

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2918



Introduced by Hon. Giorgidi B. Aggabao

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Presidential Decree No. 1569 created the Barangay Nutrition Scholars Program (BNSP) by providing at least one (1) Barangay Nutrition Scholar in every barangay. The BNSP provides every barangay with trained community workers to deliver basic nutrition and related health services through our Barangay Nutrition Scholars, particularly in far-flung barangays where health services and awareness in the importance of good nutrition may not be readily available.

Since the creation of the BNSP in 1978, there has been a significant improvement in the community awareness of the link between health and nutrition and this accounts for the reduction of malnutrition in our country. This achievement is basically attributable to our hardworking Barangay Nutrition Scholars who perform their tasks despite meager allowance and no benefit of security of tenure.

It is high time that we recognize the role of our Barangay Nutrition Scholars by providing them with benefits and sufficient monetary allowance and incentives.

Hence, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


GIORGIDI B. AGGABAO

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AN ACT
CREATING THE MAGNA CARTA OF
BARANGAY NUTRITION SCHOLARS AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives in Congress assembled:

SEC 1. Title – This Act shall be known as the “Magna Carta of Barangay Nutrition Scholars”.

SEC 2. Declaration of Policy – The State shall adopt the Barangay Nutrition Scholar (BNS) Program as a human resource development strategy of the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition, which involves the training, deployment and supervision of volunteer workers called the Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS). This strategy was mandated with the promulgation of Presidential Decree No. 1569 on 11 July 1978, which requires the deployment of one (1) BNS in every barangay and for the National Nutrition Council (NNC) to administer the program in cooperation with local government units (LGUs).

SEC 3. Definition and Qualifications – For purposes of this Act, a “Barangay Nutrition Scholar” (BNS) refers to a trained community worker who links the community with service providers, with the following qualifications:

1. Bonafide resident of the barangay for at least one (1) year, with ability to speak the dialect;
2. Possession of leadership potentials and the initiative and willingness to serve the barangay for at least one (1) year;
3. Willingness to learn, and to teach what he/she has learned to the barangay people;
4. At least a high school graduate;
5. Physical and mental fitness ; and
6. At least eighteen (18) years old but not more than sixty (60) years old.

SEC 4. Number of Barangay Nutrition Scholar/s. – There should be at least one (1) BNS in every barangay in the country.

SEC 5. Security of Tenure/ Accreditation/ Registration – After undergoing training provided in Section 7 hereof, the BNS shall serve for at least three (3) years with yearly evaluation by an evaluation team created for that purpose, and after which he/she will be given a permanent position in the barangay, after obtaining a satisfactory rating for two (2) consecutive years.

The BNS should be a member of the BNS federation duly registered with the government and thereby accredited by the NNC.

SEC 6. Discrimination – The BNS should not in any way be discriminated on the basis of sex, race, and political affiliation.

SEC 7. Basic Tasks – The Barangay Nutrition Scholar/s shall perform the following basic tasks:

1. Organize or re-organize the Barangay Nutrition Committee (BNC).-
 - a. Assist the barangay captain in organizing or reactivating the BNC and the barangay network; and
 - b. Assist the barangay captain in training *purok* leaders to assist the BNS.
2. Caring for the malnourished – The BNS identifies, locates underweight children through a community survey. This survey involves weighing all pre-schoolers and interviewing mothers to determine how the child is cared for and the resources available in

the family for their participation in nutrition and related interventions.

Based on the results of the annual weighing, the BNS weighs monthly all underweight and severely underweight pre-schoolers. The BNS also weighs all 0-24 month-old children to monitor their growth which is most critical at this stage. The BNS also conducts a quarterly follow-up weighing of children, 25-71 months old, to the extent possible.

The regular weighing provides the basis for corrective actions which may include referral to the appropriate service or implementation of nutrition projects, together with the community.

3. Mobilizing the community.-The BNS moves the community to organize into network of 20-25 households or into community-based organization working for the improvement of their nutrition situation.
4. Linkage building.- In the presence of other barangay-based development workers, the BNS may not necessarily deliver direct nutrition services to the community but serve as linkage-builder, to ensure that members of the community, especially those with underweight children, avail of nutrition and related services. The BNS must be aware of the services available and of those who need these services and establish a system through which those needing certain services are referred to the appropriate service provider.
5. Other forms of assistance.- The BNS assists in delivering nutrition and related services which include:
 - a. Organizing mother's class or community nutrition education ;
 - b. Providing nutrition counselling services, especially on exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding, through home visits ;
 - c. Managing community-based feeding programs ;
 - d. Distributing seeds, seedlings and small animals from the local agriculture office and other government organizations to promote home or community food gardens; and

e. Informing the community on scheduled immunization and other health activities in coordination with the local midwife, agriculture officer, social welfare officer, and other government workers.

