



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL No. 6508

Introduced by Representative **JESUS R. MARQUEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to institutionalize the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Established in 2014 as a stop-gap intervention, the AICS Program provides immediate and temporary relief to individuals and families facing unforeseen life events or crises. It serves as a critical social safety net, enabling affected communities to recover and meet their most urgent needs through direct financial aid, psychosocial support, and material assistance.

In the first half of this year alone, the Department reported that 953,560 individuals benefited from more than ₱8.5 billion in medical assistance. Of this number, 670,825 beneficiaries received cash assistance of up to ₱10,000, while 282,735 individuals were issued guarantee letters to cover hospitalization, medicines, and diagnostic procedures.¹ These figures underscore the indispensable role of AICS in cushioning vulnerable sectors from economic and health-related shocks.

The program's growing demand across regions warrants not only increased budgetary support but also the establishment of more efficient and accountable service delivery mechanisms. To strengthen the integrity and responsiveness of AICS, it is imperative to modernize its operations by maximizing digital platforms, improving verification systems, and preventing abuses that undermine public trust and program effectiveness.

Section 9, Article II of the 1987 Constitution mandates that 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...*" Institutionalizing AICS gives full effect to this constitutional directive by ensuring a stable, predictable, and well-governed framework for crisis assistance.

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

REP. JESUS "Jess" R. MARQUEZ

¹ Inquirer. (2025). DSWD: Nearly 1M beneficiaries for aid program. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2083080/dswd-nearly-1m-beneficiaries-for-aid-program>

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AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS
SITUATIONS (AICS) PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR THE
VIOLATION OF CERTAIN UNLAWFUL ACTS, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR

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 the “Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order, alleviating the plight of the poor through policies that provide adequate social services and raise the standard of living for the improved quality of life for all. To this end, the State shall provide assistance through projects, programs, and services geared towards alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life of every Filipino, especially the marginalized sector, and disadvantaged individuals and families.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

- (a) *Assistive technology* refers to “assistive products” whose primary purpose is to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities, to enhance overall well-being, and help prevent impairments and secondary health conditions. These include wheelchairs, prostheses, hearing aids, visual aids, and specialized computer software and hardware, or any advancement in technologies that increase mobility, hearing, vision, or communication capacities;
- (b) *Case management* refers to a process of assessing, planning, managing, coordinating, and advocating for services and other interventions used by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to improve the capability of qualified beneficiaries in addressing their needs;
- (c) *Cash relief assistance* refers to an outright cash provided to individuals and families that are currently 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;

- 1 (d) *Crisis situation* refers to a condition of an individual in a stressful situation that
2 impairs psychosocial functioning or participation in socio-economic activities,
3 including access
4 to education, work, and health care, that requires a series of interventions to
5 prevent further exposure to vulnerabilities, exploitation, or abuse;
6
- 7 (e) *Disability support assistance* refers to the monetary support to cover the
8 purchase of assistive products, technologies, provision of sign language
9 interpreter, personal assistant, maintenance medicines and hygiene needs, life
10 support equipment, and other needs of persons with disabilities;
11
- 12 (f) *Educational assistance* refers to financial assistance extended to all students to
13 help defray school expenses and/or cost of sending students/children to school,
14 such as school fees augmentation, supplies, projects, allowance, and other related
15 expenses, and to eradicate barriers to quality education, including those barriers
16 faced by persons on account of their disabilities;
17
- 18 (g) *Financial assistance* refers to monetary support in the form of outright cash,
19 electronic fund transfer, guarantee letter, coupon, check or voucher that has
20 monetary value, including funeral assistance, transportation assistance, medical
21 assistance, educational assistance, training assistance, food assistance, cash relief
22 assistance, and all other types of cash assistance that may be provided under the
23 Program;
24
- 25 (h) *Food assistance* refers to assistance to those in need due to human-induced and
26 natural calamities and those experiencing other forms of crisis or displacement,
27 eviction, demolitions or requiring interventions for sector-specific support, which
28 include hot meals, food or meal allowance, or the cash equivalent of the required
29 hot meals and/or food packs;
30
- 31 (i) *Funeral assistance* refers to assistance to help defray funeral and related
32 expenses such as transfer of cadaver, burial site, and other related expenses
33 incurred by the family of the deceased, with consideration to context, cultural,
34 and religious backgrounds;
35
- 36 (j) *Guarantee letter* refers to a document duly approved and issued by the DSWD,
37 which ensures the payment of the amount appearing on the document, that the
38 beneficiary presents to any public or government-owned or controlled hospitals
39 or other institutions and to any similar private entity that is willing to provide
40 services;
41
- 42 (k) *Material and other in-kind assistance* refers to assistance given to individuals in
43 crisis by providing them food and non-food items, non-financial, and the like, and
44 may also include other professional assistance available in the DSWD, such as
45 psycho-social support and legal consultation;
46
- 47 (l) *Medical assistance* refers to out-of-pocket expense in the form of coupon, stub,
48 guarantee letter, promissory note or voucher that has monetary value, given
49 directly to recipients or beneficiaries to pay for hospitalization expenses, other
50 medical treatments or procedures, and which include birthing procedure, as well
51 as professional fees and consultation fees, purchase of drugs, medicines, goods or
52 other services prescribed by the physician of a health facility for in- and out-
53 patients;
54
- 55 (m) *Persons with disabilities* refer to those who have long-term physical, mental,
56 intellectual or sensory impairments that hinder their full and effective
57 participation in society on an equal basis with others, including cancer patients
58 and persons living with cancer and cancer survivors under Republic Act No.
59 11215, otherwise known as the “National Integrated Cancer Control Act” and

