

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
NO. 15
SERIES OF 2022

**UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS SITUATION PROGRAM**

I. RATIONALE

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as the leader in social protection, continuously implements the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) program to support government efforts in providing aid to individuals and families seeking assistance for medical, funeral, food, transportation, educational and other support services. Undoubtedly, there is an observed increase in the number of clients who are suffering from the severe economic effects brought by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the rising inflation rate due to the high fuel prices.

To ensure the faster and more efficient delivery of assistance through the AICS program to the increased number of clients, there is a need to review of the existing guidelines and make necessary revisions to further streamline the implementing procedure, adjust the rates of assistance and corresponding approving authorities at the Central and Field Offices and Social Welfare and Development (SWAD) Offices and simplify the intake/eligibility forms and documentary requirements.

Hence, this Circular shall serve as the new implementing guidelines for AICS that shall repeal Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 11, series of 2019 and its amendatory guidelines per MC No. 24, series of 2020.

II. LEGAL BASES

- A. Section 5 of Republic Act (RA) No. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018

"Sec. 5. Reengineering of Systems and Procedures. – All offices and agencies which provide government services are hereby mandated to regularly undertake cost compliance analysis, time and motion studies, undergo evaluation and improvement of their transaction systems and procedures and reengineer the same if deemed necessary to reduce bureaucratic red tape and processing time. xxx"

B. Sections 3 (b) and 9 of RA No. 11463 or the Malasakit Centers Act

“Sec. 3 (b) Financial Assistance refers to monetary aid, in the form of guarantee letter, cash or check, which covers burial, transportation and other allied assistance or physical aid such as food, clothing, general assistive devices given by agencies and mandated by existing laws, rules and regulations to provide such assistance. xxx”

“Sec.9. Medical and Financial Assistance- The Malasakit Centers shall facilitate access to the following medical and financial assistance: (b) The DSWD financial assistance, based on existing Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) guidelines.

C. Executive Order (EO) No. 221 series of 2003, Amending Executive Order No. 15, s. 1998 entitled ‘Redirecting the Functions and Operations of the Department of Social Welfare and Development’

Section 3 mandates the DSWD “to implement (iii) crisis intervention”.

D. EO No. 137 series of 2021, AHON Convergence

“Section 1. *Institutionalizing the AHON Convergence Program.* The "Aid and Humanitarian Operations Nationwide" (AHON) Convergence Program is hereby institutionalized as a platform for an enhanced and unified delivery of social amelioration services xxx” among national government agencies including the DSWD.

E. EO No. 163, series of 2022, Institutionalizing Access to Protection Services for Refugees, Stateless and Asylum Seekers

“Section 1. *Policy.* The State recognizes the important and enduring relevance of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, 1954 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Person, and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and has taken steps to strengthen the existing legal framework and mechanisms for the protection of refugees, stateless persons and asylum seekers in the country (hereinafter collectively referred to as "persons of concerns" [POCs]), and address their need for protection, especially in times of public emergencies.

In this regard, the State shall closely monitor and ensure full protection of the rights of POCs xxx. These shall include the provision of access to socioeconomic services, xxx.”

III. OBJECTIVES

This Circular is primarily issued to prescribe the new guidelines that will govern the implementation of the AICS program by the Crisis Intervention Unit/Sections (CIU/S) at the Central and Field Offices, respectively, and SWAD Satellite Offices (SWAD Office) and in established Malasakit Centers nationwide, repealing for the purpose, the existing AICS guidelines i.e. MC No. 11, series of 2019, as amended by MC No. 24, series of 2020.

Further, it is likewise the objective of this issuance to adopt the “ease of beneficiaries” concept of digital transformation insofar as the overall processes and requirements are concerned.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. **Authorized Representative**- any person who represents a beneficiary who, for certain reasons, will not be physically present in processing and claiming the assistance requested. Allowed representatives shall be limited to:

1. **Family Member/s** - refers to a relative up to fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, including the spouse, children, parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents and grandchildren of the beneficiary.
2. In extremely justifiable circumstances, **any other individual acting as a representative of a beneficiary**. Provided that said individual shall not be allowed to represent more than two (2) beneficiaries who are unrelated to him/her for every calendar year.

For this purpose, the information of the representative shall also be subject to the crossmatching process.

B. **Beneficiary**- refers to the person who actually needs the assistance, or on whose behalf the assistance is being sought from the DSWD through an authorized representative. The beneficiary is the ultimate recipient of the assistance.

C. **Case Summary** - refers to a document prepared by a Registered Social Worker from the DSWD, the local social welfare and development office (LSWDO) or the social service office of the hospital. It is an overview of the socio-economic situation of the client or beneficiary as well as the brief assessment and recommendation of the Social Worker for that particular client or beneficiary.

