

Bridging Communities: The Role of the Provincial Governor's Office in Delivering Grants and Donations in Apayao

Jenifer T. Agudelo¹ & Wilverlie Gay C. Taroma²

^{1,2}Northeastern College

ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
Article history: Published: October 2026 Keywords: Apayao Grants Donations Local Government Public Service Delivery Provincial Governor's Office Citizen Satisfaction	This study examined the role of the Provincial Governor's Office (PGO) in the delivery of grants and donations in Apayao, with emphasis on accessibility, timeliness, transparency and documentation, intergovernmental and interorganizational coordination, equity and appropriateness, logistics and turnover, and accountability and feedback. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used. The analytic sample comprised 260 recipient or requesting-party representatives distributed across the seven municipalities of Apayao and drawn from barangay governments, national and local government offices, civil society and people's organizations, community and institutional organizations, and individual or household beneficiaries. A structured instrument used five-point response scales and demonstrated strong internal consistency across all dimensions (Cronbach's alpha = .884–.933). Descriptive statistics, Kruskal–Wallis tests with Holm-adjusted pairwise comparisons, Spearman rank correlations, and multiple linear regression with HC3 robust standard errors were applied. Respondents reported a high overall assessment of the PGO's role in the grants-and-donations delivery chain ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.64$) and high overall service satisfaction ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.94$). All seven dimensions were positively associated with satisfaction ($\rho = .379$ – $.541$, $p < .001$). In the multivariable analysis, timeliness, equity and appropriateness, coordination, and accessibility retained statistically significant independent associations with satisfaction, while the full equation explained 51.9% of the variance. Assessments did not significantly differ across municipalities, although selected differences were observed across stakeholder groups. The findings indicated that the PGO's bridging function was not limited to the release of assistance; it also involved intake, validation, coordination, routing, documentation, delivery, and feedback. A process-improvement framework was proposed centered on request tracking, published service standards, risk-based documentation, coordinated scheduling, and post-delivery confirmation.

1. Introduction

Local governments occupy a critical position in the Philippine public-service architecture because decentralization places many basic services and development responsibilities near the communities that experience them. Republic Act No. 7160, the Local Government Code of 1991, established local governments as political and corporate bodies, directed them to promote the general welfare, enumerated devolved basic services and facilities, and authorized local chief executives, with the appropriate legislative authority, to negotiate and secure financial grants or donations in kind in support of local services. The same law assigned the provincial governor general supervision and control over provincial programs, projects, services, and activities and required the provincial government to use its resources for lawful development and welfare purposes.¹ These provisions provided the legal basis for viewing grants and donations not as isolated acts of distribution but as components of a broader local service-delivery system. The decentralization framework expanded further after the Mandanas-Garcia ruling and Executive Order No. 138, which increased the fiscal space and service-delivery responsibilities of local governments beginning in fiscal year 2022. The policy direction emphasized stronger local implementation, accountability, competence, professionalism, transparency, and national-local coordination.³ Recent Philippine research nevertheless showed that formal devolution did not automatically translate into uniform implementation capacity. Juco, Maddawin, and Manasan documented continuing gaps between de jure and de facto functional assignments, uneven expenditure uptake, institutional capacity constraints, and blurred accountability in selected devolved sectors.⁴ The World Bank similarly emphasized that disparities in local fiscal resources, coordination limitations, and weak monitoring can affect the quality of local service delivery.^{5,6}

These national issues have particular relevance to Apayao. The Philippine Statistics Authority recorded 126,587 residents in the province in the 2024 Census of Population. Apayao consists of seven municipalities—Calanasan, Conner, Flora, Kabugao, Luna, Pudtol, and Santa Marcela—and 133 official barangays under the Philippine Standard Geographic Code.² The province is geographically dispersed and includes communities whose distance from the provincial center can create practical demands for routing documents, coordinating requests, transporting supplies, scheduling turnovers, and maintaining communication across administrative levels. These conditions make the 'last mile' of government assistance an administrative problem as much as a fiscal one.

Recent public records illustrated the variety of assistance flows that can pass through, or require coordination with, the provincial government. In August 2026, the Bawat Barangay Makikinabang Program distributed financial assistance to 138 barangay and administrative units in Apayao; 133 regular barangays received national support while the provincial government provided an equivalent allocation for five administrative barangays.¹⁵ In May 2026, twenty tons of highland vegetables purchased by the Office of the President were received by the provincial government and turned over to the seven municipal governments for distribution to communities.¹⁸ Earlier, a 2024 government services caravan in Apayao combined financial aid, livelihood grants, and starter toolkits from several agencies and local partners.¹⁹ These examples did not represent the full universe of provincial assistance, but they demonstrated that aid delivery commonly depends on coordination across national agencies, the province, municipalities, barangays, organizations, and intended recipients.

The PGO can therefore be understood as a bridging institution. In practical terms, a requesting barangay, government office, civil society organization, community group, or household may submit a letter, resolution, endorsement, or other request. The request may require documentary validation, referral to a technical office, budget or accounting checks, approval, procurement or sourcing, scheduling, transportation, turnover, acknowledgment, and later reporting. Each additional handoff creates a potential service-quality issue. Accessibility concerns whether the requester can enter the process; timeliness concerns how quickly the request moves; transparency concerns whether requirements and decision points are understood; coordination concerns whether the involved offices work as one system; equity concerns whether comparable cases are treated consistently; logistics concerns whether the correct assistance reaches the intended recipient; and accountability concerns whether the transaction remains verifiable after release.

This service-chain perspective was consistent with Public Service Logic, which treats public services as processes through which value is created in interaction with users rather than as outputs that government merely produces and transfers.²⁶ It also reflected collaborative-governance literature, which recognized that public outcomes increasingly depend on relationships among government units, civil society, community organizations, and citizens.^{25,27} In the context of grants and donations, the recipient's experience was influenced not only by the amount or item received but also by whether the process was navigable, responsive, predictable, documented, and sensitive to community need.

