

Memorandum Circular No. 21  
Series of 2022

**SUBJECT: AMENDMENT OF MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 17 SERIES OF 2018 ENTITLED "REVISED GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE REGISTRATION, LICENSING OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (SWD) AGENCIES AND ACCREDITATION OF SWD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES" – CLAUSES VII, XI AND REQUIREMENTS**

## I. RATIONALE

Republic Act 10847 entitled "An Act Lowering the Age Requirement for Applicants taking the Board Examination for Social Workers, Providing for Continuing Social Work Education and Upgrading the Sundry Provisions relative to the Practice of Social Work", along with its Implementing Rules and Regulations issued by the Professional Regulatory Board for Social Workers, highlighted the crucial role of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the implementation of its regulatory functions. As mandated by applicable laws, the DSWD shall set standards to register and license agencies and organizations engaged or planning to engage in programs/services within the purview of social welfare and development (SWD) activities, and to accredit SWD programs and services of the licensed social work and development agencies (SWDA) and service providers. Further, DSWD shall provide technical assistance to applicant organizations to ensure that SWD programs and services are at par and compliant to the set standards for the benefit of its clients.

On 29 August 2018, the DSWD issued Memorandum Circular No. 17 Series of 2018 entitled "Revised Guidelines Governing the Registration, Licensing of SWD Agencies (SWDAs), and Accreditation of SWD Programs and Services" which aims to regulate all public and private agencies and organizations in the country that are engaged or planning to engage in providing direct or indirect Social Welfare and Development (SWD) programs and services. Such a document is important in as much as it lays out the Department's performance of its regulatory function, through the Standards Bureau (SB) and its Standards Section (SS) counterparts in the Field Offices (FOs).

The Department, through the Standards Bureau, consolidated several feedback and requests for clarification on MC No. 17 series of 2018, after three (3) years of its implementation. One of the feedback was to update the process of registration, licensing, and accreditation, especially when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the Philippines in 2020, which forced everyone to adapt to the new normal way of living i.e. adoption of virtual approach and methodology, which includes the delivery of services by the Government to its people.

In response to these requests for clarification and issues raised, and to avoid unnecessary delay in the delivery of social welfare and development programs and services, this guideline shall amend specific provisions of Memorandum Circular No. 17 series of 2018.

## II. AMENDMENTS

The following provisions of DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 17 series of 2018 are hereby amended as follows:

1. **Clause VII. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ON REGISTRATION, LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION**

**2. REGISTRATION OF SWDA**  
**1.4. Issuance of Certificate of Registration**

Is hereby amended to add:

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Failure to apply for License to Operate within a year from the time of Registration shall automatically cancel the issued Registration Certificate. SWDAs shall re-apply for Registration through submission of application form and payment of applicable fees.

**2. Clause VII. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ON REGISTRATION, LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION**

**2. LICENSING OF SWDA**  
**2.4. Process**

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c.1. At least one (1) day validation visit shall be conducted to further assess the compliance of the SWDA to the licensing requirements and criteria. The validation visit shall be based on the agreed schedule between the DSWD and applicant SWDA.

Further,

**Clause VII. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ON REGISTRATION, LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION**

**3. ACCREDITATION OF SWD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

**3.4. Process**

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d.1. Accreditation assessment visit shall be conducted to applicants found with submitted complete requirements. The assessment visit shall base on agreed schedule between the DSWD and applicant SWDA.

are hereby amended to:

**CLAUSE VII. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ON REGISTRATION, LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION**

**2. LICENSING OF SWDA, and**

**3. ACCREDITATION OF SWD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

**2.4/3.4. Process**

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**c.1./d.1.** The duly authorized assessors from the DSWD Standards Bureau or DSWD Standards Section shall conduct validation/assessment for applicants found to have complied with the complete and compliant requirements. The duly authorized assessor and applicants shall agree on the schedule of validation and assessment.

Further, to fully maximize and to efficiently utilize the government resources, the duly authorized assessors from the Standards Bureau and Standards Section shall adopt the following modes of assessment provided that the criteria and conditions are met, to wit:

#### **1. Face-to-Face Assessment**

The **face-to-face assessment** is the actual or on-site visit of the assessor in the location of the Social Welfare Development Agencies (SWDA) to assess its compliance with the Department's set standards. This shall be considered as the default or primary mode of assessment by the assessors from the Standards Bureau and Standards Section.