- D. **Certificate of Eligibility (CE)** - a document issued by the DSWD, duly approved by the approving authorities, that proves that the client is eligible to receive the interventions and services under the AICS program.
- E. **Client** - is any individual or group who may be the beneficiary who seeks assistance or the authorized representative, on behalf of the beneficiary due to the latter's inability to be physically present.
- F. **Crisis Situation/s** - is a time in the individuals' life when they experience a breakdown or disruption in their usual or normal daily activities or family functioning. Such disruption prevents them from adequately performing their social roles and functions, and may lead them into worsened life situations.
- G. **Crossmatching** - the process of cleaning or counter checking the information or data sets provided by the client/s approaching the DSWD for assistance versus those already recorded from clients previously served by the Department to determine the eligible clients who may avail or re-avail assistance, taking into consideration the limitations under the frequency of availment.
- H. **General Intake Sheet (GIS)** - is the form used by the DSWD Social Workers to record the basic information of the beneficiary and the authorized representative, the problem presented, and intake the assessment as well as the recommendation of assistance to the beneficiaries;
- I. **Guarantee Letter (GL)** - is a document issued by the DSWD in favor of the beneficiary addressed to service providers to guarantee the payment of the service on behalf of the beneficiary. The service providers may include hospitals, funeral homes, and such other providers that are willing to accept the GLs issued by the DSWD for payment of their services and/or goods for the beneficiary.
- J. **Material Assistance Distribution Sheet (MDS)** - is the form used by the DSWD to list/record all clients who will receive material assistance as defined below.
- K. **Social Case Study Report (SCSR)** - refers to the document prepared by a Registered Social Worker of the LSWDO, that describes in detail the situation and conditions of the beneficiary, including his/her or their social history. The central part of this document is the social assessment and the intervention plan and when applicable, evaluation of the intervention plan, and the recommendation of the Social Worker.

V. PROGRAM COVERAGE

A. Financial Assistance

- a. **Medical Assistance** - This assistance shall cover hospitalization expenses, cost of medicines, and other medical treatment or procedures such as implants, common laboratory tests and diagnostic imaging procedures for any illness or ailment, including postpartum¹ complications, and also provision of assistive devices.

A client may be given assistance based on a hospital bill only once. Additionally, an in-patient beneficiary may request other assistance in the event that the needed medicine/s or treatment of the patient is not available at the hospital of confinement.

Other health care expenses such as immunization, birthing (including cesarean delivery), and purchase of vitamins and other supplements which are not related to medical treatment or aftercare shall not be covered by this assistance.

- b. **Funeral Assistance** - This assistance shall cover funeral and other related expenses including, but not limited to, expenses in bringing the remains of the deceased to his or her residence/hometown, interment, cremation, and/or burial site in accordance with existing customary practices of the family especially among Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Moros.

Funeral and related expenses due to a disaster, calamity, and/or critical events or similar circumstances resulting in one or multiple casualties within the family may allow the surviving family member/ immediate relative of the deceased to request outright cash assistance subject to the assessment of the DSWD Social Worker, without the need of a SCSR.

- c. **Transportation Assistance** - The assistance for the purchase or payment of transport (air/sea/land) tickets and/or expenses for travels of beneficiary/client, within the Philippines, for purposes not limited to: return to home provinces permanently, or seek medical intervention/s in another place, or attendance to emergency concerns such as death or care of sick loved ones, rescue of abused relatives, or events of disaster/calamity that require immediate presence of the beneficiary/client.

¹ Including but not limited to: excessive bleeding (hemorrhage); cardiovascular diseases or high blood pressure disorders of pregnancy; infection or sepsis; amniotic fluid embolism; anesthesia complications.

Outright cash may be considered for those who will be traveling using multiple modes of transportation.

Provided that, if the DSWD procures the ticket for the beneficiary/client, the expenses for food and other necessary expenses for the travel shall be given to the client in cash. The Social Worker shall state in the GIS or in a separate justification attached to the CE his assessment to justify the provision of the provision of outright cash.

- d. **Educational Assistance** - A form of assistance given to a student-in-crisis, to help defray school expenses and/or cost of sending students/children to school such as school fees, school supplies, school projects, allowances, and other related expenses. Beneficiaries may include those who are breadwinners, whether or not they are the heads of their families, or working students or orphaned/abandoned and/or now living with relatives, children of solo parents or with unemployed parents or Overseas Filipinos (OFs) or persons with disability-in-crisis, or children of rebel returnees or of persons deprived of liberty², children with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or those living with parents with HIV, those who are victims of abuse or displacement, or are otherwise in crisis due to human-induced or natural calamities. This may include those taking technical or vocational courses. A maximum of three (3) students per family shall be entitled to this assistance.

This assistance shall not cover graduate (Masteral) and post-graduate (Doctoral) studies including professional degrees such as, but not limited to, Doctor of Medicine and Bachelor of Laws/Juris Doctor and those expenses for the review for the licensure/bar examinations.

- e. **Food Assistance** – the provision of assistance to clients to meet the need for food and other most basic needs for sustenance. The assistance that may be distributed/provided through outright cash.
- f. **Cash Assistance for other Support Services** - An assistance in the form of outright cash provided to individuals and families in crisis or in extremely difficult circumstances in which the need is not covered under any of the other services of the AICS program. These individuals and families must establish that they are in a state of active crisis or vulnerability to crisis or are recovering

² "Person Deprived of Liberty (PDL) – refers to a detainee, inmate, or prisoner, or other person under confinement or custody in any other manner", Rule III, Section 3(u), Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 10575.

therefrom as validated by the assessment of the LSWDO Social Worker or DSWD Social Worker.

B. Material Assistance - The provision of food and non-food items to the beneficiary/client who needs immediate material support which can be covered by the items listed below, subject to the availability of the material assistance and the funding required, and provided that any acquisition of goods and services shall be subject to existing procurement laws, rules and regulations. This assistance may be given simultaneously or successively with financial assistance based on the assessment of the handling DSWD Social Worker depending on the posing needs of the client.

- a. **Family Food Packs/Other Food items** - it may be in the form of food packs, hot/ready-to-eat/precooked/prepacked meals, or food voucher, whenever available at the CIU/CIS/SWAD Office. It may be given to individuals and families in need or in vulnerable situations such as those who are unemployed, without family support, persons with disability-in-crisis, homeless/street dwellers or victims of fire incidents, severe drought (*El Niño*), *La Niña*, flood or other similar incidents that cause hunger.

