

Legal Analysis of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) Policy for Achieving Social Welfare

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Keywords:	Abstract
Social Assistance, Public Policy, Social Protection, Social Welfare Center, Poverty	People's welfare is a primary objective of state administration, which is pursued through various social protection policies, including the Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) program. Although the poverty rate has continued to decline, vulnerable populations still experience economic pressure due to increasing living costs. Therefore, effective and targeted policy interventions are required. This study aims to examine the implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) policy in improving community welfare based on Cirebon Regent Regulation Number 71 of 2023 concerning the Social Welfare Center (Pusat Kesejahteraan Sosial [Puskesmas]) and to evaluate its effectiveness and targeting accuracy. This study employed a normative juridical approach with a qualitative research design. The results showed that the implementation of Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) in Cirebon Regency was generally consistent with applicable legal provisions through stages of beneficiary data collection, verification, validation, and assistance distribution involving the Social Welfare Center (Pusat Kesejahteraan Sosial [Puskesmas]). However, the policy has not been fully effective because the assistance remains primarily consumptive in nature and challenges persist regarding the accuracy and improvement of the beneficiary data system. Therefore, improvements are needed in data management systems, implementer capacity, optimization of the Puskesmas role, and strengthening of economic empowerment programs to achieve sustainable social welfare.

INTRODUCTION

Social welfare is one of the primary objectives of state administration, which is realized through public policies, particularly those aimed at providing social protection for poor and vulnerable populations. Although the poverty rate in Indonesia has declined, challenges related to the fulfillment of basic needs, accuracy in social assistance targeting, and the effectiveness of government policies remain obstacles to achieving people's welfare.

Data from the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS]) revealed that the poverty rate in March 2025 reached 8.47%, equivalent to 23.85 million people, indicating a decline compared with the previous period. However, the increasing number of poor populations in urban areas and the persistent poverty levels in rural areas demonstrate that social protection efforts remain necessary to maintain the welfare of vulnerable communities.

From the perspective of the welfare state, the government has a constitutional obligation to protect poor populations and establish an adequate social protection system. One approach to fulfilling this responsibility is through the Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) policy, which aims to support low-income households in meeting basic needs and maintaining household economic stability. Previous studies have shown that Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) can contribute to meeting basic community needs, although its impact on improving long-term welfare remains limited. In addition to fulfilling immediate needs, Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) also plays a role in maintaining purchasing power and reducing economic pressures during periods of hardship.

At the regional level, Cirebon Regency continues to face challenges in social welfare, reflected in the number of people living in poverty, which reached 245.92 thousand individuals or approximately 11% of the total population in 2024. Furthermore, the poverty threshold increased to IDR 475,046 per capita per month, indicating rising living costs and increasing household needs. This condition demonstrates that social assistance policies remain essential instruments for improving community welfare. As an effort to strengthen social welfare services, the Cirebon Regency Government issued Cirebon Regent Regulation Number 71 of 2023 concerning Social Welfare Centers (Pusat Kesejahteraan Sosial [Puskesmas]). The Puskesmas functions as an integrated service center responsible for providing assistance, collecting social welfare data, receiving public complaints, and facilitating community access to various social welfare programs.

The normative foundation for social welfare implementation in Indonesia is regulated under Law Number 11 of 2009 concerning Social Welfare. This regulation establishes the state's responsibility to ensure the fulfillment of basic community needs, encompassing not only economic aspects but also social and spiritual dimensions. Through the fulfillment of these dimensions, citizens are expected to achieve a dignified life, develop their potential, and participate actively in social life. The regulation further emphasizes that social welfare implementation must be guided by the principles of social protection, justice, utility, and accountability.

From a legal research perspective, a fundamental research gap exists because many previous studies on Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) have predominantly focused on sociological analysis, policy descriptions, or program evaluations. Studies specifically examining Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) from the perspective of normative consistency and the effectiveness of local legal policies remain limited. Previous research has generally emphasized economic benefits, public perceptions, or technical barriers in assistance distribution, while fewer studies have systematically examined whether the implementation of Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) at the regional level aligns with the national social welfare legal framework, good governance principles, and local regulatory structures. From an administrative law perspective, policy effectiveness is determined not only by legal norms (law in the books) but also by how these norms are implemented in practice (law in action). The gap between legal provisions and implementation practices may hinder the achievement of legal objectives in realizing community welfare.

Based on this background, this research examines how the implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) policy as an effort to realize community welfare based on Cirebon Regent Regulation Number 71 of 2023 concerning Social Welfare Centers (Pusat Kesejahteraan Sosial [Puskesos]). This study aims to analyze the normative juridical implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) policy based on the provisions of Cirebon Regent Regulation Number 71 of 2023 as the legal foundation for regional social welfare implementation, including its alignment with beneficiary targeting, distribution mechanisms, supervision, and accountability in social assistance management.

