

CS commends legal professionals for providing pro bono legal services to community

The Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office announced the results of the 2020-22 Recognition Scheme for Provision of Pro Bono Legal Services (the Recognition Scheme) today (July 12) to commend legal professionals, law firms and barristers' chambers for providing pro bono legal services to the community from July 1, 2020, to December 31, 2022.

There were 106 legal professionals presented with the Special Award under the Individual Category for having provided pro bono legal services of not less than 50 hours within the recognition period. Moreover, 298 legal professionals were presented with the Individual Award for having provided pro bono legal services of not less than 30 hours within the recognition period.

At the same time, 10 law firms and barristers' chambers were presented with the Company Award. They demonstrated significant efforts in providing pro bono legal services, and their legal professionals have provided the required aggregate hours of pro bono legal services during the recognition period.

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, thanked the winning legal professionals, law firms and barristers' chambers for their contributions to voluntary service, and encouraged more legal professionals to volunteer in pro bono services. He stressed that, with the rule of law being the cornerstone and core value of Hong Kong's success, the Government is committed to promoting pro bono legal services to enhance access to justice by members of the public.

To this end, the Government has provided subvention for the Duty Lawyer Service to run the Free Legal Advice Scheme (FLAS) at nine district offices of the Home Affairs Department on weekday evenings to engage volunteer lawyers to provide free legal advice. Over 1 300 pro bono lawyers participate in the FLAS at present, with about 6 000 cases handled in 2022.

The Chief Secretary for Administration's Office has implemented the Legal Advice Scheme for Unrepresented Litigants on Civil Procedures (Procedural Advice Scheme). Resident lawyers and volunteer lawyers will provide free legal advice on legal procedures. The Procedural Advice Scheme covers litigants who are parties to or going to commence civil legal proceedings in the Lands Tribunal, Family Court, District Court or courts at levels above.

Furthermore, the Free Legal Advice Service on Building Management run by the Home Affairs Department in collaboration with the Law Society of Hong

Kong, the Bar Free Legal Service Scheme implemented by the Hong Kong Bar Association, the Free Legal Helpline run by the Law Society of Hong Kong, etc are also pro bono legal services recognised by the Recognition Scheme.

Three awardees of the Recognition Scheme have been invited to be featured in the Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs) to share their takeaways from the scheme. For more details of the Recognition Scheme, the list of awardees and the APIs, please visit www.admwing.gov.hk/eng/public_service/probonolegalservices.html.