

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH (20th) CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House Bill No. **1022**



Introduced by
Rep. ROBERT NAZAL

AN ACT
PROVIDING FULL EDUCATION-TO-EMPLOYMENT SCHOLARSHIP AND RETURN
SERVICE PROGRAM TO THE DESERVING STUDENTS PRIORITIZING THE FAMILY
OF FARMERS, FISHERFOLK, AND OTHER INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The agriculture and fisheries (A&F) sector continues to underpin Philippine rural life, yet its contribution to the national economy is contracting. Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data show that as of March 2025, only 20.1 percent of all employed Filipinos worked in A&F, while the sector generated just 8.3 percent of Gross Domestic Product in Q1 2025, the smallest share among the three major economic sectors. This wide labor-productivity gap drives persistent rural poverty and heightens food-security risks.

A critical reason is an eroding human-capital base. The average Filipino farmer is 57 years old, and roughly two-thirds (65 percent) of farming parents would rather see their children pursue non-farm careers because of low returns and physically demanding conditions. Without fresh talent, the country faces a succession crisis just as climate variability and global market shocks make food production more complex.

Several government programs already offer assistance: ACEF-GIAHEP, DA-BAR, SEARCA, BFAR Fisheries Scholarship Program, but they are fragmented, follow different rules, and cover very few students:

Program	Latest available slots / active scholars*
ACEF-GIAHEP (Caraga)	37 slots for AY 2024-2025
DA-BAR Internship (MS/PhD)	≈10 slots nationwide for 2024
SEARCA (Filipino graduate scholars)	≈100 active

BFAR FSP (Region VI)	100 active (75 continuing + 26 new)
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**Published figures indicate only hundreds, not thousands of grantees nationwide, far below the scale needed to revitalize the sector. The existing schemes lack a unified, enforceable return-service requirement that ensures graduates apply their skills to domestic priority jobs.*

The Farmers and Fisherfolk Education-to-Employment Scholarship Act introduces an integrated solution built on three pillars:

1. Full-cycle financing. Beyond free tuition, the bill covers licensure-review fees and pre-employment tool allowances cost items rarely addressed by current grants;
2. Guaranteed return service. Scholars sign a contract to serve two years for every academic year of support (minimum of two), deployable to DA-attached agencies, LGU demo-farms, cooperatives, or accredited agri-enterprises. This directly tackles youth out-migration and keeps expertise where it is most needed; and
3. Sustainable funding without new taxes. The measure earmarks 2% to 5% of Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) receipts, complemented by ACEF and regular DA appropriations, thereby leveraging existing agricultural pools in a fiscally prudent manner.

Research by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies consistently affirms that strategic investment in higher agricultural education is a proven driver of productivity and inclusive growth even though precise peso-for-peso multipliers vary by study. Coupled with the bill's mandatory service provision, every cohort of new agronomists, veterinarians, agri-engineers, and skilled farm technicians strengthens value-chain nodes from seed laboratories to post-harvest facilities, which, in turn, multiplies the impact of infrastructure and mechanization programs funded under RCEF and ACEF.

In light of the aging workforce, the minuscule reach of current scholarships, and the pressing need to secure the nation's food future, the immediate passage of the Farmers and Fisherfolk Education-to-Employment Scholarship Act is respectfully urged.


Rep. ROBERT NAZAL
 Bagong Henerasyon Party-List

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act shall be known as “Magsasaka Education-to-Employment Scholarship Act.”

SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

The State recognizes the importance of the youth in nation-building, promoting their well-being, patriotism, and nationalism through education, science, technology, arts, culture, and sports. Labor is also a vital socioeconomic force that the State will protect and promote, ensuring full employment and industrialization based on sustainable agriculture. Private enterprises are encouraged to broaden their ownership, and all sectors of the economy will be given opportunities to develop.

The State aims to enable agriculture and fisheries sectors to share in development and growth sustainably, providing equitable access to assets, income, services, and infrastructure. The State will also promote food security, prioritizing the production of rice, white corn, and fishery products to meet local consumption with adequate support.

SECTION 3. OBJECTIVES.

This Act shall have the following objectives:

- A. To increase the number of farm workers and fisherfolk;
- B. To alleviate poverty among the families of farmers and fisherfolk by providing scholarships for their children;
- C. To attract and motivate the next generation of farmers and fisherfolk;

- D. To increase productivity in agriculture and fisheries and encourage the adoption of modern innovation in farming and fisheries development;
- E. To provide more agricultural and fisheries-related employment in the country;
- F. To lessen the need for agricultural and fisheries products importation;
- G. To increase the workforce in Agricultural and Fisheries Research and Development, and Agricultural and Fisheries economists, scientists, and engineers, among others.

SECTION 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF FULL EDUCATION-TO-EMPLOYMENT SCHOLARSHIP AND RETURN SERVICE PROGRAM FOR DESERVING STUDENTS AND SCOPE.

There shall be established an Agricultural and Fisheries Education-to-Employment and Return Service Program for deserving students within the family of farmers, fisherfolks, and other interested individuals in State Universities and Technical and Vocational Programs with agricultural and fisheries-related courses upon passing and qualifying in the admission program with the necessary requirements.

The financial assistance that shall be provided by the program are the following:

- A. Matriculation and other miscellaneous fees;
- B. Monthly (food, transportation) allowance;
- C. Books, supplies, tools, and equipment;
- D. Uniform;
- E. Research and Development;
- F. Boarding House allowance;
- G. Graduation fees and expenses;
- H. Board Reviews; and
- I. Pre-Employment allowance.

SECTION. 5. QUALIFICATION.

An applicant shall have the following qualifications:

- A. Must be a natural-born Filipino or naturalized Filipino citizen;
- B. Must be a graduate of at least an alternative learning system (ALS) program;
- C. Must pass the entrance examination and interview required by the program; and
- D. After graduation, the scholar shall serve in government service under the Department of Agriculture or any government agency of office for two years for every year of scholarship received,

SECTION. 6. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) and other concerned agencies shall conduct an information dissemination and marketing campaign to promote and showcase the benefits and opportunities in agriculture and fisheries as a career path. The campaign

shall include various media platforms and strategies to effectively reach the target audience.

SECTION. 7. APPROPRIATIONS.

The amount necessary for the implementation of the entire program of this Act shall be provided in the appropriation of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in the annual General Appropriations Act. Additionally, funding for the implementation of this program shall be allocated from both the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) and at least 2-5% of the revenue generated by the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), subject to the availability of funds. The DA shall ensure transparency and accountability, and that the funds from both sources are used solely for the purposes of this Act. Any unutilized funds at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried over to the succeeding year.

SECTION. 8. IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Upon the effectivity of this Act, DA, CHED, TESDA, Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Budget and Management, and other private and public stakeholders, including representatives from the fisherfolk sector, shall organize and formulate the implementing rules and regulations to fully implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION. 9. REPEALING CLAUSE.

All laws, decrees, executive issuances, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SECTION. 10. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE.

If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is declared null and void, no other section, provision, or part thereof shall be affected, and the same shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION. 11. EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE.

This Act shall take effect immediately after publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,