

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



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SENATE

S.B. No. 947

RECEIVED BY:

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Introduced by Senator **SONNY ANGARA**

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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR RURAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Unemployment remains a persistent problem in the country despite rapid economic growth in recent years. Results of the latest Labor Force Survey (LFS) of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that unemployment rate reached 6.1 percent or 2.594 million unemployed persons in April this year, from 5.8 percent or 2.469 million in January. <sup>1</sup>

Moreover, progress in the country has been uneven, with poverty gap between the urban and rural areas widening. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a specialized agency of the United Nations, poverty in the Philippines is most severe and widespread in rural areas, where almost 80 percent of the country's poor population live. <sup>2</sup>

The lack of significant economic growth in rural areas has resulted to shortage of employment opportunities for residents, contributing to poverty incidence in these areas. The Rural Employment Assistance Program (REAP), which is a temporary work-for-aid initiative for qualified heads of family or unmarried adults, will not only help address the unemployment problem but will also spur agricultural and infrastructure development in the rural areas.

The Program shall provide temporary employment for qualified members of poor households in rural areas, as identified by the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), who volunteers to do unskilled manual work for a minimum of forty-five (45) days but not more than ninety (90) days in every calendar year.

Projects and activities to be identified and undertaken under the REAP may include the following: (a) Development, rebuilding and rehabilitation of agri-based livelihood assets destroyed or lost due to natural disasters; (b) Rehabilitation or development of common service facilities which are being shared and used by poor families as production or consolidation centers such as post-harvest facilities and public markets; and (c) Development or rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads and bridges necessary to bring the products of poor families to the market.

In light of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


**SONNY ANGARA**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/labor-force>  
<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/country/home/tags/philippines>

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AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

*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 "**Rural Employment Assistance**  
2 **Act.**"

3  
4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is the declared policy of the State to promote a just and  
5 dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity of the nation and free the people from  
6 poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a  
7 rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all. Towards this end, the State shall  
8 provide employment assistance to a qualified head of family or an unmarried, single adult  
9 member of qualified poor households in rural areas identified by the National Household  
10 Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) of the Department of Social Welfare and  
11 Development (DSWD).

12  
13 **SEC. 3. Rural Employment Assistance Program.** The DSWD shall establish and implement  
14 the Rural Employment Assistance Program (REAP), hereinafter referred to as the Program, in  
15 coordination with the local government units (LGUs). The Program shall provide temporary  
16 employment to every qualified head of family or an unmarried, single adult member of qualified  
17 poor families in rural areas who volunteers to do unskilled manual work for a minimum of forty-  
18 five (45) days but not more than ninety (90) days in every calendar year.

19  
20 As used in this Act, a "rural area" refers to a barangay which has a population size of  
21 less than two thousand five hundred (2,500) and which does not have any business  
22 establishment with twenty-five (25) or more employees, or five (5) or more establishments with a  
23 minimum of ten (10) employees, or five (5) or more facilities within a two (2)-kilometer radius  
24 from the barangay hall.

25  
26 The "poor" refers to individuals and families whose income fall below the poverty  
27 threshold as defined by the government or those who cannot afford to provide their minimum

1 basic needs of food, health, education, housing and other essential amenities of life in a  
2 sustained manner or those who have been identified as poor by the NHTS-PR.

3  
4 **SEC. 4. Assessment to Determine Qualification for Availment of Employment Assistance.**

5 The DSWD, in close coordination with the LGUs and other concerned government agencies,  
6 shall conduct an assessment of all poor individuals and families in rural areas who signify  
7 interest to do unskilled labor to determine their eligibility to avail of the services and benefits  
8 under the REAP.

9  
10 **SEC. 5. Rate of Assistance.** Every head of family or an unmarried, single adult member of a  
11 poor family in the rural areas who qualifies to avail of the benefits and services under the REAP  
12 shall be entitled to receive for each day of work financial assistance equal to the applicable  
13 minimum wage set by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB) in the  
14 region. They shall also be entitled to the coverage of mandatory social security benefits such as  
15 those extended by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), Home  
16 Development Mutual Fund (PAG-IBIG) and the Social Security System (SSS).

17  
18 **SEC. 6. Types of Works and Activities.** The DSWD, in coordination with the LGUs and other  
19 concerned government agencies, shall lead in the implementation of the REAP, particularly in  
20 project identification and in the implementation and monitoring of projects and activities.  
21 Projects and activities to be identified and undertaken under the REAP should be of the type  
22 and nature that can be completed in a specific period of time. These projects may include the  
23 following:

- 24 (a) Development, rebuilding/rehabilitation of agri-based livelihood assets destroyed or  
25 lost due to natural disasters such as desilting of irrigation canals, development of paddy  
26 dikes and rehabilitation of water impounding;  
27 (b) Rehabilitation and or development of common service facilities which are being  
28 shared and used by poor families as production or consolidation centers/units such as  
29 post-harvest facilities and public markets;  
30 (c) Development or rehabilitation of physical assets to open up access to natural assets  
31 where the former is necessary to bring the products of poor families to the market such  
32 as farm-to-market roads, slope protection and bridges; and  
33 (d) Protection of productive assets through mitigation measures such as mangrove  
34 planting, rehabilitation and tree planting.

35  
36 **SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** Within ninety (90) days after the approval of  
37 this Act, the Secretary of DSWD shall, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and  
38 Local Government, issue the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

39  
40 **Sec. 8. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official*  
41 *Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

42  
43 Approved,