

## **News Release**

**Department of Labor and Employment**

**April 8, 2020**

# **OFWs displaced by COVID-19 to get 10k**

A one-time financial assistance of 10 thousand pesos will be given to overseas Filipino workers whose employments were affected by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

“The Department of Labor and Employment has already prepared the guidelines of the DOLE-AKAP assistance program for OFWs to ensure its effective and streamlined implementation,” Secretary Silvestre Bello III said.

DOLE-AKAP will cover regular/documented OFWs as defined in the 2016 Revised Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Rules and Regulations.

“Regular or documented OFWs are those who possess a valid passport and appropriate visa or permit to stay and work in the receiving country; and whose contract of employment has been processed by the POEA or the POLO,” Bello said.

The assistance program, Bello added, also covers qualified undocumented OFWs or those who were originally regular or documented workers but for some reason or cause have thereafter lost their regular or documented status.

“Also included in the program are those who are not registered with the POEA or whose contracts were not processed by POEA or the POLO, but have undertaken actions to regularize their contracts or status; or who are not registered with the POEA or whose contracts were not processed by POEA or the POLO, but are active OWWA members at the time of availment,” Bello said.

Balik-Manggagawa who are unable to return to host country in view of host country lockdown due to COVID-19 are also entitled to receive the 10 thousand pesos assistance.

Bello further said OFWs who have experienced job displacement due to the receiving country's imposition of lockdown or community quarantine or having been infected by the disease will receive the cash assistance.

"They must be still at overseas jobsites, or in the Philippines as Balik-Manggagawa, or already repatriated to the Philippines; and must not receive any financial support/ assistance from the receiving countries/employers," Bello clarified.

Further, OFWs coming from priority countries/territories will be given financial assistance.

"The Department shall provide financial assistance to qualified OFWs from countries with Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) presence and/or are heavily affected by COVID-19," Bello said

These priority countries are Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates.

For the Asia and the Pacific, OFWs in following COVID-19-hit countries will be prioritized: Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macau, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, and New Zealand.

For Europe and the Americas, OFWs in the following countries will be prioritized: Canada, Cyprus, Italy, Germany, Greece, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain, United States of America.

To apply for the cash assistance program, on-site OFWs must visit the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in their host country. For repatriated OFWS and Balik Manggagawa, they must apply in OWWA Regional Welfare Offices (RWOs).

POLOs and OWWA, as well as DOLE offices will be posting the detailed requirements of the OFW cash assistance program.

Bello said the funds for the DOLE-AKAP including other administrative expenses of Central and Regional operations to be incurred in the implementation of this program shall be sourced from DOLE COVID19 Adjustment Measures Program (DOLE-CAMP) in the amount of Php1.5 Billion. # # #