training that is offered free to certain select groups of students, such as closed enrollment classes for a company’s employees and arranged through private contracts; or
- (e) offering, by an accredited out-of-state institution, of one or more courses or programs in partnership with a college in the CNMI that has been licensed by the Board.

005 Declaration of Intent

Any institution of higher education planning to offer any credit-bearing course or degree program in the Northern Mariana Islands, except as provided for under 004, shall inform the Board of such intent by letter. This declaration of intent shall include the following:

- proposed name of the institution planning to deliver such educational offerings;
- brief description of the scope of the institution’s proposed educational offerings;
- date the institution plans to commence instruction;
- names, telephone numbers, and addresses of principal contact persons/organiza- tions for use by the Board for communication purposes during the application phase; and
- date the institution expects to submit its application with accompanying required documentation.

006 License Application

Prior to offering any credit-bearing course or degree program at the postsecondary level in the Northern Mariana Islands, except as provided for under 004, the institution shall apply to the Board for a license to operate in the CNMI.

006.01 Application Process. The application materials may be obtained from the Office of the Board of Regents on Saipan.

The licensing process includes

- (a) submitting the application to the Office of the Board according to established deadlines,
- (b) securing required bonds,
- (c) paying all applicable fees, and
- (d) meeting all requirements laid out in 007.

All applications are reviewed in a three-tier process, first by Board staff, second by the Program Committee of the Board, and finally by the Board of Regents. Final approval of the application by the Board is required before the applicant may begin offering classes in the CNMI.

The application must be submitted according to established deadlines in order for it to be considered at one of the Board’s quarterly meetings. Applicants may contact the Office of the Board to obtain a current list of filing deadlines.

The Program Committee of the Board will not commence its review of the application until the applicant submits all required documentation to the Office of the Board, as certified by the Board’s designee. Such certification shall be not later than two months prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting in January, April, July, or October. Should such deadline not be met, the application review will not commence until prior to the next quarterly meeting and shall be in accordance with the schedule laid out in *License Application Process and Timeline*.

The Board shall make a determination regarding the application at its quarterly meeting applicable for the date of submission of the application.

006.02 Application Fee. A non-refundable application fee of \$500.00 to cover administrative costs shall be submitted to the Board with each application. Resubmission of the application following its withdrawal by an applicant requires an additional application fee.

006.02.01 Exclusion. In the event that the Board denies the applicant a license, the Board may, at the time of the denial, determine that the application fee may be waived for resubmission of an application, in whole or in part, provided that the resubmission occurs within six months of the date of denial.

007 License Requirements

In order to obtain a license to operate as a postsecondary educational institution in the CNMI, an entity must meet the following requirements:

- (a) Physical presence in the CNMI;
- (b) Defined mission, suitable purposes, and identified target population;
- (c) Institutional governing capacity;
- (d) Financial stability and integrity;
- (e) Educational programs of acceptable quality, content, and length;
- (f) Quality teaching faculty;
- (g) Sufficient library and learning resources;
- (h) Adequate support services; and
- (i) Adequate administrative services

007.01 Physical presence in the CNMI

Evaluation criteria:

- The institution has the required legal documents to operate in the CNMI.
- The institution has sufficient and adequate facilities to serve its educational purposes.

Required documentation:

- a. Proprietorship:
 - Business License
 - Identification and description of physical facilities to be used by the institution, with designation of principal use of each facility or portion of facility (e.g., administrative, instructional, library)
- b. Partnership:
 - Business License
 - Partnership Agreement
 - Identification and description of physical facilities to be used by the institution, with designation of principal use of each facility or portion of facility (e.g., administrative, instructional, library)
- c. Corporation:
 - Business License
 - Corporate Certificate
 - Articles of Incorporation
 - Corporate By-laws
 - Identification and description of physical facilities to be used by the institution, with designation of principal use of each facility or portion of facility (e.g., administrative, instructional, library)

007.02 Defined mission, suitable purposes, and identified target population

Evaluation criteria:

- The institution has a clearly defined mission appropriate for a post- secondary educational institution and for its intended constituency.
- The institution's purposes are suitable to the public interest of the CNMI.
- The institution's target population is identified.