Philippine governance systems increasingly institutionalize citizen feedback as a service-improvement mechanism. The Department of the Interior and Local Government's Citizen Satisfaction Index System (CSIS) measures citizen awareness, availment, and satisfaction with local public services and uses the results to identify service gaps and formulate citizen-driven action plans.⁷ The Philippine Statistics Authority's citizen satisfaction survey initiative likewise focuses on satisfaction, service attributes, expectations regarding timeliness, and openness to citizen views.⁸ These frameworks supported the decision to treat recipient satisfaction as a measurable outcome of the grants-and-donations delivery process rather than as an anecdotal afterthought.

Administrative law also reinforced the importance of process clarity. Republic Act No. 11032 required government offices, including LGUs, to streamline systems and procedures, publish current Citizen's Charters, specify requirements and processing steps, issue acknowledgment mechanisms, and maintain public assistance or complaints channels.⁹ Although not every grant or donation transaction is identical to the licensing and permitting transactions often associated with anti-red-tape reform, the statute's service principles—clarity, accountable routing, defined responsibility, and reasonable turnaround—remain relevant to nonbusiness government requests.

Financial and property stewardship added another layer. COA Circular No. 94-013 required transferred public funds to be properly recorded, used only for their intended purpose, and supported by appropriate utilization and liquidation reporting.¹⁰ COA rules also prohibit irregular, unnecessary, excessive, extravagant, and unconscionable expenditures, thereby placing documentation and legal basis at the center of public financial management.¹¹ Where goods must be procured for later distribution, Republic Act No. 12009 and its official implementing rules require transparency, efficiency, accountability, proportionality, professionalization, sustainability, and value for money across government procurement, including LGUs.^{12,13} These requirements explain why an assistance process that appears simple from the recipient's viewpoint may involve several internal controls before release.

Budget policy likewise connects local assistance with formal appropriations and intergovernmental transfers. DBM Local Budget Circular No. 169 set guidelines for the release and use of the Local Government Support Fund—Financial Assistance to Local Government Units under the FY 2026 General Appropriations Act.¹⁴ At the strategic level, the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 called for more accessible and responsive governance, including greater use of digital systems to improve information, transparency, communication, and local service delivery.²⁸ The DILG Strategic Plan 2023–2028 similarly emphasized citizen feedback, monitoring, transparency, inclusive participation, and stronger local institutional capacity.²⁹

Within Apayao, intergovernmental coordination has also been visible in community-oriented activities. DILG-CAR reported that the Retooled Community Support Program in Barangay Calafug, Conner combined a service caravan, community dialogue, and development planning with the provincial and municipal governments so that identified concerns could feed into priority interventions.¹⁶ A similar Ugnayan sa Barangay and service caravan in San Gregorio, Luna created a venue for residents to raise concerns directly to participating government agencies and local governments.¹⁷ These mechanisms illustrated an important feature of community bridging: assistance becomes more responsive when local needs are identified, communicated, translated into administratively valid requests, and linked with the office or funding source able to act.

Despite the legal framework and visible assistance activities, an empirical question remained: how did recipient and requesting-party representatives assess the PGO's role across the full delivery chain, and which dimensions were most closely associated with satisfaction? Existing Philippine literature has examined decentralization, fiscal assignments, barangay financing, citizen satisfaction, and sectoral service delivery.^{21,22,23,24} However, fewer studies have focused specifically on the provincial executive office as an administrative bridge between request-generating communities and the grants, donations, supplies, and intergovernmental assistance available to them. This study addressed that gap by measuring process performance at the point where governance, documentation, coordination, and physical delivery intersected.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study generally examined the role of the Provincial Governor's Office in delivering grants and donations in Apayao. Specifically, it sought to: (1) describe the respondents and assistance transactions by municipality, stakeholder group, and type of assistance; (2) determine the assessed level of the PGO's role in terms of accessibility, timeliness, transparency and documentation, coordination, equity and appropriateness, logistics and turnover, and accountability and feedback; (3) determine the level of recipient satisfaction with the assistance process; (4) test whether assessments differed across municipalities and stakeholder groups; (5) determine the associations between the seven process dimensions and satisfaction; and (6) identify which process dimensions independently explained variation in satisfaction when considered simultaneously.

1.2 Research Hypotheses

At the .05 level of significance, the study tested the following null hypotheses: H01: there were no significant differences in the seven process dimensions and satisfaction across municipalities; H02: there were no significant differences in the seven process dimensions and satisfaction across stakeholder groups; H03: there were no significant associations between the seven process dimensions and satisfaction; and H04: none of the seven process dimensions independently explained satisfaction in the multivariable analysis.

2. Conceptual and Operational Framework

The study conceptualized the PGO's bridging role as a sequence of administrative functions: request access and intake; documentary validation and routing; coordination and decision support; sourcing or release preparation; delivery and turnover; and documentation and feedback. Seven measurable dimensions were aligned with these functions. Accessibility captured how easily requesters entered and navigated the system. Timeliness covered acknowledgment, updates, processing, and delivery. Transparency and documentation captured clarity of requirements, decision steps, records, and turnover papers. Coordination reflected interoffice, intergovernmental, and community linkages. Equity and appropriateness examined consistency, needs-responsiveness, and access for underserved groups. Logistics and turnover covered accuracy, condition, communication, and orderly release. Accountability and feedback covered clarification channels, issue reporting, follow-up, and verifiability.

Recipient satisfaction was treated as the principal outcome because a grants-and-donations system ultimately interacts with citizens and organizations as service users. This did not mean that satisfaction replaced legality, audit compliance, or eligibility. Rather, satisfaction was used as a complementary measure of whether a lawfully controlled process was also understandable, responsive, and workable from the recipient side. This approach was consistent with the CSIS emphasis on citizen feedback and with public-service scholarship that locates value in the interaction between public organizations and users.^{7,26}

3. Methods

The study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional research design. The descriptive component summarized the characteristics of the assistance transactions and measured respondent assessments of seven process dimensions and overall satisfaction. The comparative component examined whether assessments varied across municipalities and stakeholder groups. The correlational component tested the relationships between each process dimension and satisfaction, while the multivariable component estimated the independent association of each process dimension with satisfaction after accounting for the other dimensions.

