

SSS releases P84M for unemployment benefit

29 October 2019

The state-run Social Security System (SSS) over the weekend said it already disbursed more than P84 million worth of unemployment benefits in the first two months of implementation of this landmark provision of Republic Act 11199 or the Social Security Act of 2018.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Aurora C. Ignacio said the pension fund was able to provide immediate financial assistance to more than 6,900 actively-paying members of SSS who were involuntarily separated from the workforce.

"We are now seeing the fruits of labor of our lawmakers, stakeholders and SSS representatives who have crafted the SS Act of 2018. We are able to provide cash benefits to the qualified members who needed the SSS the most when they unexpectedly lost their jobs," Ignacio said.

As of 21 October 2019, or more than two months since the pension fund started receiving applications for the unemployment benefit, SSS already paid a total of P84.27 million worth of unemployment benefit to 6,907 members who were separated from work.

Makati Gil-Puyat Branch approved the highest number of unemployment benefit applications at 943 amounting to P13.76 million worth of disbursement. This was followed by Bacoor Branch with 876 applications received amounting to P8.98 million releases; Biñan Branch with 833 approved applications amounting to P9.74 million benefit paid; and Pasig-Pioneer and Cebu Branches, both with 437 approved applications with disbursements amounting to P6.10 million and P5.16 million, respectively.

The SSS unemployment benefit is one of the salient features of SS Act of 2018 which aims to provide a cash benefit equivalent to half of the member's average monthly salary credit (AMSC) for a maximum of two months.

"SSS members who were involuntarily separated from work starting March 5, 2019, onwards can avail the unemployment benefit," Ignacio added.

To qualify for unemployment benefit, members must not exceed 60 years old at the time of involuntary separation. But for underground and surface mineworkers, and racehorse jockey members, they must not exceed 50 and 55 years old, respectively.

Member-applicant must have paid at least 36 monthly contributions wherein 12 months of it should have been paid within the 18-month period before the month of involuntary separation.

Ignacio reminded interested applicants that involuntary separation includes installation of labor-saving devices, redundancy, retrenchment, closure or cessation of operation, and disease or illness of the employee whose continued employment is prohibited by law or is prejudicial to his or her co-employees' health.

Applicants must submit a DOLE-issued certification establishing the nature and date of involuntary separation as well as a Notice of Termination from the employer or an Affidavit of Termination of Employment.

Likewise, applicants should present an original and photocopy of one primary ID card or document or in the absence of which, any two ID cards or documents, both with signature and at least one with photo at any SSS local branch or foreign office.

Applicants are also told that the unemployment benefit application should be submitted within one year from the date of the involuntary separation and that they can only claim the said benefit once every three years starting from the date of separation from work. Further, if two or more compensable contingencies occurred within the same period, SSS will only pay the highest benefit.

SSS accredits CEmBa as partner agent; taps more organized groups in Luzon

04 November 2019

The state-run Social Security System has accredited Capital Employees of Bataan Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CEmBa) as servicing and collecting Partner Agent (PA) as part of its serious effort to extend SSS coverage and services to informal sector workers.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Aurora C. Ignacio said the organization's wide range of products and services and good financial management makes them qualified as an accredited partner agent.

"We select organized groups that are highly capable of handling SSS transactions for its members and have shown their dedication to assist SSS in bringing the much-needed social security protection to workers in the informal sector," Ignacio said.

The Bataan-based cooperative was established in Balanga City in 2006 and currently provides savings, lending, and social programs and support services to more than 1,600 members. To date, CEmBa is the 28th accredited PA in Luzon.

As collecting Partner Agent (PA), CEmBa is authorized to collect SSS contributions, member loan amortizations, and miscellaneous payments from its regular or associate members who are self-employed or voluntary members of SSS.

The newly accredited PA is also allowed to receive and screen registration forms, member loan application forms, funeral claim application forms, and other supporting documents. Under the Memorandum of Agreement signed by the SSS and CEmBa, the latter can issue a Certificate of Fact of Death for the death claim application submitted through them. With the SSS-CEmBa partnership, the pension fund is expected to cover at least 1,200 cooperative members.

"We are optimistic that there would be more and more cooperatives and microfinance institutions which will serve as links in bringing social security to their members especially those in hard-to-reach and underserved areas so that they too will be able to avail SSS benefits and loan privileges," Ignacio said.

Meanwhile, SSS recently conducted another Multi-Sectoral Forum dubbed as "SSS: Nakiki-isa sa Pagsulong ng Social Protection Para sa mga Manggagawa sa Informal Sector" Japi Traveller's Hotel in Cauayan, Isabela.

Around 100 participants from various cooperatives and local government units (LGUs) in Northern Luzon attended the forum. The event highlighted the value of SSS membership, SSS programs for self-employed workers and the role of cooperatives in the promotion of social security protection through the testimony of an existing partner agent in the area.