

Memorandum Circular
No. 09
Series of 2021

SUBJECT: POLICY GUIDELINES ON STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS DURING ELECTION AND NON-ELECTION PERIODS

I. RATIONALE

The DSWD, as the lead government agency in social protection, welfare, and development primarily is mandated to lead in the formulation, implementation, and coordination of social welfare and development policies and programs for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged. Guided by its commitment and goal, "DSWD May Malasakit," it shall promote the rights of its beneficiaries, and promote the integrity of the programs of the Department.

Past experiences in national and local elections show several incidents and reports of some partners gaining control or taking advantage in the implementation of some of the activities of the Department during the election period while mobilizing under threat to the beneficiaries of its different programs and services, towards advancing their personal and political interests. This experience paved the way to developing the policy referred to as *Bawal ang Epal Dito* that addressed election-related issues and complaints in collaboration with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Commission on Elections (COMELEC).

To respond to various issues and complaints that use the programs and services of the Department for personal and political advancement, the Department deemed it most fitting to strengthen its policies and structures in the implementation of its programs and services during the election and non-election periods in order to prevent occurrences of such incidents while at the same time capacitating the program implementers and beneficiaries to build confidence and competence in responding to all election-related issues and complaints. This is very critical in ensuring that the DSWD programs and services will yield the most rewarding benefits and results for its intended beneficiaries or recipients thus, preventing acts and engagements that may exploit, abuse, waste, or use the agency, its personnel, programs, facilities and funds for personal or political gains or advancement. The DSWD may pursue further partnership with other organizations along with four major areas: Bantay (watchdog), Gabay (mentor), Kaagapay (co-implementer), and Tulay (link). Hence, transforming the Anti-Epal concept with a capacity and resource building perspectives.

The programs, activities, projects (PAPs) of the Department must be separated from political partisanship and other forms of political activities that



negate the principles of decency, transparency, and accountability. In order to address these concerns, these set of guidelines is being issued.

II. LEGAL BASES

Safeguarding the rights of the beneficiaries as recipients and ensuring the integrity of the various programs and services of the Department is embodied in the existing laws, policies, and regulations of the Government of the Philippines. To ensure that this shall be achieved during election and non-election periods and spare the program from the influence of politics and shield the beneficiaries from the influence of electoral candidates, the following laws and guidelines shall provide the legal provisions in the implementation of these guidelines:

1. **The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines** provides the basis of ethical and accountable behavior in the public sector.

Art. IX, B Sec 2 (4) LEGAL, states that: *“Public office is a public trust. Public officers and employees must at all times be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency, act with patriotism and justice, and lead modest lives.”*

Article IX Section 2 (B), and Section 6, provide that *“no officer or employee in the civil service shall engage, directly or indirectly, in any electioneering or partisan political campaign.”*

2. **Batas Pambansa Big. 881, s. 1985, or the Omnibus Election Code** - Section 261(i) of the Code discourages intervention by public officers and employees, directly or indirectly, “in any election campaign or engages in any partisan political activity, except to vote or to preserve public order, if he is a peace officer.”

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- (o) it is prohibited for “any person who uses under any guise whatsoever, directly or indirectly, (1) public funds or money deposited with, or held in trust by, public financing institutions or by government offices, banks, or agencies; (2) any printing press, radio, or television station or audio-visual equipment operated by the Government...; or (3) any equipment, vehicle, facility, apparatus, or paraphernalia owned by the government or by its political subdivisions... for any election campaign or for any partisan political activity.”

3. **Republic Act No. 6713 (1989) or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees** provides for eight (8) norms of conduct – a commitment to the public interest, professionalism, justness and sincerity, political neutrality, responsiveness to the public, nationalism, and patriotism, commitment to democracy, and simple living.

Section 4. Norms of Conduct of Public Officials and Employees. - (A) Every public official and employee shall observe the following as standards of personal conduct in the discharge and execution of official duties:

- (a) Commitment to public interest. - Public officials and employees shall always uphold the public interest over and above personal interest. All government resources and powers of their respective offices must be employed and used efficiently, effectively, honestly and economically, particularly to avoid wastage in public funds and revenues.

4. Republic Act No. 11518 or 2021 General Appropriations Act

Section 82. Prohibition on the Attachment of the Name, Image and Likeness of Public Officials on Government Projects. Subject to guidelines to be issued by the DBM, it shall be prohibited to affix, or cause to be affixed, the name, visage, appearance, logo, signature, or analogous image of any public official, whether elected or appointed, on all programs, activities, projects (PAPs) or corresponding signage which are funded in this Act.

5. Republic Act No. 9006 (2001), An Act to Enhance the Holding of Free, Orderly, Honest, Peaceful, and Credible Elections through Fair Election Practices.

Section 9. Posting of Campaign Materials or Lawful Election Propaganda.

