


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



24 APR 22 P2:23

SENATE
S. B. No. 2638

RECEIVED BY 

Introduced by Introduced by Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" T. Go

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS
SITUATION PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND
DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR THE VIOLATION OF CERTAIN
UNLAWFUL ACTS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the country's poverty rate declined to 22.4 percent in the first half of 2023 from 23.7 percent in the same period in 2021. However, it still translates to 25.24 million Filipinos whose per capita income is not sufficient to meet their basic food and non-food needs.

These numbers are not just statistics, they represent the lived experiences of Filipinos who are grappling with the harsh realities of poverty, displacement, and uncertainty. Behind each number lies a story of struggle, resilience, and the desperate need for support.

Section 9 Article II of the Constitution provides that the State shall free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all. In light of this, the need for a robust and institutionalized assistance program cannot be overstated.

The AICS Program was established with the noble intention of providing immediate and necessary support to those affected by calamities or sudden hardships. Its mandate includes offering financial assistance for various needs such as transportation, medical care,

funeral expenses, and basic necessities. This program implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, provides not just temporary relief but also empowers Filipinos to rebuild their lives with dignity and resilience.

This proposed Act aims to institutionalize the AICS program as a permanent national initiative to effectively address the needs of Filipinos during challenging situations by providing each qualified target beneficiary financial, medical, transportation, food, material assistance, and other assistance based on the assessment of the social workers of the DSWD.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE "BONG" T. GO

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION. 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the "Assistance to Individuals
2 in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act."

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to promote a just and
4 dynamic social order alleviating the plight of the poor through policies that provide adequate
5 social services and raise the standard of living for the improved quality of life for all. Towards
6 this end, the State shall provide assistance through projects, programs and services geared
7 towards alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life of every Filipino, especially the
8 marginalized sector, and disadvantaged individuals and families.

9 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act:

10 a. *Assistive Devices and Technologies* refer to those whose primary purpose is to
11 increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities
12 and to enhance overall well-being and help prevent impairments and secondary health
13 conditions. These include wheelchairs, prostheses, hearing aids, visual aids, and

- 1 specialized computer software and hardware, or any advancement in technologies
2 that increase mobility, hearing, vision, or communication capacities;
- 3 b. *Funeral assistance* refers to assistance to help defray funeral and related expenses,
4 such as transfer of cadaver, burial site, and other related expenses incurred by the
5 family of the deceased, with consideration to context, cultural, and religious
6 backgrounds;
- 7 c. *Crisis situation* refers to a condition of an individual in a stressful situation that impairs
8 psychosocial functioning or participation in socio - economic activities, including access
9 to education, work, and health care, that requires series of interventions to prevent
10 further exposure to vulnerabilities, exploitation or abuse;
- 11 d. *Disability support assistance* refers to the monetary support to cover the purchase of
12 assistive products, technologies, provision of sign language interpreter, personal
13 assistant, maintenance medicines and hygiene needs, life support equipment, and
14 other needs of persons with disabilities;
- 15 e. *Educational assistance* refers to financial assistance extended to all students to help
16 defray school expenses and/or cost of sending students/children to school such as
17 school fees augmentation, supplies, projects, allowance and other related expenses
18 and to eradicate barriers to quality education, including those barriers faced by
19 persons on account of their disabilities;
- 20 f. *Financial assistance* refers to monetary support in the form of outright cash, electronic
21 fund transfer, guarantee letter, coupon, check or voucher that has monetary value,
22 including funeral assistance, transportation assistance, medical assistance,
23 educational assistance, training assistance, food assistance, assistance for other

- 1 support services, and all other types of cash assistance that may be provided under
2 the Program;
- 3 g. *Food assistance* refers to assistance to those in need due to human induced and
4 natural calamities and those experiencing other forms of crisis or displacement,
5 eviction, demolitions or requiring interventions for sector-specific support which
6 include hot meals, food or meal allowance, or the cash equivalent of the required hot
7 meals and/or food packs;
- 8 h. *Guarantee letter* refers to a document duly approved and issued by the DSWD, which
9 ensures the payment of the amount appearing on the document, that the beneficiary
10 presents to any public or government owned or controlled hospitals or other
11 entities and to any similar private entity that is willing to provide services;
- 12 i. *Material and other in-kind assistance* refers to an assistance given to individuals in
13 crisis by providing them food and non-food items, non-financial, and the likes, and
14 may also include other professional assistance available in the DSWD, such as psycho-
15 social support and legal consultation;
- 16 j. *Medical assistance* refers to out-of-pocket expense in the form of coupon, stub,
17 guarantee letter, promissory note or voucher that has monetary value, given directly
18 to recipients or beneficiaries to be used to pay for hospitalization expenses, other
19 medical treatments or procedures which include birthing procedure, as well as
20 professional fees and consultation fees, and the purchase of drugs, medicines, goods
21 or other services prescribed by the physician of a health facility for in- and out-
22 patients;
- 23 k. *Target Beneficiaries* refer to individuals or families who are indigent, financially
24 incapacitated, stateless persons, repatriates, deportees, transients, vulnerable,

1 disadvantaged, or internally displaced persons or in crisis situations based on the
2 assessment of the social workers of the DSWD; and

- 3 I. *Transportation assistance* refers to the monetary support to cover the actual cost
4 incurred on land, sea, and air travel, including travel insurance and such other related
5 expenses as facilitated by the social workers of the DSWD.

