

RAPID EVALUATION OF
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE
TO BENEFICIARIES OF
ASSISTANCE TO
INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS
SITUATION (AICS)

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Introduction

Poverty is recognized as a key development challenge facing humanity, and despite various strategies and programs for poverty reduction, the Philippine government is still challenged with high level of poverty among its citizens. The most recent data from Philippine Statistics Authority reveals that 1 in 5 Filipinos were poor in 2015 with 21.6% poverty incidence which is equivalent to 21.9 Million poor Filipinos. This number of poor Filipinos is targeted to be eradicated by 2040 as the Philippines is committed in achieving the Ambisyon 2040 in line with the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs aim to have no poverty by 2030 and this would involve the process of targeting the most vulnerable, increasing access to basic resources and services, and supporting communities affected by conflict and climate-related disasters. On the other hand, the Ambisyon 2040 aspires that all Filipinos will have *Matatag, Maginhawa at Panatag na Buhay* by 2040 wherein the description of “maginhawa” embraces the aspect that no one is poor, and no one is ever hungry.

In order to reduce and eradicate poverty, providing social protection is necessary as it will enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized by promoting and protecting livelihood and employment, providing protection against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improving people’s capacity to manage risks. Part of this social protection is the delivery of social assistance programs which involves direct and targeted service provision to highly vulnerable groups, helping them manage risks caused by various shocks such as disasters, conflicts, and economic crisis. As one of the lead agencies promoting social protection particularly on social welfare, the DSWD thru its protective aspect prioritizes the security of basic consumption of its clients, thus the provision of aid to individuals in crisis situations.

The Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) is one of the Department’s protective services for the poor, marginalized, disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals which provides immediate intervention for access to basic needs such as food, shelter, medical / health, education, transportation, as well as other material and financial needs. The implementation of AICS is lodged under the Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU) of Protective Services Bureau of DSWD and is being implemented for decades in which increasing number of AICS clients can be noted every year.

The assistance may be provided in the form of (a) transportation; (b) medical; (c) burial; (d) food and non-food; and (e) educational assistance. The type, kind and amount of assistance that is provided to the clients are based on the assessment and recommendation of the DSWD social workers, thus the need to bring and submit necessary documents depending on the type of assistance being requested.

For instance, educational assistance is provided to help students compensate school expenses and other educational cost such as tuition fees, school supplies, transportation allowance, and other school-related expenses. Usually, college students are the ones requesting for educational assistance although the program could also cater to the immediate needs of elementary and high school students. The type of educational assistance may be in the form of cash, cheque or guarantee letter depending on the need of the client and the assessment of the social worker. In terms of minimum and maximum amount of educational assistance that can be provided to the clients, the CIU follows the parameters stated in the *Memorandum Circular No. 2 Series of 2014*, which is the existing guidelines relative to implementation of AICS.

The need to evaluate the current process of provision of educational assistance under the AICS could come from different perspectives. For one, the continuing increase of walk-in clients and referrals who want to receive educational assistance, including the fact that it is the second type of category assistance with the highest number of clients, is an important concern. Furthermore, the program has been implemented for a significant period of time, thus the need to review the program elements and overall impact. Also, provided that the Department is currently moving towards more comprehensive and inclusive services for the poor and vulnerable sector, evaluating such program would verify its relevance. The grant of free tuition to students in state universities and colleges could also affect the implementation of the program provided that it both prioritizes indigent individuals/students who are most likely to belong in the identified poor households based on the 2nd assessment results of the Listahanan.

Objectives

The Rapid Evaluation of Educational Assistance to Beneficiaries of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) generally aims to assess the implementation and performance of the program and measure the overall satisfaction of its clients/beneficiaries¹. Specifically, this evaluation aims to:

- Examine and assess the efficiency of service delivery based on existing guidelines and actual implementation of processes for the provision of educational assistance;
- Determine the effectiveness and relevance of the program in terms of client satisfaction on the process and end-result; and
- Identify gaps and issues encountered in the program implementation and generate recommendations.

Specifically, the evaluation aims to answer the following questions:

1. How is the Educational Assistance thru AICS of DSWD being implemented?
 - a. Do the Field Offices follow the same processes and parameters in assessing and recommending the type, kind and amount of financial assistance that they provide to the clients?
 - b. Is the delivery of assistance provided in a timely manner as prescribed by the program guidelines?
 - c. Are there challenges encountered in implementing the program? How were these resolved or how can it be resolved?
 - d. What / Are there other factors that needs to be considered in order to better implement the educational assistance of AICS?
2. To what extent are the clients / beneficiaries satisfied with the program?
 - a. How much do they get from AICS for educational assistance? How much does it contribute to actual school expenses? To their immediate school requirements?
 - b. Is the process and corresponding timeframe reasonable given the amount and type of assistance that the clients get?

¹ Client refers to the guardian / parent / head of the household requesting for educational assistance while beneficiary refers to the student / recipient of the educational assistance provided.

- c. Are there other types or kind of educational assistance that can be provided instead of financial assistance which can contribute more on the improvement of well-being of the clients?
- d. In terms of overall goals of the department, how does this program contribute in achieving the organizational outcomes?

Methodology

The rapid evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative approach thru interviews of key personnel and stakeholders, combined with focus group discussion and surveys for the beneficiaries in which statistical methods was applied on the data gathered.

The Field Offices were purposively selected as they belong to the top areas with most number of served clients from 2016-2017 based on the accomplishment reports. This sampling type ensured that the strengths and weaknesses of the program supporting the existing gaps, issues and its theories behind are discovered. The sample would best help answer the evaluation questions provided that they have the most experience in program implementation given the bulk of clients served. Moreover, the survey respondents were selected randomly from the entire population of served clients of each area while the interviewees from DSWD Field Offices were selected also thru purposive sampling focusing only to those who have higher knowledge and experience on implementing the educational assistance of AICS since the evaluation would want to gather information from individuals who have particular expertise on the subject. Part of the qualitative approach used in the evaluation is the conduct of interviews, which attempts not to generalize but to specify the condition under which the program exists, the actions/processes which pertains to the program implementation of each office and the associated outcomes or consequences. Thus, the analysis or processed data for the interviews applies only to these situation or circumstances but not to all implementing offices.

The following data gathering activities were conducted throughout the study

Review of Documents

All existing and available guidelines on the implementation of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) was reviewed and served as reference in developing the framework of the study. Previous assessment conducted by DSWD on AICS implementation and relevant

studies of other agencies within and outside the country which tackles related forms of social assistance were also reviewed to have a point of reference for the program implementation. Other program-related documents such as physical and financial accomplishment reports were also reviewed and studied. Sample case assessment reports were also reviewed together with the data available in the existing Information System – Crisis Intervention Monitoring System (CrIMS).

Conduct of Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Structured interviews of the following key personnel were conducted for the study:

- DSWD PSB-AICS Focal Staff / CIU Heads (CO and FO Level) – staff who are in-charge of monitoring the implementation of the program in terms of physical and financial accomplishments.
- Social Welfare Officers – staff who are directly engaged in case assessment and provision of educational assistance to clients.
- School administrator - staff of university / college who have received / processed significant number of guarantee letters from DSWD thru the clients as part of the educational assistance.

Conduct of Focused Group Discussions (FGD)

Focused group discussions with beneficiaries of the education assistance of AICS were administered concentrating on identifying the impact of the program on their well-being. The FGD also gauged the satisfaction of the beneficiary in terms of the process and assistance that they received.

Administration of Satisfaction Survey

Randomly selected clients of the education assistance of AICS were surveyed in the form of one-on-one interview. To ensure the reliability and validity of the survey tool, pre-testing was done through conduct of actual survey to clients in Central Office. This was helpful in detecting potential problematic areas in the questionnaire as well as determining/estimating the average duration for the conduct of each interview.

The size of the sample collected from the four implementing offices was n=62. Interviews were only conducted with clients who were able to experience the process of availing educational assistance.

The table below provides a summary of the evaluation areas, data gathering methods and data sources:

Evaluation Area	Data Gathering Method	Data Sources
Efficiency in Service Delivery		
Policies and Guidelines	Document Review	Existing policies/guidelines
Business Process and structure	Document Review; Key Informant Interview	Existing policies/guidelines; DSWD PSB/PSU
Resources available	Key Informant Interview	DSWD PSB/PSU
Operational Gaps and Issues	Document Review; Key Informant Interviews; Focus Group Discussion	Accomplishment reports; Program Implementation Review (PIR); DSWD PSB/PSU; Clients / Beneficiaries
Current state and accomplishments	Document Review; Key Informant Interview; Observation	Existing policies/guidelines; Accomplishment reports; DSWD PSB
Effectiveness and Relevance		
Immediate outcomes	Focus Group Discussion; Client Satisfaction Survey	Clients / Beneficiaries
Quality of service (client experience)	Focus Group Discussion; Client Satisfaction Survey	Clients / Beneficiaries
Access to other resources/interventions/ services (alternatives)	Key Informant Interview; Focus Group Discussion; Client Satisfaction Survey	DSWD PSB; Clients / Beneficiaries