6. Republic Act No. 10121 or known as "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010"

Rule 16 – Prohibited Acts of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of

- "i. Misrepresenting the source of relief goods, equipment or the aid commodities by:
 - (1) Either covering, replacing, or defacing the labels of the containers to make it appear that the goods, equipment or the aid commodities came from agency person;
 - (2) Repacking the goods, equipment or other aid commodity into containers with different markings to make it appear that the goods came from another agency or persons or was released upon the instance of a particular agency or persons;
 - (3) Making false verbal claim that the goods, equipment or other aid commodity in its untampered original containers actually came from another agency or persons or was released upon the instance of a particular agency or persons;
 - (4) Substituting or replacing relief goods, equipment or other aid commodities with the same items or inferior/cheaper quality.

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- j. Tampering with or stealing hazard monitoring and disaster preparedness equipment and paraphernalia.”
7. **DSWD Memorandum Circular No 24. Series of 2012.** Guidelines on the Conduct of Activities in Pantawid Familyang Pilipino during the 2013 Campaign and National and Local Election.
8. **DSWD Memorandum Circular No.01. Series of 2013. Operational Guidelines During Election Period,** providing guidance on Prohibited Activities during Election Period particular to Release, Disbursement or Expenditure of Public Funds, Exceptions to Prohibitions/Allowable Activities and Safeguards.
9. **Joint Memorandum Circular with DILG and COMELEC No. 001, Series of 2013.** Adoption/Implementation of the Guidelines on “Bawal ang Epal Dito” Campaign.
10. **Joint Resolution of the CSC and COMELEC No. 1600298, Series of 2016.** Re: Advisory on Electioneering and Partisan Political Activity.
11. **COMELEC Resolution 10695, Promulgated: February 10, 2021.** In the Matter of Prescribing the Calendar of Activities and Periods of Certain Prohibited Acts in connection with the May 09, 2022 National and Local Elections.

The above-mentioned laws and issuances have legal provisions which enumerate ethical conduct and accountability of public officers and sanctions. These guidelines shall provide essential measures and strategies to observe to insulate the Department, its workforce, and client/ beneficiaries from the influence and/or use for partisan political activities

III. OBJECTIVES

The Department as the lead agency in social protection shall ensure the efficient delivery of its programs and services while safeguarding the rights and integrity of DSWD beneficiaries for free and informed decisions during election and non-election periods. Specifically, it aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide guidance to all DSWD Officials and Personnel in carrying out their functions and tasks during election and non-election periods.
2. Comply with the existing guidelines of DSWD, and lawful election propaganda as prescribed by COMELEC Memorandum Circular No. 1. series of 2013 and other related laws and policies.
3. Protect our programs and services, beneficiaries and clients, as well as our personnel from political influence and maneuvering.

4. Initiate and implement Department-wide preventive measures and strategies towards any form of engagement in the political campaigns during election period.
5. Provide coordination and monitoring protocols in the resolution of election-related grievances and complaints with regards to DSWD programs and services.

IV. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

A. SCOPE

This guideline shall provide all Officials and Personnel of the DSWD Offices, Bureaus, Services, and Units and the Field Offices, and partners a general guide on the implementation of the DSWD program and services during the election period and non-election periods. It will provide different ways and measures adopting various platforms and communication approaches and strategies to capacitate the field implementers and beneficiaries to know their rights, roles, and responsibilities as active and responsible citizens while following the electoral processes and procedures.

It shall aim to maximize the use of the regional and national Grievance Redress System of the Department to report and respond to any form of harassment, abuse or threat to the field implementers and beneficiaries. This shall also aim to promote the participation of different stakeholders safeguarding the implementation of the DSWD programs and services.

B. COVERAGE

Per Joint Resolution of the CSC and COMELEC No. 1600298, Series of 2016, the following are the persons prohibited and persons excluded from the coverage of the prohibition against engaging in any electioneering or partisan political activities:

1. The following are persons prohibited from engaging in any electioneering or partisan political activities:
 - a) Members of the Civil Service in all branches, subdivisions, instrumentalities, and agencies of the Philippine Government, including government-owned-or-controlled corporations with original charters, and state universities and colleges, whether their appointments are permanent, temporary, contractual, or even casual;
 - b) Career officers holding political offices in an acting or officer-in-charge (OIC); and
 - c) Uniformed and active members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police.

An employee on leave of absence is still covered by the prohibition on electioneering or partisan political activities.

2. The following are persons excluded from the coverage of the prohibition against engaging in any electioneering or partisan political activities, for as long as they do not solicit contributions from their subordinates or subject them to any of the acts prohibited in the Omnibus Election Code:

- a) The President and Vice President;
- b) Members of the Cabinet;
- c) Other elective officials except barangay officials;
- d) Personal and Confidential staff of the abovementioned officials;
- e) Members of the reserve corps of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

V. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Election and Campaign Period** - generally covers ninety (90) days before the election and thirty (30) days thereafter, unless otherwise specifically provided by law or the COMELEC.
2. **Electoral candidates** - refer to persons who are given a "Certificate of Candidacy" by the Commission on Elections and thus have the opportunity to be elected as officials at the national, district, provincial, municipal, and barangay levels.
3. **Government**- refers to the national government, the local governments, the government-owned and controlled corporations, and all other instrumentalities.
4. **Partisan political campaign** - an act designed to promote the election or defeat of a particular candidate or candidates to a public office (RA 9006 Implementing Rules and Regulations).

