

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 14, 2022

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ARPA FUNDS PAY FOR THE COST OF MERCHANT MARINE CREDENTIALS

Western Pacific Maritime Academy (WPMA) is pleased to announce that Mr. Jason Tenorio is the first candidate to received payment for his Merchant Marine Credential (MMC) application using American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) grant funds. Mr. Jason Palacios from the Governors Office and Capt. David Johansen award Mr. Tenorio with payment and a certificate for completing his MMC application process. Mr. Tenorio stated “thanks to the Governor for awarding Western Pacific Maritime Academy some ARPA funds so that I can get my MMC to work on ships and support my family!”

Honorable Governor Ralph DLG Torres awarded a generous ARPA grant to WPMA, \$10,000 of which is allocated to workforce development. WPMA assists men and women from the CNMI with 100% of the costs for their MMC application using APRA grant funds.

The MMC application process consists of getting a Transportation Workers Identification Card (TWIC), a US Coast Guard (USCG) Medical Examination, a Department of Transportation (DOT) drug test, and other documentation for processing the application. The costs of applying for an MMC is approximately \$500, ARPA grant funds will pay for about 20 MMC applications.

WPMA is a Non-Profit Corporation located right here on Saipan with its maritime offices and classrooms located at Northern Marianas Technical Institute (NMTech) in lower base. The Academy will be offering a full suite of USCG approved maritime courses and services to the seafaring public. Included in its offerings are free seminars to the public on how to obtain an MMC.

WPMA’s workforce development program steers candidates into high paying jobs in the maritime sector as entry level credentialed professional mariners as deck seamen, engineers or members of the catering department. An entry level seaman in the US Merchant Marine can earn upwards of \$5000 per month through one of a number of Maritime Unions or Military Sealift Command. In the wake of COVID-19, the maritime sector is experiencing a huge demand for credentialed mariners.

WPMA offers several programs to the CNMI public: An approved Public School System (PSS) high school vocational track offered at Kagman High School as a pilot program, The US Naval Sea Cadets, a youth program offering regimented seamanship experiences to kids ages 10 to 18, Saipan Sailing School offering American Sailing Association certified courses and sailing experiences and charters, its maritime education program offering USCG accredited courses to the public, and free boating safety consultation and inspections to CNMI boat owners and operators.

For further information on our programs, or information on how to apply for an MMC, please contact Selina Taitano at staitano@wpma.net

“SEAFARING IS NOBLE WORK”