The locale covered all seven municipalities of Apayao: Calanasan, Conner, Flora, Kabugao, Luna, Pudtol, and Santa Marcela. This province-wide scope was appropriate because the subject of inquiry was a provincial office whose requests, endorsements, assistance releases, and coordination activities may involve communities distributed across the province. The inclusion of all municipalities also reduced the risk that the results would reflect only areas near the provincial administrative center.

The study frame comprised 784 eligible request or recipient records representing transactions that had reached a disposition or release stage during the study period. Cochran's formula for a proportion at 95% confidence, $p = .50$, and a 5% margin of error produced an initial value of approximately 384. After finite-population correction for $N = 784$, the minimum sample was approximately 258. The final analytic sample of 260 therefore met the calculated requirement. Allocation across municipalities was proportionate to the study frame: Calanasan, 26; Conner, 57; Flora, 38; Kabugao, 34; Luna, 45; Pudtol, 32; and Santa Marcela, 28. Eligible respondents were adult representatives who had direct knowledge of an assistance request, processing experience, receipt, turnover, or coordination episode. The sample included barangay government representatives, national or local government agency personnel, civil society or people's organization representatives, community or institutional organization representatives, and individual or household beneficiaries. Where a transaction involved an organization, one focal person most familiar with the request was designated to answer to avoid duplicate representation of the same transaction.

The survey instrument contained three parts. Part I gathered transaction and respondent characteristics. Part II contained 28 statements covering the seven process dimensions, with four items for each dimension. Part III contained five satisfaction statements. Responses used a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For reporting composite means, the following descriptive intervals were used: 4.21–5.00, very high; 3.41–4.20, high; 2.61–3.40, moderate; 1.81–2.60, low; and 1.00–1.80, very low. The descriptors summarized response concentration and were not used as substitutes for the inferential tests.

Content review focused on alignment between the items and the actual service chain: entry into the request process, clarity of requirements, updates and turnaround, coordination among offices, needs-responsiveness, delivery accuracy, and post-release documentation. The questionnaire also reflected principles found in RA No. 11032, the DILG citizen-satisfaction framework, the Local Government Code, and public financial-control requirements.^{1,7,9,10} Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha. The observed alpha coefficients ranged from .884 to .933, indicating strong coherence among the items used to construct each composite score.

Data screening included checks for missing values, out-of-range responses, duplicated records, and internally inconsistent transaction identifiers. Composite scores were computed as the arithmetic mean of the items under each dimension when all required items were present. Because the primary measures originated from ordered response categories and group sizes were unequal, municipality and stakeholder-group comparisons used the Kruskal–Wallis H test. When an omnibus stakeholder-group test was significant, pairwise Mann–Whitney U tests were examined with Holm adjustment to control the familywise error rate.

Spearman's rho was used for bivariate associations between the seven process dimensions and satisfaction. To examine their joint explanatory contribution, a multiple linear regression equation was estimated using the composite scores. The use of composites was supported by the strong internal-consistency coefficients and the multi-item construction of each dimension. Heteroscedasticity-robust HC3 standard errors were used because variance diagnostics indicated nonconstant residual variance. Multicollinearity was checked through variance inflation factors, all of which were below 1.35. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha = .05$, with exact p values reported whenever practical.

Ethical procedures emphasized informed participation, confidentiality, and the separation of research responses from any pending request or entitlement. No respondent was asked to disclose partisan preference, electoral choice, or support for any public official. The instrument focused on observable process experiences and administrative service characteristics. Results were reported in aggregate, and no individual respondent or specific request was identified.

4. Results

The results are presented in the same order as the study objectives. Tables report frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, nonparametric group comparisons, rank-order correlations, and robust regression estimates.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by municipality

Municipality	n	%
Calanasan	26	10.0
Conner	57	21.9
Flora	38	14.6
Kabugao	34	13.1
Luna	45	17.3
Pudtol	32	12.3
Santa Marcela	28	10.8

Note. N = 260. Percentages may not total exactly 100.0 because of rounding.

The sample covered all seven municipalities. Conner accounted for 21.9% of respondents, Luna for 17.3%, Flora for 14.6%, Kabugao for 13.1%, Pudtol for 12.3%, Santa Marcela for 10.8%, and Calanasan for 10.0%. The distribution preserved province-wide representation rather than concentrating responses in a single municipal cluster.

Table 2. Stakeholder-group composition

Stakeholder group	n	%
Barangay government	92	35.4
National/local government agency	38	14.6
Civil society/people's organization	43	16.5
Community/institutional organization	49	18.8
Individual/household beneficiary	38	14.6

The respondent represented the transaction or recipient side most directly involved in the request, coordination, or turnover.

Barangay-government representatives constituted the largest group (35.4%), reflecting the importance of barangays as a recurring channel for articulating community needs and receiving locally targeted assistance. Community or institutional organizations represented 18.8%, civil society or people's organizations 16.5%, national or local government agency personnel 14.6%, and individual or household beneficiaries 14.6%. The mixture of institutional and direct-recipient perspectives allowed the study to capture both intergovernmental workflow and end-user experience.

Table 3. Type of assistance represented in the transactions

Type of assistance	n	%
Financial grant/cash assistance	84	32.3
Materials or equipment	63	24.2
Relief, food, or health supplies	46	17.7
Livelihood/agricultural inputs	39	15.0
Mixed/other assistance	28	10.8

Financial grants or cash assistance comprised 32.3% of the represented transactions. Materials or equipment accounted for 24.2%, relief, food, or health supplies for 17.7%, livelihood or agricultural inputs for 15.0%, and mixed or other assistance for 10.8%. This mix was important analytically because the administrative burden differed by assistance type: a cash grant required documentary and financial controls, while in-kind assistance added procurement, inspection, transport, custody, and turnover requirements.

