

Disbursement of subsidies to catering sector under fifth round of Anti-epidemic Fund in progress

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (January 27) that so far around \$320 million in subsidies has been disbursed under the Catering Business Subsidy Scheme of the fifth round of Anti-epidemic Fund to provide financial support to the catering sector directly affected by the tightened social distancing measures.

The applications for the Catering Business Subsidy Scheme started on January 17, and a total of over 16 100 applications have been received so far. The FEHD expedited the processing of the applications received with a view to disbursing subsidies to eligible applicants as early as possible. Up till yesterday (January 26), payments were authorised for over 3 800 applications, with subsidies totaling around \$320 million being mailed to the applicants by crossed cheques.

The application deadline for the scheme is February 18. The scheme provides a one-off subsidy ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000 to eligible licence holders of general restaurants, light refreshment restaurants, marine restaurants and factory canteens in operation according to the floor areas of the premises as specified on their licences. For each eligible catering outlet, if it is also running a karaoke establishment, nightclub and bar or pub and has closed the whole of its licensed premises as directed under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirement and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), it is eligible to apply for an additional one-off subsidy of \$25,000 according to the respective business.

Eligible licensees of food factory licences in food courts inside shopping malls are also eligible for a one-off subsidy ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 according to the licensed area of its premises in operation, while eligible cooked food/light refreshment market stall tenants as well as persons holding a hawker licence and operating cooked food business in public housing developments can also apply for a one-off subsidy of \$25,000.

In addition, the 2022 Che Kung Festival Fair was announced to be cancelled last Friday (January 21). All ex-gratia payments, pitched at 50 per cent of the stall licence fees, together with the refunds of the stall licence fees, have been mailed to all 42 licensees by crossed cheques. Based on the total auction amount of around \$1.2 million, the ex-gratia payments disbursed amounted to about \$600,000.