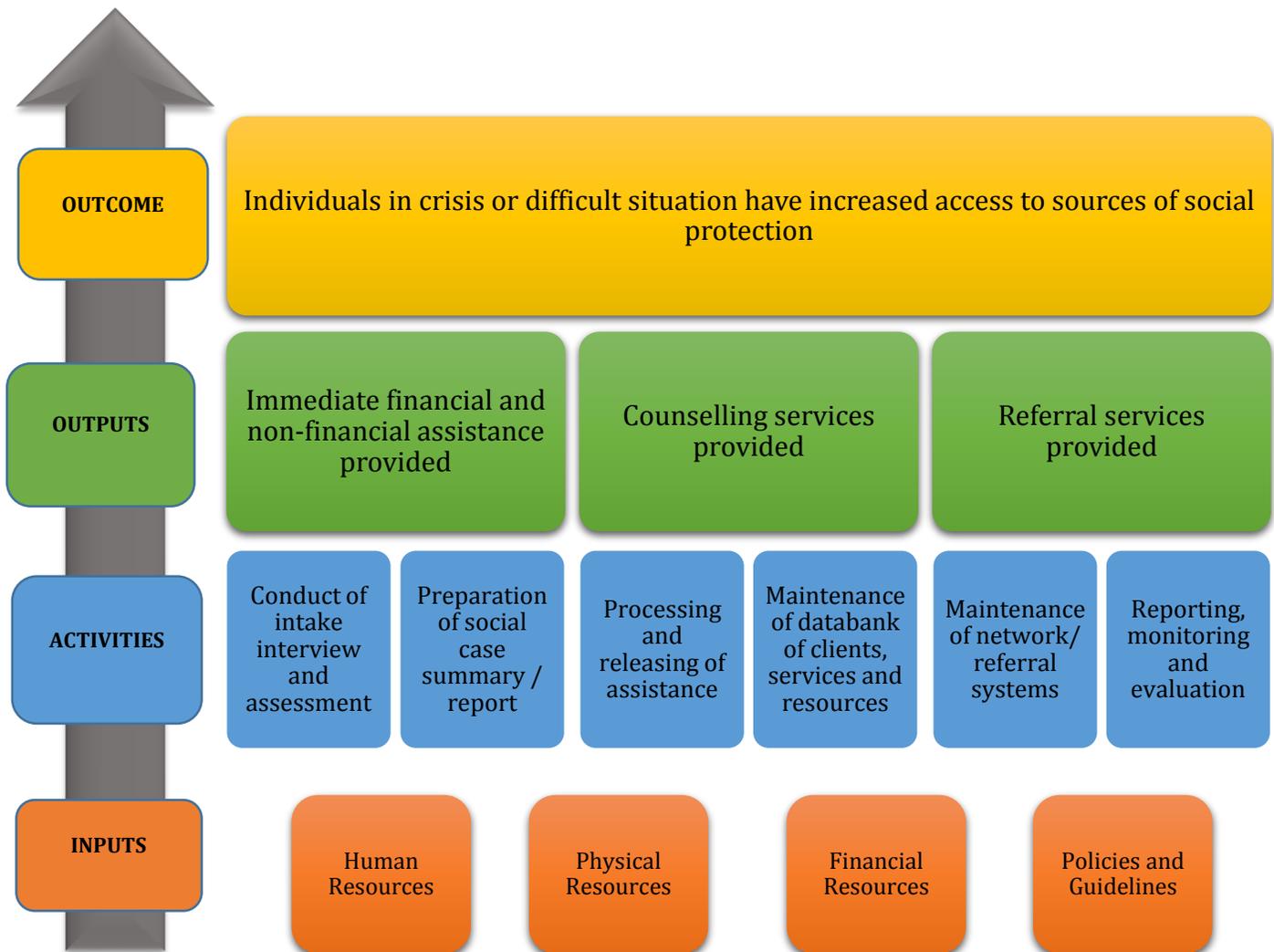
Scope and Limitations

The rapid evaluation focused on one type of assistance (i.e. educational assistance) out of the five (5) types of assistance under the AICS. As such, other types of assistance, namely: medical, burial, transportation, and food/non-food assistance were not included in this particular study. The rapid evaluation was performed in the Crisis Intervention Units (CIU) of Central Office and two regions per island cluster - including Region I and NCR for Luzon, Regions VII and VIII for Visayas, and Regions IX and X for Mindanao. In each office, a survey of thirty-five (35) respondents, four (4) key informant interviews and two (2) FGDs with 5-7 participants each were conducted.

For the FGD and survey, majority of the gathered beneficiaries were those provided with educational assistance from January 2016 to October 2017 whilst the remaining beneficiaries are from 2015. This will help ensure that the respondents still remember the process and other details of their availment of educational assistance in DSWD. The FGD and survey covered only two cities/municipalities per region. The two cities/municipalities having the most number of served clients within the region were initially selected, then the individual respondents for the FGD and survey were selected thru random sampling.

Moreover, the KII was administered, per region, on two (2) Social Workers who directly conduct assessment to clients, the CIU head of PSU who is in charge of monitoring the daily operations of AICS and one (1) school administrator who significantly received high number of guarantee letters from DSWD. The two Social Workers per region who were interviewed was determined by the Field Office depending on their knowledge and experience as assessors for educational assistance of AICS. Moreover, the school/university selected for the interview was based on the recommendation of the Field Office's CIU but should have received significant number of guarantee letters based on DSWD's data.

Program Theory of Change



As shown in the figure above, the Department’s vision, which is anchored on the country’s Ambisyon 2040, states that all Filipinos are free from hunger and poverty, have equal access to opportunities, enabled by a fair, just, and peaceful society. With this, the Department implements programs and projects that will ensure social welfare and development, social protection and poverty reduction. One of the objectives of the Department is to promote and protect the rights of the poor and vulnerable sectors. As such, the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) is one of the Department’s protective services which provides financial assistance to individuals and families whose normal functioning has been hampered due to difficult circumstances caused by crisis situations. The ultimate goal of the AICS is to ensure

that the individuals in crisis or difficult situation have increased access to sources of social protection apart from being enabled to meet the material or financial requirements for their immediate needs. This makes the AICS program not just needs-based but also helps in improving people's capacity to manage risks. In order to achieve the said goal, the AICS ensure the provision of direct financial and material assistance as well as psychosocial counselling and referral services. The direct financial and material assistance will relieve them from their immediate needs while the counseling service will enable them to understand and process personal, social, and psychological distresses and difficulties, whereas, the referral services can help in ensuring sustainability of financial resources of the family. These services will then guarantee that the individual or family in crisis situation will be equipped to continue their living despite the difficult situation that they have encountered. Provision of such services would require the facilitation and processing from DSWD which may include, but not limited, to the following activities:

- Conduct of intake interview and assessment – this action will identify the presenting, working, and underlying problem of the client. This will also help identify the existing resources of the client.
- Preparation of social case summary / report – the report shall include the assessment and recommendation of the social worker regarding the needs of the client. This will identify which services and/or intervention shall be appropriate for the client's needs.
- Processing and releasing of assistance – the assistance could be in the form of financial or material assistance along with the counseling and referral services as necessary.
- Maintenance of databank of clients, services and resources – the databank will ensure that the history of the client is captured so that every time he is requesting for assistance, the records can be easily retrieved including previous transactions and services availed from DSWD.
- Maintenance of network/ referral systems – network/referral systems are necessary to provide appropriate referral service to the clients. It will ensure that the department will have other options to extend the intervention aside from the immediate financial / material assistance. Further counselling services and other services outside the scope of DSWD could be guaranteed thru these network/referral system.

- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation – thru continuous conduct of reporting, monitoring and evaluation, the program is exposed to program and process enhancements which ensures quality service to the clients and achievement of overall program goals.

Implementation and cascading of the above-mentioned activities would be done depending on the availability and management of the resources such as human resources, financial resources and physical resources. Moreover, existing policies and guidelines also serve as input in implementing the necessary activities in order to have a standard business process in delivering the services.

Program Design and Implementation

Overview

The Protective Services Program is a package of interventions for individuals, families in crisis or difficult situation and vulnerable disaster-affected communities which include among others the provision of food, transportation, medical, burial or educational assistance, cash for work, repairs/upgrading /construction of day care centers and senior citizen communities in need of such support, facilities and structures. Under this set of programs is the **Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS)** which aims to provide integrated services thru direct financial and material assistance to individuals and families in crisis or difficult situation. The program aims to enable these individuals and families to meet their immediate needs in terms of food, medical, transportation, burial or education expenses. Referrals for other assistance such as legal, psychosocial and other services may also be provided. The assistance is being provided through the Department's Crisis Intervention Units located at the Central Office, Field Offices and SWAD Satellite Offices. The beneficiaries of AICS can be anyone who sought assistance directly or referred to the CIUs but priority is given to families who are indigent, belonging to the informal sector and others who are in crisis situation as assessed by the Social Workers.

Program components

The assistance to be provided under this program can be in the form of the following:

- Transportation Assistance – for the purchase or payment of transport tickets or expenses to enable the families/individuals to return to their home provinces permanently or to attend to emergency concerns requiring their immediate presence. In order to facilitate the processing of the request, clients are required to submit (1) Barangay Certificate / Indigency, (2) Valid ID, and (3) other documents as necessary. These should be original copy and/or photocopied documents certified by CIU Social Worker.
- Medical Assistance – to help families/individuals to support their medical treatment, hospitalization and other medical expenses. In order to facilitate the processing of the request, clients are required to submit (1) Barangay Certificate / Indigency, (2) Valid ID, (3) Clinical Abstract / Medical Certificate with signature and license number of the attending physician, and (4) Hospital Bill, Prescription or Laboratory Request. These should be original copy and/or photocopied documents certified by CIU Social Worker.
- Burial Assistance - to help families/individuals shoulder funeral costs and related expenses, including but not limited to, cases of bringing home the remains of their deceased loved ones. In order to facilitate the processing of the request, clients are required to submit (1) Barangay Certificate / Indigency, (2) Valid ID of the client, (3) Funeral Contract, (4) Death Certificate of the deceased, and (5) other documents as necessary. These should be original copy and/or photocopied documents certified by CIU Social Worker.
- Educational assistance – to help families/individuals defray the school expenses and /or cost of sending students to schools which may include tuition fee, school supplies, daily allowance and other school related expenses. In order to facilitate the processing of the request, clients are required to submit (1) Barangay Certificate / Indigency, (2) School ID of the Student, and (3) Enrollment Assessment/ Registration Form. These should be original copy and/or photocopied documents certified by CIU Social Worker.
- Food/non-Food Assistance – provision of food/non-food assistance to families/individuals who are assessed to be in need of such for at least one and a half days up to ten days or as necessary depending on the situation. It may include immediate provision of hot meals to walk-in clients, provision of food packs or food allowance.

Procedural Guidelines / Business Process

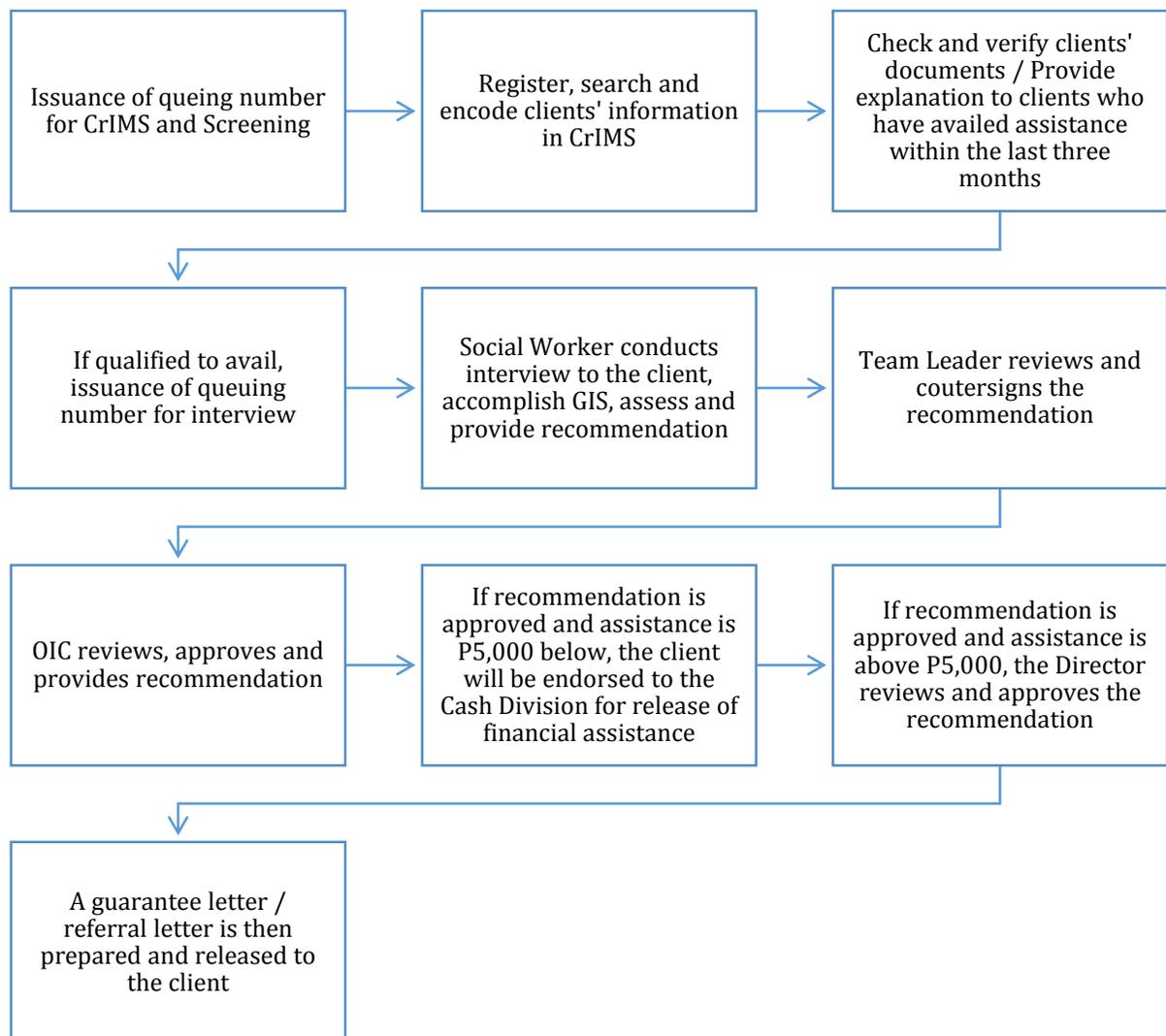
The process of availment of AICS starts from obtaining a queuing number for CrIMS and client screening followed by the registration and/or checking of client information in the CrIMS then indicating the transaction history in the General Intake Sheet (GIS). Included in the screening process is checking the completeness of the documents presented by the client. The client will then again acquire a queuing number for the interview/assessment.

