

**[OMBUDSMAN MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 01,
S. 2013, April 19, 2013]**

**GUIDELINES ON HANDLING REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE (RAS)
AND OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

SECTION 1. *Rationale.* - Pursuant to Section 26, pars. (3) and (4), of Republic Act No. 6770 and in line with the Ombudsman's thrust to improve responsiveness in public assistance, there is a need to ensure compliance with a high standard of public service delivery especially among frontline units extending prompt, courteous and adequate service.

SEC. 2. *Request for assistance; nature of* - A request for assistance (RAS) refers to any form of grievance or concern seeking redress, relief or public assistance, which does not necessarily amount to a criminal, administrative or forfeiture complaint, wherein the Office is mandated to intervene within the primary scope of its powers, functions, and jurisdiction.

All other forms of assistance, such as but not limited to administering of oaths, responding to queries, giving advice, and referring an aid cognizable by other agencies, which the Office may extend (and which government offices, in general, may also extend), shall not be considered a RAS.

SEC. 3. *Docketing.* - (a) *Area/Sectoral Offices* - The public assistance unit and the records unit of each area/sectoral office shall coordinate and adopt their respective guidelines on the prompt evaluation and docketing or referencing of RAS and other forms of assistance, provided it is consistent with the general provisions hereof. The proposed guidelines shall be submitted to the Ombudsman for final approval.

(b) *Central Office* - If, upon assessment by the Central Records Division, the matter calls for a request for assistance or falls under other forms of assistance, the same shall be immediately referred to the Public Assistance Bureau for evaluation, docketing and appropriate action. Such similar matters or concerns received by the Public Assistance Bureau directly (e.g., walk-in, direct mail) or through other modes (e.g., email or hotline) shall be evaluated by its authorized evaluators and given an appropriate docket or reference number. All other matters in the nature of complaints received by the Public Assistance Bureau shall be immediately referred to the Central Records Division for evaluation and appropriate action.

c) *Common Provisions* - A request for assistance shall be docketed as RAS while other forms of assistance shall be given an internal reference number (i.e., OFA).

A RAS shall not be consolidated with a complaint for fact-finding or a regular Ombudsman case.

The appropriate bureau or unit shall maintain a RAS database for monitoring, reporting and referencing purposes.