This research shifts the analytical focus from primarily economic and sociological evaluations toward normative juridical examination by assessing the synchronization between national legal frameworks, local regulations, and policy implementation practices. The study advances understanding of how the gap between law in the books and law in action influences the effectiveness of social assistance policies while contributing to welfare state discourse through evidence regarding the role of Puskesos as a legal and institutional instrument for decentralizing social services. Practically, the findings provide insights for regional policymakers in improving beneficiary data collection and updating systems, strengthening verification and validation mechanisms, optimizing Puskesos functions to improve targeting accuracy, and integrating Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) with economic empowerment programs to achieve sustainable welfare improvement. Furthermore, this study contributes to administrative law development by identifying legal and institutional factors affecting policy effectiveness, including implementer capacity, community participation, and coordination mechanisms, while providing a foundation for future research on legal harmonization, institutional strengthening, and accountability mechanisms in achieving social welfare objectives.

METHOD

This research employed a normative juridical approach with a qualitative research design. The study focused on analyzing the implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) policy based on Cirebon Regent Regulation Number 71 of 2023 concerning Social Welfare Centers (Pusat Kesejahteraan Sosial [Puskesos]). The data were obtained through the examination of applicable legal norms, with secondary legal materials, including legislation, legal documents, academic literature, and other relevant sources, serving as the primary analytical materials.

Data collection was conducted through a literature review involving the analysis of legal documents, regulations, scholarly works, and other relevant references. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis to examine the legal aspects of policy implementation and address the research objectives. The analysis process consisted of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting and organizing information relevant to the research focus. Data presentation was conducted through descriptive narratives to illustrate the implementation of the policy, while conclusion drawing involved interpreting the analyzed data to answer the research questions. To ensure the validity of the findings, data triangulation was conducted by comparing various legal sources and relevant literature. The application of the normative juridical method and

qualitative approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) policy in Cirebon Regency and its effectiveness in supporting community welfare based on Cirebon Regent Regulation Number 71 of 2023 concerning Social Welfare Centers (Pusat Kesejahteraan Sosial [Puskesmas]).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) Policy in Cirebon Regency

The implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) policy in Cirebon Regency has been carried out in accordance with the mechanism established through a clear division of authority between the central government and local governments. The central government establishes policies and regulations related to social assistance programs, while local governments are responsible for administrative management, such as data collection, conducting examinations, checks, and proposing prospective recipients through the National Social and Economic Single Data (DTSEN) system. This implementation shows that there is harmony between national and regional policies.

Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) is one of the social protection policies that aims to help low-income people and vulnerable groups in meeting basic needs. In the concept of welfare state, the implementation of social assistance is a form of state responsibility in providing social protection and ensuring the fulfillment of basic needs of the community as an effort to realize social welfare.

The implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) policy in Cirebon Regency is based on Cirebon Regent Regulation Number 71 of 2023 concerning Social Welfare Centers. The norms in the regulation show that Puskesmas is an instrument of local government that was formed to bring social welfare services closer to the community at the village level. The Puskesmas is in charge of ensuring that the process of data collection, verification, validation, handling complaints, and the distribution of information regarding social assistance can run effectively, coordinated, and on target.

The mechanism for distributing social assistance begins with a proposal from the village government. Furthermore, the Social Welfare Center (Puskesmas) verifies and validates the submitted data to ensure that prospective recipients meet the criteria set based on socio-economic conditions. The results of the process are then submitted to the Cirebon Regency Social Service as the basis for determining the recipients of Direct Cash Assistance. This series of stages shows that the distribution of social assistance is carried out through a tiered procedure to ensure the accuracy of targets, accountability, and legal certainty.

Based on the Decree of the Regent of Cirebon Number 400.9.11.3/Kep.47-Dinsos/2023, the number of recipients of Direct Cash Assistance is set at 24,188 Beneficiary Families (KPM). This amount is the result of the data collection, verification, and validation process carried out before the determination of aid recipients by the Cirebon Regency Government.

The role of the Social Welfare Center (Puskesmas) is not only limited to the process of data collection, verification, and validation of aid recipient data, but also as a center for social welfare services at the village level. The social welfare center provides information about social assistance programs, receives community complaints, and facilitates data updates in the event of changes in the socio-economic conditions of the community. Thus, the Puskesmas becomes a liaison between the community and the government in the implementation of social welfare

services. The urgency of this role is rooted in the reality that resource management and public policy setting will not succeed without the participation of the community, which is the main foundation for the realization of their level improvement.

The implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance policy in Cirebon Regency has reflected the implementation of the function of the welfare state through the provision of social protection to people in need. The presence of the Puskesmas strengthens the implementation of the policy because it supports the process of data collection, verification, validation, and service to the community so that the distribution of assistance can be carried out in accordance with the provisions. However, the implementation of Direct Cash Assistance in Cirebon Regency still faces obstacles, especially in updating the data of aid recipients. In practice, changes in the socio-economic conditions of the community cannot always be accommodated quickly in the database used as a reference for determining recipients. As a result, there are people who have met the requirements as potential beneficiaries but have not been listed in the data, while some recipients whose economic conditions have improved are still registered. This condition shows that the accuracy and sustainability of the data update process are factors that greatly determine the effectiveness of policies. Therefore, periodic data updates through coordination between the village government, Puskesmas, Social Services, and the National Social and Economic Single Data (DTSEN) manager need to be carried out consistently so that the determination of beneficiaries always reflects the actual socio-economic conditions of the community and ensures the accuracy of the targets.