Required documentation:

- Statement of mission for the institution
- List of purposes for the institution
- Description of the population to be served by the institution

007.03 Institutional governing capacity

Evaluation criteria:

- The institution has a governing board whose responsibilities are clearly stated (for corporation).
- Among the governing board's responsibilities are those that ensure institutional integrity and that the institution is engaged in activities designed to carry out its stated mission and purposes (for corporation).
- The governing board is sufficient in size and composition to meet its stated responsibilities (for corporation).
- The institution has a Chief Executive Officer with defined responsibilities and sufficient qualifications to meet those responsibilities.
- The institution has an organizational structure sufficient to manage its affairs.

Required documentation:

- Governing board by-laws and statement of board responsibilities (for corporation)
- Biographical information for members of the governing board (for corporation)
- Biographical information and responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer of the institution
- Table of organization, including names and biographical information of those who will fill the positions

007.04 Financial stability and integrity

Evaluation criteria:

- The institution's proposed budgets, financial resources, and funding base are adequate to support its mission, purposes, and programs.
- The institution ensures its financial integrity by making provision for timely and regular external fiscal audits of (a) its financial records and (b) its financial management system.

Required documentation:

- Proposed budgets
- Documentation of any external foundation or other financial support

- Documentation of funding base
- Description of plans for timely and regular fiscal audits of the institution's financial records and financial management system
- Proof of performance/surety bond

007.05 Educational programs of acceptable quality, content, and length

Evaluation criteria:

- The institution has policies that specify the requirements and qualifications for students entering (a) the institution and (b) its certificate and degree programs.
- The institution's catalog clearly describes its certificate and degree programs, including expected student learning outcomes, and specifies the requirements to be met for the award of each certificate and degree offered, including general education courses and academic standards.
- The institution's instructional program offerings are (a) consistent with its mission and (b) are of sufficient depth, breadth, and rigor to provide the knowledge and skills expected of program graduates and to merit award of the proposed certificate or degree.
- The institution's degree programs include a defined general education component of the breadth and depth appropriate for a postsecondary degree.
- The institution's catalog contains course descriptions and prerequisites, when appropriate, for all offered courses.
- The institution has stated criteria for awarding academic credits.
- Generally accepted standards for hours of instruction per academic credit awarded are manifested in the institution's proposed class schedule.
- The proposed class schedule identifies, for each class, hours of classroom/laboratory instruction, and credits to be awarded.
- If course or program offerings are affiliated with a U.S. accredited institution, the quality of such offerings is adequate to meet the needs of the courses or programs offered in the CNMI.

Required documentation:

- Statement of requirements for student admission into the institution
- Statement of requirements for student admission into a specific program of study
- Names of certificates and degrees, with expected student learning outcomes for each
- Specific requirements for each certificate and degree offered (e.g. required courses, including general education requirements, and academic standards)
- Catalog or other public document describing the courses and established prerequisites for specific courses
- Statement of criteria for awarding of credits
- Proposed schedule of classes for the first semester of operation

007.06 Quality teaching faculty

Evaluation criteria:

- The institution's teaching faculty is sufficient in number and qualifications to support the institution's educational programs.

- The institution's teaching faculty are qualified to teach those courses which they are assigned to teach.
- The institution has a clear statement of faculty responsibilities.

Required documentation:

- Roster of full time and part time faculty, including degrees, qualifications, and experience
- Statement of faculty responsibilities
- Proposed schedule of classes, which identifies the faculty responsible for each class

007.07 Sufficient library and learning resources

Evaluation criteria:

- The institution's library and learning resources are sufficient in breadth, depth, and quantity to support the courses and instructional programs offered at the institution and to meet the needs of students enrolled in such courses and/or programs.

Required documentation:

- Description and quantity of library holdings and learning resources
- Copies of agreements for access to external learning resources

007.08 Adequate student support services

Evaluation criteria:

- Support services for students are adequate and appropriate for meeting the needs of students and are consistent with student characteristics and the institution's mission.
- The institution has a clear description of (a) how it will maintain student records and (b) how students may obtain academic records if the institution closes.

