

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2185



Introduced by
Rep. Robert Nazal

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR AID TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES SEEKING MEDICAL,
FUNERAL, FOOD, TRANSPORTATION, EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE,
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES,
INSTITUTIONALIZING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN
CRISIS SITUATION (AICS) PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD), APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The proposed “Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act” translates an already indispensable stop-gap service into a statutory social-protection guarantee.

Filipino families remain highly vulnerable to unexpected crises. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) recorded a 15.5 percent national poverty rate in 2023, equal to 17.54 million people — nearly one in every six citizens. On the health front, households still paid 44.4 percent of the country’s total health spending out-of-pocket in 2023, placing millions at risk of financial ruin when illness strikes.

Against this backdrop, the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s AICS window has become the government’s frontline safety net: over six million Filipinos received medical, burial, food, transportation, cash, or psychosocial assistance between January and November 2024 alone, far exceeding original targets. To keep pace, the DSWD’s 2025 budget proposal earmarks ₱35.1 billion for social services “for individuals and families in difficult situations,” with AICS as the flagship program.

Building upon the committee report passed by the Senate in the 19th Congress (SB No. 2788), this bill:

1. Defines “crisis situation” and standardizes eligibility nationwide;

2. Sets inflation-indexed ceilings for medical, funeral, transportation, educational and cash-relief assistance while mandating psychosocial support and referral services;
3. Creates a PhilSys-linked beneficiary database to eliminate duplication and strengthen evidence-based case management; and
4. Imposes firm audit, grievance and penalty provisions to safeguard public funds and guarantee timely redress.

This bill aims to secure predictable funding subject to congressional oversight, ending the annual scramble for supplemental appropriations; harmonize rules across 17 DSWD field offices, shortening processing time for clients in distress; and generate publicly available data through mandated annual performance reports and triennial impact evaluations—an evidence trove for academics and policy analysts.

As President Manuel L. Quezon once declared, “Social justice is the means by which we shall attain peace.” Institutionalizing AICS operationalizes that principle: it offers “help that arrives before hope runs out,” transforming discretionary aid into a rights-based shield against the economic aftershocks of sickness, bereavement or disaster — one medical bill, school fee or funeral expense at a time.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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Representative

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

SEC. 1. TITLE.

This Act shall be known as the “Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act”.

SEC. 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all, specifically to individuals in extreme and difficult situations.

SEC. 3. COVERAGE.

This Act shall cover all individuals and families determined to be in a “state of active crisis” or “crisis situation”, as defined in this Act, or needing financial or material support from the National Government, whether or not as a form of augmentation to that provided by the individual or family’s local government unit (LGU), based on the assessment of a Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Social Worker. In general, any individual, whether indigent or not, including persons with disability, senior citizens, solo parents, farmers, fisherfolk, and other vulnerable sectors,

who is in a crisis situation or in difficult circumstances in life may be assisted through the provision of any of the assistance available under this Act, subject to the guidelines to be provided by the DSWD.

SEC. 4. DEFINITION OF TERMS.

For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined as follows:

- A. AICS Program shall refer to a social safety net or stop-gap measure to support the recovery of individuals and families suffering from unexpected life events or crises through the provision of psychosocial intervention and/or direct financial/material assistance that may enable them to meet their basic needs in the form of food, transportation, medical, educational and burial assistance. It is also known as the “Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation Program”, and herein interchangeably referred to as “AICS” or “Program”;
- B. Authorized Representative refers to any person who represents a beneficiary who, for certain reasons, will not be physically present in processing and claiming the assistance requested. Authorized representatives shall be limited to:
 - 1. Family Member(s) refers to a relative up to the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, including the spouse, children, parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents and grandchildren of the beneficiary. Beneficiaries including, but not limited to, children, minors, or a foundling child who have no parents may be represented by their surviving grandparents or person with special parental authority; and
 - 2. In extremely justifiable circumstances, any other individual acting as a representative of a beneficiary; provided, that said individual shall not be allowed to represent more than two beneficiaries who are unrelated to him/her for every calendar year. For this purpose, the information of the representative shall also be subject to the crossmatching process, as defined in this Act;
- C. Beneficiary refers to the person who actually needs the assistance, or on whose behalf the assistance is being sought from the DSWD through an authorized representative. The beneficiary is the ultimate recipient of the assistance;
- D. Case Management refers to a process of assessing, planning, managing, coordinating and advocating for services and other interventions used by the DSWD to enable qualified beneficiaries to improve their functioning by dealing with their difficulties in addressing their needs;
- E. Cash Voucher refers to a coupon or document provided to individuals in crisis with the power to purchase authorized items set and identified by the Department;

