

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>WHO WE ARE</i>	1
<i>OUR PROGRESS</i>	2
<i>OUR FINANCES</i>	3
<i>WHAT'S NEXT</i>	4

## CITIZEN CENTRIC REPORT ~ FISCAL YEAR 2020



# CNMI OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

## MISSION

The Office of the Attorney General provides legal counsel and representation to Commonwealth government and its agencies on many issues vital to the people's interest. These issues include the protection of children from abuse and neglect, preservation of the environment, protecting the Commonwealth's financial assets, the protection of consumers, and public safety.



## WHO WE ARE

THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (OAG) IS CONSTITUTIONALLY CREATED PURSUANT TO THE NMI CONSTITUTION, ART. 11I, § 11 AS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IS HEADED BY AN ATTORNEY GENERAL ELECTED TO A FOUR-YEAR TERM. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IS THE CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER OF THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- PROVIDING LEGAL ADVICE TO THE GOVERNOR AND EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS INCLUDING PUBLIC CORPORATIONS AND AUTONOMOUS AGENCIES;
- REPRESENTING THE COMMONWEALTH IN ALL LEGAL MATTERS AND;
- PROSECUTING VIOLATIONS OF COMMONWEALTH LAW

## DIVISIONS AND UNITS OF THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

- CIVIL DIVISION
- CRIMINAL DIVISION
- SOLICITOR'S DIVISION
- OFFICE OF CONSUMER COUNSEL
- ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION
- ATTORNEY GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION
- CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT UNIT
- VICTIM WITNESS ADVOCACY UNIT
- INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UNIT

### CONTACT US:

CNMI Office of the Attorney General  
Caller Box 10007  
Saipan, MP 96950  
WEBSITE: [www.cnmioag.org](http://www.cnmioag.org)

Civil Division:	237-7500
Criminal Division:	237-7600
Investigative Division:	237-7630
Victim Witness Advocacy Unit:	237-7602

## Our Progress

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Prevailed in: Litigation cases (5); and Administrative matters (2)
- Prevailed in subsequent filing of an inverse condemnation case in an attempt to increase the value of the property by filing a new case
- Prevailed in 15 of 16 Appeals decided in FY2020
- Supported a majority of states to settle the claims against two opioid drug manufacturers, Purdue and Mallinckrodt
- Successfully defended the Commonwealth from being included as a party in the Superior Court case against the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation for deficient employer contributions to the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund in accordance with the settlement reached in the District Court case
- Successfully defended the position that the CNMI Public School System is constitutionally entitled only to general revenues in In Re Matter of a Petition for Certified Question in Supreme Court No. 2018-SCC-0021-CQU
- Successfully protested the parole of a convicted murder
- Successfully handled an extradition case on behalf of the State of Nevada, seeking an arrest and return of a Chinese national for check fraud
- Filed briefs and conducted oral argument in *Commonwealth v. Aldan*, 2020 MP where the Court affirmed the conviction and sentence for Sexual Assault in the First Degree; thus,

ensuring the victim received justice rightly deserved

### ACTIVITIES:

DIVISION/UNIT	FY2020
<b>CIVIL DIVISION</b>	
Agencies Served	70
Procurement Contract Review	507
Personnel Contract Review	740
Review of Legislation for the Governor	19
Review for Legislative Comments	26
Legal Services Request	165
Litigation	56
Appeals	5
<b>CRIMINAL DIVISION</b>	
Criminal – Felony	160
Criminal – Misdemeanor	236
Juvenile	20
Traffic	1,229
Appeals	1
<b>INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION</b>	
Penal Summons – Served	119
Witness Summons – Served	92
Bench Warrants – Served	5
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION</b>	
Apostilles	149
Certifications	101
Notary Public – New Applicants	11
<b>CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT UNIT</b>	
Active Cases	336
Closed Cases	6
<b>VICTIM WITNESS ADVOCACY UNIT</b>	
Victims Served – Criminal	316
Victims Served – Civil	225

## Our Finances

### BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES:

BUDGET	FY2020
<b>GENERAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$1,417,999.44</b>
Personnel	\$1,349,491.52
Operations	\$68,507.92
<b>FEDERAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$230,406.00</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$1,648,405.44</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION COLLECTIONS</b>	
Apostilles	\$7,450.00
Certifications	\$5,050.00
Notary Public	\$725.00
Commonwealth Register	\$320.00
<b>TOTAL COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>\$14,070.00</b>
<b>CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS</b>	
Collected and Distributed	\$359,753.65
Tax Rebate Offset	\$1,855.53
Child Tax Offset	\$2,800.00
Economic Impact Payment (Stimulus) Offset	\$79,420.25
Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Offset	\$2,900.00
<b>TOTAL COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>\$446,729.43</b>

### REPORT PUBLIC CORRUPTION

Public Corruption is a breach of trust by local officials or government employees, who undermine our Commonwealth's overall safety, the public trust, and confidence in our local government. If anyone has any information about wrongdoings by a public official or government employee, please submit a tip online at [www.cnmioag.org](http://www.cnmioag.org) or contact our Investigative Division at 237-7630



### Consumer Complaints

The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) promotes and protects the interests of the CNMI consumers while ensuring a competent and fair marketplace. Consumer Complaint forms may be obtained at [www.cnmioag.org](http://www.cnmioag.org) under the Consumer Protection section or in person at the Civil Division in Capitol Hill, or via email by sending a request to [consumer\\_counsel@cnmioag.org](mailto:consumer_counsel@cnmioag.org)

## What's Next

---

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Provided legal guidance to newly created agencies: the Commonwealth Cannabis Commission and the Northern Marianas Technical Institute
- Provided legal guidance to the Commonwealth's response to the global COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of emergency services
- Resolved fourteen (14) contested litigation and administrative matters
- Presented at a Continuing Legal Education event organized by the U.S. District Court on Challenges for the Prosecution
- Drafted and updated proposed legislation on the Commonwealth 2020 Election Laws and numerous Criminal Laws
- Improved and modernized the office's case management system to ensure accuracy and increase efficiency of the database
- Bring up to date the office's Disaster & Emergency Response Manual

### CHALLENGES:

- The shortfall of revenue together with the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in severe reduction in government funding which affected the office's personnel and operational budget. Our office went through a series of reductions in the following areas:
  - A budget reduction of close to 30% affected the office's FY2020 appropriation
  - A 64-hour work schedule was implemented
  - 48% further reduction of the FY2020 budget was imposed forcing the government to implement a furlough; the OAG furloughed nine (9) Civil Service employees

### KEY INITIATIVES FOR 2021:

- Continue to provide legal advice and guidance to the Executive Branch, Departments and Agencies and to represent the Commonwealth in the trial court and on matters currently on appeal
- Focus on illegal business practices that hurt our consumers and other businesses; implement consumer awareness programs and investigate consumer complaints
- Continue to promote and ensure an open and transparent government
- Continue to work on new procurement regulations for the government and provide training to agencies
- Continue to explore solutions to mental health issues in the criminal justice system
- Continue to collaborate with other jurisdictions to expand resource activities to combat illegal drug and criminal activity in the CNMI

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Do you like this report? Would you like to see other information? Please let us know by contacting Carla T. Hocog, Public Information Officer at 237-7500 or email [carla\\_hocog@cnmioag.org](mailto:carla_hocog@cnmioag.org)