The contents of the family food packs may be the same as that regularly provided during disaster operations. However, the PMB-CID may provide food packs containing ready-to-eat/precooked/prepacked meals, or those especially packaged for groups in vulnerable situations, not limited to, older persons, pregnant women, lactating mothers or other persons with special needs, the standard composition of said food packs may be recommended by the Nutritionist-Dietitian of the PMB duly approved by the Undersecretary for Operations.

- b. **Hygiene or sleeping kits** - The contents of the hygiene or sleeping kits may be the same as that regularly provided during disaster operations.
- c. **Assistive Devices and Technologies** - Assistive devices and technologies are those whose primary purpose is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence to facilitate participation and to enhance overall well-being. Examples of assistive devices and technologies include wheelchairs, cane, walker, prostheses, hearing aids, visual aids, and specialized computer software and hardware that increase mobility, hearing, vision, or communication capacities.

C. Psychosocial Support - support given to help meet the psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of clients/beneficiaries and their families. It is a set of interventions that intends to positively improve a person's behavior to reduce the impact of stress brought about by a crisis through

behavioral modification interventions. This is intended for giving immediate relief to psychological and emotional issues under specific circumstances through the following:

- a. **Psychological First Aid (PFA)** - is an evidence-informed modular approach to help children, adolescents, adults, and families who are affected by a disaster or traumatic incident, whether survivors, witnesses, or responders to such events, to cope up with the struggle, stress, trauma so they face new challenges following the event or otherwise return to their normal social functioning. Core actions constitute the basic objectives of providing early assistance within days or weeks following an event.
- b. **Social Work Counseling** - is a Social Work brand of counseling to help clients clarify issues, gain insight into their feelings and thoughts affecting their behaviors, and facilitate for them to process these thoughts and feelings to identify potential solutions and to deal effectively with his/her problem/s resulting in a state of active crisis. This is conducted by utilizing the Social Work Perspective in counseling such as the use of the Bio-Psychosocial approach and the Person-in-Environment framework.

D. Referral Services - refers to assistance that is not available at the CIU/CIS/SWAD Office, or from other offices, bureaus, services or units (OBSUs) of the DSWD or other agencies and/or institutions. This involves services that are not limited to referrals to legal services, psychological and/or psychiatric interventions, social case management, and admission to facilities deemed to be needed by the client and/or the beneficiary.

As needed, clients availing assistance through the AICS program may be provided with comprehensive case management, whereby the assigned social worker collaboratively assesses the needs of the client and his/her family, and arranges, coordinates, monitors, evaluates, and advocates for a package of multiple services listed under herein Circular to meet the specific needs of the client towards improvement. Provided that, the assigned Social Worker may likewise refer said client to the concerned SWAD Office or LSWDO for the conduct of comprehensive case management or to ensure follow-through.

VI. PROGRAM BENEFICIARY

The AICS program is intended for individuals and families determined to be in a “state of active crisis” or “crisis situation” or needing financial or material support from the National Government, whether or not as a form of augmentation to that provided by the client’s LGU, based on the assessment of a DSWD Social Worker. In general, any individual, whether indigent or not, who is in a crisis situation or in difficult circumstances in life may be assisted through the provision of any of the assistance available. Subject to other guidelines, the program beneficiary may include POCs, as defined under EO No. 163, series of 2022.

VII. DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS

As a general rule, the beneficiary or the authorized representative shall submit a copy of their VALID ID or alternative document/s for identification, except in cases where the beneficiary or representative may have no VALID ID, such as, but not limited to, children who are not enrolled in schools, IPs, victims of fire, typhoon or other calamities or disasters (natural or man-made). In which case, the barangay certification or justification from the DSWD Social Welfare Officer (SWO) pertaining to the absence of the VALID ID shall suffice.

In order to be accepted by the DSWD, VALID IDs:

1. Must not be expired, *i.e.*, it must be up to date, or still valid as of the date of application for assistance;
2. Must not be falsified;
3. Are preferably issued by the government, including the Pantawid Familyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) ID issued by the DSWD;
4. Are preferably with signature, except Philsys ID;
5. Are preferably with the picture of the client.

A person who is acting as an authorized representative of the beneficiary shall present an authorization letter duly signed by the beneficiary.

Further, the GIS and CE shall be required in all cases and for all clients, except those requesting for material assistance such as food packs, hot/ready-to-eat meals, and hygiene or sleeping kits wherein the GIS alone will suffice. These documents must be kept in either hard or electronic copy. The GIS is considered a confidential document and the safekeeping thereof must conform with the prescribed laws, rules and regulations. The PMB-CID will cascade the GIS and CE which shall be utilized by the DSWD nationwide.

The following documentary requirements for each type of assistance may be submitted in original/true copies, to wit:

Type	Documents
<p><i>Medical Assistance</i></p> <p>If payment for hospital bill</p> <p>If medicines/ assistive devices</p>	<p>Any identification document, as stated above; and,</p> <p><i>Any one of the following, as may be applicable:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medical Certificate or Medical Abstract with date of issuance, complete name, signature and license number of the attending physician (issued within the last 6 months); <i>or</i> ● Discharge summary with date of issuance, complete name, signature and license number of the attending physician (issued within the last 6 months); <i>or</i> ● Certificate of confinement with date of issuance, complete name, signature and license number of the attending physician (issued within the last 6 months); <i>or</i> ● Death Summary with date of issuance, complete name, signature and license number of the attending physician (issued within the last 6 months); <i>or</i> ● Alagang Pinoy Tagubilin Form with diagnosis, date of issuance, complete name, signature and license number of the attending physician (issued within the last 6 months) <p><i>Depending on the purpose of the medical assistance, the client shall submit any one of the following requirements, in addition to the basic requirements above:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporary/final Hospital Bill/Statement of Account (Outstanding Balance) with complete name and signature of the Billing Clerk; <i>or</i> - A Certificate of Balance or promissory note shall be required if the patient has already been discharged from the hospital. - Prescription with date of issuance, complete name, signature and license number of the attending physician (issued within the last 6 months); <i>or</i> - Treatment protocol with date of issuance, complete name, signature and license number of the attending physician (issued within the last 6 months)

