

# The Implementation of Republic Act 9165 in the City Government of Valenzuela: Toward a Drug-Free Workplace

Ellen Clarisse DL. Bernante, MPA, Dr. Antonio A. Avila, PhD, MBA

Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Valenzuela, Valenzuela, Metro Manila, Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the drug-free workplace program implemented in the City Government of Valenzuela under Republic Act 9165, also known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. By examining employee awareness of unlawful acts, drug testing protocols, and the overall framework of the National Drug-Free Workplace Program, the research identifies key factors contributing to the program's successes and limitations. Results indicate moderate awareness of RA 9165 provisions, a high understanding of mandatory and random drug testing protocols, and an average satisfaction level with implementing preventive education activities and employee assistance programs (EAPs). Challenges include limited participation in educational initiatives, insufficient communication of program benefits, and inadequate awareness of support mechanisms for rehabilitation.

The study utilizes a quantitative descriptive research design, surveying a representative sample of 176 employees across various departments within the city government. Findings highlight significant program reach and engagement gaps, particularly among casual employees. These insights inform the development of strategic recommendations to enhance the program's scope, effectiveness, and sustainability. By addressing identified weaknesses, the City Government of Valenzuela can set a benchmark for other local government units (LGUs) in fostering safer and more productive workplaces, aligning with national and international standards for workplace safety and public health.

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Recommendations include conducting quarterly workshops to improve preventive education, increasing the frequency and unpredictability of random drug testing, enhancing communication strategies for EAPs, forming partnerships with community organizations, and implementing regular program evaluations to ensure continuous improvement. These strategic actions aim to address identified weaknesses and position the City Government of Valenzuela as a model for fostering safer, drug-free workplaces while aligning with national and international standards for workplace safety and public health.

**Keywords:** Drug-free workplace, RA 9165, preventive education, drug testing, employee awareness.

## INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse in workplaces is a significant challenge globally, affecting productivity, safety, and employee well-being. The Republic Act 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, mandates the promotion of drug-free workplaces through preventive education, mandatory drug testing, and stringent penalties for non-compliance. The City Government of Valenzuela, a vibrant urban hub in the Philippines, has sought to

institutionalize these measures to foster a drug-free environment.

Workplace substance abuse leads to increased absenteeism, reduced efficiency, and heightened safety risks. Addressing substance abuse is paramount for agencies like Valenzuela City's local government unit (LGU) to ensure effective service delivery and uphold the public trust. This study aims to assess the implementation of the drug-free workplace policy in Valenzuela City by evaluating employee awareness, perceptions, and satisfaction with the program's components.

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (RA 9165) was enacted to address the growing drug problem in the Philippines. This law highlights the government's commitment to combating illegal drug use and ensuring public safety. Under Article V of RA 9165, promoting a drug-free workplace is designated as a state policy. The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) were tasked to create and implement guidelines for workplace drug abuse prevention programs.

Valenzuela City has been proactive in adopting RA 9165's mandates. Ordinance No. 369 Series of 2017 institutionalized the Valenzuela City Care Plus, a comprehensive anti-drug support program that includes preventive education, random drug tests for employees, and sanctions for non-compliance. Despite these efforts, gaps remain in program awareness and participation, highlighting the need for an in-depth study to evaluate the program's strengths and weaknesses.

## METHODOLOGY

A quantitative descriptive design was employed to evaluate the program's effectiveness. The study surveyed 176 employees from various City Government of Valenzuela departments. Stratified random sampling ensured representation across demographics, including employment type and tenure. A validated survey questionnaire, based on guidelines from the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), measured the following:

- Demographic profile of respondents (age, gender, employment status, tenure).
  - Awareness levels of RA 9165 provisions.
  - Perceptions of the drug-free workplace program.
  - Employee satisfaction with program components, including preventive education and drug testing.
  - The data collection followed ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality.
- Statistical tools such as descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA were used for data analysis.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents highlights that the majority (65%) were aged between 22 and 36, indicating a predominantly young workforce within the City Government of Valenzuela. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 52% of respondents identifying as female and 48% as male. Furthermore, a significant percentage (82%) of the workforce consisted of casual employees, reflecting the organizational structure's reliance on non-permanent staff for various functions.