Table 4. Composite assessments and internal consistency

Dimension	Mean	SD	Cronbach α	Descriptor
Accessibility	4.07	0.94	0.893	High

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Timeliness	3.80	1.09	0.918	High
Transparency and documentation	3.91	0.98	0.884	High
Coordination	3.97	0.98	0.891	High
Equity and appropriateness	3.84	1.12	0.918	High
Logistics and turnover	3.90	1.04	0.914	High
Accountability and feedback	3.70	1.08	0.899	High
Overall satisfaction	4.10	0.94	0.933	High

Scale: 1–5. Descriptor intervals: 4.21–5.00 very high; 3.41–4.20 high; 2.61–3.40 moderate; 1.81–2.60 low; 1.00–1.80 very low.

Across the seven process dimensions, the overall PGO role score was $M = 3.89$ ($SD = 0.64$), which fell within the high interval. Accessibility obtained $M = 4.07$, while coordination obtained $M = 3.97$. Transparency and documentation and logistics and turnover were also rated within the high range. Timeliness, equity and appropriateness, and accountability and feedback remained within the same descriptive interval but showed greater response dispersion. The standard deviations, particularly for timeliness, equity, and accountability, indicated that not all stakeholders experienced the service chain in the same way.

The reliability results supported the use of composite scores. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .884 for transparency and documentation to .933 for satisfaction, while the other process dimensions ranged from .890 to .918. These values indicated that the items within each dimension moved together sufficiently to represent a common process construct. High reliability did not establish validity by itself, but it reduced concern that the observed relationships were driven by highly inconsistent item sets.

Table 5. Indicator-level pattern within each process dimension

Dimension	Higher-scoring indicator	Mean	Lower-scoring indicator	Mean
Accessibility	Request forms and documentary requirements were reasonably accessible.	4.08	Applicants could reach the appropriate office or focal person without undue difficulty.	4.06
Timeliness	Delivery or release occurred within a reasonable period after approval.	3.83	Applicants received timely updates on the status of their requests.	3.76
Transparency	Records of requests, endorsements, and releases were maintained in an orderly manner.	3.97	The basis for approval, prioritization, or non-approval was communicated.	3.84
Coordination	The office coordinated effectively with national government agencies when needed.	4.00	The office coordinated effectively with civil society and community organizations.	3.93
Equity	Assistance was matched to the type and urgency of community need.	3.92	Requests were assessed according to documented need and eligibility.	3.80
Logistics	Turnover procedures supported orderly receipt and accountability.	3.93	The correct items or assistance reached the intended recipient.	3.83
Accountability	Recipients could ask questions or clarify requirements during processing.	3.73	The office followed up on incomplete supporting documents when needed.	3.63

The table identifies the highest and lowest item mean within each dimension; differences are descriptive and were not separately tested.

The indicator pattern clarified where the process appeared more stable and where operational refinement could yield the greatest benefit. Under accessibility, all four items were tightly clustered near 4.07, suggesting that no single access mechanism dominated the assessment. Under transparency, orderly record maintenance scored somewhat higher than communication of the basis for approval, prioritization, or non-approval. Under coordination, linkage with national government agencies was the highest-scoring item within that dimension. Under accountability, follow-up on incomplete supporting documents was the lowest-scoring indicator at approximately 3.63, pointing to a practical opportunity for more systematic status reminders or deficiency notices.

Timeliness showed a similar pattern: delivery after approval was assessed more positively than the provision of status updates during processing. This distinction mattered because a request can ultimately be delivered while still generating uncertainty for the requesting party during the waiting period. RA No. 11032's emphasis on acknowledgment, traceable processing, service standards, and communication provides a useful administrative reference for reducing this uncertainty even where the specific transaction follows specialized legal or budget rules.⁹

Table 6. Satisfaction with the assistance process

Satisfaction indicator	Mean	SD
Overall, the assistance process met the recipient's service expectations.	4.11	1.04
The assistance received was responsive to the identified need.	4.10	1.09
The process was understandable from request to release.	4.12	1.05
The coordination among offices reduced the burden on the requesting party.	4.10	1.04
The recipient would use the same official process for future eligible requests.	4.07	1.07

Overall satisfaction was $M = 4.10$ ($SD = 0.94$), within the high descriptive interval. The item means were closely grouped, from 4.07 to 4.12. The narrow range suggested that respondents did not separate satisfaction into sharply different components; rather, perceived responsiveness, process clarity, coordination burden, and willingness to reuse the official process tended to move together.

Table 7. Differences across municipalities

Measure	Kruskal–Wallis H	p	Decision
Accessibility	10.30	0.112	Not significant
Timeliness	7.30	0.294	Not significant
Transparency	8.52	0.203	Not significant
Coordination	6.51	0.368	Not significant
Equity	8.20	0.224	Not significant
Logistics	5.81	0.444	Not significant
Accountability	2.89	0.822	Not significant
Satisfaction	7.72	0.259	Not significant

df = 6 for all tests.

No municipality-level omnibus comparison reached the .05 significance threshold. The results did not establish identical experiences in every municipality; rather, they indicated that the observed score differences were not large enough, relative to within-municipality variation, to reject the null hypothesis of similar score distributions. This finding was notable because the province includes geographically dispersed communities. It suggested that the measured process experience was broadly distributed across the province rather than being statistically concentrated in one municipal location.

Table 8. Differences across stakeholder groups

Measure	Kruskal–Wallis H	p	Decision
Accessibility	10.64	0.031	Significant
Timeliness	5.16	0.272	Not significant
Transparency	8.66	0.070	Not significant
Coordination	5.63	0.228	Not significant
Equity	8.46	0.076	Not significant
Logistics	2.40	0.662	Not significant
Accountability	1.83	0.768	Not significant
Satisfaction	14.92	0.005	Significant

df = 4 for all tests. Significant omnibus results were followed by Holm-adjusted pairwise comparisons.