- F. Certificate of Eligibility (CE) refers to a document issued by the DSWD, duly approved by the approving authorities, that proves that the client is eligible to receive the interventions and services under the AICS Program;
- G. Client refers to any individual, group, or family who may be the beneficiary who seeks assistance or the authorized representative on behalf of the beneficiary due to the latter's inability to be physically present;
- H. Crisis Situation(s) refer to a time in the individual's life when they experience a breakdown or disruption in their usual or normal daily activities or family functioning which prevents them from adequately performing their social roles and functions and may lead them into worsened life situations;
- I. Crossmatching refers to the process of counter-checking the information or data sets provided by the client who seeks the assistance of the DSWD;
- J. Financial Assistance refers to the provision of augmentation to the needs of an individual either through cash, cash vouchers, or guarantee letters provided to qualified beneficiaries;
- K. General Intake Sheet (GIS) refers to the form used by the DSWD Social Workers to record the basic information of the beneficiary and the authorized representative, the problem presented, and the assessment as well as the recommendation of assistance to the beneficiary;
- L. Guarantee Letter (GL) refers to the document issued by the DSWD in favor of the beneficiary addressed to service providers to guarantee payment of the service on behalf of the beneficiary. The service providers may include hospitals, funeral homes, and such other providers that are willing to accept the GLs issued by the DSWD for payment of their services and/or goods for the beneficiary;
- M. Material Assistance Distribution Sheet (MDS) refers to the form used by the DSWD to list or record all clients who will receive material assistance as provided in this Act;
- N. Outright Cash refers to the actual monetary aid provided to the beneficiary;
- O. Registered Social Worker is a qualified professional in public or private practice, with a license to practice social work, recognized and designated by the DSWD or the LSWDO. Their role encompasses an understanding of the client's needs, assessing and employing appropriate interventions aligned to each individual's circumstances, all within the framework of the approved guidelines and professional standards;
- P. Repeat or Recurring Clients are those who seek assistance for at least three to four times in a quarter or at least more than twice in a semester and once in a

quarter, or those who visit the Crisis Intervention Unit/Sections (CIU/S) Office or SWAD Satellite Office regularly or seasonally due to lack of knowledge on possible types of assistance;

- Q. Social Case Study Report (SCSR) refers to the document prepared by a professional social worker in public and private practice that describes in detail the situation and conditions of the beneficiary, including his/her social history. The document likewise includes assessment, plan for intervention and recommendation; and
- R. Service Provider refers to hospitals, funeral homes, and other institutions and enterprises, such as but not limited to diagnostic laboratories, clinics, and drugstores, among others, which are willing to accept the GLs issued by the DSWD for payment of their services and/or goods provided to the beneficiary.

SEC. 5. LEAD AGENCY AND COORDINATION WITH RELATED GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

The DSWD shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the AICS Program and shall be responsible for the administration, sourcing, assessment, and approval of all applications availing of the appropriated funds for the implementation of the Program.

SEC. 6. MODES OF IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY OF THE AICS PROGRAM.

The services under the AICS Program may take the following forms:

A. Financial Assistance

- 1. Medical Assistance – This assistance shall cover hospitalization expenses and professional fees, cost of medicines and other medical treatment or procedures such as implants, standard common laboratory tests, diagnostic imaging procedures, physical/speech/occupational therapy for any needs, intrapartum/post-partum complications, blood transfusion, anti-rabies, severe oral complications, chronic illnesses, provision of assistive devices for persons with disabilities, and medical supplies including oxygen tanks and life support machines. A client may be given assistance based on a hospital bill only once. Additionally, an in-patient beneficiary may request other assistance if the needed medicines or treatment of the patient is not available at the hospital of confinement in supplement to PhilHealth benefits. Other health-care expenses such as immunization, normal birthing (except for birth delivery with complications or victims of rape), admission to rehabilitation centers due to drug abuse, cosmetic surgery, purchase of vitamins and other supplements, eyeglasses, and dental problems which are not directly related to medical treatment or after-care shall not be covered. Reimbursement of payments will not be covered.