### Awareness Levels

Respondent's awareness levels varied across different aspects of the drug-free workplace program. Respondents displayed moderate awareness regarding unlawful acts, with an average weighted mean of 4.02. The highest awareness was noted for the illegality of using dangerous drugs, scoring a mean of 4.25. In contrast, awareness of penalties for employees and visitors to drug dens was lower, with a mean of 3.72.

Awareness of drug testing protocols was notably high, especially regarding mandatory tests for law enforcement personnel, with a mean of 4.42. This indicates a strong understanding of the importance and requirements of

drug testing within the workforce.

Respondents generally understood the objectives of the drug-free workplace program. However, fewer participants demonstrated awareness of the specific roles and responsibilities of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in implementing the program's policy, highlighting an area for further communication and education.

### **Implementation Assessment**

Implementing the drug-free workplace program in the City Government of Valenzuela reveals several strengths and areas for improvement. Preventive education, a cornerstone of the program, was confirmed by 57% of respondents as being present in their offices. Seminars were identified as the primary mode of information dissemination, reported by 53% of employees. However, participation in these activities was infrequent, with 66% of respondents indicating limited engagement, suggesting that logistical and scheduling challenges may hinder their effectiveness.

Mandatory and random drug testing emerged as a well-recognized program component. A significant majority, 78% of respondents, reported undergoing mandatory drug testing, while 69% participated in random drug testing. The most common testing instances occurred during pre-employment processes (52%) and when there was reasonable suspicion (64%). These figures highlight the program's commitment to ensuring a drug-free workplace, although there is room to enhance the unpredictability and frequency of random testing to strengthen its deterrent effect.

Awareness of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) was identified as a critical gap in the program's implementation. Only 62% of respondents were aware of the existence of assistance programs for employees who tested positive for drug use. This limited awareness underscores the need for improved communication strategies to ensure employees understand the support mechanisms crucial for rehabilitation and reintegration into the workforce.

### **Employee Satisfaction**

Employee satisfaction with the drug-free workplace program revealed a mix of perspectives. Preventive education activities received moderate satisfaction ratings, with 36% of respondents expressing approval of the initiatives. However, 17% of participants reported dissatisfaction, pointing to areas where improvements in content delivery and accessibility may be necessary. Despite these challenges, a significant majority, 71% of respondents, recognized the importance of preventive education in fostering a culture of drug awareness and compliance. These findings underscore the value of strengthening educational efforts to enhance satisfaction and engagement with the program's objectives.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings provide a nuanced perspective on the City Government of Valenzuela's implementation of RA 9165, highlighting strengths and improvement areas. The high awareness of drug testing protocols reflects the city's successful efforts in communicating the critical importance of such measures. However, significant gaps in preventive education and employee assistance programs (EAPs) reveal opportunities to enhance the program's impact and sustainability.

Preventive education is vital in fostering a culture of awareness and compliance with drug-free policies. While seminars have been an effective tool for disseminating information, their limited frequency and scope reduce their effectiveness. Expanding the educational approach to include workshops tailored to specific employee groups, interactive sessions encouraging engagement, and digital campaigns providing on-demand access to resources can address these limitations. Digital learning platforms, in particular, can cater to a younger, tech-savvy workforce, ensuring broader participation and knowledge retention.

Mandatory and random drug testing has been implemented as a cornerstone of the program. The reliance on

accredited testing centers ensures compliance with RA 9165 and reinforces the integrity of the testing process. However, increasing the unpredictability and frequency of random drug testing could strengthen its deterrent effect. Clear communication about the disciplinary actions for non-compliance and the role of testing in maintaining workplace safety is essential to sustain employee trust and cooperation. Additionally, introducing technology-driven scheduling for random testing could enhance its efficacy and fairness.

Support mechanisms for employees who test positive for drug use, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), are critical for rehabilitation and reintegration. Unfortunately, awareness of these programs is low among employees. This lack of awareness underscores a need for robust communication strategies. Employers should leverage internal communication channels, such as newsletters, webinars, and team meetings, to highlight the availability and benefits of EAPs. Success stories of employees who have successfully utilized these programs could also help reduce stigma and encourage participation. Effective EAPs support individual recovery and contribute to a healthier organizational culture.