	<p><i>Any one of the following, as may be applicable:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funeral Contract (except for Moro and IPs performing customary practices); <i>or</i> ● Statement of account; <i>or</i> ● Certification from the Barangay that the family made the casket but they have debt to pay for the materials and other expenses; <i>or</i> ● Transfer Permit (except for Moro and Indigenous Peoples performing customary practices), if the assistance for transfer of a cadaver is requested separately or along with other items under funeral assistance. <p>Provided that a Certificate of Balance or promissory note is required should there be funeral expenses left unpaid.</p> <p>If the amount of assistance being requested exceeds Php 10,000.00, the assistance will be provided through a GL and a SCSR/Case Summary from the LSWDO or the DSWD SWO or Medical Social Worker in hospitals or Social Worker of the NGO's shall also be required.</p>
<p><i>Transportation Assistance</i></p>	<p>Any identification document, as stated above; and,</p> <p><i>Any one of the following, as may be applicable:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Police Blotter/Certification (for victims of pickpockets, illegal recruitment, etc.); <i>or</i> ● Death Certificate/Certification from the Hospital/Doctor/authorized medical practitioner/Tribal Chieftain (for IPs)/Imam (for Moro)/Transfer Permit (except for Moro and Indigenous Peoples performing customary practices), if applicable; <i>or</i> ● Depending on the applicable circumstances, other supporting document/s such as, but not limited to, medical certificate, and/or court order/subpoena/referral from other agencies, barangay or local social welfare development office.
<p><i>Educational Assistance</i></p>	<p>Any identification document, as stated above, of the parent/guardian accompanying/assisting/representing the minor student, or of the student him/herself if of legal age; and,</p> <p><i>Any one of the following, as may be applicable:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Certificate of Enrolment or Registration; <i>or</i> ● School ID of the student; <i>or</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Statement of Account; <i>or</i> ● Any document issued by the school that can establish that the student is enrolled.
Food Assistance	<p>Any identification document, as stated above; and,</p> <p><i>Any one of the following, as may be applicable:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any document/record that can prove that the beneficiary is in crisis/in need of food assistance; <i>or</i> ● Referral letter; <i>or</i> ● Certificate of indigency; <i>or</i> ● Any document/record that can prove that the beneficiary is stranded/trip ticket; <i>or</i> ● For patients or their authorized representatives, any medical document/record that can prove that the beneficiary is admitted in a hospital/medical certificate/abstract
Cash Assistance for other support services	<p>Any identification document, as stated above; and,</p> <p><i>Any one of the following, as may be applicable:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Police Report/Blotter; <i>or</i> ● BFP Report/Certification for fire victims; <i>or</i> ● Passport, Travel Document(s), Certification from OWWA/POLO/Department of Migrant Workers or the Barangay or any proof of repatriation by the OF; <i>or</i> ● Certificate for Victims of Online Sexual Exploitation of Children or violence against women and children issued by the LSWDO; <i>or</i> ● Referral letter/endorsement (e.g. from the DOJ//NGOs, LGU/s or other concerned agency); <i>or</i> ● Incident report of the LGU; <i>or</i> ● Spot report from the AFP or PNP; <i>or</i> ● Certification of death; <i>or</i> ● Certificate from the LDRMO; <i>or</i> ● Certificate from the BFP; <i>or</i> ● Disaster Assistance Family Access Card (DAFAC); <i>or</i> ● Joint AFP-PNP Intelligence Committee (JAPIC) certificate; <i>or</i> ● Medico-legal certification; <i>or</i> ● Barangay Certificate of Residency or Certificate of Indigency/Certificate of the Client is in Need of Assistance/other documents, in the absence of any of the documents enumerated.

<i>Material Assistance (family food packs or sleeping or hygiene kit or meals)</i>	<p>Any identification document, as stated above; and,</p> <p><i>As may be applicable:</i></p> <p>For an individual client</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GIS; and ● MDS <p>For groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GIS; and ● Case Summary and MDS
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In exceptional circumstances where a document listed above cannot be reasonably produced but the facts can be verified or proved during the assessment, the DSWD SWO may provide a justification to support the provision of assistance to the client. Provided that such justification shall be approved by the CIU Head/CID Chief/CIS Head/SWAD Team Leader.

For auditing purposes, the CE and all other supporting documents, except the GIS, shall be submitted to the Finance and Management Service/Unit (FMS/U). Provided that for the material assistance provided/distributed, except assistive devices, the MDS may be presented along with the VALID IDs of the clients.

These requirements shall be printed and displayed conspicuously outside the premises of the DSWD CO and FO/CIS/SWAD Offices, and translated in the Filipino language or such local dialects, as applicable. The PMB and its respective FO counterparts shall coordinate with the Social Marketing Service/Unit, whichever is applicable, to come up with the templated information, education and communication materials (tarpaulins, leaflets, etc.) that may be replicated by the FOs.

Clients who will present documents found to be fake/fraudulent shall be endorsed to the Legal Service (LS) and the Administrative Service (AS), and their FO counterparts, for appropriate action.