persons with rare disease under Republic Act No. 10747, otherwise known as the “Rare Diseases Act of the Philippines”;

(n) *Target beneficiaries* refer to individuals or families who are indigent, financially incapacitated, stateless persons, repatriates, deportees, transients, vulnerable, disadvantaged, or internally displaced persons, or in crisis situations based on the assessment of the social workers of the DSWD; and

(o) *Transportation assistance* refers to the monetary support to cover the actual cost incurred on land, sea, and air travel, including travel insurance and such other related expenses as facilitated by the social workers of the DSWD.

SEC. 4. Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS). – To effectively respond to the individuals in crisis situation, each qualified target beneficiary shall receive financial, medical, transportation, food, material assistance, and other assistance, to include disability support services including other professional assistance available in the DSWD, such as psychosocial support or intervention for dysfunctional families and their children who need trauma care and management, and legal consultation, based on the assessment of the social workers of the DSWD.

SEC. 5. Types of Assistance. – The following are the types of assistance that the target beneficiaries may receive under the Program based on the assessment and recommendation of the social workers, authorized personnel, or any other personnel authorized by the DSWD, duly approved by their authorized officials:

(a) Financial assistance – as defined in Section 3, paragraph (g);

(b) Material assistance – a service providing food and non-food items to clients who need immediate material support, such as food packs or vouchers, hygiene or sleeping kits, and assistive devices and technologies, subject to its availability;

(c) Psychosocial support service – a service provided by trained or professional psychosocial support workers to help meet the psychological, emotional, and social needs of beneficiaries and their families. It is a set of interventions that intends to positively improve a person’s behavior to reduce the impact of stress brought about by a crisis through behavioral modification interventions;

(d) Referral service – a service provided when the requested support is not within the range of services of the Program through coordination and/or endorsement of the beneficiary’s case within the DSWD’s available programs, projects and services and to other agencies such as to the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Department of Health (DOH), Public Attorney’s Office, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation, local government units (LGUs) and other government agencies, civil society organizations, and international/non- government organizations; and

(e) Such other services that the DSWD may deem appropriate.

In order to fully meet the medical needs of individuals in crisis situations, particularly persons with disabilities or people with special needs. The DOH may provide the initial costing per type of disability for the effective assessment of social workers of the DSWD.

Appropriate documentation as provided for in the DSWD AICS Guidelines shall support all disbursements of funds. The DSWD may provide additional assistance or discontinue existing ones as it may deem appropriate.