VI. COMPONENTS

A. ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Social Marketing Service shall develop an overall Advocacy and Communication Plan that is aimed at promoting and strengthening the implementation of the DSWD programs and services and ensure that the rights and privileges of the beneficiaries are safeguarded. Series of advocacy activities and awareness campaigns shall be undertaken based on these guidelines. The SMS shall champion among the duty-bearers, partners and clients/ beneficiaries, and other stakeholders the promotion and compliance to the policies and guidelines of DSWD programs and services and to widen and sustain partnerships and linkages, and strengthen community actions and support. Moreover, SMS shall develop

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robust IEC materials that will foster strong partnership and ensure that we communicate properly with our partners and stakeholders.

1. Advocacy and Awareness Campaign Strategy

The Communication for Development (C4D) approach will be used in the campaign. The C4D approach is understood in terms of three main strategies: Advocacy, Social Mobilization, and Behavior Development or Program Communication (UNICEF,1999), and therefore shall employ the following:

“Advocacy is a process of gathering, organizing, and formulating information into an argument, to be communicated through various interpersonal and media channels to political and social leaders with a view to gaining their commitment to and active support of a development program.

Social mobilization is a process of bringing together all feasible inter-sectoral social partners to determine felt-need, raise demand for and sustain progress towards a particular development objective.

Program communication is a research-based, consultative process of addressing knowledge, attitudes, and practices of specific groups of program participants in order to develop or change those behaviors that have an impact on development objectives.”

2. Stakeholders and Messaging

Stakeholders shall be grouped as primary and secondary. As defined, primary stakeholders shall refer to the audience that is a direct recipient of the communication. They are usually decision-makers or influencers. Secondary stakeholders are those that may not be the intended audience but are indirect recipients of the message.

Messages shall be formulated with the following themes:

- a. Adherence to the highest ethical standards for all government officials and personnel
- b. Compliance and commitment to the Code of Conduct of Government Officials and Employees
- c. Duty-bound to equitable delivery of programs and services regardless of political color

- d. Protect and promote the rights and welfare of program beneficiaries and clients
- e. Full responsibility to protect the resources of the government and ensure its reach to the beneficiaries of the program
- f. Collaborate and partner with different stakeholders and make a proper representation of the programs and the beneficiaries
- g. Safeguarding the resources of the government and support its advocacy and awareness campaign

Guided by these key messages set forth in these guidelines, the Social Marketing Service shall ensure an institutionalized advocacy campaign to communicate the core messages in a consistent manner through the use of multiple channels that shall be incorporated in the overall Social Marketing Plan of the Department.

B. ORIENTATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Orientation and capacity building aims to capacitate the field implementers in carrying out their roles and responsibilities after being equipped with basic skills and knowledge in efficient and effective implementation of DSWD programs and services during the Election and non-election period. Cascading these guidelines to the FOs through orientation and capacity-building activities while maximizing the different resources, mechanisms, and venues available shall be facilitated by the regional offices in collaboration with the Human Resource Management and Development Service (HRMDS) and Social Welfare Institutional and Development Bureau (SWIDB).

The following shall be the topics in the conduct of orientation and capacity building:

- Rationale and objectives of the guidelines;
- Prohibited acts of government officials and employees based on relevant laws, policies, and issuances;
- Existing grievance mechanisms of the Department;
- Remedies and assistance available to officials and personnel;
- Preventive measures and responsive mechanisms; and
- Approaches to other election-related issues and challenges.

Internal stakeholders shall refer to officials and all personnel of the Department, while external shall refer to the organizations, entities, or persons outside of the Department, including but not limited to, branches of government, Local Government Units (LGUs), civil society organizations, non-government organizations, peoples' organizations, private organizations, the local chief executives (LCEs), legislators and officers and personnel, including volunteers of these entities who shall be

the target of the orientation and capability building activities of the OBSs and Field Offices.

C. PARTNERSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS, COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Depending on their respective mandates, roles, purposes, and resources, the Department shall continue to foster, establish and sustain partnerships with different government and non-government entities to be allies, program and advocacy champions, and sources of support in protecting the welfare of the agency's beneficiaries and clients and the government's resources.

“Bantay, Gabay, Kaagapay and Tulay” theme shall serve as the working message for partnership and collaboration during the election period.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) may be pursued with the selected partners to specifically detail their commitments, the support or resources they can share, spare, and mobilize. The terms of engagement that supports projects, programs, and activities that promote transparency, public information, and awareness or call to action shall be specifically defined in order to prevent persons or entities or prohibit them from using the programs, projects or services of the Department, including its officials, personnel, beneficiaries, properties and facilities to advance political or personal interest or gains.

The Department, in coordination and collaboration with other national government agencies such as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Commission on Elections (COMELEC), Civil Service Commission (CSC), the Ombudsman, among others, shall establish a referral system in receiving and taking action on reports, information or issues based on existing laws, rules and regulations and other mechanisms available to partners.

