

DSWD OPINION NO. 42 S. 2024

DRN: LS-I-LO-24-04-65406-C

MEMORANDUM

FOR : DIRECTOR WAYNE C. BELIZAR
Financial Management Service

FROM : ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR GASSG AND CONCURRENT
OFFICER-IN-CHARGE, Legal Service

SUBJECT : RESPONSE ON THE REQUEST OF MS. SANDRA BERGER FROM
ECONOMIC POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF DATA ON DSWD
FINANCIAL INFORMATION ON ECT, NDRRMF AND QRF FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2023

DATE : 02 MAY 2023

This pertains to your MEMORANDUM on the request of a certain Ms. Sandra Berger of the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and World Food Programme (WFP), for financial/information to be used in their research study which *"aims to explore cost to governments- and to people in need-of using a social protection system or program as a vehicle for national disaster response in the event of large-scale shocks. Additionally, the research aims to identify how investment have been used as well as the benefits, challenges, and efficiencies that are present for system strengthening."* Their research will focus on the Emergency Cash Transfer (ECT) response of the Department to Super Typhoon Egay in Field Offices I and III.

Thus, you are requesting for clearance to share the following financial information with EPRI and WFP:

- 1. The DSWD allocation disbursement data by national and regional disaggregation;*
- 2. The utilization report for "Super Typhoon Egay" with ECT details; and*
- 3. The allocation of funds to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRF) and Quick Response Fund (QRF) for the Fiscal Year 2023.*

The Legal Service has reservations in the sharing of the aforementioned financial documents to the requesting individual.

It is imperative that the requesting office or individual must first establish their identity to request for this Department's financial data. We observed that no official letter-request duly signed by the authorized official of EPRI and WFP was submitted or attached therein. It is our considered view that, albeit being an international organization, communications must still be in official manner and form, and such must be signed by the authorized representative of EPRI and WFP. We find no indication that Ms. Sandra Berger is armed with any authority from EPRI or WFP.

Also, the request must indicate the specific information needed from the Department and its intended use. The financial documents to be shared to EPRI contained the Department's status of allotment, obligations incurred, disbursement and balances as well as report on the utilization of DRRMF sourced from the General Appropriations Act (GAA) in relation to the implementation of Emergency Cash Transfer (ECT) Response. However, these

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financial documents were not specifically requested in the email of Ms. Berger. We submit that the sharing of these documents must be taken meticulously to ensure that it will be used according to its legitimate, specified and declared purpose.

Further, pursuant to item VI (1) (a) of DSWD Memorandum Circular (MC) No.10 series of 2019¹ provides:

VI. General Policies

All external researchers shall adhere to the following guidelines in the conduct of researches and studies in DSWD Offices, Centers and Institutions and in the request of data:

1. Request for the following need not go through the protocol and may be approved and provided by *submitting as letter of request* addressed to the head of the concerned office, bureau, service or unit:
 - a) **Secondary data (statistics, reference materials, etc.) from any of the offices, bureaus, services and units within the Department.** (Emphasis Supplied)

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The same guidelines also distinguished Secondary Data and Primary Data, as follows:

Primary Data - refers to the data obtained through first hand investigation. These are collected through face-to-face interview, survey questionnaires, focused group discussion, case studies, among others. (Item V (5))

Secondary Data- refers to the data that has already been consolidated and/or published by the DSWD and readily available as public document. (Item V (11))

The financial information that the FMS will be sharing contains aggregate of data on the allocation and disbursement of ECT funds in national and regional levels. Thus, cannot be considered primary data but secondary data.

However, under MC 10, series of 2019, item VII (2) thereof provides for the procedure for the request for secondary data, thus:

VII. Implementing Procedures

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2. For request shall not go through research protocol, an **official written request shall be submitted to PDPB and shall assess the availability of secondary data.** If the data is available, the request shall be endorsed to the concerned OBS/ Unit/ Division using the prescribed endorsement within fifteen (15) minutes after the review. The concerned OBS/Unit shall provide the requested data within one (1) day if single data, while two (2) days for multiple data. However, if the data or statistics are not available, the researchers shall be informed for other sources requested data.

The said prescribed form mentioned is under Annex B of the guidelines which should be accomplished by the PDPB to the concerned OBSU.


¹ Protocol for the Conduct of Research Studies on DSWD Offices, Centers and Institutions, Amending Administrative Order No. 19, series of 2011 including Request of SWD Data/ Information.

This level respects the significance of partnerships that the Department has established with local and international organizations for the improvement of the social welfare workforce and to better improve the quality of services for the benefit of the Filipinos. However, due diligence must still be employed in the sharing of our financial data to external partners. With this, we respectfully recommend that a **formal and official written request by EPRI or WFP duly signed by their authorized representative be submitted to the Department, specifically indicating the financial data/information being requested and the intended purpose or use of the data.**

Please be informed that the foregoing legal review is based solely on the information provided by your office, and may vary based on additional information or document/s or when the facts are changed or elaborated.

Lastly, please fill out the attached Customer Feedback Form and return the same to the Legal Service.

For your consideration. Thank you.



ATTY. GINA V. WENCESLAO

MCMLG/JAV/LCA/10065

