

[DSWD ORDER NO. 21, S. 1999, August 30, 1999]

GUIDELINES ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER

I. Rationale

The 1995 National Census placed the population of older persons 60 years old and above as 5.4% or 3.7 million of the total population of 68.6 million. This total comprises 1.9 million male elderly and 1.7 million female elderly. In 1996, the average life expectancy for Filipinos is 67.3 with Filipino males having an average life expectancy of 65.13 years while females have an average life expectancy of 70.30 (NSCB, 1996). With the increase in life expectancy, this sector is estimated to rise to 15 million by year 2030.

In recognition of the emerging importance of Older Persons as a social sector in nation-building and of the determined efforts of the State, particularly in recent years, to provide them opportunities for total development, the Congress enacted two significant laws namely:

1. Republic Act 7432, an Act to Maximize the Contribution of Senior Citizens to Nation-Building, Grant Benefits and Special Privileges and for other Purposes. This law recognizes the duty of the family to take care of its elderly members and of the state to design programs of social security for them, to provide social justice in all phases of national development and to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development.
2. Republic Act 7876, otherwise known as the Senior Citizens Center Act which mandates the establishment of a Senior Citizens Center (SCC) in all cities and municipalities of the Philippines, and appropriate funds therefor. This law was enacted in line with the declared policy of the State to provide adequate social services and improved quality of life for all. It provides that the State shall adopt an integrated approach towards health development giving priority to older persons. In accordance with this policy, a Senior Citizens Center in all cities and municipalities of the Philippine shall be established whereby older persons can get together to meet their mutual needs. Rule III, Article 6, of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 7876 states that the Local Government Units (LGUs), cities and municipalities, shall be called upon to provide administrative support and supervision to the Senior Citizens Center which shall be administered, managed and operated by the Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FSCAP) while the DSWD shall provide technical assistance/supervision.

To operationalize the Senior Citizen's Centers (SCC), the following guidelines are being issued as reference of the DSWD Field Offices, the Local Government Units, the Federation of Senior Citizens Associations of the Philippines (FSCAP) and other stakeholders in the management of these centers.

II. Objectives of the Center

- a) Identify the needs, trainings, and opportunities of senior citizens in the cities and municipalities;
- b) Initiate, develop and implement productive activities and work schemes for senior citizens in order to provide income or otherwise supplement their earnings in the local community;
- c) Promote and maintain linkages with provincial government units and other instrumentalities of government and the city and municipal councils for the elderly and the Federation of Senior Citizens Associations of the Philippines and other government organizations for the delivery of health care services, facilities, professional advice services, volunteer training and community self-help projects.

III. Definition of Terms

The following terms shall be defined as follows:

1. Senior citizen — shall refer to any person who is at least sixty (60) years of age.
2. Center — refers to the place established in this Act with recreational, educational, health and social programs and facilities designed for the full enjoyment and benefit of the senior citizens in the city or municipality. It can be any available sheltered structure, a spacious room in a private or public building, a room attached to a community center, a barangay hall or chapel.
3. Department of Social Welfare and Development — otherwise known as DSWD, shall mean the national office located at Batasan Complex, Quezon City and its field offices in the fifteen (15) regions of the country and DSWD-ARMM.
4. Municipality/City Federation of Senior Citizens — an organization of Senior Citizens in the locality which is affiliated with the Federation of Senior Citizens Associations of the Philippines (FSCAP) duly recognized by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.
5. Local Government Units (LGUs) — refer to the territorial and political subdivisions of the state which include the cities and municipalities.

IV. Programs and Services

- a) Social and recreational services such as social interaction with peers, counselling, active participation in sports, recreation and socio-cultural activities and holding of special celebration to recognize the contributions of the senior citizens.
- b) Health and personal care such as regular physical and dental check-up, eye care, lectures on proper health and nutrition, and how to grow old gracefully.
- c) Spiritual services such as bible studies, special masses, retreats, and other kinds of religious services, preparation for death and support services for the dying