Partnership with the LGUs shall likewise be defined and strengthened, detailing the specific support needed from them such as funding, logistics, human resource, facilities, and others as may be deemed appropriate and applicable to the provisions stipulated in these guidelines.

Further, the Department shall continue to engage with interest and organized groups to assist it in disseminating these guidelines to a wider possible audience. The Department may harness existing partnerships in safeguarding public and clients' interests and welfare with groups, such as the Kalipunan ng Liping Pilipina (KALIPPI), Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Pamilya ng Pantawid, Federation of Senior Citizens of the Philippines (FSCAP), and other Civil Society and Peoples' Organizations.

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VII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation shall be incorporated in the overall advocacy and awareness campaign strategy to assess and measure its effectiveness so that its results will be used to modify the plan towards the attainment of the desired outcome and impact, which is a change in behavior on patronage politics, upholding the agency's core values at all times and partnership built on mutual respect.

A monitoring system shall be established from the national to the regional level and a corresponding tool for every program and service of the Department shall be developed to facilitate the monitoring activities at different levels of implementation. A quarterly narrative and statistical report shall be submitted providing updates and accomplishments on the communication plan, resolution of grievances and complaints, and partnership engagements.

The monitoring tool shall be formulated based on the Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) of the Department and according to the objectives of these guidelines.

PDPB in coordination with SMS shall develop a Monitoring Tool based on the overall Advocacy and Communication Plan.

All OBSUs and FOs shall submit quarterly accomplishment reports to SMS in compliance to this guidelines 5th day of the succeeding quarter. SMS shall then consolidate, analyze and come up with one (1) department wide report with analysis and recommendation for policy and implementation enhancement to be submitted to the Secretary every 15th day of the succeeding quarter.

VIII. GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

A centralized Grievance Redress System shall be established incorporating all the programs and services of the Department and shall be cascaded to the regional offices maximizing the current existing system of the Agency Operations Center (AOC) in managing grievances received by the Department.

The AOC, together with the OBSs shall harmonize the existing grievance mechanisms from the barangay to the national level in addressing grievances according to the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act or RA 11032 through the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA). It shall also establish and sustain a referral system with other agencies.

Established grievance mechanisms of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), KALAHI CIDDS, and other OBS shall continue to operate based on their existing guidelines. Each of the OBS must ensure a

seamless process in addressing and resolving grievances in coordination with the AOC.

An overall reporting template or tool shall be developed to operate the grievance redress system to monitor appropriate responses and resolutions of cases filed and submitted to the national and regional offices as well as to ensure compliance of all offices concerned in managing the grievances.

IX. RISK MANAGEMENT

As stipulated under Memorandum Circular No. 27, series of 2014, the Department shall have an established Risk Management System to strengthen the organization's internal processes thereby maximizing opportunities while avoiding or minimizing losses and detrimental impact of risks on programs, projects, and service. As such, a Risk Management System has to be installed and ensured to be functional taking into consideration the Department's Risk Treatment Plan for 2018-2022 as stipulated in Administrative Order 17 series of 2018.

The OBS and the FOs shall incorporate in their respective risk treatment plans and activities that pertain to the deliverables prescribed in these guidelines and undertake its implementation and monitoring according to AO 17, s. 2018.

The management identifies, evaluates and assesses the agency's risks.

- Management identifies all risks that may occur (internal or external factors) at both the agency and activity levels.
- Management adopts appropriate tools for the analysis and assessment of risks.
- Management evaluates each identified risk in terms of its impact and its likelihood of occurrence.
- Management considers the potential risks related to fraud and corruption.

The management determines appropriate response to the identified, evaluated, and assessed agency's risk.

The role of internal audit is to provide objective and independent assurance to the board and senior management on the effectiveness of governance, risk management, and internal controls, including the manner in which the first and second lines of defense achieve risk management and control objectives.

X. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

1. Officers and employees in the civil service shall not engage directly or indirectly in any electioneering or partisan political campaign
2. Non-compliance to the pertinent provisions of the "Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (RA No 6713)

3. Commission of dishonesty and deceit in the public service and non-compliance to preventive measures against graft and corruption.
4. No officer or employee in the Civil Service including members of the Armed Forces, shall engage directly or indirectly in any partisan political activity or take part in any election except to vote nor shall he use his official authority or influence to coerce the political activity of any other person or body (EO 292 Administrative Code of 198).
5. Activities shall not be used in any manner that could in any way influence the vote of a person or the results of the election. For instance, during Department activities, the following, among others, shall not be allowed:
 - 5.1. Display of election paraphernalia such as tarpaulins, banners, posters, stickers, and T-shirts; prominently featuring the names, pictures or logos of candidates or parties on activity materials such as programs and handouts;
 - 5.2. Distribution of election materials such as flyers, leaflets, and sample ballots; and
 - 5.3. Playing of campaign jingles and other election-related audio or video materials.
 - 5.4. Political campaigning by any political candidate, political party, and/or their supporters.
6. The Department shall not participate directly or indirectly in or conduct of the following:
 - 6.1. medical missions, and other similar activities or events organized by a political candidate or party.
 - 6.2. political gatherings/forums or campaigns.
 - 6.3. hold training exclusively for personnel closely identified with a political candidate.
 - 6.4. activities with offices of incumbent officials running for an office. If such a joint activity has already been agreed upon prior to the election period, the incumbent official should be made to understand that the joint activity shall not be used for electioneering. If the incumbent official does use such joint activity for electioneering, such shall be immediately reported to the COMELEC.
7. Misrepresenting the source of relief goods, equipment or the aid commodities by:



- 7.1 Either covering, replacing, or defacing the labels of the containers to make it appear that the goods, equipment or the aid commodities came from agency person;
 - 7.2 Repacking the goods, equipment or other aid commodity into containers with different markings to make it appear that the goods came from another agency or persons or was released upon the instance of a particular agency or persons;
 - 7.3 Making false verbal claim that the goods, equipment or other aid commodity in its untampered original containers actually came from another agency or persons or was released upon the instance of a particular agency or persons;
 - 7.4 Substituting or replacing relief goods, equipment or other aid commodities with the same items or inferior/cheaper quality.
8. Tampering with or stealing hazard monitoring and disaster preparedness equipment and paraphernalia.
 9. Gathering of parent leaders, community volunteers and program beneficiaries shall not be allowed if they will be used for the personal advantage of the politician. The DSWD shall monitor said activities to ensure that gatherings of parent leaders are only for official meetings and/or activities only and not connected in any way to political engagements.
 10. No program or activities shall be used for political campaign.

XI. SAFEGUARDS AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The DSWD Offices and personnel can conduct the following activities as measures to prevent the occurrence of the prohibited acts:

1. Conduct information dissemination and capability-building activities for the Department's Officials and personnel and stakeholders on these guidelines according to the Department-wide Advocacy and Communication Plan and on election-related laws and issuances.
2. Plan and implement programs and provide services in a timely manner in anticipation of potential challenges especially in 'high-risk/hot spot' areas during election period.
3. Facilitate the Active Citizenship Module during Family Development Sessions and related modules to strengthen and promote community responsibility and participation.
4. Provide Technical Assistance, coaching and/or supervisory meetings to field implementers on managing the engagement or interference of politicians and other personalities and group in official projects and activities towards making them allies rather than adversarial entities.

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5. The implementation of regular activities of the different OBSs and Field Offices per their functions, duties and responsibilities shall follow the prescribed implementing procedures as specified in their respective Operations or Program Manuals or Guidelines. All workers shall be just and responsive and shall take a neutral, impartial and independent stand in all official matters.
6. The rights, safety and security of the clients/beneficiaries and personnel shall be of prime consideration and any form of influence that will be detrimental to these shall be given full attention and immediate response by the Department.
7. The conduct of any activity or project of any programs of the Department should not be tainted with politics at all times. Hence, as much as possible, the conduct of these activities shall be held in venues/areas where politicking can be avoided. Moreover, all DSWD officials and/or employees shall refrain from inviting and/or accommodating political candidates to any official activity of the Department.
8. Request for data shall only be entertained upon written request taking into consideration the provisions under the Freedom of Information Law and Data Privacy Act.
9. The Grievance Redress System in the Department will be used for reporting any incident of politicking in line of work. All complaints shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and impartiality and will be managed according to the GRS guidelines issued by the AOC as stipulated in this guideline. (GRS MECHANISM).
10. All requests for procurement of goods and services shall be in accordance with R.A. No. 9184 (The Government Procurement Reform Act) and its implementing rules and regulations and with pertinent issuances.
11. The conduct of official activities shall be in accordance with set guidelines and parameters, thereby ensuring that no favor or benefit shall accrue to any political candidate or party

For further information, please refer to DSWD Memorandum Circular 021, Series of 2012, DSWD Memorandum Circular No 24. Series of 2012, Joint Memorandum Circular with DILG and COMELEC No. 001, Series of 2013.

XII. EXCEPTIONS/ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

All institutionalized activities conducted by the Department and those not specifically covered or enumerated as prohibited acts, without prejudice to an exemption from policy issuance according to purpose and necessity, and in order to ensure the unhampered delivery of social protection services to its beneficiaries and clients, shall be exempt from the prohibition imposed by existing rules and issuances during the election period. These activities are enumerated as follows (DSWD Memorandum Circular No.01. Series of 2013):

A. Release, disbursement, or expenditure of public funds or any public works

When allowed:

1. Executed or awarded activities done before the Election Period
2. Routine and normal expenditure of the Department
3. Ongoing programs and activities being implemented by the Department
4. Projects under foreign agreements, maintenance works on existing public works, emergency works necessary to restore damaged facilities, and payments for usual costs of preparation to actual constructions.

The release, disbursement, or expenditure of public funds or any public works shall be in accordance with the existing policies and guidelines applicable.