VIII. IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES

In order to avail assistance from the DSWD, the clients shall undergo the applicable steps such as Screening, Interview and Assessment, and Releasing.

Depending on the type of client and the venue where the client will be assisted, the following procedures shall be observed in order to assist the clients in availing the services under the AICS program:

A. For individual clients transacting with the DSWD Offices (CIU/CIS/SWAD Offices)

1. STEP 1: Screening (Personal and Remote screening)

- a. **First time/walk-in client-applicants** who have no knowledge of the process of availment/application for assistance, whether or not carrying any of the documents enumerated above, shall proceed to personal screening under STEP 1.

If after the screening process, the client was found to have merely initially inquired for details, and/or has no correct, complete, valid or authentic documentary requirement/s to support the request for assistance, the client will be given a period to comply with the documents needed and a compliance slip which bears the schedule when he/she can return to process their request. In such cases, and upon their return on the scheduled date, they shall no longer pass through STEP 1 as they may already proceed to STEP 2: Interview and Assessment.

Those who brought complete documentary requirements and have not been tagged as ineligible based on previous availment per crossmatching may be allowed to proceed to STEP 2.

- b. **Clients who initially inquired/requested assistance via email/phone call/letter communications, including referrals,** will be subject to remote screening by the DSWD through a phone/video call in order to:

- i. Check whether or not the client has a previous record with the DSWD and may re-apply for assistance, through crossmatching;

- ii. Provide guidance as to the process, the documentary requirements and the venue where to process the application for assistance (CIU/CIS/SWAD Office);

- iii. Provide a period, acceptable to the client, to comply with the documents needed; and

- iv. Provide a schedule as to when the client can return to the DSWD to process the application. In which case, the client will no longer pass through STEP 1 and may proceed to STEP 2. The schedule shall depend on the daily prescribed number of clients to be catered.

In both cases, if after the screening conducted, the DSWD Social Worker determines that the assistance sought is not among the types of assistance available under the AICS program, the Social Worker shall inform the client and refer the latter to the appropriate office or agency that could provide the needed assistance.

If necessary, the social worker handling the case shall prepare a case summary indicating his/her assessment and recommendation, and shall include it in the referral letter of the client. The CIU/CIS/SWAD Office shall coordinate accordingly to ensure that the referrals are immediately and properly acted upon. Coordination with LSWDO for the after-care and other social welfare support services for the client shall likewise be done by the CIU/CIS or SWAD.

2. STEP 2: Interview and Assessment

- a. The following clients may proceed to STEP 2:
 - i. All first time/walk-in clients who were personally screened and determined to have correct, complete, valid and authentic documentary requirements; or
 - ii. A Client who was remotely screened and provided with a schedule when they can process the assistance needed.
- b. During STEP 2, the DSWD Social Worker shall interview and assess the client as well as the documentary requirements presented, and determine the following:
 - i. Eligibility to receive assistance;
 - ii. Type of appropriate assistance based on the actual need of the client as assessed during the interview and assessment, and on the documents presented; and
 - iii. If determined to be eligible to receive financial assistance, the amount of assistance to be recommended for approval, which shall also be based on the actual or augmentation needed and the documents presented, considering further the available funds of the program.

Provided that, psychosocial intervention or case management may also be extended to the client if determined appropriate by the Social Worker.

3. STEP 3: Releasing of Assistance

- a. After STEP 2, all clients who have been assessed as qualified and approved to receive assistance may proceed to STEP 3 for the release of:
 - i. **Financial Assistance** - Proceed to the Regular Disbursing Officer/s of the FMS/U or the designated disbursing officer for

cash, or to the CIU/CIS/SWAD Office for the GL, or ticket booking, if transportation assistance; or

ii. **Material Assistance** - Proceed to the CIU/CIS/SWAD Team Leader or any assigned personnel.

B. For clients tagged as group

1. For clients who would be endorsed to the Department in groups, as they may have similar circumstances, the CIU/CIS/SWAD Offices shall assess whether they can be served individually or in groups.

Clients who can be served individually shall be informed of the process, documentary requirements, the venue where they can apply for assistance and the schedule when they can apply. As they are individually considered, the process as stated in the preceding paragraphs shall apply such that different rates of assistance may be recommended depending on the individual assessment conducted.

The CIU/CIS/SWAD Office shall observe the following procedures should the clients be found to be better served as a group through Offsite *Serbisyo*:

- a. The crossmatching template shall be endorsed to the head of the group or the focal person with whom DSWD coordinates;
- b. The accomplished list shall be crossmatched versus the entire list of beneficiaries served by the DSWD nationwide. Clients who are victims of natural or manmade disasters and calamities, may be considered to be provided with another cash assistance even if they have previously received assistance from the Department.
- c. After crossmatching, the crossmatched list shall be returned by the DSWD to the group together with the findings, stating clearly the number who may not qualify because of previous receipt of assistance from DSWD, and those who may qualify. The DSWD shall inform the group of the documentary requirements needed.
- d. Prior to the Offsite *Serbisyo*, the DSWD may conduct a general assessment of the situation of the clients, and may determine the type and amount of assistance that will be provided.
- e. The date and venue of the offsite payout shall be recommended by the group, subject to the availability of the team that will conduct the payout, the funds to be utilized, and the Special Disbursing Officers (SDO).

Preferably, the venue of Offsite *Serbisyo* shall be in public halls such as, but not limited to public schools, barangays halls, development centers, multi-purpose halls and covered courts. In exceptional circumstances, as when there is no available public venue or due to political constraints/reasons, the venue may be conducted in private halls which shall in no case be owned by a political aspirant or candidate, especially during elections. In selecting the venue, primary consideration shall be the safety and wellbeing of the beneficiaries and the DSWD personnel.