Required documentation:

- Title and job description of non-instructional personnel whose responsibilities are to provide student support
- Description of how student records will be maintained
- Description of how students may obtain academic records if the institution closes

007.09 Adequate administrative services

Evaluation criteria:

- The institution has sufficient staff with appropriate qualifications and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support the institution's mission and educational programs.

Required documentation:

- Title and job description of administrative personnel

- Names and biographical information of administrative staff, current or proposed (and so identified)

008 Need for Additional Information

It is in the applicant's best interest to provide as much relevant information as possible to enable the Board of Regents to make a decision regarding the applicant's eligibility to establish and operate an institution of higher education within the CNMI.

The Board of Regents reserves the right to ask the applicant for any additional information it deems necessary for it to make a determination in authorizing the applicant to operate as a postsecondary educational institution in the CNMI.

009 Notification of Decision

The Board's staff shall issue notification of the Board's decision regarding the applicant's application by telephone within two working days following the Board's decision regarding the application.

The license authorizing the applicant to operate a postsecondary educational institution within the CNMI will be sent to the applicant by registered mail within five working days following the Board's decision.

In the event that an applicant is denied a license, a letter stating the reasons for such denial shall be sent to the applicant by registered mail within ten working days following the Board's decision.

010 Reconsideration

Should its application be denied by the Board, an applicant has the right to file for reconsideration when such applicant can show that the Board's staff or others have misrepresented its application in testimony before the Board, or when such applicant can show that the Board did not follow the procedures prescribed herein.

010.01 Procedure. A request for reconsideration must be made to the Chairperson of the Board no later than 30 days after the applicant's receipt of the letter from the Board stating the reasons for the denial of a license. The Chairperson shall appoint a special committee of not less than three Board members to review such request. The committee shall consider the request and make recommendations to the Board. The Board shall make a decision regarding the request for reconsideration no later than 60 days after the Chairperson of the Board has received such a request, and the applicant shall be informed about the decision by registered mail within ten working days following the decision.

011 Provisional License

The Board of Regents recognizes that when an entity applies for a license to establish a postsecondary educational institution in the CNMI or for a license to establish an extension of an out-of-state institution of higher education in the CNMI, some requirements may not be met at the time of the application. Therefore, the Board, at its discretion, may grant a Provisional License for a period of not more than one year so that such remaining requirements may be met.

A statement from the Board shall accompany the Provisional License and shall specify those requirements which have not been met. Documentation showing how the institution has subsequently met such requirements, and a non-fundable fee of \$250.00 to cover administrative costs, must be submitted to the Board not less than three months prior to the expiration date of the Provisional License in order for the institution's license to be extended as described in 012.

012 Term of License

012.01 Non-Accredited Institutions. For those postsecondary educational institutions operating in the CNMI which are not accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, the term of the license shall be for a period of three years. The license may be extended for additional three-year periods, provided that the institution meets those requirements specified in 013. The one-year Provisional License described in 011 shall count as one of the three years.

012.02 Accredited Institutions. When a postsecondary educational institution operating in the CNMI becomes accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, the term of the license shall be for the duration of its accreditation period. The term for each extension of the license shall coincide with the institution's reaffirmation of accreditation.

013 Requirements for Extension of License

Six months prior to the expiration of the institution's license, the institution shall submit to the Office of the Board a report certifying continued compliance with the requirements specified in 007. The report shall contain a statement describing how the institution continues to meet each of the nine requirements.

The report shall also certify compliance with an additional license requirement, *Operational Status*, the evaluation criterion being that the institution is operational, with students enrolled in its courses and actively pursuing its degree programs. Documentation related to this requirement is to be included in the report and shall consist of the following:

- Number of students enrolled in the institution each instructional term of each year during the current term of its license to operate
- The names of degrees the institution awarded during the current term of its license to operate and the number of students awarded each degree each year

The president and the chair of the governing board shall sign the report submitted for an extension of its license.

A non-refundable fee of \$500.00 to cover administrative costs shall accompany the report.