SEC. 6. Modes of Delivery of Services. – The DSWD shall adopt different modes in order to deliver efficiently, expeditiously, and effectively the financial or

1 material assistance, psychosocial support, and referral service to the clients and
2 communities needing assistance from the government such as the following

- 3
4 (a) Service delivery within the Central or Field Offices;
5
6 (b) Setting up of an off-site or satellite venues; and
7
8 (c) Extension office of the DSWD for the Program.
9

10 *Provided*, That the DSWD shall procure and/or construct a secure office system,
11 information and communication technology equipment, and all necessary capital outlay
12 expenditures such as vehicles and vaults, among others, needed to efficiently and
13 effectively implement the Program.
14

15 *Provided, further*, That the DSWD may also establish an automated system for
16 processing and releasing the requested assistance. For this purpose, the appropriations
17 needed for the payment of the necessary cash-out fees or other service fees charged by
18 partner financial institutions shall form part of the DSWD annual budget under the
19 General Appropriations Act.
20

21 **SEC. 7. Integrated Program Delivery System.** – To improve the delivery of
22 service to the eligible beneficiaries under the Program, there shall be an established
23 Integrated Program Delivery System.
24

25 In keeping with the principle of equitable access and ensuring that access to the
26 AICS is maximized, a mechanism for real-time data sharing between the DSWD and the
27 LGUs shall be institutionalized, subject to the statutory limitations under the Data Privacy
28 Act of 2012. Under this mechanism, concerned agencies such as the Philippine Statistics
29 Authority, DOH Malasakit Centers, and LGUs may share information from a centralized
30 database in order to identify the assistance given to the Program's eligible beneficiaries,
31 for purposes of assistance augmentation and to prevent a possible abuse of the assistance
32 given to those in crisis situations.
33

34 **SEC. 8. Crisis Intervention Office/Division/Unit.** – To ensure effective and
35 efficient delivery of services to the clients, there shall exist a Crisis Intervention Office
36 (CIO) at the Central Office, Crisis Intervention Divisions at the field offices, and Crisis
37 Intervention Units at the Social Welfare and Development satellite offices of the DSWD
38 that shall ensure that the Program, as enterprise information system, provided herein, is
39 properly implemented, monitored, and evaluated nationwide. The office shall monitor
40 and evaluate the implementation of the AICS Program and prepare the monitoring and
41 evaluation report for submission to the Secretary of the DSWD. The monitoring and
42 evaluation report must be available and accessible to any stakeholder at the national,
43 regional, and local levels.
44

45 **SEC. 9. Personnel Complement.** – The Secretary of the DSWD, in
46 coordination with the CIO Director at the Central Office and Regional Offices, shall
47 determine the additional plantilla positions required for the implementation of the
48 program in accordance with the revised compensation and position classification system,
49 subject to the evaluation and approval of the Department of Budget and Management and
50 in compliance with the civil service laws, rules and regulations, and other pertinent laws.
51

52 **SEC. 10. Program Monitoring and Evaluation.** – The DSWD shall conduct
53 monitoring and evaluation to assess the responsiveness of the Program through the use
54 of applicable indicators, frameworks, models, and tools, including a client/stakeholder's
55 feedback
56

57 mechanism, among others, and the establishment of standard reporting templates
58 and procedures in consonance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

1 **SEC. 11. Program Transparency and Reporting.** – The DSWD shall
2 annually publish a full report of the Program covering the implementation of the previous
3 fiscal year and/or timely post and update periodically on the DSWD website a report of
4 financial disclosures and information about beneficiaries based on geographical area and
5 sectoral category subject to the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173, or the “Data Privacy
6 Act of 2012.”

7
8 **SEC. 12. Unlawful Acts.** –
9

- 10 (a) It shall be unlawful for the officials or employees of LGUs, their agents,
11 representatives or relatives within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or
12 affinity to interfere, in any manner, in the implementation or delivery of AICS
13 services or funds to qualified beneficiaries;
14
15 (b) Likewise, it shall be unlawful for any individual or organization to commit the
16 following acts:
17
18 (i) Defraud the government by issuing or presenting falsified or misleading
19 documents, or using false pretenses or other fraudulent acts to acquire the
20 assistance provided under this Act;
21
22 (ii) Coerce, invite, encourage, or assist persons to seek assistance from the
23 DSWD for purposes of acquiring from the beneficiary a portion of the
24 assistance, before or after the receipt of assistance;
25
26 (iii) Mislead an individual or group to join, pay or cooperate with a group falsely
27 representing connection or affiliation with DSWD or falsely promising
28 priority in the processing of assistance.
29