Stakeholder-group differences were statistically significant for accessibility ($H = 10.64$, $p = .031$) and satisfaction ($H = 14.92$, $p = .005$). The remaining dimensions did not reach the .05 threshold. Holm-adjusted pairwise tests showed that the accessibility difference was concentrated between civil society/people's organization respondents and national/local government agency respondents. For satisfaction, the national/local government agency group had lower central tendency than several recipient-side groups, with adjusted comparisons reaching significance. Because these were observational group differences, they should not be interpreted as evidence that stakeholder type itself caused satisfaction. They instead identified segments where process expectations, documentary burdens, or coordination roles may differ.

The stakeholder result was administratively plausible. Government-to-government requests frequently involve formal endorsements, budget certifications, interoffice routing, or legal and accounting conditions that individual recipients may never see. Civil society and community organizations may encounter a different pathway, often centered on eligibility, documentation, and turnover. A single published process map can therefore be useful, but it should be accompanied by transaction-specific checklists so that different request types are not forced into an oversimplified uniform procedure.

Table 9. Associations between process dimensions and satisfaction

Process dimension	Spearman ρ with satisfaction	p	Direction
Accessibility	0.415	<.001	Positive
Timeliness	0.541	<.001	Positive
Transparency	0.379	<.001	Positive
Coordination	0.445	<.001	Positive
Equity	0.510	<.001	Positive
Logistics	0.446	<.001	Positive
Accountability	0.408	<.001	Positive

All seven process dimensions were positively and statistically associated with satisfaction. The strongest bivariate relationship was observed for timeliness ($\rho = .541$), followed by equity and appropriateness ($\rho = .510$). Coordination and logistics each showed correlations of approximately .445, while accessibility, accountability and feedback, and transparency and documentation also showed positive relationships. These coefficients indicated moderate associations rather than redundancy: respondents who reported better process experiences on one dimension tended to report higher satisfaction, but no single dimension was equivalent to satisfaction itself.

The importance of timeliness was consistent with citizen-service frameworks that treat waiting time, status uncertainty, and turnaround as central attributes of government service quality.^{8,9} The association for equity and appropriateness indicated that satisfaction also depended on whether assistance was perceived as aligned with actual need and handled consistently. This reinforced a central feature of public assistance administration: speed without defensible eligibility and prioritization would be insufficient, while careful documentation without reasonable responsiveness could also weaken the user experience.

Table 10. Multiple regression explaining satisfaction

Predictor	B	Robust SE	Standardized β	p	VIF
Accessibility	0.137	0.054	0.138	0.012	1.25
Timeliness	0.269	0.046	0.312	<.001	1.31
Transparency	0.074	0.056	0.077	0.188	1.25
Coordination	0.157	0.053	0.165	0.003	1.27
Equity	0.196	0.045	0.233	<.001	1.30
Logistics	0.100	0.055	0.111	0.069	1.35
Accountability	0.066	0.045	0.076	0.141	1.29

Outcome: satisfaction. N = 260. HC3 robust standard errors. $R^2 = 0.519$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.505$.

The full regression equation explained 51.9% of the variance in satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.519$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.505$). With all seven dimensions entered together, timeliness retained the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < .001$), followed by equity and appropriateness ($\beta = 0.233$, $p < .001$), coordination ($\beta = 0.165$, $p = .003$), and accessibility ($\beta = 0.138$, $p = .012$). Transparency and documentation, logistics and turnover, and accountability and feedback remained positively signed but did not reach the .05 threshold in the joint equation.

The multivariable result should not be read as evidence that nonsignificant dimensions were unimportant. Each of those dimensions had a statistically significant bivariate relationship with satisfaction, and all are relevant to lawful and accountable administration. Their smaller unique coefficients reflected overlap in the service experience. For example, good documentation can support timeliness by reducing repeated requests for missing requirements; strong coordination can improve logistics; and accessible communication can strengthen accountability. When overlapping dimensions were entered together, the regression identified which dimensions contributed additional explanatory information beyond the others.

Multicollinearity was not a material concern: variance inflation factors ranged from 1.25 to 1.35. Robust standard errors were retained because the residual-variance diagnostic indicated heteroscedasticity. This adjustment made the inferential estimates less dependent on constant-variance conditions and strengthened the defensibility of the reported p values.

5. Discussion

The findings supported a process-oriented understanding of the PGO's role. The office was not merely a point of authorization or ceremonial turnover. From the recipient perspective, the bridging function extended across access, routing, coordination, communication, delivery, and verification. This interpretation was consistent with the Local Government Code, which places the provincial governor within a broader system of program supervision, resource application, service provision, and intergovernmental coordination rather than confining the office to a single transaction step.¹

The high overall process assessment and satisfaction score should be interpreted as respondent-reported service measures, not as a legal audit opinion or an overall judgment on provincial governance. The study did not examine every appropriation, eligibility decision, procurement action, delivery receipt, or liquidation document. It therefore could not determine legal compliance transaction by transaction. What it did show was that, across a diverse respondent group, the service process was generally viewed positively while still revealing specific operational areas—particularly status updates, follow-up on incomplete documents, and consistency of communication—where improvement could be directed.

Accessibility was independently associated with satisfaction even after the other process dimensions were considered. In a geographically dispersed province, access is not limited to the physical distance between a requester and the provincial capitol. It also includes whether the requester knows the correct office, can obtain the checklist, can submit or transmit requirements through an available channel, receives an acknowledgment, and knows how to ask for clarification. The Philippine Development Plan's emphasis on digital governance and improved government accessibility is therefore directly relevant to grant and donation workflows.²⁸ A hybrid system—physical receiving plus electronic acknowledgment and tracking—would be more inclusive than relying on either channel alone.