##### **Criteria:**

This mode of assessment shall be utilized when:

- a. The application is new under the DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 17 series of 2018 (whether licensing and/or accreditation);
- b. There is no declaration of the state of emergency and/or calamity within the geographical area of the on-site assessment and the base area of the assessor.
- c. Alert level 1 is declared by the National Government in line with Republic Act Nos. 11469 and 11494 otherwise known as the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act 1 and 2;
- d. There is no special situation that will fall under the two other modes of assessment; and

#### **2. Virtual Assessment**

The **virtual assessment** is an alternative mode of assessment for applicant SWDAs that is conducted using digital platforms. It involves using videos, instant messaging programmes, online questionnaires and web-conferencing services to interact with.

##### **Criteria:**

The virtual assessment shall be utilized only when any of the conditions stated below are met:

- a. If the assessment schedule is set and the assessor has contracted COVID or was identified as a close contact of a COVID positive patient;
- b. If a State of National or Regional Calamity/Emergency is declared that includes high-risk situations such as disasters, health emergencies, high alert levels, and/or threats to peace and order or in critical areas with armed conflict;
- c. If there is a local declaration of alert levels 2 to 5 in line with Republic Act Nos. 11469 known as Bayanihan to Heal As One Act and 11494 otherwise known as the Bayanihan to Recover As One Act.;

Provided that viz:

- No new applications shall be assessed virtually;

- All assessments conducted virtually must be recorded for documentation following the provisions of the Republic Act 10173 otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012;
- Documents and other references to be used during the assessment must be submitted to the assessor for a minimum of three days prior to the schedule;
- A stable internet connection is available for both assessor and applicant, and that virtual assessment is conducted in an undisrupted and private location/environment as casework may be discussed; and
- All applications assessed virtually shall be subjected to monitoring.

### 3. Blended Assessment

The **blended assessment** is another alternative mode of assessment that combines the use of face-to-face and virtual modes of assessment. Hence, an applicant SWDA shall be assessed using both face-to-face and virtual modes of assessment, where key activities shall be conducted in the mode that can best respond to the assessment being done by the assessor (e.g. document review during virtual assessment, validation of physical structure during face-to-face).

#### **Criteria:**

The blended assessment shall be conducted only when any of the conditions stated below are met:

- a. If there are multiple qualified applications (minimum of 3) that are for assessment in one area/region; and
- b. If there are multiple satellite branch offices located in the same region or adjacent regions.

#### **Procedure for blended assessment:**

The assessor shall follow the procedure stated below:

##### 1. Virtual Assessment

- a. The assessor shall schedule the applicant SWDA for virtual assessment prior its scheduled face-to-face assessment within two (2) months interval time.
- b. During the virtual assessment, the assessor must ensure that the applicant SWDA shall be assessed as to its compliance to the documentary requirements. All desk review-related activities must be conducted during the virtual assessment.

##### 2. Face-to-face Assessment

- a. The assessor shall limit the face-to-face assessment to one (1) day only.
- b. During the face-to-face assessment, the assessor shall only validate the initial findings during the virtual assessment.
- c. Physical structure of the SWDA shall likewise be assessed during the face-to-face assessment.

To further operationalize the newly adopted modes of assessment, assessors shall be issued with Special Order during the conduct of the virtual assessment. Assessors may be allowed to adopt a *Flexiplace work arrangement* (CSC Resolution No. 2200209) until further instructions. Provided that, stable internet connectivity and necessary equipment are available. Further, assessors issued with Special Order, who have adopted alternative work arrangement (AWA) in the conduct of virtual assessments, shall be governed by the existing policy of the Department on AWA.

3. **Clause VII. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ON REGISTRATION, LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION**

**3. ACCREDITATION OF SWD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

**3.2. Requirements**

The accreditation requirements as required in the checklist of documents are specified in Annex C of this guideline. Guidelines for accreditation of center-based and community-based SWD programs and services will be issued in a separate Memorandum Circular.

is hereby amended to:

**Clause VII. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ON REGISTRATION, LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION**

**3. ACCREDITATION OF SWD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

**3.2. Requirements**

The assessment tools, which shall be used in accrediting center-based and community-based SWD programs and services are attached hereto as annexes.

In case of amendment to the existing accreditation tools or new tools are to be developed, the same shall be approved by the Undersecretary supervising the Standards Bureau.

