

## QC approves P2.8-B budget vs COVID

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The Quezon City government has approved a supplemental budget amounting to P2.8 billion to support the city's response against the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

**Mayor Joy Belmonte** signed the ordinance providing for the supplemental budget, which aims to fund the distribution of food packs and financial aid to residents and the provision of hazard and risk pay to the local government employees. The ordinance was signed last Monday but released on Friday night.

According to Belmonte, the bulk of the supplemental budget – around P2.4 billion – would be spent on additional food and economic relief to support families, especially those who now have no income due to the mandatory suspension of public transportation and non-essential establishments in the city.

“We allocated additional P697 million for the purchase of more welfare goods for repacking and distribution to families, and P750 million for the provision of cash aid to families not included in the list of beneficiaries of the national government's Social Amelioration Program,” said budget officer Marian Orayani. Another P753 million was allocated for Kalingang QC program for vulnerable sectors and the provision of wages and hazard pay to contractual city government employees who are identified as essential workers and are still required to report to work.

“We also allotted P200 million for the continued adjustment of the wages of our contractual and job order employees to a livable rate, or not be low the minimum P13,000,” added Orayani. Under the Kalingang QC Program, solo parents, persons with disabilities, vendors and public utility vehicle drivers would be given P2,000 cash aid.

It was recently expanded to cover transportation network vehicle service drivers, senior citizens and parents of persons with disabilities.

More than 25,500 people have received assistance under the program. As of Friday night, the Department of Health said there are 1,016 cases of COVID-19 involving Quezon City residents. The city government was able to validate 690 cases. Ninety of the patients have died, while 83 have recovered.