B. The creation, filling up of positions and/or hiring of employees shall be allowed if:

When allowed:

1. Either of the above-mentioned is done before the election period;
2. The hiring, creation, and/or filling up of position is necessary for the continuous and unhampered delivery of social services;
3. In case there is an urgent need to appoint a new employee, the notice of appointment shall be given to the COMELEC within three (3) days from the date of the appointment.

In case of necessary or urgent need, the names and number of personnel and positions, the organized units where the vacancies for filling-up exist, as well as a clear justification why it is necessary or urgent for the Department, must be specified.

XIII. SANCTIONS

If warranted, sanctions may be imposed after due process and pursuant to existing laws, rules and regulations.

The persons who may be held liable for committing the prohibited acts under Section VIII are:

A. WITHIN DSWD

1. **For Regular, Casual and Co-Term employees:**

The Secretary, as the Disciplining Authority, has jurisdiction to investigate and decide matters involving disciplinary action against officers and employees under his jurisdiction.¹

Any employee who has committed any of the prohibited acts or is involved therein will be subject to disciplinary proceedings pursuant to the DSWD Administrative Rules of Procedures (Administrative Order No. 13, series of 2011) in relation to the 2017 Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service (2017 RACCS).

2. For Contract of Service (COS) or Job Order (JO) workers:

Any COS/JO worker who has committed or is involved therein shall be dealt with accordingly, based on his/her contract with DSWD and other applicable laws

Private individuals who participate in conspiracy as co-principals, accomplices or accessories, with public officials or employees, in violation of this Act, shall be subject to the same penal liabilities as the public officials or employees and shall be tried jointly with them per Section 11 (c) of RA 6713.

3. Presidential Appointees

Pursuant to Executive No. 43 s. 2017 "Creating the Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC) and providing for its Powers, Duties and Functions and for other purposes", if the violator of the prohibited acts is a presidential appointee in the Executive Branch of the Government and any of its agencies or instrumentalities occupying the position of Assistant Regional Director or an equivalent rank and higher, otherwise classified as "Salary Grade 26" and higher under Republic Act (RA) No. 6758 or Compensation and Position Classification Act of 1989, including members of the governing board of any instrumentality, regulatory agency or chartered institution and directors or officers, appointees or nominees of the President to government –owned or controlled corporations, or who otherwise represent the interest of the government, the PACC shall have the authority, concurrently with the Office of the Ombudsman, to hear, investigate, receive and evaluate evidence, and intelligence reports.

The Office of the Ombudsman as protectors of the people, shall act promptly on complaints filed in any form or manner against officers or employees of the Government, or of any subdivision, agency or instrumentality thereof, including government-owned or controlled corporations, and enforce their administrative, civil and criminal

¹ BOOK V/Title I/Subtitle A/Chapter 7-Discipline of the Executive Order No. 292 or Revised of Administrative Code of 1987

liability in every case where the evidence warrants in order to promote efficient service by the Government to the people.²

Any case of a public official occupying the position of regional director and higher, otherwise classified as Grade '27' and higher, of the Compensation and Position Classification Act of 1989, who have violated the said prohibited acts shall be filed with Sandiganbayan.³

B. Outside DSWD

1. Local Government Units (LGU) employees

An employee of the LGU who has violated any of the prohibited acts or is involved therein shall be subject to the disciplining authority of the local chief executive, as the proper authority in any local government unit. An administrative investigation may be conducted by a person or a committee duly authorized by the local chief executive.⁴

2. LGU official

The LGU official who has violated any of the prohibited acts or is involved therein is subject to the jurisdiction of the DILG and/or the Ombudsman, as the case may be.

The DSWD officials and employees who personally witnessed and/or actually experienced any incident involving conduct of prohibited activities shall be required to submit a comprehensive incident report. The report shall be supported by official communications including but not limited to pictures, official documents, sworn statements of employees and their witnesses including barangay or police blotter, whenever applicable.

XIV. FUND ALLOCATION

The SMS shall allocate funds for advocacy based on the Communication Plan. In addition, the concerned OBSUs and FOs shall allocate funds for the implementation to be included in their respective WFP. The FMS, on the other hand, shall ensure that funds are available for this purpose.

² Republic Act No. 6770 or known as "The Ombudsman Act of 1989".

³ Republic Act No. 10660 of SEC. 4. Jurisdiction. – The Sandiganbayan shall exercise exclusive original jurisdiction in all cases involving:

a. Violations of Republic Act No. 3019, as amended, otherwise known as the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, Republic Act No. 1379, and Chapter II, Section 2, Title VII, Book II of the Revised Penal Code, where one or more of the accused are officials occupying the following positions in the government, whether in a permanent, acting or interim capacity, at the time of the commission of the offense.

⁴ Section 86 of Republic Act of 7160 or known as Local Government Code of 1991

XV. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

In order to strengthen the campaign and facilitate compliance with these guidelines, the Department shall institutionalize its collaboration and coordination efforts within the DSWD. It shall utilize existing systems currently in place to effectively operationalize the Advocacy and Communication Plan within the processes and implementing procedures of the programs and in all service delivery of the Department.

