



MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No. 23
Series of 2024

SUBJECT: REPEAL OF MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 13 SERIES OF 2022 ENTITLED, "ENHANCED GUIDELINES IN THE ACCREDITATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS MANAGING COURT CASES (SWMCCS)"

Whereas, Section 11 of Republic Act 8369 also known as "Family Courts Act of 1997" mandated that in areas where no family courts have been established or no Regional Trial Court (RTC) was designated by the Supreme Court due to limited number of cases, the DSWD shall designate and assign qualified, trained and DSWD accredited social workers of the Local Government Units to handle juvenile and family cases filed in the designated RTC of the place.

Whereas, the designation of a Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) accredited social worker was an alternative course of action during the scarcity of established family courts and designated RTCs at the time of its mandate.

Whereas, the said law's implementing Rules and Regulations promulgated by the Supreme Court in its Resolution A.M. no. 22-04-06-SC, particularly in Rule V, on Alternate Social Services, the requirement of accreditation by DSWD was not mentioned.¹

Whereas, the DSWD issued several issuances to operationalize this mandate and responded to the demand for the expertise of social workers in handling court cases to present, act as witness, and support not only the children but also the women, youth, persons with disabilities, and older persons. From the year 2021 up to the present, there have been four hundred fifty-one (451) social workers handling court cases nationwide accredited by the Department.

Whereas, upon coordination with the Supreme Court of the Philippines on the number of established courts handling juvenile and family-related cases, there are already three hundred seventy-three (373) Organized and operational Special Court Handling Family Cases, Statutory Courts, Single and Multiple Sala Courts Handling Family Cases from the total of four hundred eighty-four (484) established Family Courts in the thirteen (13) Judicial Regions in the Philippines.²

¹ Response of the Legal Service re: Request for Legal Guidance re: Repeal of MC 13 s2022

² Data on Family Courts in The Philippines as of 13 January 2023 provided by the Office of the Court Administrator of the Supreme Court to the DSWD Standards Bureau.

Whereas, the Supreme Court confirmed that it has no Official Order or Circular requiring Family Courts or designated RTCs and RTC judges in general, to require DSWD Accreditation Certificate for Social Workers Managing Court Cases.³

Whereas, the series of surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs) cum consultation meetings and the streamlining workshops conducted by the Department confirmed that the valid License as Registered Social Worker issued by Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) is enough proof of evidence to handle court cases.

Whereas, the field offices (FOs) have been receiving very minimal applications from LGUs as the court does not require the Accreditation Certificate for SWMCCs. Based on the annual trend by region in 2022-2023, out of the 17 regions in the country, only six (6) regions processed above ten (10) applications, others had less than five (5) or none at all.⁴

In view of the foregoing, the need to repeal the accreditation requirement for social workers managing court cases pursuant to **DSWD Memorandum Circular (MC) 13, Series of 2022, entitled, "Enhanced Guidelines in the Accreditation of Social Workers Managing Court Cases (SWMCCs), is appropriate and fitting**, taking into great consideration the present thrust of the Department to enhance the skills of SWMCC, by providing capacity building activities through the DSWD Academy. Repealing the MC will pave the way for the development and transformation of highly-trained SWMCC, thereby creating a more responsive mechanism and intervention that will truly serve the purpose of the law on Family Courts Act of 1997.⁵

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REX GATCHALIAN
Secretary

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Certified True Copy


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³ Response of Mr. Raul B. Villanueva, Court Administrator, Supreme Court of the Philippines to DSWD Standards Bureau, on March 14, 2023.

⁴ Annex A-Summary of Survey and Focus Group Discussion Results with Applicants of Accreditation of SWMCCs.

⁵ Response of the Legal Service re: Request for Legal Guidance re: Repeal of MC 13 s2022