

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4355**



Introduced by REP. Michael L. Romero

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is encouraging interested applicants to avail of the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) scholarship program, intended for children of Filipino farmers and fisher folks.

The DA for Special Concerns discussed the details of the scholarship program consistent with the provisions of RA No. 9464 or the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF).

As the facts are, 80% of the total ACEF is allotted to agriculture project loans, 10% for a scholarship program, while the remaining 10% is for research and development.

By the early 90s, the ACEF scholarship program of the DA have continuously provided assistance to students taking up agriculture and fisheries.

In pursuant to RA 10848, which was signed into law on February 16, 2016, the implementation of the ACEF scholarship will be transferred to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

This is after the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) have been approved.

However, the identification of scholars shall be the prerogative of the DA.

RA 10848 prescribes that "ten percent (10%) of ACEF will be used for the funding of a comprehensive and attractive grant-in-aid program for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary medicine education, to be implemented by CHED."

The ACEF scholarship program is implemented in partnership with the State Universities and Colleges and Private Educational Institutions that offers courses in agriculture, fishery, forestry, and others related or complementary to agriculture and fisheries development.

ACEF will shoulder the scholar's school expenses including the tuition and miscellaneous fee (excluding books), monthly stipend of P1000, and a thesis writing allowance worth P5,000.

The scholarship covers the entire duration of the academic program. However in order to enjoy ACEF scholarship, the student must pass all enrolled subjects each semester and maintain a General Weighted Average (GWA) not lower than 3.0

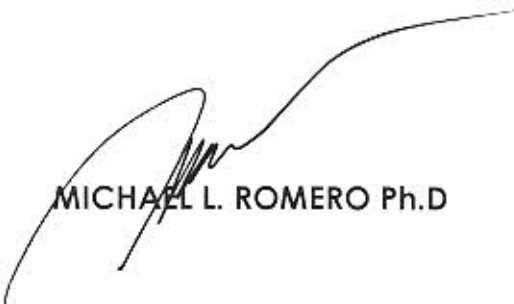
When it comes to employment after graduation, the DA assures that ACEF scholars will be given priority in the Department and its attached agencies and bureaus.

In a case there's no vacancy and a scholar cannot be accommodated, DA will assist the scholars in finding a job related to their field of expertise.

Since it started, ACEF has sent to school more or less 5,000 scholars. Nevertheless, the DA encourages more applicants from the farmers' and fishers' sector to fill in the slots for the succeeding years.

Interested applicants may reach out to the scholarship coordinators in partner institutions and submit the initial requirements: Form 137, Certificate of Good Moral Character, and Barangay Clearance as proof of indigency, and proof that the applicant is a child of a farmer or fisher folk.

Thus, the early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



MICHAEL L. ROMERO Ph.D

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**AN ACT STRENGTHENING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING THE
AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS ENHANCEMENT FUND (ACEF),
EXTENDING ITS LOAN CAPABILITIES AND FUNCTIONS, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representative of the
Philippines in congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. Short Title - This Act shall be known as the "***Strengthening the
Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund Act of 2016.***"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Principles and Policy – in consistency with the standards of Government on developing and modernizing agriculture and fisheries as the cornerstone of the Philippine economy to attain Food Security, it is hereby declared by the State to:

Increased productivity of farmers and fisherfolk by providing the necessary credit to farmers and fisherfolk and their cooperatives and associations, and micro and small-scale enterprises.

Acquisition and establishment of production, postharvest, and processing machineries, equipment and facilities, farm inputs and improvement.

Research and development on agricultural and fishery products of state colleges and universities.

Conduct a comprehensive and attractive grant-in-aid program for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary medicine education to promote the development of agriculture and fisheries.

SECTION 3. Appropriation:

There is hereby authorized to appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Million Pesos (P500,000,000.00) necessary to carry-out into effect the provisions of this act. Provided thereafter that the budget for the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 4. Rules and Regulations:

1. The use of the Fund shall be consistent with the policies and priority thrusts under Republic Act No. 8435, as amended, otherwise known as the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act;
2. The use of the Fund shall be complementary and supportive of the various and current funding assistance windows or programs of the Department of Agriculture and other government institutions;
3. The projects to be funded shall enhance the competitiveness of target project beneficiaries or sectors, especially the small farmers and fisherfolk;

4. The product and service competitiveness in the local and foreign markets in terms of product or service prices or fees and quality is achieved;
5. The upstream and downstream linkages with related and complementary agricultural activities are promoted;
6. The clear and verifiable proof of sustainability of operations is determined and supported; and
7. The projects funded shall be beneficial to most, and not only selected firms or groups within a sector.

SECTION 5. Repealing Clause. All laws, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. Separability Clause. If, for any reason or reasons, any portion or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. Effectivity Clause. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,