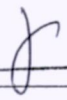


'19 JUL 23 P5:13

SENATE
S. B. No. 704

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator SONNY ANGARA

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 5.2 percent or 2.286 million unemployed persons in January 2019, from 5.3 percent or 2.320 million in January 2018.¹

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.²

The lack of significant economic growth in rural areas has resulted in 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

¹ <https://psa.gov.ph/content/employment-rate-january-2019-estimated-948-percent>

² <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/country/home/tags/philippines>

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

'19 JUL 23 P5:13

SENATE
S. B. No. 704

RECEIVED BY: _____

Introduced by Senator SONNY ANGARA

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR RURAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM 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*
2 *Assistance Program Act.*"

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is a declared policy of the State to promote
4 a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of
5 the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate
6 social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an
7 improved quality of life for all. Towards this end, the State shall provide Filipinos
8 with opportunities for just and sufficient means of livelihood. The State shall likewise
9 initiate meaningful employment assistance programs to qualified individuals of poor,
10 disadvantaged or displaced households in rural areas duly identified by the
11 appropriate national agencies.

12 Sec. 3. *Rural Employment Assistance Program.* – There is hereby created a
13 Rural Employment Assistance Program (REAP), which shall provide temporary
14 employment to every qualified individuals who are poor, disadvantaged/displaced or
15 seasonal workers who volunteer to work for a minimum of ten (10) days, but not
16 more than ninety (90) days in a calendar year wherein the minimum and maximum
17 period of engagement can cover a single activity or multiple activities spread out

1 over the course of a calendar year: Provided, that qualified individuals may include
2 sub-professionals.

3 Qualified individuals are not subject to the terms and conditions of regular
4 employment and as such, shall not be deemed to have employer-employee
5 relationship with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, or any agency
6 or institution who utilizes their services with respect to the program.

7 *Sec. 4. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:*

- 8 (a) *Displaced worker* refers to a worker in the formal and informal sectors who
9 became unemployed, underemployed, or have lost livelihood as a result of
10 closure of establishment, economic crisis, retrenchment, termination, natural
11 disaster/calamities;
- 12 (b) *Poor* refers to individuals and families whose income fall below the poverty
13 threshold as defined by the government and/or cannot afford in a sustained
14 manner to provide their minimum basic needs of food, health, education,
15 housing and other essential amenities of life, or those who have been
16 identified as poor by the National Household Targeting System for Poverty
17 Reduction (NHTS-PR);
- 18 (c) *Qualified individual* refers to willing and able Filipino citizens who are at least
19 fifteen (15) years of age. Provided, that individuals between the ages fifteen
20 (15) and eighteen (18) may only qualify by first obtaining consent from their
21 parent/s and/or legal guardian, and can only be employed in non-hazardous
22 work environments in accordance with the Labor Code;
- 23 (d) *Rural area* refers to any barangay with at least fifty percent (50%) land
24 devoted to agriculture, timberland, forest and/or pasture land as determined
25 by the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of the concerned local government unit
26 (LGU); and
- 27 (e) *Seasonal worker* refers to a worker who performs work or service that is only
28 for a specific period of time or season of the year.

29 *Sec. 5. Qualifications for Availment of Employment Assistance. – The Local*
30 *Social Welfare and Development Officers (LSWDOs), in close coordination with other*
31 *government agencies concerned, as well as the identified rural communities, may*
32 *conduct a preliminary joint assessment of all poor, disadvantaged/displaced*

1 individuals, including seasonal workers who signify interest in undertaking work in
2 order to determine eligibility in availing of the employment assistance program. The
3 assessment shall also take into consideration the inherent knowledge, skills,
4 capacities, and capabilities of potential qualified participants so as to properly
5 determine the type and nature of projects that are most suited to them and their
6 respective communities.

7 The DSWD shall facilitate basic knowledge and skills orientation and capacity-
8 building trainings and seminars as deemed necessary towards project development
9 for qualified participants. The LGUs and program partners concerned may make
10 available for use any tools and equipment necessary for project development to the
11 qualified individuals.

12 *Sec. 6. Types of Works and Activities under the Program.* – Employment
13 activities for this purpose shall be designed to mobilize eligible individuals, families,
14 and communities to finish a project within a given time period. These projects may
15 include, but are not limited to the following:

- 16 (a) Development, rebuilding/rehabilitation of agri-based livelihood assets
17 damaged, destroyed, or lost due to natural disasters, such as desilting of
18 irrigation canals, development of paddy dikes, and rehabilitation of water
19 impounding dams;
- 20 (b) Development or rehabilitation of common service facilities, which are being
21 shared and used by poor families as production or consolidation centers like
22 post-harvest facilities, public markets, display centers, and fish ports;
- 23 (c) Development or rehabilitation of physical assets to open up access to areas
24 necessary to transport rural products, such as construction of farm-to-market
25 roads and bridges;
- 26 (d) Protection of natural and productive assets through mitigation and disaster
27 risk reduction measures, such as mangrove planting and rehabilitation, tree
28 planting, seedling preparation, re-forestation and similar activities; and
- 29 (e) Social community projects such as repair, maintenance, and/or improvement
30 of common public facilities and infrastructure such as schools and health
31 centers, debris clearing, declogging of canals, debris segregation and
32 materials recovery, stockpiling and clearing.

1 The DSWD shall provide an updated list of projects that may be undertaken
2 as well as the projects not covered under this Act. This list shall be readily made
3 available to potentially qualified individuals who have expressed their desire to
4 participate in the REAP.

5 *Sec. 7. Rate of Assistance.* – Every position qualified under this Program shall
6 be entitled to receive compensation for each day of work at the prevailing minimum
7 wage set by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB)
8 concerned. LGUs may also provide for additional allowances to the beneficiaries in
9 order to cover for other expenses such as transportation and food.

10 *Sec. 8. Micro-insurance Benefits.* – Qualified individuals are granted the
11 option to access micro-insurance as a form of social security in the event of
12 accidental death or dismemberment, medical reimbursement, and bereavement
13 assistance at a socialized cost by mandating the DSWD to provide liaison services
14 necessary to enable qualified individuals access to these social serviced. LGUs may
15 also provide additional allowance to participants to cover insurance costs.

16 *Sec. 9. Appropriations.* – The Secretary of Social Welfare and Development
17 shall include in the DSWD's programs the implementation of this Act, the initial
18 funding of which shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the
19 DSWD. Thereafter, the amount of necessary for its continued implementation shall
20 be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

21 In addition, the DSWD may accept donations, contributions or grants from
22 foreign and local persons, institutions and governments, among others, for the
23 implementation of the Program.

24 *Sec. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days after
25 the approval of this Act, the Secretary of the DSWD shall issue the necessary rules
26 and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

27 *Sec. 11. Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is
28 subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are
29 not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

30 *Sec. 12. Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, acts, presidential decrees,
31 executive orders, presidential proclamations, issuances, rules and regulations, or

1 parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this
2 Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

3 Sec. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
4 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,