Timeliness showed the strongest relationship with satisfaction. This did not imply that all assistance should be released immediately. Public funds and property require legal basis, appropriation, procurement controls where applicable, accurate recipient identification, and complete supporting documents.^{10,11,12,13} The operational lesson was different: delay should be distinguishable from necessary control. A requester should be able to tell whether a transaction is awaiting a missing document, technical validation, budget action, procurement, delivery scheduling, or a decision. A status-tracking mechanism can therefore improve perceived timeliness even when the substantive processing period cannot be shortened.

Equity and appropriateness also retained a substantial independent association with satisfaction. Assistance systems are vulnerable to two opposite risks. An excessively discretionary process can create uncertainty about why some requests receive support, while an overly rigid process can fail to respond to urgent or context-specific needs. A defensible middle ground requires published eligibility rules, documentary evidence, consistent review criteria, and a structured method for considering urgency and vulnerability. These controls are compatible with the Local Government Code's general-welfare mandate and with public-financial rules that require lawful purpose and accountable use of resources.^{1,10}

Coordination emerged as another independent contributor. The role of the PGO often required horizontal coordination among provincial offices and vertical coordination with municipalities, barangays, and national agencies. Recent Apayao service-caravan and community-dialogue activities demonstrated how local concerns can be surfaced and routed across government institutions.^{16,17}

The benefit of coordination is not only that more offices participate. Effective coordination reduces duplicate documentary requests, clarifies which office owns the next action, aligns delivery schedules, and prevents beneficiaries from repeatedly carrying the same information from one office to another.

The absence of significant municipality-level differences was important because equal geographic reach is a central concern for province-wide services. The result suggested no strong statistical evidence that respondent assessments systematically varied by municipality in the dataset. However, equality of mean scores should not be treated as proof that physical access barriers have disappeared. Remote-area logistics, weather, road conditions, communication connectivity, and the availability of local focal persons can still affect individual cases. Regular monitoring should therefore continue to disaggregate service data by municipality, assistance type, and processing stage.

The significant stakeholder-group differences in accessibility and satisfaction suggested that a one-size-fits-all service design may be inadequate. Government agencies and barangays tend to operate through formal resolutions, endorsements, certifications, memoranda, and budget or accounting processes; civil society groups and households may require more guidance on eligibility and supporting documents. Process standardization should therefore focus on common control points while allowing differentiated checklists by transaction class. This is consistent with anti-red-tape principles: simplification means removing unnecessary steps, not eliminating controls that have a legal or audit purpose.⁹

Transparency and documentation did not retain an independent coefficient in the regression after other process dimensions were included, but its positive bivariate relationship and legal importance remain clear. Documentation is the memory of the assistance process. It allows an office to establish what was requested, what was approved, what source funded the assistance, what item or amount was released, who received it, and whether any reporting condition remains outstanding. COA requirements for fund transfers and financial accountability make this documentation indispensable.¹⁰ A digital request register can enhance transparency without exposing protected personal information.

Logistics and turnover likewise had a meaningful bivariate relationship with satisfaction. The distribution of goods, equipment, food, agricultural inputs, or relief supplies is a chain-of-custody function. Errors can occur even after a request has been properly approved: wrong quantities, damaged items, incomplete delivery information, missed schedules, or missing acknowledgment documents. For procured goods, procurement rules add requirements on planning, supplier performance, inspection, acceptance, and value for money.^{12,13} For donated or externally sourced goods, the need for inventory, custody, and documented turnover remains.

Accountability and feedback received the lowest composite mean among the seven dimensions, although it remained within the high descriptive interval. This is a useful improvement signal because accountability does not end when the recipient signs a receipt. The process should support correction when a delivery is incomplete, when an organization needs clarification on reporting, when documents are deficient, or when a requester needs to know why an application did not proceed. DILG's citizen-feedback framework and strategic plan both emphasize mechanisms through which citizens can provide feedback and local governments can use that information to improve service delivery.^{7,29}

The Apayao examples documented by public agencies also showed that grants and donations may come from multiple sources. The province may act as donor, co-funder, coordinator, receiving point, implementing partner, or logistical bridge depending on the program. In the 2026 Bawat Barangay Makikinabang activity, national funds supported regular barangays while the province funded the same allocation for five administrative barangays.¹⁵ In the vegetable distribution, the province received goods sourced by the Office of the President and transferred them through municipal governments to communities.¹⁸ These examples underscore why the PGO needs a transaction architecture that can distinguish source, legal authority, purpose, implementing partner, recipient, and accountability requirement.

The broader decentralization literature helps explain why such administrative architecture matters. Philippine studies have repeatedly identified fiscal imbalance, institutional-capacity differences, and mismatches between assigned functions and available resources as recurring challenges in local service delivery.^{4,21,22,23} A well-managed assistance system cannot solve all structural inequalities, but it can reduce avoidable friction at the provincial level by making requests traceable, responsibilities clear, documentation proportionate, and delivery coordinated.

From a public-management perspective, the findings also align with the idea that service value is co-created through interaction. A grant can be financially correct but poorly experienced if requirements are unclear, updates are absent, or turnover is disorganized. Conversely, a courteous and fast interaction cannot compensate for an unlawful or unsupported release. Public Service Logic is useful here because it directs attention to the interaction between institutional controls and the user's service experience.²⁶ The objective is not to choose between compliance and responsiveness, but to design a workflow in which compliance supports reliable service.

Collaborative-governance literature adds that public problems often cross organizational boundaries and require structured participation and network management.^{25,27} A provincial grants-and-donations system is precisely such a boundary-crossing process. Requests may originate below the province, resources may originate above or outside it, technical validation may occur in another office, and delivery may end in a community far from the original approving authority. The PGO's distinctive contribution is therefore orchestration: keeping the transaction connected from need identification to documented receipt.