The Social Worker conducts intake interview using the prescribed General Intake Sheet (GIS) and may gather collateral information about the client from his/her family, relatives, etc. as necessary. The type, kind and amount of financial assistance to be provided to the client shall be based on the assessment and recommendation of the DSWD Social Workers and/or LGU social workers duly approved by the authorized official/s of the Department. The assessment is based on the data gathered from the interview, supporting documents, client's needs and capacity in addressing the problem and their available resources. The social worker may also provide psychosocial processing to the client as necessary. Approval of financial assistance to be provided to the clients depends on the proposed amount, starting from the approval of the CIU Head, to the Assistance Bureau Director, Assistance Regional Director or the Regional Director. The maximum allowable assistance that the social worker may recommend is only up to PhP25,000.00 but in extremely justifiable cases, it may go beyond but not exceeding PhP75,000.00. Financial assistance may also be provided thru Guarantee Letter which shall be issued to the client and will be made payable directly to the service provider. Referral letters may also be issued for those seeking assistance beyond the Department's services. Upon approval of the recommended type, kind and amount of financial assistance, it shall then be released to the client and recorded/updated in the CrIMS.

Generally, a client can avail of the assistance once within three months per type of assistance but for availment of educational assistance, only one student per family per semester can be processed and requested. They can request for other types of assistance within the same semester as long as approved based on the assessment of Social Worker. Although educational assistance are for students, it is still highly recommended that their parents/guardians shall undergo the process of availment especially the interview/assessment part. Moreover, 18 years old and above can process their educational assistance alone but below 18 years old students should be accompanied by their

parents/guardian. Furthermore, the guidelines states that financial assistance can cater up to PhP25,000.00 but in order to provide assistance to more clients, the CIU is reducing the maximum amount for educational assistance to PhP5,000.00.

Figure 1. AICS Process Flow



Major Findings

Entry to the Program

Political intervention was mitigated upon the issuance of MC 9, S 2016 but still manifests in the entry process

According to the program guidelines (MC 02, s. 2014), the clients may access the AICS educational assistance through walk-in and through referrals to the CIUs in DSWD COs/FOs, and/or satellite offices in the provinces.

Interview with the implementers revealed that in the previous years, prior to the implementation of MC 9, S. 2016 (an amendment to MC 2, S. 2014), entry/referral of some clients into the program was greatly influenced by politicians. Political intervention is more pronounced in provinces where politicians (and their families) build their own turfs. This political intervention leads to political patronage, causing the beneficiaries/constituents believe that these politicians use their own money to extend assistance to the poor. For instance in FO IX, there were Congressmen who provide list of clients with requirements to DSWD. These potential clients will then be contacted by the CIU and schedule them for interview and assessment. Moreover, pay-outs were sometimes done off site, by request of Congressmen/Mayor. For FO VII, certain politicians would have their pre-identified beneficiaries submit their documents for financial assistance to their office and process the submission to DSWD indicating their preferred amount of assistance. But all these practices, for most of the areas, were no longer allowed since 2016. Although there are still referrals coming from certain Partylists, Congressmen and MSWDOs, no special process is being offered to them; DSWD staff can also defend their words and actions towards demanding coordinators of Partylists and Congressmen with the help of the amended policy. It also protects social workers from political interference that somehow affects performance in public sector.

Stakeholders in FO X had similar experience, but the Field Office was able to manage the intervention from politicians particularly the LGUs and Partylists thru the internal policies implemented by the Regional Director. However, according to FOX, there are still politicians who find ways to intervene in the process; for instance, one politician helps in the dissemination of information to his citizens regarding the educational assistance. Upon dissemination of list of requirements for the educational assistance, their staff would instruct the clients to submit the said documents to their office so they can facilitate the submission to DSWD and they shall just wait for the payment to reach their respective schools.

On the other hand, FO I and NCR have different experience, there were certain politicians whose intervention are very much pronounced to the point that some clients were not aware that the assistance came from DSWD. And although the implementing office are aware of this situation, their response are very restricted as protection to our field workers who are assigned in these areas.

Political intervention has been minimized after the issuance of MC 9, S. 2016, but some degree of intervention is still evident that is associated to unclear guidelines on the entry processes, how to make the program accessible to the target clients, and how DSWD shall inform the citizens about the program.

Most of the clients were informed about the program through their friends/classmates, relatives and communities they belong to.

Despite the lack of promotional activities, by word of mouth, around 50% of the respondents were informed about the program through their classmates and friends. Only a few (9%) said that they were informed through DSWD/DSWD staff.

Table 1. Sources of Information about the AICS Educational Assistance

Source of Information	Frequency	Percent
Friends/Classmates/Teachers	133	49.3
Barangay Official / Municipal Staff	41	15.2
Family/Relatives	37	13.7
Neighborhood/Community	35	13.0
DSWD staff	16	5.9
Social Media (Facebook etc.)	3	1.1
Others	5	1.9

Moreover, making correct information available to the stakeholders that would support transparency and establishing strong information channels & dissemination strategies seem to be lacking.

Stolk (2010) emphasizes that demand driven governance, which aims to promote transparency by making information available to stakeholders, plays a crucial part in anti-corruption mechanisms and is vital to having an effective social safety net (SSN) program. In his paper entitled “To strengthen the governance dimension of social safety net programs in the ASEAN Region,” he argues that ensuring transparency and communicating program

information to the beneficiaries would improve program outcomes of SSNs. Importance of information dissemination and transparency are also important principles in the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007 which states that all government agencies should publish materials written either in English, Filipino, or in the local dialect, that details the procedure to obtain a particular service; the person/s responsible for each step; the maximum time to conclude the process; and the document/s to be presented by the client.

Looking into the DSWD experience in implementing AICS-educational assistance, it was found that information dissemination strategies are present but are not strong enough to avoid misconceptions and process delays/errors.

In CO, better communication strategy was observed; correct information about the educational assistance were disseminated properly up to Barangay level which contributed in reducing misconceptions about the program and boosting promotion of the program. In contrast, weak information dissemination strategies have resulted into misconceptions on AICS educational assistance and inefficiencies in the entry process in FO VIII. Some clients thought that a standard amount of PhP5,000.00 is given to each client and that they can only avail the said assistance once a year. Although the office has a citizen's charter, it still failed to prevent misconceptions and to promote transparency. Moreover, the existing information dissemination strategies for certain areas of Region I, VII and NCR also allowed the actions of some politicians to claim all the credits for processing and providing educational assistance. Aside from that, delays in entering into the program due to incomplete documents were experienced by some clients. According to the findings, some clients went back and forth to the CIU due to lack or invalid documents they submitted which could have been mitigated/reduced had the Department implemented a stronger information dissemination. Compliance to requirements was also mentioned as one of the reasons for delays in assistance in the report of assessment of CIU prepared by PDPB in 2014.

Pre-Assistance Situation of Beneficiaries and Eligibility to the Program

Social safety net programs such as educational assistance are designed to act as stop-gap mechanism to alleviate impacts of shocks on vulnerable groups (Social Protection Framework, 2012). These programs intend to help the target beneficiaries to eventually overcome the situation that they are in.

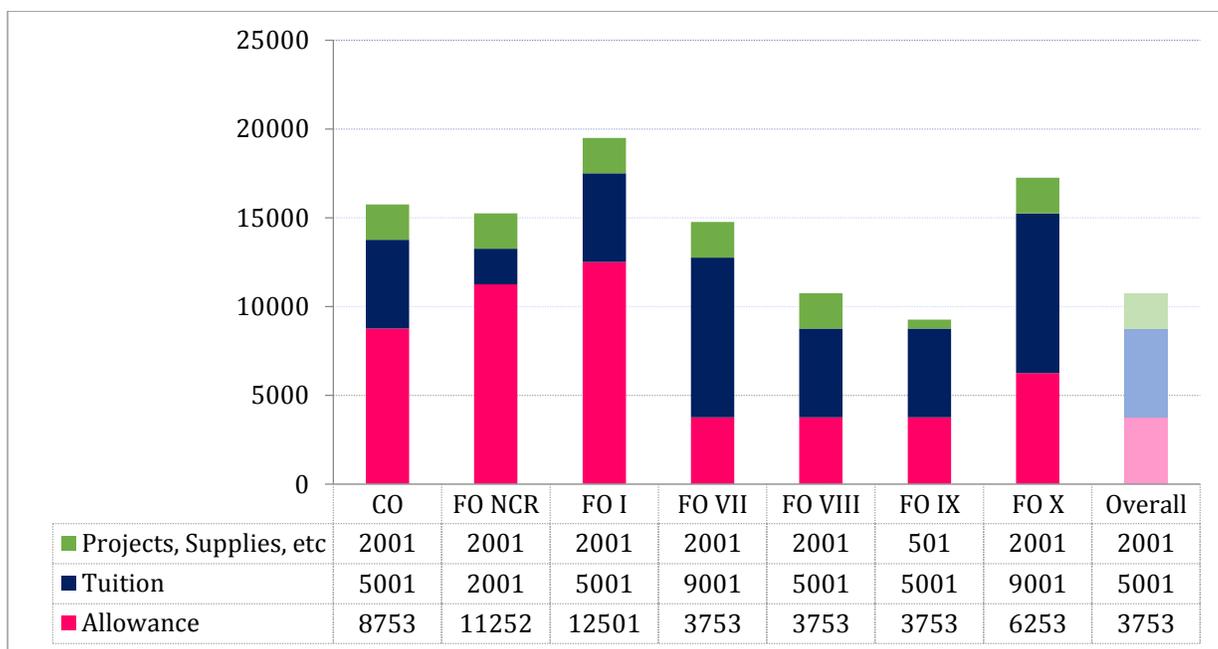
In connection to this, clients in the study were interviewed to examine their needs, the shocks they experienced, and their situation prior to seeking educational assistance. Moreover, their

income, school expenses, and other variables were estimated to determine various economic and social vulnerabilities. The following findings shows the results on the vulnerability/condition of the respondents prior to availing assistance and their eligibility to the program.

Beneficiaries seeking educational assistance typically intend to augment their tuition fees.

The following data show that bulk of academic expenses of college beneficiaries come from tuition fees. Overall, the median spending of students is around 5000 which is 46% of their total expenses. This was followed by transportation and food allowance. Clients residing in Metro Manila and Region 1 reflected highest expenditures on allowance. Other expenses such as expenses on books, projects and uniforms represent only a small portion of the expenses of students. Aside from the tuition fee, as mentioned in FGDs, one of the major expenses is the rental of boarding house and other corresponding expenses because the schools are usually located far from their homes. Thus, there is a clamor on providing outright cash assistance for other school expenses which also puts the students in crisis situation.

