

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Social Welfare and Development

IBP Road, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126
Telephone Nos. (632) 931-8101 to 07; Telefax (632) 931-8191

e-mail: osec@dswd.gov.ph
Website: http://www.dswd.gov.ph/

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DEPT. OF SOCIAL WELFARE & DEV'T.
IBP ROAD, CONSTITUTION HILLS, Q.C.

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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

Series of 2014
No. 01

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES TO STRENGTHEN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS SITUATIONS (AICS) FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2014

1.0 RATIONALE

The DSWD, as a leader in social protection, is mandated to work towards the achievement of improved capacities and opportunities of the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and, families and communities, to enable them to improve their quality of life. On this, the Department continuously implements social welfare and development (SWD) programs in partnership with various intermediaries.

The Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) is part of the DSWD's menu under protective services for the marginalized and disadvantaged individuals. The AICS has been implemented by the DSWD for decades, and although it is included in the devolution of services to the Local Government Units (LGUs) per the Local Government Code of 1991, the DSWD continues to dispense the services as a form of augmentation support to the LGUs.

The AICS is being implemented by the Crisis Intervention Units (CIUs) at the DSWD Central Office (CO) and Field Offices (FOs). The CIUs provide a range of services, such as immediate rescue, and provision of direct financial assistance, psychosocial support, and material assistance including medical, transportation, financial, burial, and other services.

The AICS benefitted 105,263 clients in 2012. Assistance amounting to PhP246,437,877 was directly provided to individuals in crisis, funded from DSWD Regular Funds under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) and the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) of various legislators.¹ For 2013, DSWD's budget for AICS amounts to PhP33,516,000, or PhP8,379,000 per quarter for the entire CIU in FOs and CO. This amount is augmented by the PDAF of various legislators, who refer their constituents to DSWD for availment of much-needed social services in accordance with the parameters and guidelines issued by the DSWD.

Historical data shows there has been increasing number of AICS clients and based on their profile, most of them come from remote areas far from the regional centers where they claim the assistance. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen the existing internal delivery system to benefit the marginalized and disadvantaged sector.

¹ DSWD CY 2012 Annual Report, p. 26.

2.0 SCOPE AND COVERAGE

- 2.1 The beneficiaries of the AICS shall be the walk-in clients of the CIUs in all DSWD FOs and the CO and other satellite offices that may be established in provinces and municipalities based on need. Preference shall be given, first, to beneficiaries belonging to indigent families under the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR), second, to families belonging to the informal sector, and third, other poor, marginalized and disadvantaged families.
- 2.2 The AICS includes the fund from the PhP4,090,000,000 provided for in Section 4 under the Special Provisions for DSWD of the GAA of 2014 and shall cover the provision of financial assistance to individuals in crisis situations. Financial assistance is defined in this instance as the delivery of limited assistance either in cash or guarantee letters (to Service Providers) to individuals and families whose normal functioning has been hampered due to stressful situations brought about by socio-economic difficulties.
- 2.3 The assistance may be in the form of the following:
 - 2.3.1 **Transportation Assistance** – assistance given to qualified beneficiaries for the payment of transportation expenses (such as to purchase tickets to bus and boat) to enable them to return to their home provinces permanently or to attend to emergency concerns such as death or sickness of a family member in their home provinces.
 - 2.3.2 **Medical Assistance** – assistance given to qualified beneficiaries to help them shoulder the cost of hospitalization expenses, purchase of medicines, medical treatment support (i.e. laboratory procedures, assistive medical devices, etc.) and other medical expenses. Habitual CIU clients with chronic illnesses may be provided with Philhealth insurance coverage, in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH). They will no longer be entitled to in-patient financial assistance, except for instances when the drug or treatment is not available in the hospital or covered by the Philhealth.
 - 2.3.3 **Burial Assistance** – assistance given to beneficiaries to help them shoulder the cost of funeral and related expenses, including cases of bringing home the bodies of their deceased loved ones.
 - 2.3.4 **Food Assistance** – assistance given to beneficiaries who expressed need for food and are assessed to be in need of such for at least one and a half day subsistence. It includes the immediate provision of hot meals to walk-in clients, or the provision of food packs.
 - 2.3.5 **Educational Assistance** – is a form of assistance given to qualified beneficiaries to help defray the other cost of sending students/ children to school such as school supplies, transportation allowance and also school tuition fees. Educational assistance is provided to children of families affected by the disaster, children in especially difficult circumstances as covered by Republic Act 7610 like abused, exploited, neglected and abandoned children, children victims of child labor, and those children whose schooling are affected by marital problems.

- 2.3.6 Other forms of assistance** – may be provided to an individual who is assessed in crisis situation like purchase of assistive devices, provision of minimal emergency cash assistance, and other form of related assistance needed by the clients, as may be approved by the Secretary of DSWD.

