

Women and Child Affairs Circular: 3/2023

All District Secretaries,

Programme to Provide a Nutrition Allowance of Rs.45,000/- to Pregnant and Lactating Mothers – 2024

The approval of Cabinet of Ministers has been received for the Cabinet Memorandum titled "Effective implementation of the programme of providing a nutrition allowance of Rs.45,000 to pregnant mothers for 10 months minimizing its current issues" submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers by the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment under No. MWCA/CP/02/01/23/11 for the implementation of the said programme in the year 2024.

02. Accordingly, the circulars No. 06/2016 and 07/2022 that I referred to you earlier regarding the said programme are cancelled with effect from 01-01-2024. Further, I kindly inform you to follow the instructions mentioned in this circular to implement the said programme from that date (2024-01-01).

3. Effective Date.

3.1 This new circular will be effective from 01-01-2024

3.2 Circular No. 07/2022 should be applicable for the applications received for the programme up to 31.12.2023. (Circular No. 07/2022 should be applicable to the Criteria for the selection of beneficiaries)

4. Responsibility and Supervision.

4.1. The main responsibility and supervision of this programme in the district is assigned to the District Secretaries and the main responsibility and supervision of the implementation at the divisional secretariat division level is assigned to the Divisional Secretaries.

5. Implementation and Coordination

5.1. Coordination of this program at the district level and coordination with the Ministry should be done by the Early Childhood Development Officer attached to the District Secretariat under the supervision of the District Secretary.

5.2. The Early Childhood Development Officer is assigned to coordinate and implement this program in the field under the supervision of the Divisional Secretary.

5.3. If an Early Childhood Development Officer is not available, the District Secretary/Divisional Secretary can assign the responsibility in 5.1/5.2 to the Child Rights Promotion Officer or Women Development Officer or any other suitable officer.

5.4. Since it is appropriate to provide the support of a subject officer for the implementation of this program, attention of the divisional secretaries is drawn to appoint a suitable officer for the same.

6. Selection of Beneficiaries

6.1 The monthly expenditure of the family is determined by multiplying the current per capita monthly expenditure by the number of family members and pregnant and lactating mothers of families with a monthly income less than the amount so determined, will be entitled to benefits.

6.1.1 According to the data of the Department of Census and Statistics, the current per capita monthly expenditure is Rs.38,121/-. If that value is revised in the future, the Director of the National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development will notify the same.

(Eg :- If the number of family members is 03, - Average monthly expenditure of that family

$$= \text{Rs. } 38,121/- \times 03$$

$$= \text{Rs. } 114,363/-)$$

6.1.2 The manner in which the family is defined should be applicable for providing other social welfare benefits as well.

6.2 Even though mothers applied do not have the qualifications according to the above criteria, they will be entitled to the allowance on the recommendation of the relevant Medical Officer of Health, if they have one or more of the following health conditions.

- ❖ Body Mass Index (BMI) less than 18.5 Kg/m²,
- ❖ Anemia
- ❖ Having multiple pregnancies (carrying twins in the womb) or
- ❖ Other nutritional deficiencies

7. Applications

7.1. When a woman registers herself as a pregnant mother at the maternity clinic, the Public Health Midwife should issue applications for this benefit, and it should be informed to the Medical Officer of Health and Public Health Midwives through the District Director of Health Services.

7.2. These applications should be printed by the Divisional Secretariat and handed over to the MOH Office and the specimen of application is given in Annexure 01. Instructions for the beneficiary mother are stated on the back of the application. The Divisional Secretary also can issue applications directly to the beneficiaries, if necessary.

7.3. Income status should be verified by the Grama Niladhari of the Grama Niladhari Division where the pregnant mother is permanently resident. The said Grama Niladhari should maintain a register of information of pregnant mothers who confirmed their residence.

7.4 The divisional secretariat that issues vouchers should be the divisional secretariat division where the government maternity clinic at which the pregnant mother is registered, is located and not the divisional secretariat division where the pregnant mother permanently resides. In case where the Divisional Secretariat Division of permanent residence and Divisional Secretariat Division that issues the vouchers is not the same, a letter verifying the income and countersigned by the

Divisional Secretary should be forwarded by the Grama Niladhari of the Grama Niladhari Division of permanent residence, to the Divisional Secretariat Division that issues vouchers.

8. Issuance of Vouchers

8.1. Vouchers for mothers should be issued by the Divisional Secretariats

8.2. One voucher has a value of Rs.4,500/- and 10 vouchers should be issued at once to get the most necessary nutritional food for 10 months from the date of completion of 12 weeks of pregnancy, covering the last 06 months of pregnancy and the first 04 months of breastfeeding.

8.3. The 10 vouchers issued to the beneficiary mother should be validated by stating the valid 10 months with a seal.

8.4. Vouchers can be signed by the Divisional Secretary, Assistant Divisional Secretary, Administrative Officer or an officer authorized in writing by the Divisional Secretary.

8.5. Since the aim of this program is to provide proper nutrition at the right time during pregnancy, it is important to inform pregnant mothers to hand over the applications to the Divisional Secretariat before the end of the third month of pregnancy.

