ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL REINTEGRATION CENTER FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

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In the interest of the service and pursuant to Republic Act 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, specifically its Section 17 which prescribes the establishment of a Replacement and Monitoring Center, and to Executive Order 446, dated 12 July 2005, authorizing the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to oversee and coordinate the implementation of various initiatives for the welfare of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to enable them to productively rejoin the mainstream of and to contribute to the development of the Philippine Society, a National Reintegration Center for OFWs is hereby established within the DOLE family to further enhance and strengthen the existing reintegration programs for OFWs and their families to ensure the greatest benefits to our OFWs from the fruits of their work overseas.

Nature of the Center

The National Reintegration Center for OFWs, hereinafter referred to as the Reintegration Center, shall be a “One Stop Center” of Department of Labor and Employment reintegration services for OFWs and their families. It shall also be a “Service Networking Hub” to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of services by cooperating stakeholders/ service providers to address the multi-facetted reintegration needs of OFWs and their families, including the development of their communities.

Policy Objective:

The Reintegration Center shall develop, implement, and evolve progressive and responsive reintegration programs for OFWs and their families, which shall likewise be attuned to their communities needs, so as to maximize the benefits of migration for development.

Functions of the Reintegration Center

The Reintegration Center shall, among others, undertake the following:

- Develop, implement, and evolve a program that will effectively facilitate the personal reintegration of OFWs, by building on the wealth of experiences of the Family Circles and by providing easier access to the various programs and services of DOLE agencies and a network of cooperating stakeholders/service providers;

- Develop, implement, and evolve a program of Community Reintegration that will encourage OFW to contribute to community development, with the end in view, among others, of replacing the feared “brain drain” effect of migration with a “brain gain movement”;

- Develop, implement, and evolve a program that will promote the economic reintegration of OFWs to improve their socio-economic well-being and secure their future;

- Develop, utilize, and continuously upgrade computer-based information system in support of the Reintegration Center’s programs; and

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- Develop, implement, and continuously refine information campaigns via multi-media to attract OFWs and their families toward the programs and services of the Reintegration Center.

Basic Services at the Reintegration Center

To carry out its objectives, the Reintegration Center shall through the “Assistance Desk” initially provide the following basic services:

- Face to face and on-line responses to queries regarding the services of the Reintegration Center and its network of cooperating stakeholder/service providers;

- Evaluation of requests for assistance, their channeling to appropriate service provider/s, and facilitation or actual delivery of effective services, such as:

2.1 Job Search Assistance for local or overseas employment;

2.2 Assistance for entrepreneurship and enterprise development;

2.3 Training and re-tooling assistance;

2.4 Psycho-social services;

2.5 Facilitating participation in Brain Gain Movement Initiatives;

2.6 Linking OFW Assistance to LGUs and Communities;

2.7 Introduction to Special Retirement Program;

2.8 Information on Special Remittance Package;

2.9 Information on Investment Portfolios and their providers; and

2.10 Organization of Advocacy and Information Program for specific groups of OFWs preferably leading to formation of Family Circles.

Organizational Structure

The Reintegration Center shall be attached to the Office of the DOLE Secretary

The Secretary shall be supported by an Advisory Committee in exercising policy guidance and oversight supervision over the Reintegration Center. The Advisory Committee shall be chaired by the Undersecretary for Employment Promotion and Manpower Development. The Administrator of the Overseas Workers’ Welfare Administration shall serve as Vice-Chairman. The Heads or representatives of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and the Technical Skills Development Authority (TESDA), together with the Center Director shall serve as members.

The Reintegration Center shall have a secretariat headed by a Center Director who shall exercise direct supervision and overall coordination of the operations of the Center.

He shall be assisted by a Deputy who shall discharge his functions in his absence. A support Administrative Unit will backstop the operations of the Center.