3.0 GUIDELINES

- 3.1 The provision of financial assistance to beneficiaries shall be in accordance with the parameters established under this guidelines, DSWD Administrative Order No. 1 Series of 2011, entitled, "*Amendment to A.O. 5 Series of 2008 on Omnibus Guidelines on the Management of DSWD – Operated Crisis Intervention Units (CIUs)*," DSWD Administrative Order No. 5 Series of 2008, entitled, "*Omnibus Guidelines on the Management of DSWD – Operated Crisis Intervention Units (CIUs)*," and related issuances of the Department.
- 3.2 The form and amount of financial assistance to be provided to beneficiaries shall be based on the assessment and recommendation of the DSWD social workers and/or other authorized personnel duly approved by the authorized official/s of the department. Appropriate documentation shall support all disbursements of funds based on the Social Case Study Report for each beneficiary.
- 3.3 Financial assistance amounting to not more than PhP3,000 may be released immediately to the beneficiary duly approved by the head of the CIU in the CO or FOs.
- 3.4 A maximum assistance amounting of PhP10,000 may be extended to clients seeking medical, burial, and transportation assistance through issuance of a Guarantee Letter to service providers, such as transport companies, medical institution, pharmacies, and funeral services. Assistance amounting to PhP10,000 shall be approved by the Assistant Bureau Director (ABD) of Protective Services Bureau (PSB) in the CO or the Assistant Regional Director (ARD) of the FOs.
- 3.5 The social worker and/or the authorized personnel may recommend assistance beyond PhP10,000 but not to exceed PhP25,000, subject to availability of funds and the approval of the Regional Director for DSWD FOs or the Director of the PSB for the DSWD CO to assist qualified individuals needing assistance to defray the cost of medical cases that require repetitive medical treatment (i.e. dialysis, chemotherapy), chronic illnesses, and those requiring costly medical procedures or expenses (hospitalization, laboratory procedure).
- 3.6 A client can avail of the assistance only once within three (3) months. Availment of assistance beyond this limit must be supported by a justification based on the special need of the beneficiary per assessment of the social worker, subject to the approval of the Regional Director for DSWD FOs or the PSB Director for the DSWD CO.
- 3.7 Partnerships with the partner agencies such as public hospitals and other concerned government agencies, transport companies, funeral parlors, drugstores/pharmacies, hospitals and other service providers shall be established by the Department to ensure that referred clients are efficiently and effectively assisted. Contracts or Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) may be entered into by the DSWD with qualified service providers in accordance with pertinent

regulations, such as Republic Act No. 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act.

- 3.8 In no case shall implementation of the AICS be delegated and/or transferred to any kind of Civil Society Organization, whether it be a non-governmental organization or a people's organization. However, to ensure transparency, the Department shall engage a third-party agency, entity, or organization to monitor the implementation of this service.
- 3.9 The DSWD shall submit a quarterly report on the implementation of this service to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Senate Committee on Finance. As indicated in Section 4 under the Special Provisions for DSWD of the GAA of 2014, DSWD shall also post the following information on the its website: (i) List of cases responded to and the type of intervention provided, (ii) List of beneficiaries, their locations, the specific assistance given to them, and the corresponding amounts provided to beneficiaries.

4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS

4.1 CIU Operations

- 4.1.1 All CIUs in DSWD FOs shall operate from 8:00 in the morning to 5:00 in the afternoon from Mondays through Fridays. However, the CIU at DSWD National Capital Region (NCR) shall operate twenty-four (24) hours daily.
- 4.1.2 The CIU at the DSWD CO shall operate from 8:00 in the morning to 6:00 in the evening from Mondays through Fridays.
- 4.1.3 Satellite CIU Offices in provinces, through the Social Welfare and Development (SWAD) Offices, shall operate from 8:00 in the morning to 5:00 in the afternoon.

4.2 Screening

The clients seeking assistance from CIU shall bring the following documents:

4.2.1 *Medical Assistance*

- Clinical Abstract/Medical Certificate with signature and license number of the attending physician (issued within 3 months)
- Hospital Bill (for payment of hospital bill,) or Prescription (for medicines) or Laboratory requests (for procedures)
- Barangay Certificate or any Valid ID of the client
- Referral Letter (if applicable)

4.2.2 *Burial Assistance*

- Funeral Contract
- Registered Death Certificate
- Barangay Certificate or any Valid ID of the client
- Referral Letter (if applicable)

4.2.3 *Transportation Assistance*

- Barangay Certificate or any Valid ID of the client
- Police Blotter (for victims of pick pockets, illegal recruitment)

- Referral Letter (if applicable)

4.2.4 *Educational Assistance*

- Enrolment Assessment Form or Certificate of Enrolment
- School ID of the student/ beneficiary
- Barangay Certificate or any Valid ID of the Client
- Referral Letter (if applicable)

4.2.5 A Social Case Study report prepared by the LGU social worker/ medical social worker, or a social case summary prepared by a registered social worker may be required by the CIU social worker to support assessment and recommendation of assistance. A social case study report is required as supporting document for assistance more than PhP10,000.