9. Registration of Shops

9.1. In order to provide food items to the beneficiaries through vouchers, applications will be called from the shops willing to provide food items from several places that are geographically spread within the Divisional Secretariat Division and easily accessible to the beneficiaries, while the Divisional Secretary should register the shops selected for this programme based on the criteria mentioned in 9.2 below.

9.2. The following matters should be considered as criteria in selecting these suppliers.

- i. Being a shop that has been trading for at least one year after opening the shop
- ii. Location easily accessible to the beneficiaries.
- iii. Having space to stay when several beneficiaries come to purchase goods.
- iv. Ability to deliver goods to multiple beneficiaries at once.
- v. Ability to maintain adequate stock levels.
- vi. Quality of foods.

9.3. The divisional secretary should inform the beneficiaries about the shops registered in this manner, and only the shops registered will be authorized to issue food items recommended for these vouchers. Checks should be made to ensure that no food item is issued except for the recommended food items. The Divisional Secretary can cancel the registration if complaints are received and

confirmed that other items are provided instead of such recommended food items or money is given or other irregularities are occurred.

10. Purchase of Food Items

10.1. The beneficiary mothers should be informed that they can purchase food items for the relevant month from the shops that are convenient for them, subject to a maximum of Rs.4500/- of the vouchers issued by the Divisional Secretariats. In providing vouchers for this purpose, a leaflet containing the names and addresses of the registered shops, the types of food to be purchased and instructions that the vouchers will not be re-issued if lost, should be prepared and given to the expectant mother along with the voucher book.

10.2. The beneficiary mother or a representative can purchase food items from this voucher.

10.3. The voucher valid for the relevant month can be used only for obtaining food items during the same month and shops should be informed not to issue food items for those vouchers after the expiry of the month in which the voucher is stamped.

10.4. If she is not satisfied with the quality, quantity and price of the items of the shop where the food items were issued during the relevant month, the beneficiary mother can purchase the food items of the next month voucher from another registered shop convenient to her.

11. Types of food to be purchased

11.1. Foods that can meet the nutritional needs of a pregnant and lactating mother have been classified under several categories and recommended by the Ministry of Health. Those food categories and the food items classified under them are given in Annexure No. 02. Beneficiary mothers should be educated that they should buy food items that represent several of those food categories.

12. Registered Shops

12.1 After the registration of the shops selected by Divisional Secretariats as per 9.1 and 9.2 above, the Divisional Secretary should inform the shops in writing about the following matters.

12.2. That pregnant mothers should be given priority when they come to buy food items for vouchers.

12.3. That the stocks of food items recommended by the Ministry of Health should be kept in sufficient quantity.

12.4. Only those recommended food items should be issued for vouchers. If not, it will be removed from the voucher process as a disqualified shop.

12.5. Food items should be issued only during the relevant month for which the vouchers are valid and food items should not be issued for those vouchers after the expiry of that month.

12.6. Vouchers collected during the month should be handed over to the Divisional Secretariat for payment immediately after the end of the month.

13. Payments

13.1 Payments for vouchers submitted by shops should be made by the Divisional Secretariats. It should be satisfied about the accuracy of the vouchers.

13.2. When handing over the vouchers by the shop, a receipt (original copy) should be given to the shop using the receipt book and the copy should be attached to the Form General 35 and handed over to the accounts branch for payment.

14. Record Keeping

14.1. Files should be maintained for the applications received by the Divisional Secretariat in a manner that they can be identified separately according to the Grama Niladhari Division.

14.2. A register for applications accepted should be maintained as per Annexure 03.

14.3. When issuing vouchers to the beneficiary mothers, a register should be maintained as per the format in Annexure 04.

15. Reporting and Presentation of Monthly Progress

15.1. Monthly progress should be reported as per Annexure 05, Annexure 06 and Annexure 07.

15.2 Information in Annexure 06 should be maintained at the Divisional Secretariat level.

15.3 The relevant information should be called from the Divisional Secretariats and the district summary report should be prepared according to Annexure 06 and forwarded to the Head Office by the District Secretariats before the 8th of every month to prepare the monthly progress.

15.4 The information related to Annexure 07 should be prepared by the District Early Childhood Coordination Officer and forwarded to the National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development at the end of every quarter with the approval of the District Secretary.

15.5. Since it is essential to maintain a data system related to this programme, it is mandatory to maintain information at the divisional secretariat division level and district level as per the formats given as annexure of this circular.

16. I am extremely grateful for the support that you have/the staff has given to this programme that started in the year 2015, and I highly appreciate the support that you and your staff are giving to successfully implement the said programme through the new system.

17. This circular has been approved by the Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government and the Ministry of Health.

Secretary

Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment

Copies :

1. Secretary to the President, Presidential Secretariat
2. Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government
3. Secretary, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs
4. Secretary, Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine
5. Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies
6. Provincial Chief Secretaries
7. Provincial Secretaries of Health FYI & FNA
8. Divisional Secretaries
9. Commissioner , Department and probation and Child Care Services
10. Director, Women's Bureau of Sri Lanka
11. Chairman, National Child Protection Authority
12. Auditor General, National Audit Office