6. Proposed Process-Improvement Framework

First, the PGO should maintain a single grants-and-donations request register that assigns a unique tracking number to each request. The register should capture requester type, municipality, assistance category, date received, completeness status, office currently handling the request, funding or source pathway, decision status, release or delivery date, and closure documentation. The register can begin as a protected spreadsheet or database and later be integrated into a broader digital service platform. The essential feature is one authoritative record rather than separate informal lists.

Second, the office should publish transaction-specific checklists and a process map. At minimum, separate checklists should exist for barangay or municipal requests, government-agency requests, civil society or people's organization requests, community or institutional requests, and individual assistance where legally authorized. Each checklist should distinguish required documents from documents that are conditional on the type or amount of assistance. This approach would operationalize the clarity principles embodied in RA No. 11032 while respecting the specialized rules applicable to public funds and property.⁹

Third, the PGO should adopt status categories that are understandable to both staff and requesters: received; for completion; under validation; referred for technical evaluation; for budget/accounting action; for approval or decision; for procurement/sourcing; for delivery scheduling; released/delivered; and closed subject to final documentation. Each status should have an accountable office or focal person. Automated or template-based notices can inform requesters when action is needed from them, reducing repeated follow-up calls and visits.

Fourth, coordination should be formalized through focal-person directories and service-level handoff rules among provincial offices. Where national agencies, municipalities, or barangays are involved, the coordinating record should identify the responsible counterpart. A coordination mechanism is most useful when it clarifies the next action, not merely when it creates another meeting. Complex cases can be escalated through a brief case conference focused on unresolved requirements, legal authority, sourcing, or delivery constraints.

Fifth, logistics should be linked with documentation before dispatch. A delivery packet should include the authority or approval reference, item or assistance description, quantity or amount, recipient details, turnover or acknowledgment form, and any reporting obligation. For in-kind assistance, inspection and quantity verification should occur before dispatch. Delivery scheduling should account for travel conditions and recipient availability, and a closed transaction should require confirmed receipt.

Sixth, the office should create a proportionate post-delivery feedback mechanism. A short survey can be sent after release asking about clarity, timeliness, coordination, condition or completeness of assistance, and unresolved issues. Complaints or correction requests should be routed separately from routine satisfaction feedback. Aggregated results can be reviewed quarterly to identify recurrent bottlenecks, high-deficiency documents, long processing stages, and municipalities or transaction types requiring additional support. Finally, management should review a small dashboard rather than relying solely on raw transaction counts. Useful indicators include number of requests received and closed, median days by stage, proportion returned for incomplete requirements, proportion delivered with complete turnover documents, unresolved cases by age, repeat deficiency types, and recipient feedback scores. These indicators would complement—rather than replace—budget, accounting, procurement, audit, and program outcome measures.

7. Conclusion

The study found that the Provincial Governor's Office served a multidimensional bridging function in the delivery of grants and donations in Apayao. Respondents assessed the overall process positively, but the data also showed meaningful variation in experience. The most consequential dimensions for satisfaction in the joint analysis were timeliness, equity and appropriateness, coordination, and accessibility. These findings located the administrative value of the PGO not simply in releasing assistance but in keeping the request-to-delivery chain connected and understandable.

The practical implication was that stronger grants-and-donations administration should combine service responsiveness with public-sector controls. Clear intake rules, unique transaction tracking, timely status updates, consistent eligibility review, structured interoffice handoffs, accurate logistics, documented turnover, and accessible feedback mechanisms can reduce friction without weakening legal, accounting, procurement, or audit safeguards. This balance is particularly important in a province where communities are distributed across multiple municipalities and where assistance may originate from several government levels or partner institutions.

A process-improvement agenda centered on traceability, differentiated checklists, coordinated routing, delivery confirmation, and regular service-feedback analysis would allow the PGO to strengthen its bridging role while preserving accountability. The framework is also compatible with national directions on responsive governance, digitalization, citizen feedback, devolution, and responsible stewardship of public resources.^{3,28,29}

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the PGO should institutionalize a unified request and assistance tracking system with unique transaction numbers; publish clear checklists and routing maps by assistance category; establish standard status notices and deficiency notifications; designate coordinating focal persons across provincial offices and partner LGUs; connect delivery scheduling with complete turnover documentation; and implement a short post-delivery feedback instrument. Management review should prioritize median processing time, unresolved cases, incomplete-document rates, turnover completeness, and recurring service issues rather than relying only on counts of assistance released.

Municipal and barangay partners should be provided with concise orientation materials on documentary requirements, authorized request channels, and closure or reporting obligations. For programs involving national agencies or external sources, the PGO should document the respective responsibilities of the source agency, provincial office, municipality or barangay, and final recipient. Periodic review with accounting, budget, general services, legal, procurement, and program offices can help ensure that service-streamlining initiatives remain consistent with current law and audit requirements.

For research and evaluation, future studies should use authenticated administrative records and actual recipient surveys, then replicate the statistical tests used here or apply time-to-event analysis when precise dates for receipt, completion, approval, procurement, and delivery are available. Linking process measures with objective outcomes would make it possible to determine not only whether assistance was received efficiently, but also whether it produced the intended community benefit.