6 ***SEC. 4. Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS).*** – To effectively respond
7 to the needs of the crisis, each qualified target beneficiary shall receive financial, medical,
8 transportation, food, material assistance, or other assistance, to include disability support
9 services including other professional assistance available in the DSWD, such as psychosocial
10 support or intervention for dysfunctional families and their children who need trauma care and
11 management, and legal consultation, based on the assessment of the social workers of the
12 DSWD.

13 The DSWD shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the AICS Program and shall
14 be responsible in the administration, sourcing, assessment, and approval of all applications in
15 availing from the appropriated funds for the implementation of the Program. In the
16 implementation of this Act, the DSWD shall ensure that qualified beneficiaries receive their
17 assistance promptly and without delay.

18 ***SEC. 5. Type and Amount of Assistance.*** – The following are the types of assistance
19 that the target beneficiaries may receive under the Program based on the assessment and
20 recommendation of the social workers, authorized personnel, or any other personnel
21 authorized by the DSWD, duly approved by their authorized officials:

- 22 a. *Financial assistance* – a service provided in a form of cash, guarantee letter, and other
23 modes of delivery of service issued to qualified clients to cover medical, funeral,
24 transportation, educational, food, and cash relief assistance;

- 1 b. *Material assistance* – a service providing food and non-food items to clients who need
2 immediate material support, such as food packs or vouchers, hygiene or sleeping kits
3 and assistive devices and technologies, subject to its availability;
- 4 c. *Psychosocial support service* – a service provided by trained or professional
5 psychosocial support workers to help meet the psychological, emotional, and social
6 needs of beneficiaries and their families. It is a set of interventions that intends to
7 positively improve a person’s behavior to reduce the impact of stress brought about
8 by a crisis through behavioral modification interventions;
- 9 d. *Referral Service* – a service provided when the requested support is not within the
10 range of services of the Program through coordination and/or endorsement of the
11 beneficiary’s case within the DSWD’s available programs, projects and services and to
12 other agencies such as to the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on
13 Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
14 (TESDA), Department of Health (DOH), Public Attorney’s Office (PAO), Philippine
15 Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation
16 (PAGCOR), local government units (LGUs) and other government agencies, civil
17 service organizations, and international/non-government organizations; and
- 18 e. Such other services that the DSWD may deem appropriate.

19 ***SEC. 6. Program Beneficiaries.*** - All individuals and families determined to be in a
20 "state of active crisis" or "crisis situation", or needing financial or material support from the
21 National Government, whether or not as a form of augmentation to that provided by the local
22 government unit, based on the assessment of a DSWD Social Worker. In general, any
23 individual, whether indigent or not, who is in a crisis situation or in difficult circumstances in
24 life may be assisted through any of the assistance provided in this Act.

1 The DSWD may prescribe the necessary documentary requirements for each type of
2 assistance that may be availed by the program beneficiary.

3 **SEC. 7. *Prohibitions.*** – It shall be unlawful for any individual, public official, or
4 employee of the DSWD or any local government unit, to cause delay in the implementation or
5 delivery of AICS services or funds to the qualified beneficiaries or coerce a beneficiary to
6 surrender a portion of the assistance. Any person who committed the unlawful act under this
7 Section shall be liable under the Revised Penal Code and other existing penal laws. If the
8 offender is a public official or employee, he or she shall also be held administratively liable.

9 **SEC. 8. *Grievance Mechanisms.*** - The DSWD shall establish grievance mechanisms
10 for the filing or reporting of complaints or grievances and other related laws arising from the
11 implementation of the AICS Program. For this purpose, the Department shall ensure that all
12 beneficiaries and stakeholders of the Program have access to these grievance mechanisms.

13 **SEC. 9. *Program Transparency and Reporting.*** – The DSWD shall quarterly
14 publish a full report of the Program covering the implementation of the previous quarter and
15 post and update periodically on the DSWD website a report of financial disclosures and
16 information about beneficiaries based on geographical area and sectoral category, subject to
17 the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173, or the “Data Privacy Act of 2012.”

18 The DSWD shall also submit to Congress a quarterly accomplishment report and
19 utilization of the funds earmarked for the implementation of the Program. The Report shall
20 include the pertinent details of the implementation, such as, but not limited to, the mode of
21 implementation, number of beneficiaries, expenditures, and other pertinent information as
22 may be necessary.

1 **SEC. 10. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.*** – A joint congressional
2 oversight committee shall be constituted to monitor, set the overall framework, and review
3 the implementation of this Act.

4 The Oversight Committee shall be composed of five (5) Senators and five (5)
5 Representatives to be appointed by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of
6 Representatives, respectively, and co-chaired by the Chairpersons of the Committee on Social
7 Justice, Welfare and Rural Development of the Senate and the Committee on Social Services
8 of the House of Representatives.

9 **SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within six (6) months from the
10 effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DSWD shall promulgate the necessary rules and
11 regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

12 **SEC. 12. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of
13 this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of DSWD. Thereafter, such
14 sum as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the
15 annual General Appropriations Act, including the payment for the necessary service fees,
16 financial charges, or administrative cost, and capital outlay for the establishment of the
17 necessary offices for the delivery of assistance.

18 **SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part of this Act is held invalid or
19 unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and
20 effect.

21 **SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees or issuances, executive
22 orders, letter of instructions, administrative orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof
23 contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are amended, repealed, or modified
24 accordingly.

- 1 **SEC. 15. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
- 2 in the Official Gazette or in a national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,