4.2.6 The client will be screened based on the assistance requested and documents presented. The social worker shall initially assess the appropriateness of the documents presented vis-à-vis the requirements. The client will be requested to complete necessary requirements as basis of assessment and recommendation of the social worker.

4.3 Submission of Documents

All supporting documents shall be submitted to the Financial Management Service (FMS) / Units (FMU) for auditing purposes, except for the prescribed GIS and social case study report which shall remain in the CIU file for confidentiality purposes.

4.4 Interview / Assessment

The social worker will conduct intake interview using the prescribed General Intake Sheet. The social worker may gather collateral information about the client from immediate family members, relatives, referring parties and other sources, if necessary.

The assessment of the case shall be based on the data gathered during interview, client's current need, and supporting documents presented. The assessment shall likewise include capacity of the family in addressing the problem and available resources that the family could tap. The assessment of the worker shall be the basis for the recommendation.

During the interview, the social worker may likewise provide psychosocial processing to the client to lessen their anxieties brought by the crisis situation.

4.5 Release of Assistance

The assistance shall be immediately released once the amount has been determined based on the interview/assessment and submitted supporting documents.

The submitted requirements together with the Certificate of Eligibility shall be attached to the Disbursement Vouchers (DVs) and Obligation Request (ORs) as supporting documents for the release of assistance (cash outright or guarantee letter).

- 4.5.1 For clients who shall be provided with minimal outright cash assistance, the assistance shall be claimed from the designated disbursing officer within the day or scheduled as soon as possible, if funds are not yet available at the CIU, the CO, or FOs.
- 4.5.2 For clients who shall be provided with guarantee letters bearing assistance amounting to PhP10,000 and below, the social worker shall issue the guarantee letter signed and approved by the ABD of PSB in the CO or the ARD of the FOs. The guarantee letter shall be presented to the concerned service provider for availment of assistance/ service based on the approved amount. The check shall be made payable directly to the service provider and shall be claimed by the representative of the service provider at the FMS/FMU after check was processed.
- 4.5.3 For clients seeking transportation assistance, the CIU will facilitate the provision of boat and bus tickets and issue the latter to the client.
- 4.5.4 For clients whose amount of assistance exceeded the amount of P10,000.00, the concerned CIU shall recommend first the approval of the release of assistance from the Regional Director or PSB Director.

4.6 Referral

- 4.6.1 Referral services may include the following:
 - Referral to residential centers and institution for temporary shelter and/ or protective custody.
 - Referral to other agencies, such as the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), for availment of further services and assistance.
- 4.6.2 A referral letter to a partner or identified agency shall be prepared by the social worker and shall be given to the client seeking assistance beyond the services of the office. The CIU shall coordinate with LGUs and partner agencies for after-care services of the client to ensure that the referrals are immediately and properly attended to.
- 4.6.3 If necessary, the social worker handling the case shall prepare a case summary indicating her assessment and recommendation, and include the case summary on the referral letter to be provided to the client. The social worker may escort the client to the referred agency for proper endorsement.

4.7 Administrative Structure and Manpower Requirements

The DSWD shall create the necessary structure and provide the manpower requirements in the CO and its FOs particularly the setting up of Provincial Satellite Offices to be able to deliver the AICS services more efficiently and closer to the clients. Special disbursing arrangements may be undertaken in selected and/or difficult-to-reach areas, if found necessary under the circumstances.

4.7.1 Strengthening the Satellite CIU Office

Each Satellite CIU established by the FO shall consist of two core staff (1 Social Welfare Officer II and 1 Social Welfare Assistant). The staff of the Satellite CIUs shall be directly reporting to the team leader of the SWAD Offices and the Provincial Social Welfare Officer (PSWO) of the PSWDOs in ARMM. The hiring of staff for the Satellite CIUs will be charged under the administrative fund of the 2014 AICS fund.

4.7.2 Special Disbursing Officer (SDO) Designation

The SWAD Team Leader and the PSWO of ARMM provinces shall act as the special disbursing officer of the Satellite CIU Office, provided that he/she holds a regular position. Should there be no available SWAD staff holding a regular position, the FO may provide an SDO for the office.