6. Record Keeping.-To help other barangay workers and the local officials, the BNS shall keep a record of the results of the regular weighing as well as a record on the nutrition and health profile of families in the barangay.

7. Action Plan.- The BNS shall formulate a BNS Action Plan as guide in managing the different tasks assigned to him/her.

8. Training.- The BNS shall undergo a ten-day didactic training. The training facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills needed for the effective performance of the task of identifying the malnourished, monitoring the malnourished and referring them to appropriate service providers.

After the didactic phase, the BNS shall undergo a twenty-day practicum to learn how to weigh pre-schoolers properly and interview mothers on matters which may relate to their child-rearing practices. During this phase, the BNS shall collect and analyze data on the barangay nutrition situation using the family and barangay profile forms. He/She shall also formulate the appropriate action plan.

The BNS trainer-supervisor or the District/City Nutrition Program Coordinator (D/CNPC) shall organize, conduct, and supervise the training. In the absence of the D/CNPC, the nutrition action officer (NAO) shall assume these responsibilities.

9. Continuing education.-To reinforce skills during the formal training, the BNS shall attend monthly meetings during which the D/CNPC or NAO shall provide more information to update their knowledge and skills. The D/CNPC or NAO shall conduct regular visits to observe and encourage the BNS to perform their tasks correctly and effectively.

10. Coordination.-The BNS shall facilitate the formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and coordination of the Barangay Plan of Action for Nutrition.

SEC 8. *Benefits, Privileges and Incentives* - The Barangay Nutrition Scholars shall enjoy the following benefits, privileges and incentives but not limited to those listed below:

- a. The Barangay Nutrition Scholar shall be granted a civil service eligibility equivalent to second grade after the completion of at least two (2) years of continuous and satisfactory service in the barangay . The BNS can avail of this second grade civil service eligibility by filing the proper application with the regional office of the Civil Service Commission.
- b. The Barangay Nutrition Scholar shall be entitled to a monthly allowance of at least Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00) , a yearly uniform or clothing allowance in the amount of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00) and a yearly training stipend, kit and travel allowance of at least One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00).
- c. The BNS shall be entitled to benefits accorded to regular government employees such as PhilHealth, Pag-Ibig and similar benefits under the Indigent Program of the local government unit.
- d. The BNS shall be entitled to a hazard pay of at least Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) monthly.
- e. In addition thereto, the local government unit may grant monetary allowance to a BNS as additional incentive .
- f. The NNC, in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, shall formulate a scholarship program where incumbent and deserving BNSs shall be given the opportunity to avail of a scholarship grant in any institution offering a two-year course. In the case of a BNS aged 50 and above, he/she has the option to assign the scholarship grant to any of his children.

SEC 9. *Code of Morality and Conduct* – While in the service, a BNS shall at all times maintain good moral character and should not be involved in any crime and administrative cases, as well as any political activities, which would be grounds for dismissal.

SEC 10. *Working Hours and Related Conditions* – The BNS shall render at least eight (8) hours of work a day to deliver nutrition services and on Saturdays and Sundays, they should be on-call as the need arises.

SEC 11. Supervisory Functions/Roles of the National Nutrition Council. - The NNC shall provide continuing education through trainings, and the like and give recognition based on evaluation system and provide technical assistance to the BNS Federations to ensure their functionality.

SEC 12. Rights to Organize – The BNSs have the right to organize but should maintain political neutrality.

SEC 13. Rules and Regulations – The Department of Health in cooperation with the National Nutrition Council, National BNS Federation, Inc. and other concerned government agencies and non-government organizations, shall formulate, within one hundred eighty days (180) from its effectivity, the rules and regulations necessary to implement this Act.

SEC 14. Appropriation. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be appropriated out of the budget of the National Nutrition Council under the Department of Health. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary shall be incorporated in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC 15. Separability Clause – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid, the remainder of any provision hereof not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SEC 16. Repealing Clause – All laws, decrees, executive orders, and other presidential issuances which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC 17. Effectivity – This Act shall take effect fifteen days (15) after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.