Further, the following are the specific tasks expected of the OBSs:

A. CENTRAL OFFICE

1. Social Marketing Service

The Social Marketing Service shall be the overall overseer of this policy guideline which shall ensure its effective implementation at all phases. SMS shall, as the communication arm of the Department, lead and spearhead the advocacy and awareness campaign in order to have a consistent, synchronized, and effective approach and execution of these guidelines. The SMS shall institute one-message advocacy through a DSWD Strategic Advocacy Plan that is anchored on the Department's Communication Plan.

In the formulation of the DSWD Strategic Advocacy Plan, the SMS shall implement its existing process in coming up with a Department-wide plan, which shall be the Strategic Advocacy Plan, and ensure that all relevant inputs and perspectives of all internal and external stakeholders are harmonized and incorporated.

The SMS shall coordinate and collaborate with all OBSs and DSWD Field Offices in formulating their respective advocacy and operational plans based on the overall Strategic Advocacy Plan. This shall also be coordinated with other partners and stakeholders.

The SMS in coordination with SWIDB and HRMDS shall conduct Orientation and Capacity Building activities for all DSWD Officials and Personnel, and stakeholders.

The SMS shall also spearhead the development and implementation of the overall monitoring system inclusive of grievances and complaints in coordination with different OBSs and FOs and with the Agency Operation Center (AOC).

The SMS shall conduct quarterly monitoring and evaluation activities, and provide necessary technical assistance and coaching to DSWD Field Offices.



The SMS shall submit a consolidated quarterly narrative and statistical report to the Secretary of the Department highlighting accomplishments and updates on the DSWD Communication Plan during the election period including complaints and grievances received disaggregated based on the status of resolutions, and engagement with partner agencies and other stakeholders. More importantly, they shall inform the Secretary on issues and concerns raised in the implementation of this policy guidelines and provide recommendations.

SMS shall develop a centralized communication platform or mechanism as part of its role in coordination with OBS and FOs. Furthermore, the SMS shall also develop a clear communication plan/protocol for internal communications in order to avoid lapses in timely coordination and cascading of information to OBSUs and Field Offices.

SMS may create a TWG or body that will assist them in the implementation of this policy guidelines.

2. Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program National Program Management Office

The 4Ps NPMO shall manage the projects, services, and activities according to the prescribed implementing procedures as specified in its Operations Manual (OM) and these guidelines, supported at all times by applicable policy issuances;

Ensure that these guidelines, as aligned to the Department's Strategic Advocacy Plan are communicated to 4Ps personnel, partners and beneficiaries.

Implement continuing information dissemination or campaigns geared towards promoting active citizenry and empowerment through the Family Development Session and the Active Citizenship modules;

Sustain efforts in strengthening the engagement of 4Ps workforce and beneficiaries in the Program in the context of neutral and apolitical service and practices especially before and during the election period;

Utilize the 4Ps existing Grievance Redress System (GRS) in managing all 4Ps-related grievances.

Conduct orientation and capacity building activities for and with 4Ps workforce (field operations staff and other personnel) in a neutral and safe manner so as not to connote any partisan support refraining from inviting and/or accommodating political candidates for election;

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It shall develop its own advocacy and communication plan to be submitted to the SMS as part of the overall Advocacy and Communication Plan.

3. Social Welfare Institutional and Development Bureau

SWIDB shall develop a standard presentation material and modules specifically designed for the orientation and capacity-building activities in coordination with the Human Resource Management and Development Service for all the field operations staff.

The SWIDB shall also coordinate and provide technical assistance to partner agencies, the local government units, and other stakeholders in ensuring and mobilizing support towards the efficiency in the implementation of DSWD programs and services during the election period.

SWIDB shall lead in establishing a centralized knowledge base which can be accessed by all internal stakeholders to facilitate efficient flow of information and standardized messaging.

4. Program Management Bureau

The PMB shall ensure the responsive and efficient implementation of social welfare and development (SWD) programs, projects, and services for the vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society following the existing mechanism of the Department and these guidelines and related laws and issuances during the election period.

It shall implement programs prescribed by-laws, particularly those concerning SWD sectors, e.g. children, youth, women, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities. Ensure that these guidelines, as aligned to the Department's Strategic Advocacy Plan are communicated to partners and beneficiaries of all sectors. Moreover, implement continuing information dissemination or campaigns geared towards promoting active citizenry and empowerment.

It shall develop its own advocacy and communication plan to be submitted to the SMS as part of the overall Advocacy and Communication Plan.

5. Financial Management Service

The FMS shall:

- Facilitate the budgetary releases in facilitating the implementation of the Department-wide Advocacy and Communication Plan.
- Be responsible for the effective, efficient, and economical management of financial resources of the DSWD during the election period.
- Provide the DSWD Management with relevant information, advice, and options in the decision-making process on finance.
- Evaluate and analyze financial-related issues and grievances that may be brought up during the election period.

