

DSWD issues policy to protect programs, services from politics

In anticipation of the upcoming campaign period, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) recently enacted an internal policy to safeguard the Department's programs and services from politicking during election and even non-election periods.

Memorandum Circular No. 09, series of 2021 or the "Policy Guidelines on Strengthening Partnership with Stakeholders During Election and Non-Election Periods," was issued by the Department in consideration of the upcoming election period, and in response to perennial issues of certain programs being used for personal and political advancement.

This policy institutionalizes the Department's previous campaign of "Bawal ang Epal Dito" which addressed election-related issues and complaints, especially on the implementation of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). In the past, the 4Ps had been mentioned by political candidates in their respective campaigns, as well as included in campaign posters.

With the policy in place, the DSWD will be strengthening its partnership with beneficiaries and partner-organizations along four major pursuits: Bantay (watchdog); Gabay (mentor); Kaagapay (co-implementer); and Tulay (link). This means that the Department will seek the active engagement of program-beneficiaries, as well as partner-organizations in ensuring that no program or service of the DSWD will be used in any personal or political activity.

Instead of just focusing on the election period, the Department will now incorporate advocacy and awareness

campaign against politicking as part of its year-long communications initiative.

The DSWD will also conduct orientation activities and establish partnerships with other government agencies and non-government entities to help champion the cause of the said policy.

Moreover, the Department will create a grievance mechanism where concerned citizens can report erring candidates or unscrupulous individuals wanting to use DSWD's many programs and services in influencing the public.

Aside from this, the said policy also intends to remind all DSWD employees to remain non-partisan in their capacity as public servants and refrain from participating in any political-related activities. It also reminds all personnel of the Department of their sworn duty to serve the public, devoid of any personal motive, and underscores the code of ethics that each employee must adhere to.

Lastly, the policy also emphasizes the need for strengthened coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Civil Service Commission, and the Commission on Election so that reports of violations can be immediately responded to and perpetrators are penalized.

The DSWD is committed to being apolitical in accomplishing its mandate to the public. ###