014 Performance/Surety Bond

The applicant shall obtain a performance/surety bond, based upon student enrollment as follows:

- \$25,000 --- less than 50 students;
- \$50,000 --- 50 to 99 students; or
- \$100,000 --- 100 or more students

014.01 Exemption. For those applicants who can demonstrate through such means as a CPA audit that the institution's income from tuition and fees is less than \$10,000 per annum, the performance/surety bond shall be \$10,000.

015 Filing of Complaints

When any person, persons, agency, or institution desires to file a formal complaint regarding an institution's violation of any part of the licensing policy or any part of the licensing condition, with such complaint possibly resulting in the suspension or revocation of the license of an institution as provided for in 016, the following procedures shall apply:

1. All complaints must be presented in writing, be signed by the complainant, and detail the nature and particulars of the complaint.
2. The Board shall inform the concerned institution that a complaint has been made and shall be informed about the nature of the complaint.
3. The concerned institution shall have the right to respond to the complaint, providing it does so within 30 days after receiving notification of such a complaint.

The Board will entertain only those complaints that relate to institutional violation of the requirements laid out in 007 or to conditions leading to possible suspension or revocation of an institution's license to operate a postsecondary educational institution in the CNMI as laid out in 016.

016 Suspension or Revocation of License

The license issued to an institution is granted based upon the conditions laid out in the required documentation submitted with the License Application. Non-adherence to such conditions shall be cause for suspension or revocation of the institution's license to operate a postsecondary educational institution within the CNMI.

Any one of the following shall be cause for suspension or revocation of an institution's license to operate in the CNMI:

- Misrepresentation in the documentation submitted with the License Application, or
- Failure on the part of the institution to maintain the standards and conditions set forth by the institution in its License Application, or
- Failure to operate in accordance with its stated mission and purposes.

When the Board determines that a complaint, filed as provided for under 015, may warrant suspension or termination of the institution's license to operate in the CNMI, the following procedures shall apply:

1. The Board Chair shall notify the affected institution of the possible suspension or revocation of its operating license and the reasons for such determination.
2. The Board chair shall appoint a team of not less than three members to conduct a review of the institution relative to the complaint, with such review to take place not more than 30 days after appointment of the review team. The institution shall be given written notification of the institutional review, with such notification stating the purpose of the review, the names of the review team members, and the dates during which the review will be conducted.
3. The review team shall review institutional documents and interview faculty, staff, and students relative to the complaint.
4. Within 10 working days after completion of the institutional review, the review team shall submit to the Program Committee of the Board a written report containing the results of its findings and its recommended action.
5. Within 30 days of the review team's submission of its written report to the Program Committee, the Program Committee shall consider the review team's report and determine its own recommendation to be made to the Board. The Program Committee shall provide the affected institution a copy of its recommendation, with supporting justification.
6. Within 30 days after the Program Committee has determined its recommendation, the Board shall hold a session to make a final decision regarding the revocation or suspension of the institution's license to operate. The affected institution shall be notified of the Board session and shall be provided an opportunity to present its position regarding the action to be taken.
7. The Board shall meet in Executive Session to make its final decision regarding the institution and shall notify the institution of its decision by registered mail within five working days following the Executive Session.

017 Student Records

All academic records, financial aid information, and other student records should be stored in a permanent form, such as microfilm or compact disc.

The Board will not be responsible for student records if an institution decides to close. A closing institution is expected to make arrangements with another college or university or with the CNMI archives to preserve student records, and to inform the Board about such arrangements. Prior to closure, the institution shall attempt to notify every current and past student by mail about the closure, where the academic records are being stored, and how students can access those records. The same information shall be placed in advertisements in all local newspapers for a period of not less than one week. To the extent possible and practical, a copy of a student's academic record should also be forwarded to the individual student.

018 Accreditation Status

The CNMI Board of Regents is not an accrediting body. Therefore, the Board's issuance of a license to establish an institution of higher education in the CNMI does not constitute accreditation of the institution. It is the Board's expectation that any institution of higher education operating within the CNMI will seek accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges or from some other appropriate accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.