Targeting Accuracy of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) Policy

The implementation of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) in Cirebon Regency has basically run in accordance with the provisions of applicable law. This policy provides benefits in helping low-income people meet their basic daily needs and reduce the economic pressure on beneficiary families. Thus, social assistance has carried out its function as social protection as contained in Law Number 11 of 2009 concerning Social Welfare. However, the effectiveness of Direct Cash Assistance in realizing community welfare is still not optimal. The assistance provided is more used to meet daily consumption needs, so the benefits are short-term and have not been able to significantly improve people's welfare in the long term. This shows that the implementation of Direct Cash Assistance is still oriented towards meeting basic needs and has not been optimally supported by economic empowerment programs that can increase the independence of aid recipients.

Another problem is related to the accuracy of the target recipients of assistance. In its implementation, there are still recipients whose economic conditions are able but are still recorded as recipients. On the other hand, there are also people who meet the requirements as recipients who have not been included in the list of recipients. This shows that the quality of data collection, verification, and validation of aid recipients still needs to be improved so that the distribution of social assistance is truly given to people who meet the criteria.

The effectiveness of the implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) policy can use Soerjono Soekanto's idea of legal effectiveness. This idea states that the success of a legal provision cannot be separated from five elements, namely the elements of the rule of law, the elements of implementation in the field, the elements of the completeness of facilities, the elements of community response, and local culture. From the results of research in Cirebon Regency, the legal factors themselves have been met, because they are supported by the

existence of Law Number 11 of 2009 and Cirebon Regent Regulation Number 71 of 2023. The two regulations not only regulate the mechanism for distributing aid, but also build a social welfare service system that ensures legal certainty, integration, accountability, and ease of public access to social services through the Puskesmas. However, law enforcement factors and supporting facilities still face obstacles, especially in the process of updating beneficiary data who are not fully able to keep up with changes in the socio-economic conditions of the community. As a result, the goal of target accuracy has not been achieved optimally. In addition, the implementation of the assistance policy also causes social jealousy due to inconsistencies in the determination of aid recipients. Judging from the legal objective, this situation shows that the principle of social justice has not been fully realized. Satjipto Rahardjo stated that the law must be seen as a means to achieve social goals and provide benefits to society. Therefore, the accuracy of the target of aid recipients is an important aspect in realizing justice and legal benefits. If the assistance is not received by people who really need it, then the legal purpose in providing social protection cannot be carried out optimally.

Based on the results of the analysis, the implementation of Direct Cash Assistance in Cirebon Regency has a clear legal basis and is able to provide benefits in helping the community meet basic needs (Difayanti & Agustina, 2025). However, the effectiveness and accuracy of policy targets still require strengthening, through continuous updating of beneficiary data (Wijayanti et al., 2025), improving the quality of data verification and validation (Tamrin & Zulkarnaini, 2023), optimizing the function of the Puskesmas (Sari et al., 2021; Khikmawati, 2022), and strengthening coordination between the village government, the Puskesmas, and the Social Service.

This effort is important to ensure that the distribution of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) is really given to the community that meets the criteria, so that the purpose of implementing social welfare as mandated in Law Number 11 of 2009 can be realized effectively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings (Bastagli et al., 2021), the implementation of the Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) policy (Gentilini et al., 2022; Beazley et al., 2021) as an effort to improve community welfare (Hidrobo et al., 2020) has been carried out in accordance with the applicable legal framework (United Nations, 2023).

The policy mechanism has been implemented through the stages of beneficiary data collection, verification, validation, and assistance distribution involving collaboration between the central government, local governments, and Pusat Kesejahteraan Sosial (Puskesmas) as social welfare service centers at the regional level.

The existence of Puskesmas plays an important role in strengthening social services, managing social welfare data, and facilitating community complaint services, thereby supporting the harmonization of national and regional social welfare policies (Pratama & Rahmawati, 2022; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022). However, the effectiveness of Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) in improving social welfare remains limited due to several challenges, including inaccuracies in beneficiary data (Leite et al., 2021), limited human resource capacity (World Bank, 2023), and suboptimal verification and validation processes (Mahmud et al., 2024).

These issues affect the accuracy of beneficiary targeting and reduce the effectiveness of assistance distribution (Barca & Beazley, 2019; Kidd & Athias, 2020). The Cirebon Regency Government needs to improve the quality of the social welfare data management system through regular data updates (OECD, 2023), strengthen verification and validation mechanisms by involving village governments, Puskesmas, and community members (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2022), and enhance the capacity of implementing personnel through continuous training and technical guidance (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UN DESA], 2021).

Furthermore, the Direct Cash Assistance (Bantuan Langsung Tunai [BLT]) program should be integrated with community economic empowerment initiatives so that assistance is not limited to short-term consumption needs but can also encourage sustainable improvements in welfare. Supervision, evaluation, transparency, and accountability in the implementation of social assistance programs should be continuously strengthened to ensure that social protection objectives and community welfare improvements are achieved more effectively, accurately targeted, and sustainably.

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