Offsite *Serbisyo* shall be made only during office days and office hours except in exceptional or justifiable circumstances requiring the immediate provision of assistance during weekends and after office hours, or as directed by the President or the Secretary or the Undersecretary for Operations, and their FO counterparts.

The DSWD and the group shall work together to ensure the presence of security personnel from the LGU, the Philippine National Police or the Armed Forces of the Philippines, as applicable, during the scheduled payout.

Other coordination shall be made by the CO or the FO with appropriate offices/authorities, as applicable, for pre, during and post offsite release activities and concerns.

f. During the Offsite *Serbisyo* proper, the following process shall be followed:

i. STEP 1: Screening

Upon arrival at the venue, the client shall proceed to STEP 1 to check whether he is included in the list and if the documents are correct, complete, valid and authentic documentary requirements. Those who are cleared in STEP 1 may proceed to STEP 2.

ii. STEP 2: Interview and Assessment

The client may proceed to any of the available Social Worker who shall interview and assess the client as well as the documentary requirements presented, and determine the eligibility of the client.

If determined to be eligible to receive financial assistance, the amount of assistance to be recommended for approval, which shall also be based on the group assessment conducted by the DSWD prior to the scheduled payout.

iii. **STEP 3: Release of Assistance**

After the interview and assessment, the Social Worker shall recommend the approval of the client for the release of the assistance through the SDO, or any other approved modes available.

C. For in-patient clients in hospitals with established Malasakit Centers

All FOs shall ensure the presence of the DSWD representatives in established Malasakit Centers.

The roles of DSWD in Malasakit Centers remain those stipulated under the Joint Administrative Order (JAO) No. 1, series of 2020 of the Department with the Department of Health, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation entitled the "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Medical and Financial Assistance to Indigent and Financially-Incapacitated patients pursuant to Republic Act No. 11463 also known as "Malasakit Centers Act of 2019".

Further, the adjustments set in these Guidelines shall also be made applicable in handling client-patients in Malasakit Centers provided that the assistance is within the parameters stated under the JAO.

The approving authorities for assistance provided in Malasakit Centers shall be the CIU/CIS/SWAD Team Leader, as applicable, until such time that its corresponding plantilla positions are created and filled-up. Provided that the CO/FO may opt to assign SDOs in the Malasakit Centers, to ensure the timely release of assistance to the client.

IX. MODES OF PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

The provision of assistance may be in the following form:

A. For financial assistance - It may be through outright cash, or GL.

1. **Outright cash** - For assistance in the amount of P10,000.00 and below, the entitled client may claim it from the designated disbursing officer within the day, subject to the availability of funds. Depending on the assessment, the social worker may propose the provision of outright cash to clients who are determined to be better assisted therewith because of their circumstances.

2. **Guarantee letter (GL)** - Assistance above P10,000.00, especially medical and funeral, shall be released through a GL, unless other modes are necessary, as may be justified by the DSWD Social Worker.

The GL shall be prepared by the DSWD Social Worker and shall ensure that it bears the type of assistance to be provided and the amount thereof. In issuing a GL for assistance, utmost consideration shall be the exigency of the need of the client. Further, a GL is considered to be an urgent document and shall be prioritized for signing by the concerned approving authorities.

Upon release, the releasing officer shall inform the client that the GL shall be presented by the client to the concerned service provider for the availment of assistance based on the approved amount. The payment equivalent to the amount granted to the client in the GL shall be made directly by the DSWD to the said service provider through a bank-to-bank transaction or Authority to Debit Account (ADA).

For this purpose, the DSWD may engage with service providers via Memorandum of Agreement.

- B. **For material assistance** - Clients who requested material assistance shall appear physically and shall be required to present any of the identification documents stated above, and sign the MDS of the CIU/CIS/SWAD Office.

The PMB-CID and the FOs' CIS shall prepare the necessary proposal for the provision of material assistance.

The DSWD may resort to other expeditious means of distribution by engaging partners/service providers that are able and willing to assist the Department. As may be authorized and if applicable, the following disbursement strategies may be considered:

1. Payment through electronic or digital means;
2. Cash card payments;
3. Transfer of funds to other National Government Agency/ies or LGU/s; or
4. Any other mode to expedite the distribution of assistance

The other schemes of delivery of assistance such as payment through digital or electronic means or cash card payments shall be implemented simultaneously with other available mechanisms to ensure efficient delivery of service. Provided that, the execution of implementing guidelines or memoranda of agreement with partner financial intermediaries may be resorted to, subject to applicable procurement and/or auditing laws, rules and regulations.

X. RATE OF ASSISTANCE AND FREQUENCY OF AVAILMENT

The rates of assistance and the frequency of availment shall be as follows:

Type	Particulars	Cost of Assistance		Frequency of Availment ³
		Minimum	Maximum	
Transportation Assistance	Land/Sea/Air Travel	Actual Cost based on ticket quotation and/or travel expenses		<p>General Rule (GR): Once a year</p> <p>Exception/s (XPN): For specific cases such as:</p> <p>(a) Travel due to death - every death incident</p> <p>(b) Travel for medical reasons - as the need arises</p>
Medical Assistance	Hospital bill	1,000.00	300,000.00	<p>GR: Once per hospital bill.</p> <p>XPN: For chronic diseases or illnesses - Per hospitalization/admission</p>
	Medicines	1,000.00	150,000.00	Once every three months
	Laboratory Procedures			
	Other special treatment such as, but not limited to dialysis,			