Figure 2. Median spending by college beneficiaries on school expenses by Office



Considering this, students typically seek educational assistance to augment their tuition fees. Based on the survey results, 68% of the respondents said that high expenses on tuition prompted them to avail assistance

Table 2. Frequency of clients who use the assistance for several types of expenses

Use of assistance	Frequency	Percent
Tuition	183	67.5
Projects, Supplies, Uniforms, etc.	129	47.6
Allowance	88	32.5

Multiple responses allowed

Albeit the implementation of the Free Tuition Policy starting academic year 2017-2018, still relatively many students from state universities and colleges (SUCs) came to DSWD to avail educational assistance because they were not covered by the free tuition. Among the sample, 20% or 32 beneficiaries who are enrolled in SUCs for the 1st semester of AY 2017-2018 availed assistance from DSWD to pay for their tuition fees. But to begin with, the latest AICS guidelines indicate that the educational assistance shall also cover school tuition fees and the implication of the free tuition policy on the coverage of AICS educational assistance is not yet incorporated in the guidelines and processes.

Most clients of educational assistance are not requesting for the assistance due to immediate need or crisis situation. Some clients treat the assistance as a source of income due to lack of employment opportunities and inadequate income.

Annual Per Capita income of the clients were processed to generate their level of poverty based on the 2015 provincial poverty threshold estimates of the Philippine Statistics Authority. Table below shows that majority of the served clients interviewed belong to households which are below the poverty threshold.

Table 3. Poverty level of clients by Office

Poverty level	Office							Total
	CO	FO NCR	FO I	FO VII	FO VIII	FO IX	FO X	
below poverty threshold	27	23	19	26	33	37	28	193
%	77.1	76.7	51.4	74.3	84.6	71.2	84.9	74.0
above poverty threshold	8	7	18	9	6	15	5	68
%	22.8	23.3	48.7	25.7	15.4	25.7	15.1	26.0
Total	35	30	37	35	39	52	33	261
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Overall, 74% of the respondents are living below the poverty threshold. It can also be noticed that FO VIII and FO X have the highest proportion of poor clients. However, among the implementing offices, it is notable that FO I reflected the highest proportion of respondents who are living above the poverty threshold.

Consistent with the FGDs and interviews with clients, it was mentioned that most of the clients sought to avail educational assistance because of poverty and that income of their parents / guardians are not enough to sustain their educational expenses-treating education assistance as one of their regular source. In fact, findings below show that 40% have already availed educational assistance more than once.

Table 4. Number of times clients availed educational assistance

Number	Frequency	Percent
1 beses	159	60.0
2-3 beses	97	36.6
4 o higit pang beses	9	3.4

It follows that most of the clients of educational assistance are not really requesting for the assistance due to immediate need or crisis situation, but because of chronic poverty condition. This is also the reason why for some implementers, the provision of educational assistance somehow defeats its purpose thus, less empowering for the clients. With this, social workers assess the clients by looking at the financial resources of the family, remaining balance in tuition and miscellaneous fees or other school expenses and the available funds for CIU at the department level.

There is a modest number of inclusion and exclusion errors in selecting beneficiaries. Among the sample, there are some families served which are non-poor and showed no signs of vulnerability which could be due to lack of well-defined parameters of vulnerability/selection criteria.

Aside from income, signs of vulnerability of the respondents were categorized by the evaluators based on the clients' responses. The following table below shows that most of the respondents belong to households who suffer financially due to a chronically ill household member. These were mentioned by the respondents when asked about the condition of their family which urged them to seek educational assistance from AICS.

Table 4. Various signs of vulnerability of clients

Signs of vulnerability	Frequency	Percent
Chronic Disease/Illness	84	31.0
More than 3 family members are attending school/university	75	27.7
Disability	30	11.1
Debts	5	1.9
Lack of parental support	5	1.9
<i>Multiple responses are allowed</i>		

Number of vulnerability signs of the respondents' families were then counted and showed in the table below. Based on the results, 107 or 43% of the clients served showed at least one sign of vulnerability. It could be noticed, however, that an inclusion error may be present as there are 33 clients or 13% who are above the poverty threshold

Priority shall be given to families who are indigent, vulnerable and disadvantaged or those in the informal sector who are in crisis situation based on assessment of the Social Workers

and showed no signs of vulnerability but were provided with assistance. For instance, in some areas of Region I where payout is done thru politicians, all interested clients may avail of the financial assistance regardless of their situation or vulnerability since no assessment from Social Worker is being done in the process. Similarly, exclusion error is also likely, particularly among the Pantawid families because based on the results of the interviews, it is

not definite whether or not Pantawid families shall be exempt from availing educational assistance.

Table 5. Number of vulnerabilities of clients by Region

Vulnerability Count	Above Poverty Threshold	Below Poverty Threshold	Total
0	33	108	141
1	28	61	89
2	4	17	17
3	-	1	1

Risks of errors in selecting clients could also be caused by lack of well-defined parameters for vulnerability. While it is indicated in the guidelines that priority shall be given to indigent, vulnerable, and disadvantaged families, there are no specific criteria or concrete indicators of vulnerability. There are also no scoring mechanism/tool for establishing levels of vulnerability (low, medium, high) which could guide the Social Workers on how much assistance shall be given to the clients.

Processes in Availing Assistance

Different Regional Offices have varying procedures in providing educational assistance. It is notable that Field Office I, in general, does not comply with the standard processes.

The evaluation team asked the survey respondents if they have undergone the following processes during their availing of assistance (*Please see Table 6*). Based on the results, majority of the clients in Central Office, FO NCR and in FO IX completed the following steps. On the other hand, most clients in FO VIII and FO X end with interview with a social worker; some of them do not actually directly get the assistance. This is because Offices implement different modes of assistance – provision of outright cash and issuance of guarantee letters. Lastly, attention should be given to Field Office I because based on the data, its actual implementation does not conform to the standard processes of assistance provision. According to the respondents in FO 1, they submitted all the documentary requirements either to the barangay or their school. The Congressman himself will then be the one who will distribute the cash assistance to the students after a week. Provision of assistance is done by the Congressman in schools.

Table 6. Steps/Process undertaken by clients in availing assistance by Region

Steps/Processes	Office						
	CO n=36	FO NCR n=36	FO I n=37	FO VII n=35	FO VIII n=39	FO IX n=54	FO X n=33
1. Client lines up and gets queuing number	100	89	14	57	79	89	52
2. Client submits his/her documents to DSWD staff to check the appropriateness and completeness of the documents	100	94	11	77	85	91	97
3. Client provides initial details / information about their situation to the DSWD staff	86	89	19	63	64	89	88
4. Client gets queuing number / wait for the interview/ assessment	97	86	0	69	69	81	76
5. The client is interviewed by the Social Worker	97	89	5	69	79	96	79
6. Client gets queuing number / wait for the release of assistance	100	92	16	37	21	69	42
7. Client receives the cash, cheque or guarantee letter as form of educational assistance	100	89	22	57	8	87	27

Some Field Offices opted to issue guarantee letters as primary mode of assistance to ensure that the assistance is solely being used for school expenses.

In the Rapid Assessment of AICS conducted by the DSWD FO IV-CALABARZON, it was found that the funds provided as cash advance to the SWAD Team Leader (Special Disbursement Officer) was either delayed or insufficient which causes backlogs in the cash outright and offsite services. Moreover, upon liquidation of cash advances by the SWAD Offices, unavailability of funds of the Regional Office is another issue which causes longer cash gap or the time between the cash is used/released by the SWAD Offices and cash coming back to them from the Regional Office; and this sometimes leave SWAD Offices cash poor. In Field Office VIII, guarantee letter is the primary mode of payment for educational assistance. The limited number of employees who can acquire cash advance resulted to devising other options to provide assistance. Thus, the CIU opted to have Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

with service providers for different types of assistance, which will only entail release of guarantee letters instead of direct cash. For direct cash assistance, medical and burial assistance are prioritized over other types of assistance. This mode of payment also ensured the Department that the educational assistance is solely being used for the school expenses of the students. However, this implied that educational assistance is less of a crisis intervention because tuition fee is a regular expense if one is attending school. In 2017, the Field Office provided 97% of its educational assistance for tuition fee augmentation of their clients. Moreover, with the existence of the MOA, strong coordination between the agency and service provider is maintained for smooth feedback, while some schools uses the opportunity to ensure that their students would be able to pay their tuition fee thru the educational assistance of the agency.

These findings were validated whereas in Field Office X and some areas in Region VII, educational assistance is provided thru guarantee letter which is directly used for tuition fee augmentation. This assistance is provided directly thru the schools for tuition fee. Moreover, Field Office NCR also provides guarantee letter to their clients and because they have huge number of clients, they secure their issued guarantee letters with control number and other security features to prevent fraud.

In Field Office IX, outright cash for educational assistance is provided. In 2015, the Field Office is still providing guarantee letters but they have lessened the issuance of such since no formal agreement is made between the agency and the service provider. As such, they are more determined to continue providing outright cash assistance. Although there are cases where beneficiaries have used the money for other immediate needs, majority of the amount is still allocated for educational expenses. In terms of cash flow, implementers believe that there is improvement in the cash system provided that even though there is limited alternate Special Disbursement Officer (SDO), cash is replenished moderately, providing enough time to conduct regular pay-out for all types of assistance.

Some Offices require other documents which are not indicated in the guidelines. Moreover, lack of staff adversely affects the processes/requirements for availing the assistance

The table below shows the documents submitted by the survey respondents to avail of the educational assistance.

Table 7. Requirements submitted by clients by Office

Requirements	Office						
	CO	FO NCR	FO I	FO VII	FO VIII	FO IX	FO X
Enrollment Assessment Form/ Certificate of Registration	94.4	30.6	40.5	74.3	100.0	100.0	97.0
Barangay Certificate of Residency/ Indigency	97.2	100.0	48.6	91.4	100.0	98.2	100.0
School ID of Beneficiary	97.2	91.7	54.1	77.1	97.4	98.2	100.0
Case Study	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	53.9	0.0	36.4
Certificate of No Scholarship	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	64.1	0.0	3.0

Survey results showed that Field Office VIII and X require clients to submit additional documents not indicated in the guidelines. It was validated from the qualitative findings that FO VIII requires submission of certificate of non-scholar and case summary from M/LSWDO in order to process the requests for educational assistance. As stated in the MC No. 4 series of 2015, social case study report is required as supporting document for assistance more than PhP5,000.00 and are usually requested for medical assistance. But from the perspective of the implementers in the Field Office, this initiative shall help identify and assess the immediate need of the client provided that M/LSWDOs know their citizens more, thus ensuring that only those qualified and deserving shall be provided with educational assistance. However, this leads to exclusion of some clients such as those with regular income who are not entertained at the LSWDO level but in reality is needing immediate assistance from the government. There are also claims of M/LSWDOs requiring voter's identification before granting the case summary and those who restricts individuals / families who are not allies. This also somehow doubles the process given that the client is required to undergo two interviews with almost the same line of questioning from the social workers. The certificate of non-scholar is also restrictive given that the financial assistance provided to the clients is not a form of scholarship thus, should still be made available for scholars who may need extra assistance for other school expenses.

