

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10889



Introduced by **Representative AGATHA "AGAY" CRUZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Finding a job requires persistence, preparation, and patience. It should not, however, require a tour of government offices.

Before employment begins, a jobseeker may need to secure clearances, registrations, certifications, and other government documents from different agencies. When these transactions require separate systems, repeated submissions, multiple appointments, and unnecessary travel, routine compliance can become another barrier to work.

This matters especially for young workers entering the labor market. In June 2026, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported a youth employment rate of 86.5 percent, while around 743,000 employed youth were underemployed.¹

Congress already reduced one barrier through Republic Act No. 11261 (First Time Jobseekers Assistance Act), which waives covered government fees for qualified first-time jobseekers and directs Public Employment Service Offices to assist them in securing pre-employment documents. But cost is only one part of the problem, and first-time jobseekers are only one part of the workforce. The need for simpler government transactions also arises when workers change jobs, reenter the workforce, seek employment after displacement, or otherwise pursue new employment opportunities.

The proposed Streamlined Transactions for Employment Processing (STEP) Act addresses this broader administrative challenge. It establishes the STEP Service Network, an integrated service framework using existing digital government platforms, Public Employment Service Offices, participating agencies, and assisted-access points, to make employment-related government transactions easier to access and complete.

The measure builds on Republic Act No. 12254 (E-Governance Act), which

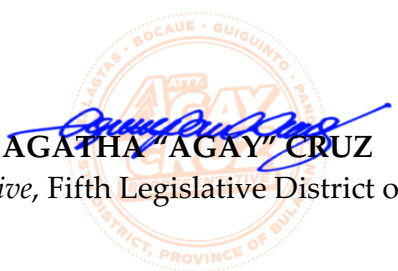
¹ Number of Employed Persons Increased to 50.66 Million as Labor Force Participation Rose in June 2026, PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY, 6 August 2026, available at <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/labor-force-survey>

mandates interoperable, citizen-centered government services and integration of frontline transactions involving agencies such as the Philippine Statistics Authority, National Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Social Security System, Pag-IBIG Fund, and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation.

It seeks to provide jobseekers with a common point of access to participating services; facilitate electronic applications, appointments, payments, and transaction tracking where legally and technically feasible; provide assisted access through PESOs; and reduce unnecessary repetitive submissions through secure government-to-government verification.

A citizen who is ready to work has already taken an important step toward contributing to the economy. Government should help make the next step simpler, faster, and more economical.

The passage of the STEP Act is therefore respectfully urged for the jobseeker who is taking their initial step into employment, pursuing a better opportunity, rebuilding after displacement, or simply trying to earn a living without first having to navigate a maze of government transactions.



AGATHA "AGAY" CRUZ

Representative, Fifth Legislative District of Bulacan

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Introduced by **Representative AGATHA “AGAY” CRUZ**

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING AN INTEGRATED SERVICE NETWORK FOR
GOVERNMENT TRANSACTIONS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT,
STREAMLINING ACCESS THERETO FOR JOBSEEKERS, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Streamlined Transactions
2 for Employment Processing (STEP) Act.”
3

4 **Section 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 promote full, productive, and freely chosen employment and facilitate the transition of
6 Filipinos from education, training, or unemployment to decent work.
7

8 Towards this end, the State shall simplify access to government documents and
9 services commonly required when applying for or commencing employment to reduce
10 unnecessary travel, repetitive submissions, waiting time, and administrative costs. The
11 State shall likewise maximize existing government facilities and digital infrastructure,
12 provide assisted access to persons who need it, and ensure that government systems are
13 interoperable, secure, and inclusive.
14

15 **Section 3. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act:
16

17 (a) *First-time jobseeker* refers to a person qualified to avail of the benefits under
18 Republic Act No. 11261, otherwise known as the “First Time Jobseekers
19 Assistance Act”;
20

21 (b) *Jobseeker* refers to refers to a person seeking employment, whether for local or
22 overseas employment;
23

1 (c) *Participating agency* refers to any national government agency, government-
2 owned or -controlled corporation, local government unit, or other government
3 entity whose employment-related document, registration, credential,
4 clearance, certification, or service is accessible through the STEP Service
5 Network; and

6
7 (d) *STEP Service Network* refers to the integrated network of digital government
8 platforms, Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs), participating agencies,
9 and other authorized assisted-access points through which jobseekers may
10 obtain information, initiate or submit applications, schedule appointments,
11 track transactions, receive assistance, and, when legally and technically
12 permissible, obtain or retrieve government documents, registrations,
13 credentials, certifications, and other services related to employment.