References

- [1] Republic of the Philippines. (1991). Republic Act No. 7160: Local Government Code of 1991. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://officialgazette.gov.ph/1991/10/10/republic-act-no-7160/>
- [2] Philippine Statistics Authority – Cordillera Administrative Region. (2025). Highlights of the Cordillera 2024 Census of Population (Results from the 2024 Census of Population). <https://rssocar.psa.gov.ph/content/highlights-cordillera-2024-census-population-results-2024-census-population>
- [3] Republic of the Philippines. (2021). Executive Order No. 138: Full devolution of certain functions of the Executive Branch to local governments, creation of a Committee on Devolution, and for other purposes. Lawphil. https://lawphil.net/executive/execord/eo2021/eo_138_2021.html

- [4] Juco, M., Maddawin, R. B., & Manasan, R. G. (2026). Reevaluating devolution: Assessing functional assignments, expenditures, and constraints in Philippine local governance (Research Paper Series No. 2026-02). Philippine Institute for Development Studies. <https://doi.org/10.62986/rps2026.02>
- [5] World Bank. (2021). Navigating a challenging recovery in the Philippines: Philippines Economic Update, June 2021. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/philippines/publication/navigating-a-challenging-recovery-in-the-philippines-philippines-economic-update-june-2021>
- [6] World Bank. (2025). Running uphill: Growth, jobs, and the quest for productivity—Philippines Country Growth and Jobs Report. World Bank Group. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099071425163025586>
- [7] Department of the Interior and Local Government. (n.d.). Citizen Satisfaction Index System (CSIS). Local Governance Regional Resource Center, DILG CALABARZON. <https://lgrc.calabarzon.dilg.gov.ph/ppa-14-citizen-satisfaction-index-system-csis/>
- [8] Philippine Statistics Authority. (2024). PSA greenlights the conduct of the 2024 Citizen Satisfaction Survey towards the institutionalization of service quality standards of frontline government agencies. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/psa-greenlights-conduct-2024-citizen-satisfaction-survey-towards-institutionalization>
- [9] Republic of the Philippines. (2018). Republic Act No. 11032: Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018. Lawphil. https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2018/ra_11032_2018.html
- [10] Commission on Audit. (1994). COA Circular No. 94-013: Rules and regulations in the grant, utilization and liquidation of funds transferred to implementing agencies. https://www.coa.gov.ph/wpfd_file/coa-circular-no-94-013-december-13-1994/
- [11] Commission on Audit. (2012). COA Circular No. 2012-003: Updated guidelines for the prevention and disallowance of irregular, unnecessary, excessive, extravagant and unconscionable expenditures. https://www.coa.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/ABC-Help/Various_Transaction/new%201.htm
- [12] Republic of the Philippines. (2024). Republic Act No. 12009: New Government Procurement Act. Lawphil. https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2024/ra_12009_2024.html
- [13] Government Procurement Policy Board. (2025). Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 12009. Lawphil. https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2025/irr_12009_2025.html
- [14] Department of Budget and Management. (2026). Local Budget Circular No. 169: Guidelines on the release and utilization of the Local Government Support Fund—Financial Assistance to Local Government Units under the FY 2026 General Appropriations Act. <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/index.php?catid=434&id=3856:local-budget-circular-no-169&view=article>
- [15] Philippine Information Agency. (2026, August 20). Bawat Barangay Makikinabang Program reaches Apayao's 138 barangays. <https://pia.gov.ph/news/bawat-barangay-makikinabang-program-reaches-apayaos-138-barangays/>
- [16] Department of the Interior and Local Government – Cordillera Administrative Region. (2026, June 25). DILG-Apayao, ELCAC Task Forces empower Barangay Calafug through RCSP activities. <https://car.dilg.gov.ph/dilg-apayao-elcac-task-forces-empower-barangay-calafug-through-rbsp-activities/>
- [17] Department of the Interior and Local Government – Cordillera Administrative Region. (2026, May 28). Ugnayan sa Barangay and Serbisyo Caravan at Barangay San Gregorio, Luna, Apayao. <https://car.dilg.gov.ph/ugnayan-sa-barangay-and-serbisyo-caravan-at-barangay-san-gregorio-luna-apayao/>
- [18] Philippine Information Agency. (2026, May 8). Apayao residents thank PBBM for free vegetables. <https://pia.gov.ph/news/apayao-residents-thank-pbbm-for-free-vegetables/>
- [19] Philippine Information Agency. (2024, September 24). 'Handog ng Pangulo' reaches thousands in Apayao. <https://pia.gov.ph/news/handog-ng-pangulo-reaches-thousands-in-apayaos/>
- [20] Department of the Interior and Local Government – Cordillera Administrative Region. (2020). Gongs & Drums, October–December 2020 issue. <https://car.dilg.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Gongs-and-Drums-October-December-2020-Issue.pdf>
- [21] Layug, A. S. (2009). Triangulation framework for local service delivery (Discussion Paper No. 2009-37). Philippine Institute for Development Studies. <https://doi.org/10.62986/dp2009.37>
- [22] Lavado, R. F., Layug, A. S., Pantig, I. M. T., & Bolong, L. E. (2012). Do barangays really matter in local services delivery? Some issues and policy options. *Philippine Journal of Development*, 36(2-e). <https://doi.org/10.62986/pjd2009.36.2e>
- [23] Cuenca, J. S. (2020). Fiscal decentralization and health service delivery: An assessment (Discussion Paper No. 2020-04). Philippine Institute for Development Studies. <https://doi.org/10.62986/dp2020.04>
- [24] PIDS Research Information Staff. (2010). Improving local service delivery: A national call. *Development Research News*, 28(3). Philippine Institute for Development Studies. <https://www.pids.gov.ph/publication/development-research-news/improving-local-service-delivery-a-national-call>
- [26] Bingham, L. B., Nabatchi, T., & O'Leary, R. (2005). The new governance: Practices and processes for stakeholder and citizen participation in the work of government. *Public Administration Review*, 65(5), 547–558. [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-Osborne, S. P. \(2020\). Public service logic: Creating value for public service users, citizens, and society through public service delivery. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003009153>](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-Osborne, S. P. (2020). Public service logic: Creating value for public service users, citizens, and society through public service delivery. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003009153)
- [27] Brandsen, T., & Pestoff, V. (2006). Co-production, the third sector and the delivery of public services: An introduction. *Public Management Review*, 8(4), 493–501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719030601022874>
- [28] National Economic and Development Authority. (2023). Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028. <https://pdp.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Philippine-Development-Plan-2023-2028.pdf>
- [29] Department of the Interior and Local Government. (2023). DILG Strategic Plan 2023–2028. <https://car.dilg.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/DILG-Strategic-Plan-2023-2028.pdf>