

Anti-epidemic Fund to strengthen support for engineering, architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape sectors

The Development Bureau (DEVB) announced today (June 11) that with a view to encouraging and supporting private organisations to employ graduates and assistant professionals of the engineering, architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape sectors, the Government will provide salary subsidies to the relevant employers under the Anti-epidemic Fund.

The spokesman for the DEVB said that the Hong Kong economy has been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the unemployment rate of the construction industry continuously rising. Both new graduates of the relevant professional sectors and assistant professionals who have just completed professional training or are waiting to attend the professional assessment examination are facing difficulties in finding jobs. There is a need to introduce targeted and swift measures to create for them opportunities for both on-the-job and practical training.

A total of 1 750 subsidy places, which are divided into two groups, will be provided under the new measures. The first group is similar to the existing Engineering Graduate Training Scheme provided by the Vocational Training Council. It is applicable to university students studying architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape architecture, and are graduating this year. The approved employers will receive a salary subsidy of \$5,610 per month for providing recognised professional training to each employed eligible graduate. The period of the subsidy is up to 18 months and a total of 500 subsidy places will be provided.

The second group is applicable to assistant professionals of the engineering, architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape sectors, which means the assistant engineers who complete the recognised training within this year but still need to obtain practical work experience, or the assistant professionals who complete the recognised training within this year and satisfy the admission criteria of the professional assessments in the architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape sectors. The approved employers will receive a salary subsidy of \$10,000 per month for providing opportunities for recognised professional practice to each eligible assistant professional employed. The period of the subsidy is up to 12 months and a total of 1 250 subsidy places will be provided.

"The above subsidy will be able to provide employment and training opportunities for graduates and assistant professionals of the relevant professional fields. This helps to retain talents and nurture successors continuously under the influence of the pandemic. At the same time, we

encourage and support relevant professional institutions and bodies to provide graduates and assistant professionals in the construction-related professions with various training to accelerate their development in the professional fields," the spokesman for the DEVB said.

The subsidy scheme will be opened for application from June 19 to July 18. The application forms and guidelines can be downloaded from the website of the DEVB (www.devb.gov.hk/en/issues_in_focus/support_easpl/index.html).