14
15 **Section 4. Establishment of the STEP Service Network.** – The Department of Labor
16 and Employment (DOLE), in coordination with the Department of Information and
17 Communications Technology (DICT), Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA), Department of
18 the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), and
19 participating agencies, shall institutionalize the STEP Service Network by integrating
20 employment-related government services with existing digital government systems and
21 providing assisted access through existing government facilities.

22
23 The STEP Service Network shall provide integrated access to employment-related
24 government services for all jobseekers, without prejudice to the exemptions, benefits, and
25 assistance granted to qualified first-time jobseekers under Republic Act No. 11261.

26
27 The STEP Service Network shall, to the extent applicable, operate through the
28 Citizen Frontline Delivery Service Platforms and other E-Government Programs
29 established under Republic Act No. 12254, otherwise known as the “E-Governance Act,”
30 and through PESOs. Job placement offices in educational institutions may serve as
31 additional assisted-access points in accordance with Republic Act No. 8759, otherwise
32 known as the “Public Employment Service Office Act of 1999,” as amended, and
33 applicable agreements with the DOLE.

34
35 Implementation of the STEP Service Network shall not require the establishment
36 of a duplicative stand-alone digital portal when the relevant service may be integrated
37 into or accessed through existing E-Government Programs. Neither shall it require the
38 construction of a separate building, establishment of a separate office, or creation of a
39 separate organizational unit solely for the implementation of the STEP Service Network.

40
41 The DOLE shall lead employment service coordination, while the DICT shall lead
42 digital integration, interoperability, and the adoption of applicable technical standards.
43 With respect to services specific to overseas employment, the DMW shall exercise its
44 powers and functions under Republic Act No. 11641, otherwise known as the

1 “Department of Migrant Workers Act.” Each participating agency shall retain its statutory
2 authority over, and responsibility for, the evaluation, approval, denial, issuance, validity,
3 and custody of documents and information under its mandate.

4
5 **Section 5. Covered Services.** – The STEP Service Network shall facilitate access to
6 government documents, registrations, credentials, and services commonly required in
7 connection with the application for or commencement of employment.

8
9 Such services may include:

- 10 (a) Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) registration or verification through the
11 Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR);
12 (b) Clearance issued by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI);
13 (c) Police clearance issued through the Philippine National Police (PNP);
14 (d) Registration and membership services of the Social Security System (SSS),
15 (e) Registration and membership services of the Philippine Health Insurance
16 Corporation (PhilHealth);
17 (f) Registration and membership services of the Home Development Mutual Fund
18 (Pag-IBIG Fund);
19 (g) Civil registry documents issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA);
20 (h) Barangay or local government certifications or clearances lawfully required in
21 connection with employment;
22 (i) Medical certificates issued by public hospitals or other government health
23 facilities, when applicable; and
24 (j) Such other employment-related government documents or services as may be
25 identified by the DOLE in consultation with the concerned participating
26 agency.

27
28 Inclusion of a document or service in the STEP Service Network shall not, by itself,
29 constitute authority for an employer to require such document or service from a job
30 applicant or employee.

31
32 Where personal appearance, biometric capture, examination, medical procedure,
33 interview, or other in-person process is required by law or by the nature of the transaction,
34 the STEP Service Network may facilitate the filing of applications in advance,
35 appointment scheduling, payment when applicable, and transaction tracking, but shall
36 not dispense with the required process.

37
38 **Section 6. Integrated and Simplified Processing.** – Subject to applicable laws and
39 technical feasibility, the STEP Service Network shall provide:

- 40 (a) Consolidated and regularly updated information on government documents
41 and services related to employment;
42 (b) Common point of access to participating services;
43 (c) Electronic submission or retrieval of information and supporting documents;
44 (d) Appointment scheduling;

- (e) Electronic payment of lawful fees and charges, when applicable;
- (f) Transaction tracking and notifications; and
- (g) Issuance or retrieval of electronic documents or credentials when permitted by law.

The DOLE, DICT, ARTA, and participating agencies shall coordinate the reengineering and harmonization of procedures to eliminate unnecessary duplication, reduce processing time, and improve accessibility in accordance with Republic Act No. 11032, otherwise known as the “Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018.”

No additional documentary requirement shall be imposed solely because a transaction is coursed through the STEP Service Network.

Section 7. Reuse and Verification of Government Data. – Where authorized by law and technically feasible, a jobseeker shall not be required to resubmit information or a government-issued document that has already been verified by a participating agency and may be lawfully and securely retrieved or verified from the government entity responsible for such information or document, provided that the information or document remains valid and applicable to the transaction.

