

ARTA, DILG, DSWD seek fast-tracking cash and food assistance release to communities

03 November 2020 – The Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) are now working on expediting the release of cash and food assistance to the marginalized and poor communities. This, following the President’s directive to simplify the process of giving out said assistance in his speech aired last Tuesday.

"So what I would like to happen is this: simplify the giving of the money by asking for a proposal, then that proposal should not be studied by days or by months... And all assistance connected with the health of a person o ano, ibigay ninyo", the President directed in his recent address.

In an initial meeting, ARTA, DILG, and DSWD discussed the concerns and issues on the current process of distributing food and cash assistance to communities. In the coming days, the agencies will further coordinate on expediting the process of granting the assistance to requesting local government units especially now that consecutive weather disturbances have affected various areas in the country on top of the ongoing pandemic.

DSWD Usec. Felicisimo C. Budiongan informed the group that the national agency’s role in relief operations shall be upon receipt of request from the local chief executive of a request for augmentation and if the affected families are more than 30.

ARTA DG Belgica recommended instead that DSWD Regional or Field Offices, being at ground zero of the disaster-stricken area, should already monitor if sufficient food and cash assistance has been distributed by the local government officials concerned. If none has been extended by the LGU officials within two (2) days, the DSWD Regional or Field Office shall automatically send a report to the Central Office to send food and cash assistance to the disaster-hit area. Likewise, the LGU officials concerned shall be subject to investigation and there will be a presumption of serious neglect of duty and grave misconduct which are both serious offenses for administrative cases to be filed with the Office of Ombudsman and which would merit immediate preventive suspension.

ARTA DG Belgica added "In times of calamities, a wait-and-see method is already a thing of the past. Reports and assessment of the situation at ground zero are easily verifiable with different available technologies. More than ever, we invite our disaster relief officials to be more pro-active in times when our kababayans need the government the most. Sa mga ganitong pagkakataon, kailangan na maramdaman agad ng mga kababayan natin ang ayuda ng gobyerno. Walang dapat masayang na oras dahil bawat minuto ay mahalaga. We acknowledge the efforts of DSWD and DILG in their commitment to deliver fast government service to our people and we just need to make sure that our local government officials will strictly follow the Presidential directive on immediate delivery of assistance to our fellowmen."

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