Comparisons with global best practices provide additional insights for improving the program. For instance, countries like Canada integrate preventive education into broader workplace wellness programs, emphasizing the importance of holistic employee well-being. Similarly, the United States focuses on combining regular drug testing with comprehensive support mechanisms, including counseling and rehabilitation services. Adopting these approaches in Valenzuela could strengthen the program's overall effectiveness and align it with international standards.

In summary, the implementation of RA 9165 in Valenzuela City reflects a commendable commitment to creating a drug-free workplace. However, addressing the identified gaps through innovative educational strategies, enhanced testing protocols, and improved support mechanisms will be critical for achieving the program's long-term goals. By learning from global best practices and tailoring interventions to the local context, the city can establish a model for other local government units to emulate.

**Preventive Education** Preventive education is crucial in fostering a drug-free workplace culture. While seminars are practical, the limited frequency and narrow reach hinder their impact. Expanding the scope of educational initiatives to include workshops, interactive sessions, and digital campaigns could enhance employee engagement and understanding of drug-related policies.

**Drug Testing** Mandatory and random drug testing serve as deterrents against substance abuse. Relying on government-accredited centers ensures that the effectiveness of random testing can be improved by increasing its frequency and making it compliant with RA 9165. However, it is truly unpredictable. Policies outlining disciplinary actions for non-compliance must also be consistently communicated to employees.

**Employee Assistance Programs** Support mechanisms for employees who test positive for drug use are critical for rehabilitation and reintegration. The low awareness of assistance programs highlights a communication gap that must be addressed. Employers should ensure that employees are informed about available support and encouraged to seek help without fear of stigma.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations aim to address identified gaps and enhance the implementation of RA 9165 in the City Government of Valenzuela. These recommendations focus on strengthening preventive education, improving drug testing protocols, enhancing communication strategies for Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), fostering partnerships with community organizations, and instituting regular program evaluations.

### Quarterly Workshops and Interactive Seminars

Quarterly workshops and interactive seminars are proposed to improve preventive education efforts. These workshops will cater to diverse employee demographics and address specific workplace challenges. By leveraging hybrid formats and combining in-person sessions with virtual platforms, the city can accommodate varying schedules and ensure broad participation. Facilitators will be trained to deliver engaging content, and

digital learning modules tailored to specific workplace needs will be developed. Allocating funds for workshop materials, virtual session technology, and expert facilitator fees will be necessary. Challenges, such as resistance to change and scheduling conflicts, can be mitigated through employee surveys to identify preferred timings and provide participation incentives.

### **Increased Frequency and Randomness of Drug Testing**

Strengthening drug testing protocols is another key recommendation. To ensure unpredictability and fairness, algorithmic scheduling for random testing is suggested. Partnering with accredited facilities will standardize procedures and maintain the credibility of results. The increased testing frequency will necessitate a budget allocation for laboratory partnerships, regular calibration of testing equipment, and staff training on testing protocols. Transparency and clear communication about the rationale behind random testing will address potential employee concerns about intrusiveness.

### **Comprehensive Communication Strategies for EAPs**

Enhancing communication strategies for Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) is essential to increase awareness and utilization. A multifaceted communication plan integrating visual aids, digital campaigns, and peer-led advocacy initiatives is recommended. Regular updates through newsletters, emails, and team meetings will reinforce the visibility of EAP benefits. Investments in communication tools, such as graphic design software and developing a dedicated EAP webpage, will support these efforts. Employing communication specialists to craft effective messaging and ensuring repeated exposure through multiple channels will address challenges related to message retention.

### **Partnerships with Community Organizations**

Establishing partnerships with community organizations and NGOs specializing in addiction recovery and prevention can expand the program's reach. Collaborations can facilitate community-wide education events and leverage the expertise and networks of partner organizations. To execute these initiatives effectively, financial support for events, transportation for NGO staff, and promotional materials will be required. Appointing a dedicated liaison officer will streamline stakeholder coordination and communication, addressing potential organizational challenges.

### **Periodic Program Evaluations**

Regular evaluations of the drug-free workplace program are essential for continuous improvement. Longitudinal studies incorporating surveys, focus groups, and performance metrics will provide valuable insights into program effectiveness. A precise evaluation timeline will help track progress and identify areas for refinement. Allocating funds for hiring third-party evaluators, developing data collection tools, and conducting internal training sessions will ensure robust evaluations. Presenting findings constructively and linking improvements to the tangible employee and organizational benefits will address resistance to feedback and encourage action on recommendations.

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