The government entity legally responsible for the information shall retain custody and control of such information and responsibility for its maintenance and protection in accordance with applicable law. Data sharing and verification shall, as far as practicable, be undertaken through secure and interoperable mechanisms without creating an unnecessary duplicate database solely for purposes of the STEP Service Network.

Section 8. Assisted Access Through Public Employment Service Offices. – Without prejudice to the assistance provided to first-time jobseekers under Republic Act No. 11261, PESOs shall serve as assisted-access points of the STEP Service Network for all jobseekers and shall, as part of their employment-facilitation functions, provide reasonable assistance in accessing or completing transactions through the Network.

Such assistance may include:

- (a) Identifying applicable government documents and services applicable to the jobseeker’s intended employment or transaction;
- (b) Accessing participating digital services;
- (c) Assisting in the completion and submission of applications;
- (d) Scheduling appointments;
- (e) Monitoring transaction status;
- (f) Retrieving authorized electronic documents; and
- (g) Referring jobseekers to the appropriate government agency or employment program, or other available service.

1 No fee shall be collected by a PESO for assistance provided under this section. Fees
2 and charges lawfully imposed for the underlying government transaction shall remain,
3 subject to applicable laws and exemptions.

4
5 Lack of internet access, lack of a personal digital device, or inability to
6 independently use digital government services shall not prevent a jobseeker from
7 accessing assistance under this Act.

8
9 **Section 9. *First-Time Jobseekers.*** – Qualified first-time jobseekers shall continue to
10 enjoy all exemptions, benefits, and assistance provided under Republic Act No. 11261.
11 Access to or use of the STEP Service Network shall not diminish, restrict, modify, or
12 otherwise affect any qualification, benefit, limitation, exception, or assistance provided
13 under said Act.

14
15 The STEP Service Network may facilitate the verification of eligibility for and
16 availment of benefits under Republic Act No. 11261, subject to the requirements and
17 limitations of said Act and applicable laws on government records, data privacy, and
18 information security.

19
20 **Section 10. *School-to-Work Transition Assistance.*** – The DOLE, in coordination
21 with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills
22 Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Education (DepEd), Civil Service
23 Commission (CSC), DMW, PESOs, and educational institutions, shall promote awareness
24 of the STEP Service Network among graduating students, trainees, and other prospective
25 jobseekers.

26
27 Existing career guidance, job placement, and employment facilitation programs
28 may provide information on government documents commonly required in connection
29 with employment, benefits available to first-time jobseekers, labor rights and basic
30 conditions of employment, internship and apprenticeship opportunities, employment
31 and skills-development programs, and civil service eligibility and government
32 employment requirements.

33
34 Activities under this section shall be aligned, as applicable, with the *Trabaho Para*
35 *sa Bayan* Plan established under Republic Act No. 11962, otherwise known as the “*Trabaho*
36 *Para sa Bayan* Act,” and shall utilize existing programs and structures to the greatest extent
37 practicable.

38
39 **Section 11. *Data Privacy, Cybersecurity, and Information Governance.*** – The
40 collection, processing, use, sharing, storage, retention, and disposal of personal
41 information through the STEP Service Network shall comply with Republic Act No.
42 10173, otherwise known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012,” Republic Act No. 12254, and
43 applicable rules, regulations, and standards issued by the National Privacy Commission
44 (NPC), DICT, and other competent authorities.

1
2 Systems developed or materially modified for purposes of the STEP Service
3 Network shall incorporate:

- 4 (a) Privacy-by-design and privacy-by-default;
- 5 (b) Data minimization and purpose limitation;
- 6 (c) Appropriate access controls;
- 7 (d) Secure authentication and transmission;
- 8 (e) Audit mechanisms, appropriate retention and disposal measures; and
- 9 (f) Mechanisms for responding to information security and personal data
10 breaches.

11
12 Any privacy impact assessment, vulnerability assessment, penetration testing,
13 security assessment, or similar review required by applicable law or regulation shall be
14 completed before the deployment of a new or materially modified system component.

15
16 Personal information processed through the STEP Service Network shall not be
17 used or disclosed for commercial solicitation or for any purpose incompatible with the
18 lawful and specified purpose for which the information was collected, except as otherwise
19 authorized by law.

20
21 **Section 12. Service Standards and Accountability.** – Transactions accessed
22 through the STEP Service Network shall remain subject to the Citizen’s Charter and
23 applicable processing periods of the responsible participating agency under Republic Act
24 No. 11032 and other applicable laws.

25
26 A jobseeker shall have ready access to information on applicable requirements,
27 lawful fees and exemptions, the agency responsible for the transaction, the prescribed
28 processing period, transaction status, and available complaint and redress mechanisms.

