

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 9146



Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE EDWIN L. OLIVAREZ**

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ASSISTANCE TO
INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS SITUATION (AICS) PROGRAM AND
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has proven to be one of the effective tools of the government in poverty alleviation, most especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its inception in 2014, the AICS Program has provided immediate and temporary assistance to individuals and families who are affected by various crises. Over time, the DSWD has effectively and efficiently enhanced the implementation of the Program in order to reach its yearly target.

The Program has provided financial, emotional, psychosocial support to individuals and families who have experienced crisis or unexpected life event by extending the following benefits:

1. Transportation benefits by purchasing or paying transport expenses to enable individuals and families to return to their home provinces permanently or seek further medical interventions in another place, or attend to emergency concerns, such as death, care, or other emergency or critical situations of family members, relatives, or other individuals in need. This also include expenses related to attendance in a court hearing, rescue of abused relative, *etc.*;

2. Medical benefits by extending assistance to defray hospitalization expenses including professional fees and cost of medicine, treatment and/or procedure;
3. Burial benefits by funding funeral and related expenses;
4. Educational benefits by giving eligible students assistance in defraying school expenses, which includes school fees, supplies, projects, allowances, and other related expenses;
5. Food benefits by provision of assistance for a maximum period of ten (10) days or an amount of at least P80.00 per meal per individual.

The AICS Program has also provided cash assistance for other support services for victims of natural and/or man-made crisis or calamity, domestic abuse, locally stranded individuals and other incidents.

This Bill seeks to institutionalize the AICS Program to convert these methods of immediate and temporary relief into a permanent solution that has the financial and administrative capability to sustain such assistance to the marginalized sector and persons dealing with extreme circumstances.

Thus, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


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SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared policy of the State to protect the interest of the poor, disadvantaged, vulnerable, and marginalized sectors of the society by providing immediate assistance to individuals and families who are facing crises and in need of prompt intervention.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act, the following terms are defined, as follows:

a) *Burial Assistance* refers to the assistance to defray funeral and related expenses;

b) *Cash Assistance for other support services* refers to the assistance provided to individuals and families in extremely difficult circumstances in which the need does not fall on other types of assistance;

c) *Crisis Situation* refers to a condition whereby an individual or family are faced with a different and stressful situation, resulting to the impairment of his/their psychosocial functioning, and thereby necessitating series of interventions to prevent further exposure to vulnerabilities, exploitation, and abuse;

d) *Educational Assistance* refers to the assistance given to students to help defray school expenses and/or cost of sending students/children to school;

e) *Food Assistance* refers to assistance for a maximum period of ten (10) days or an amount of at least P80.00 per meal per individual;

f) *Medical Assistance* refers to assistance to help shoulder hospitalization expenses, cost of medicines, other medical treatment or procedures, or professional fees;

g) *Target beneficiaries* refers to individuals and/or families who are indigent, vulnerable, disadvantaged, or are otherwise in crisis situation based on the assessment of the social workers; and

h) *Transportation Assistance* refers to the assistance for the purchase or payment of transport tickets and/or expenses to enable the beneficiaries to return to their home provinces permanently or seek further medical interventions in another place, or to attend to emergency concerns or critical situations of family members or other individuals in need.

SEC. 4. *The Assistance to Individuals in Crisis (AICS) Program.* – The Assistance to Individuals in Crisis (AICS) Program shall provide integrated services to individuals and families in crisis or difficult situations in the form of psychosocial intervention or direct financial and material assistance.

The AICS Program shall provide its target beneficiaries with transportation Assistance, medical assistance, burial assistance, educational assistance, food Assistance, cash assistance, psychosocial intervention, or referral for other services, subject to screening, verification, and assessment of the beneficiaries' needs by social workers; Provided, that in providing educational assistance, working students in public education institutions shall be prioritized.

SEC. 5. *Requirements to Avail AICS Assistance.* – The individual or family seeking assistance shall present to the social worker assigned the following documents as may be necessary to the type of assistance applied for:

- a) Any valid identification card;
- b) Police blotter;
- c) Police certification;
- d) Medical case study report, medical certificate, or medical abstract;
- e) Hospital billing statement or statement of account;
- f) Medical prescriptions;
- g) Death certificate;
- h) Funeral contract;
- i) School enrolment assessment form or certificate of registration;
- j) School identification card;
- k) Travel documents; or
- l) Any other supporting documents as may be required in the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

SEC. 6. Rates of Assistance. – The range of the rates of assistance per type, including the frequency with which a beneficiary may avail the same, shall be as follows:

