

SSS: Ursula-stricken members, pensioners may now avail of Calamity Assistance Package

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The state-run Social Security System (SSS) on Friday said members and pensioners who were affected by Typhoon Ursula last December 2019 may now avail of the Calamity Assistance Package (CAP) which has a fund allocation of nearly P260 million.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Aurora C. Ignacio said more than 398,000 paying members and pensioners who were devastated by the onslaught of Typhoon Ursula in Visayas and MIMAROPA regions on Christmas Eve last year will benefit from the relief assistance package.

"It was devastating for our kababayans in the Visayas as they were hardly-hit by Typhoon Ursula during the holiday season. Hopefully, the CAP that we are currently offering will help them with their immediate financial needs," Ignacio said.

Qualified SSS pensioners who are residing in calamity-stricken areas that are declared under the state of calamity by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) may avail the advance three-month pension while regular-paying SSS members may avail the calamity loan assistance, and Direct House Repair and Improvement Loan.

The areas declared by NDRRMC as under state of calamity were the provinces of Eastern Samar and Leyte as well as the municipalities of San Jose in Occidental Mindoro, Kalibo and Malay in Aklan, Libertad and Pandan in Antique, Sigma in Capiz, Carles and Concepcion in Iloilo, Madridejos in Cebu and Daram in Samar.

"Members and pensioners residing in other areas that may be declared by NDRRMC as under state of calamity within the prescribed application period may also avail of the CAP," Ignacio said.

The CAP includes a loan program, which is different from the regular salary loan, where members are allowed to borrow up to P20,000 depending on their monthly salary credit as well as financial assistance to pensioners wherein they can advance three months of their monthly pension.

Ignacio said the pension fund allocated more than P259.48 million for the CAP which can be broken down into P234.3 million for the loan assistance while some P25.14 million for the advance three-month pensions.

To qualify for SSS calamity loans, members should have a home address or property in the affected areas and had paid a minimum of 36 monthly contributions wherein six of which have been paid within the 12-month period before the date of application. However, members who availed the SSS Loan Restructuring Program and those with final benefit claims, such as total permanent disability and retirement, are excluded from the program.

"An additional requirement for applicants is that they must register on the My.SSS facility to allow us to generate their billing letters accordingly especially during payments so, it will be automatically be posted under their account," Ignacio added.

The calamity loan is payable in two years in equal monthly installments with an annual interest rate of 10 percent and one percent monthly penalty for late payments. To eliminate additional expenses on the part of member-borrowers, SSS waived the one percent service fee.

Applicants under the advance three-month pension, meanwhile, whose present address is different from the address in the SSS database should submit a barangay certification to prove that they reside in a declared calamity area.

The SSS Chief, however, clarified that members who still have outstanding loans under the Loan Restructuring Program (LRP) and previous CAPs, as well as those receiving pensions for total permanent disability and retirement, and those who availed of the Pension Loan Program (PLP) are not qualified to avail of the calamity loan.

Aside from the calamity loan, members with damaged homes can also avail of the direct house repair and Improvement loan with six months moratorium in amortization and interest payments. Members can borrow up to a maximum of P1 million under this program.

To qualify for direct house repair and improvement loan, the applicant must not be more than 60 years old and with at least 24 monthly contributions, of which three contributions were remitted within the last 12-month period prior to the month of filing the loan.

Members and pensioners may start to file their CAP applications today until 14 April 2020 except for the Direct House Repair and Improvement Loan which will run up to one year.

For more information, members and pensioners can visit the nearest SSS branch, contact the SSS Call Center hotline at 1455, or send an email to member_relations@sss.gov.ph. Application forms are downloadable from the SSS website at www.sss.gov.ph.