The designated SDO of the satellite office shall be bonded with a minimum cash of P20,000.00 and a maximum of P100,000.00, specifically intended for the release of cash assistance for the CIU clients. The disbursement of the said cash bond should be subject to liquidation and immediate replenishment in order to sustain the continuous operation of the satellite offices.

4.7.3 Partnership with Service Providers

To limit the huge amount of cash to be bonded to the SDOs of the Satellite Offices and to limit the releases of cash assistance, the FO through its respective Satellite Offices should establish partnership with the service providers (hospital, pharmacies, funeral parlors, transport companies) and other government agencies for the delivery of assistance to the CIU clients. Specifically, the Service Providers should facilitate the direct provision of assistance/ services to the client through a credit basis.

Identification of service provider should be based on the quality of service they provide and the trend of the number clients sought service on the said service provider.

A MOA between the FO and the Service Provider should be forged, formalizing the details of the partnership, specifically indicating the allowable maximum credit amount of P300,000.00 per service provider, set billing period, among others, to ensure monitoring of funds to be disbursed and to set a limit on the amount of service/ assistance to be paid to the service providers.

5.0 FUND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The DSWD FMS, thru the recommendation of the PSB, shall facilitate the transfer and release of funds to the concerned DSWD FOs on a quarterly basis, based on the approved Work and Financial Plan (WFP).
- 5.2 The DSWD FO shall facilitate the release of cash to the designated disbursing officer of the Satellite Offices based on the amount of cash requested. Disbursement of the SDOs of the concerned satellite office should be within its approved allocation.

- 5.3 To ensure availability of cash in the Satellite CIU offices, immediate liquidation shall be submitted to the FO when 70% disbursement has already been achieved.
- 5.4 The CIU in the CO, FOs, and Satellite Offices shall disburse funds in accordance to its approved allocation and to the existing auditing and accounting rules and regulations.
- 5.5 The payment to the Service Provider should be based on the billing made by the Service Provider on the actual amount of services/ assistance provided to the clients. The billing of the Service Provider should be on bi-monthly period or in cases when amount assistance provided is already within maximum credit amount.
- 5.6 The total disbursement of funds through the issuance of guarantee letters should be within the approved allocation of the office.
- 5.7 For DSWD ARMM, The DSWD CO shall effect the release of funds to DSWD ARM on a quarterly basis, based on the approved WFP and upon submission of proper documentary requirements (MOA on the transfer of funds, liquidation reports, etc.)
- 5.8 The DSWD ARMM shall open a separate account/ thrust account intended for the purpose.
- 5.9 The DSWD ARMM shall release the funds to the respective Provincial Social Welfare and Development Offices (PSWDOs) for the operation of the Satellite CIUs, based on the approved allocation.
- 5.11 Upon disbursement of the concerned PSWDOs and DSWD ARMM, a liquidation report shall be submitted to DSWD CO as basis for the release of the succeeding funds.

6.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 Each CIU shall maintain a databank which should include information about the client, his/her location, and the type and amount of assistance received for monitoring the status of fund utilization, for recording purpose, and for posting in the DSWD website. The PSB shall maintain the agency databank in partnership with the DSWD Information and Communications Technology and Management Service (ICTMS).
- 6.2 A monthly report indicating the physical and financial data/information and a narrative analysis on the assistance provided to the clients shall be submitted by the unit to the PSB every 5th day of the succeeding month.

7.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 7.1 For the monitoring of cases of the client, the CIU social workers may conduct field visit to client's residence, if necessary, in coordination with the LGU to determine after care services needed and assistance provided. The CIUs may likewise coordinate with the LGUs on the provision of after services to the client.

- 7.2 The FO shall conduct monthly monitoring and visit to its Satellite Office to determine and assess the operation of the unit as to funds utilized and number of clients served. The NPMO shall conduct quarterly monitoring and visit to the FO, as well as Satellite Office, to provide technical assistance and assess on the current operation the unit.
- 7.3 The PSB shall be the overseer of the AICS and shall monitor its implementation both in the CO and the FOs. It shall conduct an annual Program Implementation Review and Evaluation on the CIUs of CO, FO and Satellite office to evaluate and assess the overall implementation of the program (fund utilization, services/assistance provided, number of clients served), to identify issues/gaps/ concerns encountered and to formulate recommendation for the improvement of the program.

8.0 PENAL PROVISION

All DSWD employees entrusted with the custody of the AICS fund shall be solely responsible for its proper implementation and execution. Mismanagement of the funds shall be dealt accordingly.

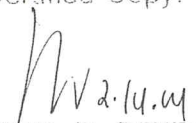
9.0 EFFECTIVITY

This guideline shall be effective for implementation on January 06, 2014.

Issued this 9th day of Jan. 2014


CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN
Secretary

Certified Copy:


MYRNA H. REYES
Officer In-Charge
Records Unit