On the other hand, FO X required additional document due to lack of staff. For more than six months of 2017, there is only one social worker assigned for the assessment/interview of clients at the Field Office wherein an average of 50-60 clients per day is being processed. If the bulk of clients is more than the regular number per day, one social worker from the

Disaster Response Team would augment, as necessary. To date, an additional two social workers were already in place for AICS implementation. Moreover, there are also Social Welfare and Development (SWAD) Offices with only one social worker assigned for assessment/interview of AICS clients having an average of 20-30 clients per day. Due to this limited resources, the field office implemented an additional business process for availment of educational assistance, which required the clients to submit a case summary report from their M/LSWDO as part of their requirements. The said case summary report shall be the lone assessment/interview document of the client, thus having DSWD facilitate only the process of releasing the assistance. This additional requirement also adds burden for the clients since securing such document requires longer timeline and is somehow politically influenced.

Long waiting hours for the processing of educational assistance was noticed in Central Office; some clients skipped their classes to complete the process of availing assistance.

Table 8. Modal duration/processing time of assistance by Region

Office	Modal Processing Time
CO	6-8 hours
FO NCR	1-2 hours
FO I	1-2 hours
FO VII	3-5 hours
FO VIII	less than 1 hour
FO IX	1-2 hours
FO X	1-2 hours

Quantitative data revealed that majority of clients in the Field Offices waited 1-2 hours to process their assistance. Whereas, it took 6-8 hours for the clients in the Central Office to complete the processes. Furthermore, they are required to initially appear at the office to get their stub with indicated schedule on when to process their request. Respondents claim that the waiting time before they will be interviewed and before their assistance is released prolongs the process since the actual interview and release of assistance will take only 10-15 minutes each. More than the process, the volume of students requesting for assistance as against the number of social workers is a major contributory on the duration of processing

time. Because of these long waiting hours, the satisfaction of the clients declined especially for the students who skip their class to process their request for educational assistance.

Processing of payment to the service providers through guarantee letters takes 4-7 months.

While the processing of requirements and interview can be done within the day, release of assistance takes 4-7 months for assistance in the form of guarantee letters. This puts inconvenience on the part of the clients especially for the students who are worried since their permission to take their final exams will rely on the payment of DSWD to their respective schools.

The processing, funding and release of payment for the service providers are done in bulk; DSWD offices tend to initially compile all educational assistance of a certain service provider before starting to process the payment. Since educational assistance usually have peak season, two of the factors to consider in processing the payment to service provider is (1) enough time to prepare documents / attachments of the payment request and (2) enough manpower to facilitate the payment process. For instance, if the peak season of providing educational assistance is May to July and DSWD personnel have been working more than the regular working hours for this, preparing the documents / attachments for payment of service provider would be done after the peak season provided that there is enough manpower assigned to facilitate this above their regular workload. Payment requests can last up to 2-3 months of processing depending on the number of pending requests for both regular transactions and AICS-related transactions and this could also extend if there would be lacking documents / attachments and other related concerns. Moreover, there are also cases like in Central Office where they require the certificate of matriculation (from accounting division of the school) of the students with guarantee letters indicating the total fees less the approved amount of educational assistance, before the processing of payment to service provider. This additional requirements from school to DSWD also prolongs the processing time.

Separating the processing of educational assistance from other AICS assistance is proven to improve timeliness of service delivery.

Respondents recognized that the separation of processing of educational assistance among other types of assistance is a good strategy. Since availment of educational assistance is seasonal, it would be faster to process all requests if separate or additional social workers

would facilitate the procedure. It will also avoid delays in processing of other types of assistance due to the bulk of requests for educational assistance.

In the previous years, respondents in the Central Office claimed that the whole process of availment took 6-12 hours from checking of requirements to release of assistance. This year, the processing time was reduced to 6-8 hours. In the past years of AICS implementation in Central Office, requests for educational assistance are processed together with other types of assistance and it was only this year when the process of availment of educational assistance was separated. The separation of process was seen necessary due to the bulk of clients who lined up for educational assistance in elementary and high school because of the announcement made by the department.

In FO IX, VII and NCR, there is a separate schedule for processing of educational assistance to give way for other types of assistance. Provision of educational assistance is scheduled during Saturdays to give way for priority assistance such as medical, burial and transportation assistance. On regular weekdays of Field Office IX, an average of 100-150 clients per day are being processed for all other types of assistance while during Saturdays, 50-60 clients are being processed for educational assistance. Furthermore, Field Office VII and NCR conducts their payout during Saturdays due to lack of office space, and since there are a lot of clients for educational assistance particularly during peak season, they opted to have a separate schedule for this, catering an average of 150-200 clients per payout. For the implementers, this can be considered as an innovation and facilitating factor for implementation of educational assistance however, for some clients, it would be better to have a weekday schedule so they can maximize their time during weekends or at least have other options/schedule during the weekdays.

Furthermore, in Field Office VII, a dedicated cashier within the CIU premises has been operating which helps facilitate the prompt release of assistance. Since this cashier processes purely CIU-related transactions only, it became possible for their office to immediately release the cash assistance within the day, and lessen processing time, bringing extra convenience on the part of the beneficiaries.

Political intervention in the implementation of the program is still present and could affect its processes

For instance, a district representative helps in the dissemination of information to his citizens regarding the educational assistance. Upon dissemination of the list of requirements for the

educational assistance, their staff would instruct the clients to submit the said documents to their office so they can facilitate the submission to DSWD and they shall just wait for the payment to reach their respective schools. The office of the said congressman would then provide DSWD all the submitted requests and will monitor updates on the processing of the requests. In this manner, the concerned congressman would still claim his power over the processing of the request from the perspective of his citizens.

There are also experiences from Field Office I and NCR wherein the intervention of politicians is very prominent putting all the credit of providing educational assistance to them. For instance in Region I, the DSWD was not visible for the clients since the payout and submission of requirements were done thru the schools or barangays. Payout is conducted by the Congressman himself and no interview is being done by any Social Worker. Moreover, for certain areas in Region VII, submission of requirements and payout were done at the office of a certain politician which somehow excludes the DSWD in the process. Clients are also required to obtain their “green cards” at the same office, and this contains the schedule for interview and processing of their request and according to clients the schedule is limited only for 2,000 slots/clients. While for NCR, there were also misconceptions that the Congressman is the one providing educational assistance per cascading of the officials from the Barangay level.

There are also claims from the implementers that there are politicians who insists on providing educational assistance to their referred clients even though they are not eligible to the program. Those referred clients would advise the office of the concerned politician about their denied application for educational assistance in DSWD, the politician would then call the attention of the DSWD management until it reaches the particular social worker. The concerned worker would then explain and justify the recommendation but would end up providing other types of assistance. These instances add up to the stress and complication of the working environment. However, thru the issuance of MC 9, S. 2016, the workers now have more concrete defense over these politicians; the decision-making and actions of the workers particularly on referral letters from organizations or public officials became more justified, as the guidelines cited that these are not integral to the implementation of the program. According to implementers, with the said guidelines, although there are still referral letters, they became more confident to strictly follow and defend their assessment against complaints of the referring party. With proper citation and dissemination of this information

to the clients, organizations and public officials whenever there would be grievances, the instances as mentioned above were gradually lessened.

On the other hand, the transfer of funds to LGUs which is determined depending on the density of NHTS identified-poor, might be taken advantage of by the concerned politicians especially because currently, there are no issues on liquidation but the bottleneck is on the submission of accomplishment reports. Although this scheme could be part of devolution of tasks by the agency to the local partners, the assurance of providing the needs of all those who are eligible and deserving could be sacrificed.

Disappearance of fixers was observed

Those who have availed of the educational assistance for more than two times in the Central Office testified that they have experienced improvement in the management of the program. Disappearance of fixers within and outside the agency was also observed; from the claims that there are fixers from the communities who offer processing of educational assistance with a fee and fixers from the DSWD personnel who offer faster processing and bigger amount of educational assistance.

Similarly, in Field Office NCR, existence of these fixers was reduced based on the claims of the implementers. Before, there were fixers who are caught for asking PhP300-500 fee for processing of requests for financial assistance but since the DSWD staff were already familiar with the strategy of these fixers, they became more conscious. Identity and pictures of these fixers are also posted within the vicinity of CIU offices to serve as warning for the clients.

Amount and Coverage of Assistance

Overall, amount of assistance provided by Offices differ significantly

Shown below are the median amount of assistance provided by different Offices to their clients. Note that FO IX and FO X provides a standard amount of PhP 5000.00 and PhP 3000.00 for college students, respectively, as mentioned in the previous findings. Results revealed that FO IX offers the greatest amount of assistance to college students while the CO provides the least amount. For grade school students, FO IX's assistance is 3000 pesos higher than FO X's assistance.

Table 9. Median amount of assistance by Office by Level

Office	Gradeschool	College
CO	-	2500
FO NCR	1500	3000
FO I	1000	1500
FO VII	2000	5000
FO VIII	-	4000
FO IX	1000	5000
FO X	4000	3000

This is consistent with the qualitative findings. Generally, AICS in FO IX provides a maximum of PhP5,000.00 cash assistance for college students which is usually provided to those students who have remaining tuition fee balance, while PhP3,000.00 shall be provided to those who have other school needs such as supplies, uniforms and projects. FO X also provides a standard amount equivalent to PhP3,000.00 for educational assistance to college students which are mostly provided thru guarantee letters. Cases of providing outright cash assistance and amount higher than PhP3,000.00 are only isolated cases wherein other emergency requirements were needed by the client based on the assessment of the social worker. In FO I, standard amount of educational assistance is provided to elementary, high school and college students; where elementary students are provided with P800, P1000 for high school students and P1600 for college students. While for FO VII, educational assistance ranges from P2000-P5000, however there are instances of unprocessed or denied requests for assistance if the funds left are already limited, they initially give priority to other major types of assistance.

The amount of assistance provided should also take into consideration, the expenses incurred by the clients in processing their requests such as for their transportation, documentary requirements, etc. For instance, in FO VII, there were claims that the amount they received were not sufficient provided that they spent much for transportation and completion of requirements and the amount of financial assistance granted was only PhP1000-2000 which is low compared to the acquired costs of processing request for educational assistance.

Clients with lower income tend to receive higher amount of assistance

Further examination of some variables to check if the amount of assistance provided to the clients is dependent on their annual per capita. By estimating a linear regression model (see

Statistical Note 1 on next page), it can be concluded that as annual capita decreases, the amount of assistance provided increases (and vice versa). This confirms that there is a strong link between the amount provided to the clients and the income status of clients. Fairness is exhibited in the provision of assistance since generally, those clients who have lower income tend to receive higher amount of assistance.

It was found out that provision of standard amount of assistance hinders in conducting correct assessment of expenses of clients which affects sufficiency of the amount of assistance given to them.

Coverage of assistance is computed as the percentage of amount of assistance vis-à-vis the total educational expenses of the beneficiary. The following table shows the median expenses, median total amount of assistance and the percentage of expenses covered by the educational assistance. Based on the results, while the respondents in CO and FO X have the highest amount of expenses, they were provided with the least amount of assistance, hence the least coverage. Ironically, students in FO IX who have the least expenses were provided with the highest amount of assistance.

Table 10. Expenses, Amount of Assistance, and Coverage by Region

Office	Total Expenses	Amount of Assistance	Coverage of Assistance
CO	17,254.00	2500.00	14%
FO NCR	13504.00	3000.00	22%
FO I	10753.00	1000.00	9%
FO VII	12754.00	5000.00	39%
FO VIII	13,254.00	4000.00	30%
FO IX	9,254.00	5000.00	54%
FO X	19,754.00	3000.00	15%

These findings suggest that Offices which provide standard amount of assistance (namely, FOs I, IX and X) are not able to accurately cover the expenses of clients due to lack of assessment. In particular, FO IX clients which have the least expenses tend to receive more while FO I and FO X clients which have the greatest expenses tend to receive less than what they need. A very small amount compared to other FOs were also received by clients in FO I.

