



# Carolinian Affairs Office

## Office of the Governor



### 2020 Citizen Centric Report

#### OVERVIEW

CAROLINIAN AFFAIRS OFFICE (CAO) was created by mandate of Article III, Section 18 of the CNMI Constitution.

- to advise the governor on matters affecting persons of Carolinian descent within the Commonwealth.
- review the application of government policies and the availability and quality of government services for persons of Carolinian descent
- investigate complaints and conduct public hearings regarding matters affecting persons of Carolinian descent,
- May recommend items for inclusion in the proposed annual budget, review the budget before its submission by the governor to the legislature and recommend amendments to the budget relating to matters affecting persons of Carolinian descent.

- May at any time require information in writing or otherwise with respect to matters affecting persons of Carolinian descent from the officers of any administrative department, office or agency of the Commonwealth.
- CAO is represented as a member of the Governor's Council created under Article VI, Section 5 of the CNMI Constitution.

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## MISSION

*"to develop programs and provide services to protect, promote and preserve the welfare, culture and traditions of the indigenous Carolinians of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands"*

## VISION

*"An empowered Carolinian Community thriving, recognizing their indigenous rights as set forth by their culture, the constitution and laws and proudly exhibiting their culture by speaking the language and practicing their customs and traditions"*

## GOALS

To empower and promote self-sufficiency and cultural preservation by providing social and economic development opportunities through available technical assistance to eligible individuals. It is the fiduciary duty and role of this office to assist the Governor in overseeing the general welfare of the Carolinian Community, to increase awareness of government functions and preserve the culture of the indigenous Carolinians by promoting cultural programs and activities.



# Highlights

*“To empower for Self-Sufficiency”*

## OUTREACH



**Employment:** Preparation or Printing of resumes, recommendations/referral and follow-ups on employment applications.

**Documents:** Assist in filling out applications for services when needed, preparation of affidavits.

**Advocacy:** Make appointments and assist in preparing all necessary information and documents required for submission.

**Others:** Accommodated more than 200 individuals and organizations who reserved the Carolinian Uut Pavilion for meetings, parties and other gatherings.

Since the worldwide outbreak of **Corona Virus**, CAO assisted more than 2000 individuals with their application for the Economic Impact Payment (Stimulus) and the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA).

CAO collaborated with other government agencies and non-government organizations on events and activities catered to the general public. Due to COVID 19, annual events had been postponed or held virtually.

**Carolinian Affairs Office  
Bwulasiyol Refaluwasch**

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### *In action...*



## P's of the Carolinian Culture and Traditions

Preserving, Protecting, Promoting and Perpetuating our Carolinian Culture is also a priority here at CAO. Highlighes of FY 2020 included the following events.

In October of 2019, a sacred initiation of Pwo for Antonio “Tony” U. Piailug was held. The ceremony was carried out by Grand master navigators Ali Haleyalur and Sesario Sewralur. **Pwo** is a sacred ritual for individuals who have successfully concluded a rigorous course of training in traditional wayfinding are initiated into the secrets of master navigators. The ceremony was made possible by the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs in partnership with CAO, Indigenous Affairs Office and Palau Community College.

In November, 2019, the 1st Regional Dialogue between the Guam Language Commission and the CNMI Language Commission was held in partnership with CAO, IAO and PSS Chamorro Carolinian Language Heritage Studies (CCLHS). The dialogue was held to address any regional difference, particularly in terms of orthography. The event also strengthened working relationship between the stakeholders of preserving and perpetuating our indigenous languages and culture.

The first ever Chamorro-Carolinian Mother Language Day kicked off on February 24, 2020. The CNMI also celebrated 2020 as the Year of the Indigenous Language meant to raise awareness not only to speak the language but also to appreciate it.