6. Information and Communication Technology Management Service

The ICTMS as the primary provider of information management, communication services, and technology solutions, shall:

- Support the DSWD's social welfare and development strategies.
- Be responsible in ensuring the efficient operations of the internal monitoring systems relative to the implementation of the Department-wide Advocacy and Communication Campaigns during the election period.
- Develop or strengthen the existing IT systems of respective programs and services of the OBS.
- Work in close coordination with the Agency Operations Center to facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of these guidelines.
- Assist SWIDB in establishing the knowledge base needed to support the implementation of activities indicated in this policy.

7. National Household Targeting Office

The NHTO shall:

- Provide the necessary data relative to the identification of poor households who would be recipients or beneficiaries of the social protection programs carried out by the Department.
- Aim to improve access to, and utility of, the national database of poor households and to various social protection stakeholders to respond to all targeting and Listahanan-project related queries during the election period.

8. Disaster Response Management Bureau

The DRMB leads in developing, implementing, and coordinating the DSWD's disaster response management programs, projects, and services for victims of disasters, and therefore shall use its existing mechanisms and tools in responding to issues and challenges that may be brought about during the election period.

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9. Social Technology Bureau

The STB shall:

- Be responsible for developing and enhancing customer-driven social protection technologies addressing current and emerging needs and issues of poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged individuals, groups, and families.
- Develop its own advocacy and communication plan to be submitted to the SMS as part of the overall Advocacy and Communication Plan.

10. Legal Service

The LS shall:

- Provide legal assistance and support to the DSWD's various OBSUs and personnel by handling administrative and litigated cases involving the DSWD or DSWD personnel.
- Provide legal opinions and advice on matters involving the DSWD mandate and the exercise of its official powers and functions, and rendering related services.
- Provide resolutions to all administrative cases that may be filed related to non-compliance to the existing policies and issuances during the election period.
- Plan and prepare the necessary documents (consolidated matrix of PAPs which implementation is covered by the election period, with complete computations, should these be required by the COMELEC, similar to the requirement in the previous election).
- Develop a Compendium of Legal References. This compendium shall be used during orientation and capacity building activities for stakeholders.

11. Policy Development and Planning Bureau

PDPB shall:

- Develop a separate M&E plan to serve as the basis for the formulation of the monitoring tool.
- Develop a Monitoring Tool in coordination with SMS.
- Develop a Reporting Template or Tool.

12. Human Resource Management and Development Service

HRMDS shall:

- Provide support services to DSWD Officials and Personnel.
- The HRMDS is responsible for services particular to providing capacity-building activities for all the field operations staff relative to these guidelines in coordination with the Offices, Bureaus, and Services of the Department in preparation for the coming election period.

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- The HRMDS will make these guidelines as part of the orientation session with new personnel of the Department and to ensure also that the orientation modules and materials shall be cascaded to all Field Offices.

13. Agency Operations Center

The AOC shall:

- Receive, process, and endorse complaints to appropriate OBS or agencies for response and action.
- Monitor the status of action on the grievances received and ensure that these are addressed/responded to accordingly during the election period.
- Provide feedback to the complainant when applicable.
- Submit a consolidated periodic report to the SMS for overall consolidation and submission to the Secretary of the Department.
- Develop a system in receiving, processing and endorsing complaints as handling and providing feedback. The AOC should work with SMS and SWIDB (knowledge management division) in establishing this system.
- Submit a quarterly report on grievances which will be the basis of SMS in determining if the Advocacy Plan needs any revision.

B. FIELD OFFICES

1. Ensure that the Advocacy and Communication Plan shall be cascaded and implemented efficiently at the regional level.
2. Oversee and supervise the overall management and implementation of the Advocacy and Communication Plan.
3. Cascade these policy guidelines to all FO Officials and Personnel, LGUs and other stakeholders.
4. Ensure that all issues, grievances, and complaints received relative to program implementation during the election period shall be fully addressed and resolved, and the same shall be reported to the Office of the Secretary through the Social Marketing Service as the lead implementing office of the Department-wide Advocacy and Communication Plan.
5. All complaints received shall be properly addressed. Any complaints not resolved at their level shall be elevated to the AOC.
6. Facilitate the implementation of the Advocacy and Communication Plan through a regular monitoring system in collaboration with the different divisions at the regional office. These include the Policy and Plans Division, Promotive Services Division, Protective Services Division, Disaster Response Management Division, Human Resource Division, and other divisions and units that will be involved in ensuring the implementation of these guidelines.

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7. Translate all IEC materials to local vernacular, if necessary.
8. FOs may come-up with their Operational Guidelines within the bounds of this policy guidelines, if necessary. The Operational Guidelines may include the Grievance Redress System and the Agency Operations Center. It shall specify the division, section, unit responsible for the Grievance Redress System and the Agency Operations Center.

XVI. REPEALING CLAUSE

All previous issuances and guidelines that are inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

XVII. EFFECTIVITY

This issuance shall take effect immediately. A certified true copy of the MC should be filed with the UP Law Center, and deposited with the National Printing Office for publication at the Official Gazette.

Issued in Quezon City this 12th day of AUGUST 2021.


ROLANDO JOSELITO D. BAUTISTA
Secretary

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

17 AUG 2021


MYRJA H. REYES
OIC-Division Chief
Records and Archives Mgt. Division