TYPE	PARTICULAR	COST OF ASSISTANCE MAXIMUM		FREQUENCY OF AVAILMENT
Transportation Assistance	Land travel Sea Travel Air Travel	Actual cost based on ticket quotation		Once a year
Medical Assistance	Hospitalization or Hospital bill Medicines (out-patient) Laboratory procedures (out-patient)	P 1,000.00 P 1,000.00 P 1,000.00	P 150,000.00 P 10,000.00 P 10,000.00	Once every three months
Burial Assistance	Funeral expenses Transfer of cadaver Casualties during disaster/ calamity	P 5,000.00 P 5,000.00	P 25,000.00 P 25,000.00 P 10,000.00 per casualties	One client may avail two services at the same time
Educational Assistance (2 children per family)	Elementary Students High School students	P 1,000.00 P 1,500.00	P 10,000.00	Once every school year

and 3 children for solo parent)	Senior High School or College students	P 3,000.00		Once every semester
Food Assistance	Food subsidy for individuals/families	P 1,000.00	P 5,000.00	As needed subject to assessment
Cash Assistance for other support services	Other needs	P 1,000.00	P 10,000.00	Once every applicable incident
Provision of PPE		P 1,000.00	P 2,000.00	One every three months

SEC. 7. *DSWD as Lead Agency.* The DSWD shall serve as the central planning, coordinating, implementing, and monitoring body of the Program.

In the implementation of this Act, the DSWD shall perform the following functions:

- a) Screen, verify, and assess the beneficiaries' situation and the identify the appropriate intervention to fully serve their situation;
- b) Provide the appropriate assistance to the beneficiaries from the array of benefits enumerated in Section 6 of this Act;
- c) Coordinate with different national and local agencies, including organizations from the private sector to ensure full implementation of statutory commitment Herein;
- d) Submit an annual report to Congress on all aspects of the operations of the Programs, financial status, and other relevant data, and
- e) Perform such other functions as may be necessary or incidental to the proper Implementation of this Act;

SEC. 8. *Creation of an Advisory Council.* An Advisory Council shall be created at the regional and national levels to be headed by the DSWD.

The regional advisory councils and national advisory council (NAC) shall have, as members, representatives from the DSWD, Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of

Transportation (DOTr), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and Technical Education And Skills Development Authority (TESDA). The regional advisory councils and NAC shall also have, as additional members, two (2) representatives from accredited non-governmental organizations working or monitoring social welfare service programs.

The Advisory Councils shall have the following functions:

- (a) Meet regularly to promote coordination across agencies to enhance the Implementation of the program and jointly address and resolve program implementation issues;
- (b) Recommend to the President measures and policies for the responsive delivery of the commitments under this Act and integration with the general poverty reduction strategy of government;
- (c) Promulgate a grievance redress system and accept complaints and grievances Pertaining to the implementation of the AICS; and
- (d) Review the monitoring and assessment reports of the Independent Monitoring Committee and submit necessary policy recommendations to Congress to improve and strengthen the program, if necessary.

SEC. 9. *Creation of an Independent Monitoring Committee* – An Independent Monitoring Committee shall be created at the regional, and national levels, composed of representatives from the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs) to complement the monitoring activities of the DSWD and provide feedback for appropriate action. It shall submit a report on the results of its monitoring activities relative to the implementation of the program to the respective regional advisory councils and the NAC. A monitoring and evaluation report shall be submitted to the DSWD and to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee at regular intervals, as determined in the Implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 10. *Publication of Annual Report of the Program*. – The DSWD shall annually publish a full report of the AICS covering the implementation of the previous fiscal year. The said report shall include financial disclosures, number of clients/beneficiaries served, and recommendations to the President and to both chambers of Congress on how to further enhance it. This report

shall be submitted to Congress before the submission of the President's Budget Message.

SEC. 11. *Program Transparency.* The DSWD shall regularly and timely post and update on its website a report of financial disclosures and information about beneficiaries based on geographical area, social, economic, and cultural circumstances.

SEC. 12. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.* – Upon the effectivity of This Act, a Congressional Oversight Committee, hereafter referred to as the AICS Oversight Committee is hereby constituted. This Committee shall set the overall framework to review the implementation of this Act. It shall likewise determine inherent weaknesses in the law and recommend necessary remedial legislation or executive measures.

The AICS Oversight Committee shall be composed of six (6) members with the chairpersons of the Committee on Poverty Alleviation of the House of Representatives, And the Committee on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development of the Senate as Co-Chairpersons; and six (6) members from each House, to be designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Senate President, respectively.

For purposes of determining remedial legislation, the AICS Oversight Committee Shall, within six (6) years after the effectivity of this Act, conduct a review which shall include a systematic evaluation of the impact of this Act, accomplishments of the Program, and the performance of its implementing agency.

SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* -Within one (1) month from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development shall, in coordination with appropriate government departments and agencies with the participation of local government units, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of the Act.

SEC. 14. *Appropriation.* – The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders and rules and regulations Contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 16. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its Publication in the Official Gazette.

Approved,