## The Tepengi Kkosch Refaluwasch/Caring for our Carolinian Culture Program (TKR)

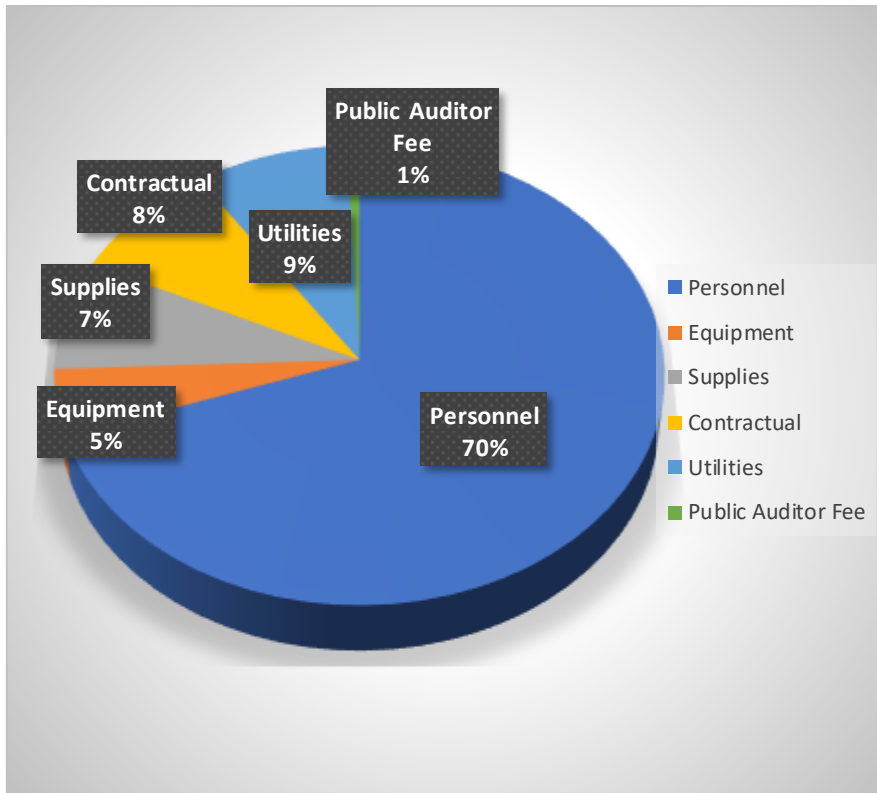
Is a program funded by grants from the Administration for Native Americans in part of our efforts to promote, preserve and protect our Refaluwasch Culture. Funding for the program ended on September 2020, however, due to the direct effect of COVID, the program was granted an extension on activities that were put on hold. The program is structured around a class environment where instructors teach students classes on Carolinian culture and traditional skills. On the final year, the program successfully complete its main theme of “Harvesting.” Students were able to plant, harvest, prepare and cook their harvest. The display hall which is also part of the grant is scheduled to be open by the end of December of 2020.

## Where the money comes from?

The funding for Fiscal Year 2020 comes from Public Law 21-8 Budget Appropriations Act of 2020 which gave the Carolinian Affairs Office \$302,747 about 1% less than the 2019 appropriations.

About seventy percent (70%) of CAO's appropriated budget covers the personnel expenses.

The office remains diligent in their spending due to limited funds especially with the effects of this pandemic. We have been very fortunate to have great partners with non-government organizations come out to help raise funds for activities not covered in the budget.



## TKR - Tepengi Kkosch Refaluwasch / Caring for Our Carolinian Culture Program

The administration for Native Americans (ANA), under the US Department of Health and Human Services, awarded \$441,815 for three years for Carolinian youth development and cultural preservation through the Social and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) program.

The funding was broken down into 3 phases

FY 2018 - \$180,967.00

FY 2019 - \$127,934.00

FY 2020 - \$131,114.00

In June of 2017, CAO submitted the office's project, "Tepengi Kkosch Refaluwasch/Caroing for Our Carolinian Culture," to the ANA SEDS program for consideration. The project proposal was aimed at better fostering cultural knowledge and practices for the Carolinian Community.

The project funding ended on September 2020. However, CAO will continue with the TKR Program and its objectives.



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## Work in Progress

CAO continues its of creating its Comprehensive Plan to develop programs and activities that will improve the services delivered to the Carolinian Community and also extend out to those who really need assistance. The welfare, education and preservation and promotion of culture of the Carolinians will be reviewed and discussed.



It is the intent of CAO to expand its operations to serve the Refaluwasch people in the areas of need with regards to welfare, health and education. The understanding of their rights as citizens and NMD's is also a priority for us.

As we are faced with funding challenges as a direct result of COVID-19, the Carolinian Affairs Office continues its effort to seek other avenues to deliver the services, programs and activities for the Carolinian Community. However, it works both ways, improving communications and the dissemination of information on issues affecting community and the support and participation of the Carolinian community. As we increase the number of participation, we strengthen our justification for increase of funding and most especially the continuity of our programs and activities.

## TEPENGI KKOSH REFALUWASCH PROGRAM

This December, the CAO TKR Program will open its mini display hall to showcase the end products of the programs and activities held throughout the program. The display hall will also showcase a collection of significant cultural artifacts which includes photos of Carolinians taken in the late 1800's and early 1900's, and some notable events sponsored by the office. The TKR Program funding ended this year; however, CAO intends to continue their program objectives working with the availability of funds.

