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## Maritime academy is WIA's newest training partner

Andrew Roberto  
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The Western Pacific Maritime Academy participated in the Workforce Investment Agency's "open house" event at its newest satellite office in San Vicente on Thursday.

Photo by Andrew Roberto

AT the "open house" event for the Workforce Investment Agency's newest satellite office in San Vicente, WIA Director Frances Torres announced that Western Pacific Maritime Academy is their latest eligible training partner.

WIA clients can now use WIA resources to fund training opportunities offered by the maritime academy, Torres told Variety. WIA will also find other community resources available to fund training, she added.

Torres said WIA works on a "case-by-case" basis to determine which clients qualify for funding. She invites community members to visit the WIA offices at the Koblerville Youth Center, the Carolinian Affairs Office, the Northern Marianas Technical Institute, and the Kagman Community Center to determine eligibility. Clients may also visit WIA's main office on Capital Hill.

Capt. Michael Bacher, Western Pacific Maritime Academy's executive director, said he was "thrilled" that funding opportunity can be made available to those who want to train at the academy.

"For somebody to get [maritime trades] training and their merchant marine credential, it's going to cost about \$2,000," Bacher told Variety.

He said the training cost is a worthwhile "investment."

"They'll be able to use that investment to go work on a ship. An entry-level mariner makes somewhere between \$5,000 and \$7,000 a month," he added.

The maritime academy is located at the Northern Marianas Technical Institute, which also houses another WIA satellite office.

NMTech Chief Executive Officer Jodina Attao, who was also at the open house, congratulated Bacher and the maritime academy.

"He has been building up his capacity as an organization, so we're very proud of their work," Attao said.

She added that NMTech and the maritime academy have partnered for the last two years, and that culinary, mechanic, and electrician programs offered at NMTech fit directly into jobs that are available on large ocean-going vessels.

"A vessel out in the water is like a city in itself, so all the trades that are being taught at NMTech are integrated in the maritime [trades]. That's where the alignment comes in," Attao said. ■

Aside from the maritime academy, WIA's other eligible training partners include the Latte Training Academy, Island Training Solutions, Guam Marianas Training Solutions, Northern Marianas College-Adult Basic Education, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

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## Andrew Roberto

Reporter

Andrew Roberto was raised his whole life on Saipan. He graduated from Saipan Southern High School, holds a degree from Northern Marianas College, and a BA in English from the University of Guam. He once worked for KUAM, UNO Magazine, and the Guam Daily Post.