Hence, the standard indicators and assessment tools as indicated in DSWD Administrative Order No. 15 and 17 Series of 2012 are hereby repealed.[1]

**4. Clause XI. OTHER ACTIVITIES ON REGULATORY SERVICES**

**1. Monitoring**

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The conduct of announced and spot/unannounced monitoring activities to SWDAs with valid Certificate of Registration, License to Operate and Certificate of Accreditation, to ensure compliance of set standards and requirements along the implementation of SWD programs and services. An existing related guidelines along monitoring shall serve as reference for implementation.

is hereby amended to

**Clause XI. OTHER ACTIVITIES ON REGULATORY SERVICES**

**1. Monitoring**

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The conduct of announced and/or spot monitoring activities to SWDAs must be held at least once during the validity of the Certificate of License to Operate and/or Certificate of Accreditation, to ensure sustained compliance on the set standards and requirements along the implementation of SWD programs and services. The duly authorized assessor shall use the current

approved assessment tool at the time of the conduct of the actual monitoring activity.

**5. Clause XI. OTHER ACTIVITIES ON REGULATORY SERVICES**

**3. Operation Manual on Registration, Licensing and Accreditation**

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As delegated by the Secretary, the Cluster Head of the Policy and Plans Group (PPG) shall have the authority to instruct SB to revise the Operation Manual including its forms, if found necessary, as well as issuance of clarificatory memorandum to address emerging issues in the implementation of specific provision/s of this guideline.

is hereby amended to:

**Clause XI. OTHER ACTIVITIES ON REGULATORY SERVICES**

**3. Operation Manual on Registration, Licensing and Accreditation**

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As delegated by the Secretary, the Supervising Undersecretary of the Standards Bureau (SB) shall have the authority to instruct SB to revise the Operation Manual including its forms, if found necessary, as well as issuance of clarificatory memorandum to address emerging issues in the implementation of specific provision/s of this guideline.

**III. ADDENDUM NOTES FOR THE DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION, LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION**

The enhanced checklist of requirements for registration, licensing, and accreditation are specified as Annex of this guidelines.

**IV. MODES OF APPLICATION**

Application documents for registration, licensing, and accreditation, may be submitted through the official mail or email address of the concerned SB or SS Office. Application documents may also be submitted through the DSWD Regulatory eServices.

**V. TRANSITORY POLICY**

The Department shall observe a six-month transitory period prior the full implementation of this guidelines and its corresponding annexes.

Requirements and forms of the old and this new guideline are both acceptable during the transitory period, in favor of the applicant's convenience.

## VI. REPEALING CLAUSE

This issuance shall revoke specific provisions stated and other similar guidelines and/or issuance inconsistent herewith.

## VII. EFFECTIVITY

This shall take effect immediately after its publication in the official DSWD website.

Issued this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2022.



**EDUARDO M. PUNAY**

Officer-In-Charge

Date: 28 DEC 2022

### ANNEXES:

1. **Annex A** – Documentary Requirements for Registration
2. **Annex B** - Documentary Requirements for Licensing
3. **Annex C** – Documentary Requirements for Accreditation
4. **Annex D** – Documentary Requirements for Accreditation of SCC
5. **Annex E** - Application Form for Registration
6. **Annex F** - Application Form for Licensing
7. **Annex G** – Application Form for Accreditation
8. **Annex H** - Application Form for Accreditation of SCC
9. **Annex I** - Assessment Tool for the Accreditation of Special Drugs Education Center (SDEC) (Center-Based, Non-Residential)
10. **Annex J** – Accreditation Tool for Reception and Action Centers (RACS) Drop-In-Centers, And Other Centers Providing Similar Programs and Services
11. **Annex K** – Accreditation Assessment Tool for National Vocational Rehabilitation Center (NVRC), Area Vocational Rehabilitation Centers (AVRC) and Other Centers Providing Similar Programs and Services
12. **Annex L** – Assessment Tool for the Accreditation of Center-Based, Non-Residential Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Programs and Services
13. **Annex M** – Assessment Tool for the Accreditation of Stimulation and Therapeutic Activity Centers (STACs), Hospices and Physical Rehabilitation Centers Providing Free and/or Socialized Stimulation, Therapeutic and Physical Rehabilitation Services
14. **Annex N** – Accreditation Assessment Tool for Senior Citizen Center (SCC)
15. **Annex O** – Assessment Tool for the Accreditation of Center-Based (Residential)/Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Programs and Services
16. **Annex P**– Assessment Tool for Accreditation of Child Placement Services
17. **Annex Q** – Assessment Tool for the Accreditation of Community-Based/Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Programs and Services

Certified True Copy

05 JAN 2023

MYRNA H. REYES

OIC-Division Chief

Records and Archives Mgt. Division

[1] DSWD AO 15 s2012 (Amended Administrative Order No 11 s2007 entitled Revised Standards on Residential Care Service) / DSWD AO 17 s2012 (Revisions on Administrative Order No. 1 s2010 or the Amended Standards on Community-Based Services)