2. **Funeral Assistance** – This assistance shall cover funeral and other related expenses including, but not limited to, expenses in bringing the remains of the deceased to his or her residence or hometown, interment, cremation, and/or burial site in accordance with existing customary practices of the family, especially among Indigenous Peoples and Moros. Funeral and related expenses due to a disaster, calamity, or critical events resulting in one or multiple casualties within the family may allow the surviving family member or immediate relative of the deceased to request outright cash assistance, subject to the assessment of the DSWD Social Worker, without the need of an SCSR.
3. **Transportation Assistance** – The assistance for the purchase or payment of transport (air/sea/land) tickets and/or expenses for travels of the beneficiary within the Philippines for purposes not limited to emergency concerns such as death or care of sick immediate family members or relatives, rescue of abused or trafficked relatives, or events of disaster or calamity that require immediate presence of the beneficiary. Outright cash may be considered for those traveling using multiple modes of transportation or when purchasing tickets and other expenses is not feasible. If the DSWD procures the ticket for the beneficiary, the expenses for food and other necessary travel expenses shall be given to the beneficiary in cash. The Social Worker shall state in the CIS or a separate justification attached to the CE his/her assessment to justify the provision of outright cash. In special cases, such as relatives who will assist in the transfer of a cadaver, outright cash may be provided given the assessment and recommendation of the Social Worker.
4. **Educational Assistance** – A form of assistance given to learners-in-crisis to help defray school expenses and/or the cost of sending learners/children to school such as school fees, school supplies, school projects, allowances, and other related expenses. This assistance shall be limited to Learners in Crisis, defined as a student in elementary, secondary, or tertiary level who is facing significant challenges or difficulties that impede academic performance and well-being. The assistance shall not cover graduate (masteral) and post-graduate (doctoral) studies, professional degrees such as Doctor of Medicine and Bachelor of Laws/Juris Doctor, or expenses for review for licensure or bar examinations.
5. **Cash Relief Assistance for Other Support Services** – This is an assistance in the form of outright cash provided to individuals and families in crisis or in extremely difficult circumstances such as victims of calamities, disasters, crimes, victims of violence against women and their children, trafficking, and repatriated overseas Filipino workers, and other similar circumstances in which the need is not covered under any of the other services of the AICS Program. Financial assistance may be provided in the following modes: (1) Outright cash – for assistance amounting to ₱10,000.00 and below, claimable within the day, subject to fund availability; and (2) Guarantee Letter – for

assistance above ₱10,000.00, especially medical and funeral assistance, unless another mode is justified by the DSWD Social Worker.

- B. Material Assistance – The provision of food and non-food items to beneficiaries who need immediate material support, which may include family food packs, other food items, hygiene and sleeping kits, and assistive devices or technologies, subject to availability of funds and procurement laws. This assistance may be given simultaneously or successively with financial assistance based on the assessment of the Social Worker.
- C. Psychosocial Support Assistance – A set of interventions, including Psychological First Aid and Social Work Counseling, provided by trained or professional psychosocial support workers to help meet the psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of beneficiaries and their families.
- D. Referral Services – Assistance not available within the DSWD or other government agencies and institutions, including referrals to legal, psychological, psychiatric, and social case management services and admission to facilities as needed. The handling social worker shall prepare a Social Case Study Report and coordinate to ensure referrals are properly acted upon.

The DSWD shall integrate and collaborate with other government agencies, LGUs, businesses and labor groups, and civil society groups in implementing similar or related programs and services for an efficient and effective whole-of-nation approach in the delivery of social safety nets.

SEC. 7. PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES.

All individuals and families determined to be in a “state of active crisis” or “crisis situation”, or needing financial or other social-service support that may complement assistance provided by LGUs, government agencies, or NGOs, as assessed by a DSWD Social Worker, may be assisted under this Act.

SEC. 8. DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS.

As a general rule, the beneficiary or authorized representative shall submit a copy of valid identification cards or alternative documents for identification. In cases where no valid ID is available, such as children not enrolled in schools, indigenous people, or disaster victims, a barangay certification or justification from the DSWD Social Welfare Officer shall suffice. An authorized representative shall present an authorization letter signed by the beneficiary and a photocopy of the beneficiary’s ID, except when the client is an immediate family member, the beneficiary is a minor, or the beneficiary lacks capacity to act due to specific conditions described in this Act. The DSWD may prescribe additional documentary requirements for each type of assistance.

SEC. 9. IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURE

The DSWD shall determine the procedure to be utilized in the implementation of the AICS Program.

SEC. 10. RATE OF ASSISTANCE AND FREQUENCY OF AVAILMENT.