Standard amount of assistance was also usually observed to be provided by politicians; they recommend standard amount for their constituents assuming that it would be fair and to avoid questions or conflicts if different amounts would be provided. However this manner of providing assistance would contradict the objective and process of the program which is to provide assistance based on the needs and situation of the clients.

Statistical Note (1)

Amount of assistance was regressed against annual per capita income to investigate if these two variables have a significant relationship. Specifically, the following equation was estimated:

$$\ln(\text{Amount of Assistance}) = \beta_0 + \ln(\text{Annual Per Capita Income}) + \varepsilon$$

Based on the regression output below, since $p=0.0129 < 0.05$ we can conclude that *Annual per Capita* is significantly negatively related to the amount of assistance. That is, -1% change in Annual per Capita is associated with 13% change in the amount of assistance to clients. This implies that clients with lower annual per capita income tend to receive more assistance.

Variable	DF	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	t Value	Pr > t
Intercept	1	9.1067	0.5037	18.2	<.0001
ln(Annual Per Capita)	1	-0.13	0.0535	-2.51	0.0129

Differences in coverage of assistance among the Offices are found to be statistically significant. Coverage of assistance was also investigated to assess if there is a statistical difference on the assistance covered by the implementing Offices. Based on the results (See Statistical Note 2), implementing Offices have varying coverage of assistance and among them, FO IX provides the highest coverage.

Statistical Note (2)

To find out if the differences of coverage of assistance among the implementing Offices are indeed significant, Kruskal –Wallis test of difference was employed by the evaluators. The results of the test are as follows:

Office	N	Sum of Scores	Expected Under Ho	Standard Deviation Under Ho	Mean Score
CO	36	3493.50	4842.00	432.67	97.04
FO NCR	34	3975.50	4573.00	422.29	116.93
FO I	36	1725.50	4842.00	432.67	47.93
FO VII	35	6465.50	4707.50	427.54	184.73
FO VIII	39	6534.00	5245.50	447.41	167.54
FO IX	55	10621.00	7397.50	512.42	193.11
FO X	33	3231.00	4438.50	416.91	97.91

Kruskal-Wallis Test	
Chi-Square	115.6637
DF	6
Pr > Chi-Square	<.0001

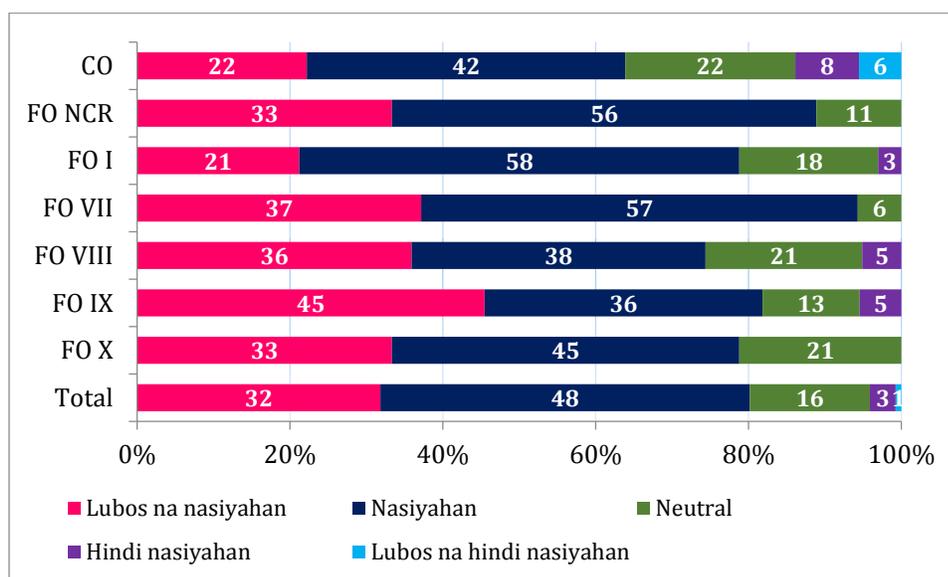
Based on the results above, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that offices have indeed varying coverage of assistance. Moreover, we can conclude that FO IX provides the highest coverage.

Beneficiary Feedback on Service Delivery

Overall, clients agreed that services provided through AICS educational assistance are satisfied with the process of availing educational assistance and expressed that the assistance was very helpful to them; however, timeliness, appropriateness of assessment, and the adequacy of the amount of assistance needs improvement.

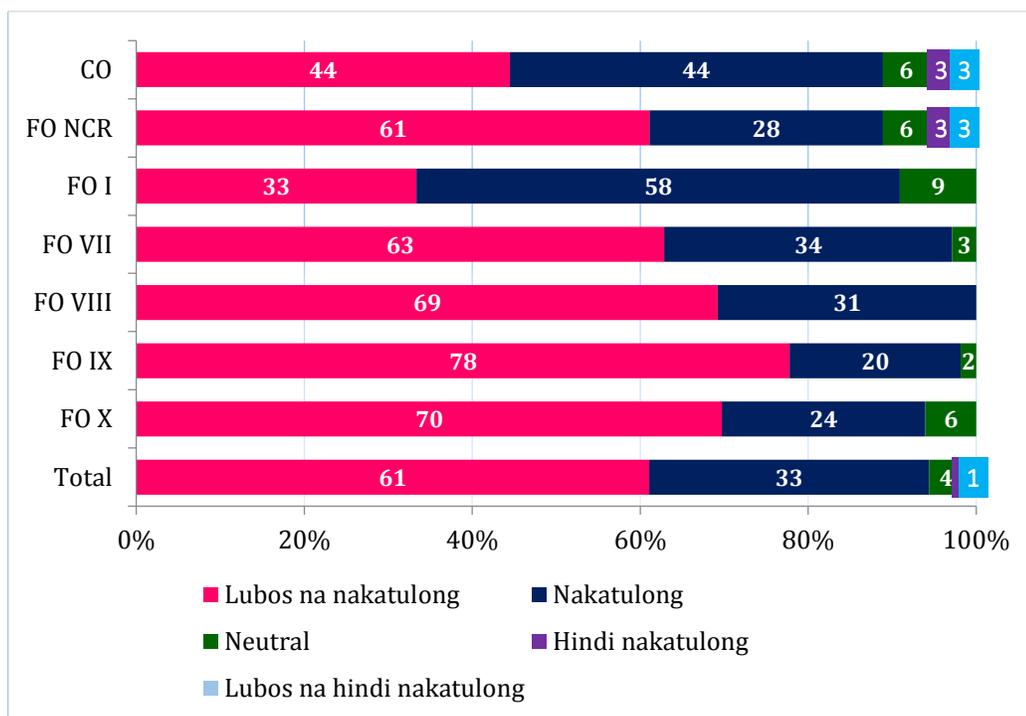
The following figure shows the overall satisfaction of clients on the process of availing assistance. Based on the figure, it could be noticed that 80% of clients expressed satisfaction and only 4% reported dissatisfaction. It also shows that clients in FO VII had the highest satisfaction on the process.

Figure 3. Overall satisfaction of clients on the process by Region



Also, clients were asked how helpful the AICS educational assistance was for them. Based on the results, 94% of the respondents said that overall, the assistance was helpful to them and only 2% of the respondents said that the assistance was not helpful in addressing their needs.

Figure 4. Overall perception of clients on the assistance by Region



To better understand which specific variables affect the clients overall satisfaction, the responses/agreement levels of the interviewed clients on a series of questions relative to the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of services of the educational assistance program were analyzed. *Figures presented are in percent.*

Table 11. Agreement level on several statements by Office

Statements	Agreement (%)							Ave.
	CO	FO NCR	FO I	FO VII	FO VIII	FO IX	FO X	
1. Maayos ang pakikitungo ng mga empleyado ng DSWD sa mga kliyente.	81	91	100	94	87	96	82	89
2. Naipaliwanag ng maayos ang prosesong pagdadaan sa pagkuha ng tulong pampaaral.	86	91	80	91	90	96	88	90
3. Ang mga hinihinging dokumento ng DSWD upang maproseso ang paghingi ng tulong pampaaral ay angkop at katanggap tanggap.	89	94	77	94	90	96	94	92
4. Naipaliwanag nang maayos kung mayroong mali o kakulangan sa mga dokumentong dinala.	88	94	71	88	87	93	94	90

Statements	Agreement (%)							Ave.
	CO	FO NCR	FO I	FO VII	FO VIII	FO IX	FO X	
5. Naipaliwanag nang maayos ang batayan/basis ng halagang natanggap.	38	44	55	59	62	68	48	55
6. Naramdaman ko ang malasakit ng DWSD staff na nag-assist sa akin.	83	89	100	88	90	93	91	89
7. Kung ibabatay sa inyong karanasan, ang assessment ng Social Worker at halaga ng natanggap ay angkop sa pangangailangan at kalagayan ng kliyente.	56	80	53	77	79	85	67	74
8. Maayos ang lugar ng paghihintayan (waiting area).	56	86	76	83	90	82	79	79
9. Ang serbisyong naibigay sa akin ng DSWD ay sapat.	42	63	42	51	59	64	55	55
10. Lubos na makakatulong ang halagang natanggap upang mabawasan ang gastusin sa pagaaral. Mabilis ang kabuuang proseso ng pagkuha ng tulong pampaaral.	86	91	65	97	92	96	97	91
11. Mabilis ang kabuuang proseso ng pagkuha ng tulong pampaaral.	44	89	70	57	77	78	55	68
12. Natugunan ng DSWD ang aking pangangailangan.	69	86	74	71	92	85	76	80
13. Sa pangkalahatan, nasiyahan ako sa halaga ng tulong pampaaral na natanggap.	75	92	78	91	97	93	85	88
14. Naibigay ng DSWD ang mapagkalingang serbisyo sa tao batay sa prosesong inyong pinagdaanan.	86	91	91	97	90	93	88	91
15. Mataas ang pagkakataon na babalik o kukuha muli ng tulong pampaaral sa susunod na semester.	97	97	87	86	97	95	94	94
AVERAGE	72	85	75	82	85	88	79	82

Overall, the 82 % of respondents positively rated the services provided by the AICS educational assistance. The results also show that, on the average, clients in FO IX had the highest agreement rating (88%) on the statements while CO had the least rating (72%).

Statements highlighted in green color are those with highest ratings and those highlighted in red color had the least ratings. Based on the data, clients agreed that the procedures in availing assistance were thoroughly explained to them and that requirements are

appropriate and properly examined. Moreover, client ratings suggest that they received genuine concern from the staff or *malasakit at mapagkalingang serbisyo* based on the processes that they went through. They also said that it would be highly likely that they would avail the assistance again.

On the other hand, it seemed that the basis of the amount clients received are not thoroughly explained to them by the social workers. Moreover, clients expressed that the amount of assistance they received are insufficient to respond and are not appropriate to their needs. The results also suggest that for the clients, the process of availing assistance is too slow, especially in CO, FO VII and FO X.