³ The frequency of availment prescribes the limit on the number of times a client may avail of a particular type of assistance at a given period and this should **NOT** be interpreted as giving the client the privilege/premium to claim the assistance repeatedly as the period comes. Even a repeat or recurring client (as those with maintenance medications) will undergo assessment every time he/she requests for assistance.

	chemotherapy, implant and pre-operation procedures			
Funeral Assistance	Funeral Expenses	5,000.00	50,000.00	GR: Per beneficiary/incident of death
	Transfer of Cadaver			
	Casualties during disaster/ calamity		10,000.00	XPN: Casualties during disasters/calamities - Per casualty <i>Note: One client may avail and process one or two services at the same time (i.e. Funeral and transfer of cadaver)</i>
Educational Assistance	Elementary students	1,000.00	5,000.00	Once every school year
	High school students	2,000.00		
	Senior High School	3,000.00	10,000.00	Once every semester (varies per region)
	College and vocational students	4,000.00		
Food Assistance	Food subsidy for individuals/families	2,000.00	5,000.00	GR: Once every semester XPN: Patients - once every admission
Cash Assistance	Other needs	2,000.00	10,000.00	Once for every applicable incident

Provided that this kind of assistance shall be validated by the CIU/CIS Head/SWAD Team Leader and approved by the proper authority as indicated below.

Further, the above schedule shall not be interpreted to limit the attending DSWD Social Worker from:

a. Recommending a higher amount, subject to his/her assessment and justification of the client's circumstances. Provided that in such cases, there shall be a SCSR/case summary to support the provision of a higher amount. Further, the kind of assistance shall be validated by the CIU/CIS Head/SWAD Team Leader and approved by the proper authority as indicated below;

b. Recommending the provision of a **series of assistance that can be simultaneously or successively given**, subject to his/her assessment and justification of the client's circumstances, especially those that may take time before recovery, which shall be validated by the CIU/CIS Head/SWAD Team Leader and approved by the proper authority as indicated below. The provision of a series of assistance shall be subject to the following conditions:

b.1 The series of assistance assessed and recommended by the DSWD Social Worker may be given **successively**, but in no case shall a single form of assistance be given in installment;

b.2. The series of assistance, except as stated in the succeeding paragraph (b.3), may be given **simultaneously**;

b.3 Cash assistance for other support services and Food assistance may **not be** provided together or simultaneously **EXCEPT** for victims of calamities, fire incidents, armed conflicts, or other incidents that may include those which may cause the displacement of families or individuals, victims of abuse, and for other beneficiaries who may be justified to receive both types of assistance.

c. Recommending an adjusted rate or frequency of availment of medical assistance for COVID-19 or other disease-related medical conditions, during the **State of Public Health Emergency or other medical conditions** (i.e. clients diagnosed with chronic diseases with kidney ailment undergoing dialysis, and those cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy), or **during a State of Calamity in some areas declared by the National Government**. For these cases, hospitalization, medicines and laboratory procedures (for out-patient) may be provided once a month or as may be warranted with the rate of assistance not exceeding the ceiling provided for each availment, based on the assessment and justification by the social worker as validated and by the CIU/CIS Head/SWAD Team Leader and proper authority, respectively. Provided that, every request for assistance shall be supported with the complete requirements of the client.

XI. APPROVING AUTHORITY

The following provision is hereby amended to reflect the range of financial assistance and the authorized approving official or his/her alternate, viz:

Amount	Field Office	Central Office	Release Period
Up to P50,000.00	CIS Head/SWAD Team Leader	CIU Head	Within the day
P50,001.00 to P75,000.00	Division Chief	Division Chief	
P75,001.00 to P100,000.00	Assistant Regional Director for Operations (ARDA in the absence of ARDO)	Assistant Bureau Director of PMB/Designated Office	Within three (3) days
P100,001.00 to P150,000.00		Bureau Director of PMB/Designated Office or alternate based on succession order	
P150,001.00 to P200,000.00	Regional Director	Assistant Secretary for Statutory Programs/Designated Cluster or alternate based on succession order	Within five (5) days
P200,001.00 to P300,000.00		Undersecretary for Operations/Designated Cluster Head or alternate based on succession order	
Above P300,000.00	Secretary or Designated OIC	Secretary or Designated OIC	

In exceptional circumstances and subject to availability of funds, the DSWD Social Worker may recommend the provision of more than P300,000.00 financial assistance, provided that all documentary requirements are complied with together with Item X(a) of this Circular.

In case of absence or unavailability of the approving officers enumerated above, the signatory shall be governed by the Order of Succession pursuant to a Special Order duly issued by the Secretary.

XII. HANDLING REPEAT OR RECURRING CLIENTS

Repeat or recurring clients are those who seek assistance for at least 3 to 4 times in a quarter or at least twice in a semester, or those who visit the CIU/CIS/SWAD Office regularly or seasonally due to lack of knowledge on possible types of assistance.

The PMB-CID shall establish a centralized database for repeat or recurring clients that could also be accessed by the FOs to prevent them from availing assistance twice or more in a quarter. These clients shall be under case management and, whenever deemed appropriate, they shall be endorsed to the LGU where they reside for further intervention.

XIII. DSWD PERSONNEL AND THEIR REFERRALS

DSWD personnel, regardless of the position as well as status of engagement, who need assistance from the DSWD may proceed to the Human Resource Management and Development Service/Unit (HRMDS/U) which shall conduct the checking and verification of the fact of active crisis and thereafter issue a Personnel Endorsement Slip which shall be presented to the CID/CIS/SWAD Office for STEP 2 under Item VIII(A)(2) of this Circular.