29
30 **Section 13. Phased Implementation.** – The DOLE and DICT, in coordination with
31 participating agencies, shall implement the STEP Service Network in phases based on
32 transaction volume, relevance to employment, availability through existing digital
33 systems, technical readiness, interoperability, accessibility, data protection requirements,
34 cybersecurity risks, and cost-effectiveness.

35
36 Within one (1) year from the effectivity of the implementing rules and regulations,
37 the DOLE and DICT shall implement the initial phase covering priority employment-
38 related services that are already digitally available or may reasonably be integrated
39 without major redevelopment of existing government systems. Priority shall be given to
40 employment-related services commonly accessed by jobseekers, including relevant
41 services covered by Republic Act No. 11261, and to services already included or capable
42 of integration under Republic Act No. 12254.

43
44 Subsequent phases shall progressively integrate other employment-related

1 services consistent with the E-Government Master Plan and the technical readiness of
2 participating agencies.

3
4 **Section 14. *Monitoring and Evaluation.*** – The DOLE, in coordination with the
5 DICT, ARTA, and participating agencies, shall annually evaluate the implementation and
6 performance of the STEP Service Network.

7
8 The evaluation shall consider the following:

- 9 (a) Number of jobseekers assisted;
10 (b) Transaction volume and completion rates;
11 (c) Processing and referral times;
12 (d) Utilization by different categories of jobseekers, including first-time jobseekers;
13 (e) Accessibility and gaps in service delivery gaps;
14 (f) User complaints and feedback;
15 (g) System reliability; and
16 (h) Aggregate information on material cybersecurity or data protection incidents
17 affecting service delivery, subject to applicable confidentiality and security
18 requirements.

19
20 A non-sensitive summary of the evaluation shall be submitted annually to the
21 appropriate committees of Congress and published on the official websites of the DOLE
22 and DICT.

23
24 **Section 15. *Limitations.*** – Nothing in this Act shall be construed to:

- 25 (a) Create a new substantive qualification or documentary requirement for
26 employment;
27 (b) Authorize an employer to require a document merely because it is included in
28 the STEP Service Network;
29 (c) Authorize the collection of a fee or charge not otherwise allowed by law;
30 (d) Modify the statutory authority of a participating agency;
31 (e) Alter the validity period of a government-issued document or credential;
32 (f) Waive or dispense with any verification, investigation, examination, biometric
33 capture, medical procedure, personal appearance, or other process required by
34 law; or
35 (g) Expand, restrict, or modify the persons entitled to exemptions or benefits under
36 Republic Act No. 11261 or any other law.

37
38 **Section 16. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the initial implementation
39 of this Act by the DOLE, DICT, and other participating national government agencies
40 shall be charged against their respective current appropriations and other funds lawfully
41 available for employment facilitation, digital government, and related purposes.
42 Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this
43 Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

1 The operation and maintenance of PESOs shall remain governed by the applicable
2 funding provisions of Republic Act No. 8759, as amended by Republic Act No. 10691.
3 National government funding for technical assistance, capacity-building, digital systems,
4 equipment, and other support necessary for the implementation of the STEP Service
5 Network shall be provided through the appropriations of the DOLE, DICT, and other
6 participating national government agencies, subject to existing budgeting, accounting,
7 and auditing laws, rules, and regulations.

8
9 **Section 17. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within one hundred twenty
10 (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOLE and DICT, in coordination with the
11 ARTA, DILG, DMW, CHED, DepEd, TESDA, CSC, Department of Health (DOH), PSA,
12 BIR, NBI, PNP, SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG Fund, NPC, and other concerned government
13 agencies, shall, after consultation with representatives of local government units,
14 educational institutions, employers, jobseekers, and other relevant stakeholders,
15 promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this
16 Act.

17
18 **Section 18. *Construction and Harmonization.*** – This Act shall be construed in
19 harmony with Republic Act No. 8759, as amended by Republic Act No. 10691; Republic
20 Act No. 10173; Republic Act No. 11032; Republic Act No. 11261; Republic Act No. 11641;
21 Republic Act No. 11962; Republic Act No. 12254; and other laws governing employment
22 facilitation, government service delivery, data protection, digital government, and the
23 mandates of participating agencies.

24
25 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish an existing statutory benefit or
26 to transfer, restrict, or diminish the statutory mandate of a government agency except as
27 expressly provided herein. In particular, this Act shall supplement, and shall not replace,
28 the assistance and benefits provided to first-time jobseekers under Republic Act No.
29 11261.

30
31 **Section 19. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act is held
32 unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in
33 full force and effect.

34
35 **Section 20. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
36 administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with
37 or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

38
39 **Section 21. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
40 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

41
42 *Approved,*