Feedback Mechanism

In Central Office, Field Office I, VII and NCR, there are available grievance / feedback mechanism to manage complaints of clients arising from program implementation

The presence of suggestion box at the CIU office of Central Office, the accessibility of the Office of the Secretary and the existence of 8888 Hotline contributes on having good grievance / feedback mechanism for the clients. All received grievances are initially validated, and these are usually complaints on long waiting hours or incorrect information stated on submitted documents and lack of requirements causing clients to repetitively go back to the office. As necessary, concerned staff is consulted and corresponding feedback shall be provided to the client. To date, no issue was raised to higher management, as all grievances are resolved at the lowest possible level.

For Field Office NCR, grievance desks are available at the Satellite Offices where clients can directly provide their suggestions, comments and inquiries to the assigned Officer of the Day. Moreover, for Field Office VII, suggestion box are available at the CIU Offices where they usually receive positive and negative feedbacks which are being discussed within the team to provide alternatives / resolutions as necessary. And in Field Office I, they implement the use of feedback forms to gather client's satisfaction on service delivery however this was not yet cascaded up to the satellite offices. Feedbacks gathered thru these modes are documented and discussed to different levels of management for proper resolution.

For other offices, grievances / feedbacks are directly provided to the Social Workers /staff without formal documentation

According to implementers, clients usually proceed directly to the staff who engaged with them to mention their complaints, suggestions or feedbacks. Usually, clients question the differences on the amount of assistance extended to them or the long processing time especially for those who still needs to attend school or work. Moreover, no high-profile grievance case has been recorded for the visited offices throughout the implementation of educational assistance. But despite the absence of such, implementers see the importance of properly documenting the comments and suggestions of clients for better implementation and improvement of the program.

Resources and Program Organization

In Central Office, insufficient physical space, equipment and facilities for the Crisis Intervention Unit affects the quality of service delivery to the clients

Central Office CIU operates on a separate office building catering an average of 500 clients on regular days and 800-1000 during peak season (school enrollment period). This bulk of clients is being served by twenty-three (23) Social Workers, and thirteen (13) administrative staff. Currently, each staff is not issued with individual laptop or computer and working table. Usually, workers and staff borrow laptops and occupy the working space of those who are outside or not in the office. The office layout and space of CIU-CO is also relatively small; although each client is served on a separate table, they are too close to each other causing them to hear the conversation on their other side. This limitation then results to risking the confidentiality of the interview thus minimal intervention and counseling were provided to the clients. Same with the result of the rapid assessment conducted by DSWD FO IV-CALABARZON, all frontline Social Work Officers were found exposed to risk of contracting airborne disease as the office lack appropriate risk mitigation measures such as providing face masks when needed. Moreover, the employees' performance and mood are influenced by their environment especially their human factors such as machine and equipment complements. Waiting areas for client is also an issue, having monobloc chairs and canopy tents built only on free spaces around the CIU office which is very inconvenient for Senior Citizens, PWDs, pregnant women, children, and sickly clients. Proposals and requests have been processed by CIU-CO to resolve such issues however, timeline for approval and procurement of equipment, supplies, etc. takes a while.

While in Field Office VIII, improving the facilities and equipment are gradually considered to provide better service to the clients

In terms of office space, the CIU is too crowded and not well ventilated considering that there are other units occupying the same office space. For CIU alone, the small office space accommodates six social workers, seven social welfare assistants, and one financial analyst. Even the clients are giving feedback that the office is crowded especially if there are lot of clients; hearing each other's interview and very limited space to occupy for those with companions. There are also requests pending for approval to transfer on other office space or procurement of air conditioner and electric fans. Currently, in terms of facilities, the waiting area for clients offers a television and chairs for convenience, with the pending request for another television and a water dispenser. These services add to clients' satisfaction taking into consideration their waiting time for the processing of their requests. For the staff, lack of steel cabinets for safekeeping of personal belongings and documents as well as absence of storage space/ room results to poor records management and unorganized workplace. Intermittent internet connections is also an issue given that checking and encoding in CRIMS is an important stage for proper processing of request for assistance. On the other hand, availability of equipment is not an issue with each social worker provided with own laptop and 2 common desktop computers used for checking and encoding in CRIMS. The management is aware of these requirements, however there is a very limited fund available to purchase such requests.

In Field Office IX, new facilities for CIU which improves the delivery of service to the clients

Less than a month before the data gathering activities in the Field Office was conducted, the Crisis Intervention Unit has transferred to a new building. This plan was made after a facility audit was conducted by Central Office last August 2016. Waiting area is properly shaded, with good ventilation and separate rooms for interview/assessment of social workers and the pay-out. However, since there are four social workers who conduct interview / assessment and there is only a single room to house them, there are suggestions on having a dedicated space for counseling/ assessment of sensitive cases for privacy and confidentiality purposes. Necessary office equipment such as computers, laptops, printers and internet connection are available for all the CIU Staff.

In Field Office NCR, lack of human and physical resources hamper the service delivery as well as put security risks among the staff

In terms of facilities, the CIU stationed at the Field Office uses only tents as assessment/interview areas which are not conducive and secured especially during the rainy season. There are also no security cameras available at the area although there are stationed security guards but due to the bulk of people entering and leaving the area, additional security measures must be observed. Availability of printing / photocopying machine is also a concern, thus most of the time, such expenses are shouldered by the personnel. Moreover, the CIU at the Field Office NCR operates 24 hours 7 days a week with only 52 personnel with rotational shiftwork. Although they are well compensated, there are still concerns on the welfare of the staff.

The Field Office NCR currently have several Satellite Offices wherein each have its own AICS operations, and this eventually brought additional requirements in terms of physical and human resources. For instance, there is no available internet connection and insufficient number of desktop and laptops despite the need for such in the usage and monitoring of CrIMS. There are 32 district offices which ideally would require at least one designated Special Disbursement Officers (SDOs) and one service vehicle each office for payout purposes. However, there were no arrangements made before the actual operations of the district offices, resulting to Social workers outside of the program being assigned as SDOs and privately-owned vehicles being used to transport cash assistance during payout which is done twice a week. Same with the findings on the rapid assessment of AICS by DSWD FO IV-CALABARZON, there is a need to establish security protocol, as the Satellite Offices kept huge amount of money in their vaults; those offices outside of the government controlled compound were identified as high risk of either robbery or theft. Being assigned as SDO would require additional accountability as claiming and ensuring the liquidation of cash advances are part of the responsibilities of the assigned SDO per their performance contracts. Moreover, security issues during payout are caused by unavailability of service vehicle and designated payout venue. Since the Field Office have limited number of service vehicles, availability of such are not secured during conduct of payout, considering that each payout would require handling of millions of pesos, thus there are instances when SDOs are forced to use their private vehicles or ride other transport services to travel to the payout venue. Payout venue is also a concern since usually this are being conducted on any place with wide space such as multi-purpose hall or basketball courts and are generally not conducive in

terms of ventilation and security. Furthermore, DSWD personnel may also opt to avail support from politicians thru use of their service vehicles, facilities and venue, instead of availing such thru their own expenses, which are sometimes abused by the politicians by claiming all the credits in providing the assistance.

In Field Office VII, they provided more client-friendly processes of availing financial assistance

In Region VII, in order to cater their island municipalities, CIU operations are being held in nearby areas. Assessment, interview and payout are held in a strategic venue where the clients of these island municipalities can proceed with minimal transportation costs. In this way, clients will not be obliged to proceed to mainland cities / municipalities since it will cost them much for transportation expenses and consume more time.

In Central Office, the welfare of staff are not prioritized due to limited resources which lowers public service motivation

In Central Office CIU, Administrative Staff and Social Workers who conduct interview and assessment of clients are hired as Contract of Service (COS) workers which implies that there is lack of social protection and inequality in benefits due to lack of employee-employer relationship with the agency. Moreover, overtime rendered by workers are not well-compensated which is usually provided every day since the CIU operates from 7AM until 6PM or until all clients were served. Last July 2017, during the peak season for educational assistance, the CIU operated for 24 hours to cater the thousands of clients who lined up; during this time the CIU staffs were not well-equipped resulting to disturbance in the existing daily operation system. In terms of skills enhancements and stress debriefing activities for workers, there is minimal opportunities offered since the CIU workforce should not be reduced in order to maintain stable daily operations.

The Field Office VIII has strong support from the management which enhances their service delivery

AICS implementation is one of the programs requiring high budgetary allocation which is a major concern for the management. Thus, the support of the management is necessary to ensure continuity of the service and this is one of the facilitating factors that the Field Office identified for their smooth implementation of AICS. Requests for additional budget allocation are usually granted by the management both at the field office and central office, thus the

availability of funds is just a secondary measure in determining or assessing the amount of assistance to be provided. Social workers look more on the presenting, working and underlying problem of the client and the financial resources of the family in recommending the amount of assistance. Sufficient manpower and completeness of equipment is also an indication of the support from the management. Lastly, the affirmation on the implementation of Memorandum Circular 9 series of 2016 entitled *Supplemental Guidelines on the Implementation of Protective Services Program (PSP)*, also verifies the support of the management towards proper implementation of the AICS.

Other Findings

In Central office, there is strong adherence to existing guidelines but can still adjust to available resources to provide fair service to the clients

The Central Office Protective Services Bureau serves as the oversight office in the implementation of AICS and given that the CIU-Central Office is the closest implementing office, the CIU-CO primarily follows and strictly implements the guidelines and policies on AICS implementation. The guidelines stated in the Memorandum Circular No. 04 Series of 2015 is directly translated into business process which is currently followed by the CIU-CO; no requirements and process are removed or added by the said office. However, since the existing guidelines is broad and offer alternatives to cater to different cases, the business process being followed by CIU-CO is also amenable. Thus the existence of the new process for processing educational assistance following the bill on free tuition on SUCs and the announcement on provision of assistance to elementary and high school students. Moreover, the enhancement of the omnibus guidelines paved the way to accommodate good practices of AICS implementation and make necessary changes in the existing guidelines.

Different auditing process and strategies are implemented to ensure proper program implementation

The auditor of Commission on Audit housed at the Regional Office X strictly follows the rules and regulations as stated in the guidelines hampering the fast process of delivering service to the clients. Social workers of AICS prioritizes the provision of assistance to the clients the soonest possible time thus sometimes processes requests even with incomplete documents, these are usually returned to CIU for the lacking attachment or justification. Most often than not, the payout for these cases were already done upon return of documents by the auditor,

thus, social workers either write or discuss their justification with the auditor. These delays then reflect on the timeline of funding replenishment for AICS.

While in the case of Region VII, Municipal Roving Bookkeepers (MRBs) were requested to conduct regular pre-audit measures. This was part of the region's initiatives to minimize COA audit report and findings which may slow down the process of providing financial assistance in terms of fund allocation and releasing. Currently, this initiative

Many clients are aware of and have accessed educational assistance offered by other government officials, agencies, and other organizations to lessen their expenses

Since the standard amount of educational assistance provided to the clients covers only a small portion of their educational expenses, students usually look for other sources of assistance to augment their school finances. Based on the survey results, relatively high number of clients (30%) said that they were able to access educational assistance programs from other entities. Among these, majority (58%) of the respondents sought LGUs and politicians' assistance, followed by CHED (27%). Thru this, the students are helping their parents with the expenses, and also show their eagerness to continue their studies, graduate and help their families earn their living. There are also other cash assistance available at their municipalities which they use to sustain daily allowance needs. In FO 10, for instance, assistance were requested from Mayors and Board Members wherein they receive an average of Php1,500.00 from the Mayor and Php1,000.00 from each board member.

