Administrative Order No. 38

Series of 2003

**Guidelines on the Assessment of Solo Parents**

(Under Republic Act 8972 – Solo Parent Welfare Act)

1. **Rationale**

Solo parenting has gain recognition in society in the last few years. It is no longer a new phenomenon especially in developing countries like the Philippines. With the continuing threats of globalization, and economic difficulties, there is a specific need to address the concern of the solo parents if only to preserve and promote the solidarity and sanctity of the family as a basic social institution.

Statistics reveal that as 2000 census, there is a total of 2, 911, 194, ehich are either widowed, or divorce/separated with dependent children nationwide. However, with the enactment of the Solo Parent Welfare Act, the number of solo parents may increase given the definition of solo parent provided by the law.

The enactment of Republic Act 8972, An Act Providing for Benefits and Privileges to Solo Parents and their Children, Appropriating Funds therefore and for other purposes. Otherwise known as the Solo Parents’ Welfare Act of 2002, mandates various government agencies to consolidate their efforts to help address the needs of the solo parents. Particularly, a comprehensive program for solo parents is being packaged by an Inter-Agency Task Force with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) as the lead on the implementation of the Solo Parents’ Welfare Act.

However, the eligibility of solo parents should be determined in order for them to avail of the said program. It is therefore necessary to define assessment procedures to guide the local social workers in the identification of solo parents eligible to avail services, hence the need for these guidelines.

1. **Legal Basis**

**Republic Act 8972 (Solo Parents Welfare Act 2002)** mandates the State to promote the family as the foundation of the nation, strengthened its solidarity and ensure its total development. Towards the end, the State shall develop a comprehensive program of services for Solo Parents and their children to be carried out by various government agencies and other related non-government organization.

**The Family Code of the Philippines (Art. 213)** states that in case of absence or death of other parent, the parent present shall continue exercising parental authority over the children, unless the court appoints another person to be the guardian of the person or the property of the children.

1. **Objectives**

To set up a system in the assessment of the eligibility of solo parents for services under RA 8972 based on the following areas:

1. Applicant category as enumerated in Article III Section 6 of the implementing rules and regulations
2. Needs of the applicant and his/her children as basis for the provision of appropriate service/intervention
3. Identification of the level of readiness of the applicant to receive a particular service/assistance, which shall serve as basis for the conduct of social preparation activities prior to the provision of such service/assistance; and,
4. Existing and potentially available resources that may support the applicant and his/her children.
5. **Procedures**
6. Application/intake interview at the City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (C/MSWD) by Solo Parents
7. A solo parent shall file an application form (Annex A) at the City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office having jurisdiction over his/her residence supported by the following:
   * Barangay certification that the applicant is a resident of the said barangay for the last six (6) months.
   * Appropriate documentation/evidence that applicant is a solo parent e.g. death certificate of spouse, etc.
   * Income tax return or any document that will establish income level of the solo parent

The general Intake Sheet (GIS) shall also be used by the social worker in the conduct of the intake interview.

1. In case of a transferee from other barangay, the applicant should seek first a clearance from the former barangay indicating whether or not he/she has availed of any benefits for solo parents and the nature of such benefits.
2. A social worker receives and ensures that all documents are complete and register this with an appropriate case number in the logbook-registry of Solo Parents.
3. In case of CIDSS barangays/municipalities, survey results and other data based information to include the Minimum Basic Needs Form and the Family Data Survey Form (FDSF) shall be utilized instead of going through the process of interviewing again the clients.
4. Assessment
5. The social worker interviews or schedule an interview with the applicant to establish his/her eligibility based on the criteria set under Section 9, Article IV of the Solo Parents Welfare Act.
6. A home visit and collateral information shall also be conducted by the Social Worker to validate information given by the applicant to probe deeper and come up with a diagnostic assessment of his/her needs/problem.
7. The applicant shall be notified in thirty (30) days after filing of the status of his/her application and shall be required to visit the agency providing the assistance. If applicant is found not qualified under the provisions of the Solo Parent Welfare Act, he/she shall be referred to the appropriate agency for assistance.
8. After completing the data gathering process, the social worker will prepare the social case study report based on the information gathered and her professional assessment of the said applicant, indicating therein the appropriate services needed.
9. Issuance of the Solo Parents Identification Card
10. Upon the favorable evaluation of the social worker, the applicant shall be issued a Solo Parent Identification Card duly signed by the social worker and the City/Municipality Mayor after thirty (30) days from filing of the application. The solo parent ID is necessary for the availment of benefits under the Solo Parents Welfare Act.
11. In the event that the ID not yet made available, the social worker can issue a certification of eligibility to the solo parent provided that a thorough assessment and evaluation has been made.
12. The solo parent ID shall bear the following informations: ID number, name, date of birth, sex, address and income classification of the solo parent e.g. A for above poverty line and B for below poverty line. It shall also include the names of the family members, their dates of birth and relationship with the solo parents. Likewise, for revalidation purposes, the ID shall indicate specific years and space for signatures/initials of the validating officer. The size of the ID should not be more that 2 x 3.5. The prescribed specification of the solo parent ID is attached as Annex B.
13. The validity of the Solo Parents ID card is one (1) year but renewable every year, subject to reassessment and reevaluation by the social worker. However, to minimize administrative expenses, the ID indicates a three (3) year period which will be signed/initiated by the social worker once revalidated.
14. For purposes of control, the Solo Parents ID shall be surrendered to the City/Municipal Social Welfare Office should the solo parent transfer her residence to other area.
15. The city/municipality shall be responsible in the printing of the solo parents ID. Proper control on the issuance of such shall be undertaken by the C/MSWDO.
16. Application for Benefits from Agencies/Organizations
17. The solo parent shall directly go to the agency providing benefits to solo parent bringing with him/her the identification card issued by the City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office.
18. The solo parents shall undergo the necessary/required qualifying process in availing specific benefits from each agencies. Likewise, they have to comply with the requirement set forth by each agency in order to avail such benefits.
19. If required, a referral letter shall be forwarded by the social worker to the agency. The social case study report is confidential and unless necessary and requested by the agency concerned, such shall not be shared to others and be strictly confidential.
20. Monitoring
21. The social worker shall be responsible in monitoring the solo parent. He/she shall ensure that progress in each case is followed through. Changes in the status and family situation of solo parent such as marriage shall be considered which shall lead to termination of benefits.
22. Appropriate case recording shall be undertaken to document the status of each case. Likewise, the solo parent shall be accessed to other support services that will enhance their social functioning skills such as parent effectiveness, psychosocial services, among others.
23. The social workers shall also establish a close coordination with the agency/agencies providing assistance/benefits to solo parents.
24. Reporting

Strong linkage/coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government shall be undertaken by DSWD to monitor compliance with the law. The Field Offices shall conduct monitoring of the local government units to determine compliance to the law in coordination with the DILG.

1. **Institutional Arrangement**

The DSWD, the lead agency in the development of comprehensive programs/services for solo parent and their children, shall advocate for the implementation of the comprehensive program to the local government units and other government agencies mandated by RA 8972 to provide for such services.

Likewise, it shall continue to provide technical assistance in the implementation of the Solo Parents Welfare Act being primarily undertaken by the Local Government Units.

The Administrative Order shall take effect immediately.

**CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN**

Secretary

Department of Social Welfare and Development