DSWD personnel endorsing referrals shall ensure that clients are properly informed of the process on how to avail of assistance from the DSWD including the documentary requirements needed. Otherwise, they shall inform their referrals to reach out to DSWD through the following modes:

1. Call (8962-2813/8951-7433) or email (ciu.co@dswd.gov.ph). Referrals who will call or email shall be subject to remote screening.
2. Walk in at the CIU/CIS/SWAD Offices. They shall be subject to personal screening.

Those who were remotely screened will be provided with a schedule for interview and assessment while walk-in clients may be catered after the personal screening process provided that complete documentary requirements are met as cleared by the screening team.

All referred client/s by the DSWD personnel, regardless of the position as well as status of engagement, will be subjected to the processes set under this circular which include the determination of the type and amount of assistance

during the interview and assessment taking into account the documentary requirements presented.

In order to maintain transparency and accountability pursuant to the strict compliance of the processes laid down by the Department, the DSWD personnel, must observe the following:

1. Not to accompany the referred beneficiary/client to the CIU/CIS/SWAD Office;
2. Not to interfere with the Social Worker's interview and assessment;
3. Not to attempt to influence or abet, by verbal request or by proceeding to the CIU/CIS/SWAD OFFICE, the Social Workers or any other personnel in prioritizing the assessment of their relatives.

No DSWD personnel shall ask or request monetary or other consideration from the referred clients. Any derogatory report in this regard shall be referred to the DSWD LS and HRMDS, copy furnished the PMB-CID, for the institution of the appropriate action/complaint in accordance with the existing rules and regulations of the DSWD and other applicable laws. This arrangement shall be reflected at the FO level.

XIV. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The other OBSUs of the Department, together with their FO counterparts, shall extend the necessary support to give effect to the provisions and objectives of this Circular. Specifically, the following OBSUs, together with their FO counterparts:

- A. The FMS shall assign disbursing officers and facilitate the release and availability of cash in the daily operations of the AICS program nationwide, and ensure the prompt settlement of dues to service providers and/or fund transfers to financial institutions for digital payments, if applicable.
- B. The AS shall provide technical assistance and augmentation support for the security and maintenance personnel, supplies, including in the procurement of equipment as well as the corresponding repairs and maintenance needed to implement the AICS program.
- C. The LS, in coordination with the Administrative Service (Security), shall assist in handling erring DSWD personnel as well as clients who would attempt to present fraudulent documents to avail assistance from the AICS program. Subject to the approval of the Office of the Secretary, the LS shall refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency or file the necessary complaint with the proper authorities/forum, for investigation, prosecution or final resolution.

- D. The ICTMS shall ensure that the existing information system used by the Department (e.g. Crisis Intervention Monitoring System (CriMs)) will be updated consistent with the revisions set forth in this Circular. Additionally, access to such a system shall be granted/shared with the PMB-CID personnel to (i) add/edit/incorporate minor modifications, (ii) upload the data captured whenever the system is offline/down, and (iii) generate reports, data and information based on the required fields.

In cases/areas with poor/intermittent/no connection, the ICTMS shall develop the necessary feature to perform offline crossmatching and to sync the data captured once internet connection is stable.

The ICTMS shall provide technical assistance to ensure the inclusion of the necessary Information and Communication Technology requirement for the implementation of the program nationwide in the Information Systems Strategic Plan of the Department.

XV. GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

All grievances received via email or written communication shall be endorsed to the PMB-CID, and FO counterpart, for appropriate action following the prescribed timeline provided. There shall be a Public Assistance and Complaints Desk (PACD) established in the CIU/CIS/SWAD Offices to readily respond to the clients during the daily operations of the program.

XVI. REPORTING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The PMB-CID shall be the primary office responsible to monitor and provide technical assistance to the FOs in the implementation of the AICS program in collaboration with the Office of the Undersecretary for Operations (OUSO) and the Assistant Secretary for Statutory Programs. The Bureau shall prepare a consolidated physical and financial report for submission to the Office of the Secretary. For this purpose, the existing reporting tools and templates shall be utilized unless the PMB-CID requires new tools and templates and cascades necessary adjustments in the current tools.

A monthly, quarterly and semestral report indicating the physical and financial data/information, and a quarterly and semestral narrative analysis on the status of the implementation shall be submitted by the FOs to the PMB-CID every 5th day of the succeeding month, with copies provided to the OUSO and Assistant Secretary for Statutory Programs. The reports shall include the implementation report of the program in established Malasakit Centers.

The FO shall conduct quarterly monitoring visits to its SWAD Offices to evaluate and assess the program implementation within the unit. A copy of the assessment report containing the issues and concerns, corrective action and

the ways forward shall be submitted to the PMB-CID every 15th day of the succeeding month of the quarter.

For this purpose, the FOs shall ensure that all SWAD Offices shall have at least one (1) reporting focal person who shall submit to the CIS Reporting Focal Person for onward submission to the PMB-CID. The creation of positions necessary to comply with this personnel complement may be coordinated with the PMB-CID for technical assistance.

Mid-year Program Implementation Review shall be conducted by the PMB-CID with the FOs to assess and monitor the implementation of the program. Lastly, an Annual Program Evaluation and Planning Workshop every November or within the last quarter shall also be organized to guide the targeting for the succeeding year.

XVII. REPEALING CLAUSE

All issuances of the Department relative to the implementation of the AICS program shall be considered as repealed upon the effectivity of these guidelines.

XVIII. EFFECTIVITY

This Circular shall take effect immediately upon signing hereof.



ERWIN T. TULFO

Secretary

Date: 07-26-22

Cert. True Copy:

29 JUL 2022

MYRNA H. REYES

OIC, Division Chief
Records and Archives Mgt. Division