30 **SEC. 13. Penalties.** –
31

- 32 (a) Any of the specified person who committed the unlawful act under Section 13 (a)
33 of this Act shall be punished by imprisonment of six (6) months. If the offender
34 is an official or employee of an LGU, the official or employee shall also be held
35 administratively liable;
36
37 (b) Any person, group or organization that commits the unlawful acts under Section
38 13 (b) of this Act shall be punished by:
39
40 (i) For the First Offense- one (1) year suspension from availing any assistance
41 from the DSWD; and
42 (ii) For the Second Offense – imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but
43 not more than six (6) years.
44

45 If the offender is an organization, the president, manager, or any officer of the
46 organization who participated in the commission of the acts enumerated above or
47 benefited therefrom, or both, shall be held liable and shall be punished by imprisonment
48 of not less than six (6) years but not more than ten (10) years. This is without prejudice to
49 any action against the organization or corporation before the appropriate government
50 agency.
51

52 Conspiracy to commit the foregoing unlawful acts shall be penalized by the same
53 penalty prescribed under this Section.

54 In all circumstances, the government shall be authorized to prosecute or to file
55 cases on behalf of the private individual defrauded and damaged by the aforementioned
56 acts. Any person who was coerced, invited, encouraged or misled while committing the
57 crimes above, or any person who has witnessed or has knowledge or information on the
58 commission of the crime and has testified or is testifying or about to testify before any
59 judicial or quasi-judicial body, or before any investigating authority, may be admitted into

1 the witness protection program: *Provided*, That to become a state witness for this crime,
2 the said person shall not be the most guilty.

3
4 A public official or personnel who commits, abets, or aids in the commission of any
5 of the Unlawful Acts provided herein shall be liable under the Revised Penal Code and
6 other existing penal laws. Administrative sanctions shall be imposed without prejudice to
7 prosecution in the proper courts.

8
9 **SEC. 14. Cash Equivalents.** – It shall be mandatory for any public or private
10 entity that provides services under this Program to accept the guarantee letter, coupon,
11 check, or voucher issued by the DSWD as full or partial payment of the obligation of the
12 qualified beneficiary.

13
14 The DSWD must, within three (3) months from the date of acceptance, pay the
15 public or private entity of the amount appearing on the guarantee letter, coupon, or
16 voucher.

17
18 **SEC. 15. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.** – A congressional
19 oversight committee is constituted to monitor, set the overall framework, and review the
20 implementation of this Act. The committee shall determine the inherent weaknesses in
21 the law and recommend necessary remedial legislation or executive measures.

22
23 The oversight committee is composed of five (5) Senators and five (5)
24 Representatives to be appointed by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of
25 Representatives, respectively, and co-chaired by the Chairpersons of the Committee on
26 Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development of the Senate and the Committee on Social
27 Services of the House of Representatives. The four (4) other members from the Senate
28 and House of Representatives shall be composed of three (3) members from each of the
29 aforementioned committees, and one (1) from the minority.

30
31 For purposes of determining remedial legislation, the oversight committee shall,
32 within two (2) years after the effectivity of this Act, conduct a review which shall include
33 a systematic evaluation of the impact of this Act, accomplishments of the program, and
34 the performance of the implementing agencies.

35
36 **SEC. 16. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within six (6) months
37 from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DSWD shall, in consultation with the
38 Secretary of the DOH and the Commission on Audit, promulgate the necessary rules and
39 regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

40
41 **SEC. 17. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the initial
42 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of
43 DSWD. Thereafter, such amount necessary for the continued implementation of this Act
44 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

45
46 **SEC. 18. Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part of this Act is held
47 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in
48 full force and effect.

49 **SEC. 19. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees or issuances,
50 executive orders, letters of instructions, administrative orders, rules, and regulations or
51 parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are amended,
52 repealed, or modified accordingly.

53
54 **SEC. 20. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
55 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

56
Approved,