Agencies/Organizations	Frequency	Percent
LGUs and Politicians	32	53.3
CHED	16	26.6
School/University	4	6.7
DOLE	2	3.3
Others	6	10.0

In Field Office VIII, educational assistance became the alternative for students who lost their scholarships

Scholars of CHED's *Tulong Dunong* and a certain Partylist ended up utilizing the educational assistance of DSWD to cover balances on tuition fees brought by sudden termination of their scholarship grants. These students were referred to DSWD educational assistance by their respective grantors, but for the particular Partylist, they are still taking part of the process of

availability by instructing their scholars to pass by their offices to get referral letters, which makes the process even longer and prone to fraudulent acts like influencing the amount of assistance to be provided to the client. Although smaller than their usual grants, students still avail of the educational assistance to help lessen their expenses.

Conclusions

Relevance

Overall, it could be concluded that provision of educational assistance is relevant in addressing the needs of not only those who are experiencing transient distresses related to education but also those who are poor and vulnerable to shocks. This program contributes to the attainment of the Department's Organizational Outcome 2- *Rights of the Vulnerable Sectors Promoted and Protected*. However, the Department's strategies along complementation with the services of other agencies, i.e. CHED, needs to be improved to avoid overlapping provision of benefits and services.

Efficiency in Service Delivery

In determining the efficiency in service delivery of educational assistance under the AICS, both the quality and quantity of service should be measured. Overall, in terms of adherence to policies and guidelines, the selected offices were able to meet the minimum rules in implementing the educational assistance of AICS; requiring the stated documents and undergoing the major processes. However, since the existing guidelines provide leeway for adjustments in the policies, the actual implementation at the field level would vary depending on the decision of their management which is based on the dynamics of the concerned stakeholders at their respective areas. Additional requirements and processes are most often in favor of the implementers, these are usually put into effect to augment lacking resources and weaknesses of the program. However, these limits the provision of educational assistance to all deserving and eligible clients as well as lessen the client's satisfaction. Moreover, the availability of resources, either in terms of human resources or physical resources for the implementers affects the timely manner of service delivery. Lack of manpower causes slow processing of requests especially if there is bulk of clients requesting for assistance; and in the case of educational assistance, enough manpower should be ensured during the enrollment period in schools. Also, with the advancement of technology, equipment and information systems would help fasten and improve the service delivery however the absence and inefficient use of such may decelerate the process; which is being

experienced in AICS implementation due to lack of laptops, computers and having intermittent internet connection.

One of the major issue on AICS implementation is the intervention of politicians on the process of providing the assistance; either they will intervene along the processing of request or during the actual release of assistance. This scenario has been occurring even in the past years of program implementation but the department has also been doing actions to counter such practices, thus the implementation of MC No. 9, Series of 2016 clarifying that intervention from public officials are not integral to the implementation of any social protection program of the department. However, despite this and other similar policies, public officials still find ways to intervene because of the loopholes on the existing guidelines for AICS implementation. Likewise, more specific guidelines for implementation of each kind of assistance is necessary since the purpose and coverage of each is different. Specificities on the minimum and maximum amount, requirements and its purpose, process flow, timeline and identification of accountable office/person as well as the modes of payment should be cited on the guidelines for a standard service delivery to the clients of educational assistance.

Effectiveness of Service Delivery

It was evident that educational assistance was indeed effective and responsive to the needs of its clients. Based on the survey results, 94% of the clients expressed that the assistance helpful to them; however, appropriateness of assessment and the adequacy of the amount of assistance needs improvement. But despite the insufficiency of the assistance provided to some clients (FO X), the Department was generally providing higher amount of assistance to those clients who have lower incomes based on the quantitative findings.

Recommendations

Recommendation for the DSWD – PSB, FOs, etc.

1. The guidelines should be revisited particularly on the following areas:
 - a. Correct information that would support transparency shall be made available to the stakeholders and strong information channels & dissemination strategies should be established.
 - b. The implementing offices shall refrain from providing standard amount of assistance to clients as this results to inappropriateness and inadequacy of assistance provided to the clients. The amount assistance should be based on actual need of the client which can be formulated by citing specific criteria or concrete indicators of vulnerability of the clients;
 - c. Specific criteria or concrete indicators of vulnerability of the clients shall be stated in order to formulate scoring mechanism/tool for establishing levels of vulnerability (low, medium, high) which could guide the Social Workers on how much assistance shall be given to the clients. This mechanism would help the Social Workers in their assessment and may also provide equality and transparency for the clients on how they are being assessed. It should also be clear if recipients of other social programs of the department are still eligible to avail these types of assistance.
 - d. Maximum amount of educational assistance should be indicated as well as the possible modes of payment. This is necessary especially because compared to other types of assistance, the amount provided for educational assistance is lesser. The number of family members who can avail of educational assistance once every semester (college) or once every school year (elementary and high school) should also be cited properly since for educational assistance, the chance of having more than two children enrolled in school is higher. In deciding on this, it should be considered that the more children enrolled in school, there would be more expenses for the family thus the need for assistance.
 - e. A standard business process should be developed and implemented across all offices indicating the step-by-step process which the client would undergo in availing educational assistance. It should also include the accountable person for each step and the corresponding timeline to finish each phase. For outright cash assistance, the timeline for releasing should be indicated while for guarantee letters, the timeline for payment to the service provider should be included or at least discussed to the client.
 - f. Requirements should be strictly standardized since for educational assistance, the clients should only prove his residency, enrollment/registration in school and/or remaining

- balance in school (for cases of assistance for tuition fee expenses). Purpose and scenarios requiring other documents such as social case summary should be properly cited in the guidelines for proper implementation at the field level.
- g. Regulations for creation of contracts or Memorandum of Agreements with service providers should also be clearly stated in the guidelines to provide at least minimum standard roles and responsibilities for the department and the service provider. The regulation should also ensure the inclusion of timeline for processing of payment by the department, especially for schools so that the payment will reach the exam week of the students.
 - h. For transfer of funds to LGUs, the minimum criteria for the identification of LGUs should be clearly stated. For instance, indicating at least the minimum percentage of liquidation and accomplishment reports submitted and other project partnership indicators should be ensured. Possible sanctions for LGUs who are not submitting necessary reports should also be included. The guidelines should also indicate that the LGUs must still follow the rules and guidelines of the department on AICS implementation; this will help limit the political intervention in the process of provision of AICS.
 - i. Establishment of a grievance mechanism should also be included in the guidelines; capturing complaints, feedback and suggestions from the clients. Levels of accountability and standard protocol in handling the grievances should be cited. Implementation of a Customer Satisfaction Survey should also be included; wherein the results shall be used for reporting purposes. Other available means of feedback mechanism shall also be cited for reference of implementers.
2. Conduct of operational spot-checks can be explored to help monitor the gaps and issues on AICS implementation. Regular conduct of spot-checks will ensure that the guidelines are properly implemented at the field level. It will also help resolve existing gaps and issues more efficiently since actual practice would be observed. Good practices on AICS implementation would also be easily gathered thru spot-checks as well as serve as regular monitoring for the field office especially in terms of submission of reports and accomplishments. Technical assistance on certain areas of implementation can also be conducted immediately after the presentation of findings of spot-check.
 3. In terms of resources, the CIU should ensure enough manpower to maintain a reasonable client to staff ratio since lack of manpower leads to lower quality of service and additional requirements or processes on the part of the clients. It will also help ensure the welfare of

the staff provided that most are hired as Cost of Service (COS) workers. Proper compensation should also be provided to workers who provide overtime especially on weekends. For the long run, pathways to regularize these workers should also be done since provision of AICS have become one of the biggest services of the department and have been operating for quite a long period of time. Budget allocation for office equipment, facilities, internet connection, and service vehicle should also be ensured to help provide good quality service to the clients by providing faster and more automated processing of requests. Enough number of Special Disbursement Officers (SDOs) per operating office should also be ensured since it affects the utilization and disbursement rate.

4. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Materials shall be produced in order to increase the reach of the program and raise the awareness and knowledge of the target clients. With the existence of effective IEC materials, misconceptions on AICS as well as unnecessary processes and interventions would be lessened provided that clients would be fully-aware and empowered on the program rules and regulations. These strong information channels & dissemination strategies shall be disseminated up to Barangay level for accessibility purposes.
5. The Central Office CIU should enhance its process of providing assistance to avoid the long waiting hours for the processing and releasing of assistance. The CIU-CO shall initially conduct time and motion study to analyze and measure the consumed time for each step. This shall then help in improving the procedures and increasing productivity. Replication of the good practices of other regional / field offices can also be considered.

Recommendation for the partner LGUs

1. LGUs managing fund transfers for AICS should implement the same rules and regulations of the department in implementing the program particularly on the requirements and processes. LGUs should also ensure timely submission of physical accomplishment reports and liquidation reports for proper monitoring purposes of the department and to avoid non-receipt of funds on the next periods.
2. To lessen political intervention in the process of providing AICS, LGUs should also properly observe the policies of the department in terms of scope of their roles and responsibilities. By means of a written contract or agreement between the department and the concerned LGU, unnecessary political intervention would be avoided to ensure smooth implementation of the program in their respective areas. Anti-politicizing activities like “Bawal ang Epal Dito” campaign could also be established to prevent politicians from intervening in AICS operations

For further monitoring and evaluation

1. Regular monitoring of accomplishments of all offices implementing AICS should be secured provided that the information system for AICS is still not cascaded or implemented on all concerned offices. It is important to have an updated physical and financial accomplishment for monitoring purposes of the different programs/projects/services.
2. The study covered only selected regional offices and selected cities / municipalities which limits the generalization of the findings. A nationwide evaluation covering more cities and municipalities can establish more relevant findings and recommendations which would help improve the overall services of the program.
3. The study is also limited only to educational assistance of AICS, further evaluation for the entire AICS including all types of assistance could be conducted to measure the overall impact to the clients and efficiency of service delivery of the entire program process. Other relevant findings may be gathered which concentrates only to specific types of assistance other than educational assistance.

Profile of Survey Respondents

This section provides summary statistics for various demographic variables on the clients interviewed for the survey.

Age of Clients

Most of the clients (31%) interviewed are 20-29 years old. A few respondents (2%), on the other hand, are senior citizens.

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 18	23	8.5
20-29	84	31.0
30-39	14	5.17
40-49	35	12.9
50-59	15	5.5
60 and above	6	2.2

Educational level of beneficiaries

For the survey, almost 90% of the clients said that the assistance sought was for a college beneficiary.

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
College	197	74.9
Gradeschool	66	25.1

Household Size

Most of the clients have household sizes ranging from 4-5 (38%) and 6-7 (32%) members. A considerably high percentage of the clients (22%) belong to huge household size of 8 and above.

HH size	Frequency	Percent
2-3	21	7.9
4-5	102	38.3
6-7	87	32.7
8 and above	56	21.1

Source of income

Majority (69%) of the respondents' household income come from employment and followed by livelihood/business (44%). It could also be observed that a moderately high number of respondents (20%) are receiving cash through government transfers/programs such as the Pantawid Pamilya.

Source of Income	Frequency	Percent
Employment	191	70.5
Livelihood	122	45.0
Government Transfers	32	11.8
Remittances	32	11.8
Transfers from NGOs, POs	3	1.1
Others	10	3.7
<i>Multiple response data</i>		

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Annexes

Annex A: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Annex B: Beneficiary Survey Tool

Annex C: Key Informant Interview Guide for CIU Head

Annex D: Key Informant Interview Guide for Social Welfare Officer

Annex E: Key Informant Interview Guide for School/College/ University Personnel