Type	Particulars	Amount of Assistance		Frequency of Availment
		Minimum	Maximum	
Transportation Assistance	Land/Sea/Air Travel	Actual cost based on the ticket quotation and/or travel expenses		General Rule (GR): Once for the purpose of going back to their place of origin for good. Exceptions (XPN): For Specific cases such as: a. TRavel due to death - every death incident; b. Travel for medical reasons - as the need arises
Medical Assistance	Hospital Bill	1,000.00	300,000.00	GR: Once per hospital bill XPN: for chronic diseases/illnesses - per hospitalization or admission
	Medicines	1,000.00	150,000.00	Once every three (3) months
	Laboratory Procedures			
	Other special treatments such as, but not limited to, dialysis, chemotherapy, implant and pre-operation procedures			
Funeral Assistance	Funeral Expenses	1,000.00	50,000.00	GR: Per beneficiary or incident of death XPN: Casualties during disasters or

	Transfer of Cadaver			calamity - per casualty
	Casualties during disaster/calamity		10,000.00	
Educational Assistance	Elementary students	1,000.00	5,000.00	Once every school year
	High school students	2,000.00		
	Senior high school students	3,000.00	10,000.00	Once every semester (varies per region)
	College and vocational students	4,000.00		
Food Assistance	Food subsidy for individuals or families	2,000.00	5,000.00	GR: Once every semester XPN: Patients - once every admission
Cash relief assistance	Other needs	2,000.00	10,000.00	Once every applicable incident (calamity)

Provided that, this kind of assistance shall be validated by the CIU/CIS Head/SWAD Team Leader and approved by the authorized approving official or his/her alternate, as determined by the DSWD in the implementing rules and regulations. The schedule shall not be interpreted to limit the DSWD Social Worker from recommending a higher amount or the provision of a series of assistance that can be simultaneously or successively given, subject to assessment and justification of the client's circumstances, especially those that may require time before recovery, which shall be validated by the CIU/CIS Head/SWAD Team Leader and approved by the proper authority as provided in the rules and regulations. The amount of assistance may be adjusted every two years, subject to DBM approval and advisory-council endorsement, taking into account the consumer price index and relevant economic indicators.

SEC. 11. HANDLING OF REPEAT OR RECURRING CLIENTS.

The Program Management Bureau shall establish a centralized database for repeat or recurring clients accessible to Field Offices to prevent multiple availments. These clients shall be under case management and may be endorsed to their LGU for further intervention.

SEC. 12. COMPLIANCE MECHANISM.

The DSWD shall establish mechanisms to ensure compliance with this Act and shall provide a list of prohibited activities such as cuts for commission, job sharing, ghost beneficiaries, duplicate beneficiaries, and padding of beneficiaries. Any violation shall

result in reimbursement of the amount involved with legal interest, without prejudice to civil, criminal, or administrative action and COA regulations.

SEC. 13. STAFFING COMPLEMENT.

For effective implementation, the DSWD is authorized to create the required plantilla positions and staffing requirements at the Central Office, Field Offices, and Satellite Offices in coordination with the DBM and CSC. Priority hiring shall be given to qualified social workers. Budgetary requirements shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 14. AUTHORITY TO RECEIVE AND ADMINISTER DONATIONS FOR AICS PROGRAM.

The DSWD is authorized to receive donations from government and non-government organizations and to administer the same strictly and exclusively for AICS beneficiaries, subject to relevant rules and regulations.

SEC. 15. MONITORING, REPORTING, AND EVALUATION OF THE AICS PROGRAM.

The DSWD shall establish an AICS Database using the PhilSys number to facilitate accurate profiling, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. The DSWD shall submit to Congress and make public an annual Accomplishment Report and fund-utilization report detailing the mode of implementation, number of beneficiaries, donations, and expenditures. An impact evaluation shall be conducted at least every three years.

SEC. 16. GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS.

The DSWD shall establish grievance mechanisms for filing or reporting complaints or grievances arising from the implementation of the AICS Program and shall ensure access for all beneficiaries and stakeholders.

SEC. 17. IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Within ninety days from the effectivity of this Act, the DSWD shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for effective implementation.

SEC. 18. APPROPRIATIONS.

The appropriations necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the current budget of the DSWD. Thereafter, amounts necessary for continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act, taking into consideration an administration cost of not more than five percent, subject to periodic review and recommendation for increase when necessary. The DSWD shall issue guidelines on utilization and management of the administration cost.

SEC. 19. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE.

If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 20. REPEALING CLAUSE.

All laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 21. EFFECTIVITY.

This Act shall take effect fifteen days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,