The Administrative Unit shall have the following specific functions:

- Resource Management and Records Keeping - to secure and efficiently manage the resources of the center in support of service delivery;

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- Public Information Management and Advocacy - to bring the programs and services of the Reintegration Center within the reach of OFWs and their families wherever they may be. Track and monitor returning OFWs, in coordination with Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs) and other concerned entities, to direct promotional activities and services to where they would likely produce the most impact. Establish on-line registration system for OFWs who wish to avail of or contribute to the program and services of the Reintegration Center so they may be linked to the appropriate service provider within the Reintegration Center and/or its network of cooperating stakeholders/service providers; and

- Planning, research and program development - to continuously enhance the services of the Reintegration Center.

The Administrative Unit shall also be responsible for the day to day running of the “Assistance Desk”, including the “On-line” services.

The Reintegration Center shall have three main program operating units, headed by Program Managers, as follows:

- Personal Reintegration - This unit shall render such services as job search assistance for local or overseas placement; technical assistance for self-employment, through entrepreneurship development; access to credit/micro-finance for livelihood projects; access to techno-skills training and retooling projects utilizing the skills and expertise of OFWs and Filipino migrants; business counseling or advisory on savings mobilization schemes; and psycho-social counseling, preferably with the support and cooperation of the Family Circles.

- Community Reintegration - In line with the “Brain Gain” thrust, this unit of the Re- integration Center, in cooperation with other government agencies particularly the Department of Tourism and the Philippine Retirement Authority, will encourage OFW returnees, OFWs who still abroad, as well as Filipino immigrants to share or contribute their expertise, skills and investible savings/funds with their communities or to local government units (LGUs) for the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and/or high impact community-based projects;

- Economic Reintegration - This unit of the Reintegration Center shall network with financial institutions and other entities to secure their effective cooperation for the identification or development of entrepreneurial opportunities or investment portfolios that will encourage saving by and increase earnings and well- being of OFWs. The Reintegration Center shall likewise encourage cooperating stake holders/service providers to develop and offer easier to use, faster, safer and price-competitive remittance schemes or packages to encourage OFWs to transfer funds to their families in the Philippines through formal channels. The unit shall also coordinate with the Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA), financial institutions, and other related support agencies to develop investment portfolios or retirement programs so OFWs could participate in and/or benefit from enterprises that serve Filipino immigrants seeking to settle or acquire properties/assets in the Philippines upon retirement or those which promote or support the growth of tourism in the Philippines.

All the officers and personnel to be assigned to the Reintegration Center shall be composed of staff from the DOLE and its attached agencies. Each unit of the Reintegration Center shall have a lead officer. Identified DOLE agencies required to contribute personnel to the different units of the Reintegration Center necessary for the day to day operations of the Reintegration Center shall ensure full time presence of personnel therein, provided that personnel from the DOLE agencies concerned may rotate assigned personnel for periodic duty. Personnel on rotation assignment shall ensure that assigned tasks are provided continuous servicing and monitoring. Other personnel shall report at the Reintegration Center on their scheduled days of duty as committed by their mother units.

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Official Address

The Reintegration Center shall be housed at the ground floor of the Blas F. Ople Development Center for OFWs (the old OWWA Bldg.) located at the corner of Solana and Victoria Streets in Intramuros, Manila.

Funding Requirements

Start up expenses for the maintenance and operating requirements and capital outlay of the Reintegration Center shall sourced from OWWA funds, based on approval by the OWWA Board of Trustees; while the salaries, allowances, and other benefits of the officers and staff temporarily assigned at the Reintegration Center shall be chargeable to their respective mother units.

Thereafter and premised on favorable outcome of the operations of the Reintegration Center, the DOLE shall endeavor to secure funding grants or regular appropriation to support the work of the Reintegration Center. Provision of regular officers and staff is likewise envisioned for the Reintegration Center.

In all instances, the Reintegration Center shall seek to draw the support of the private sector in addressing the reintegration needs of the OFWs.

Implementing Guidelines

Guidelines for the effective and efficient implementation of this Order shall be issued, as necessary.

Effectivity

This Order shall take effect immediately.

Adopted: 16 Feb. 2007

(SGD.) ARTURO D. BRION
Secretary

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