

FEHD provides further financial support for catering sector

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (October 9) that under the Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme (CSS) of the Anti-epidemic Fund, which was set up to provide financial relief measures to the catering business hard hit by the epidemic and social distancing measures, so far over \$3.2 billion in subsidies have been disbursed to eligible applicants. To provide further financial support to operators of licensed catering outlets, applications for the Catering Business Subsidy Scheme under the third round of the Anti-epidemic Fund will start on October 13 (Tuesday).

The Government launched the CSS under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund in May to disburse subsidies in two tranches on an equal basis to the hard-hit catering outlets. An enhanced subsidy scheme was launched in August to accept applications by those eligible licence holders of catering outlets which have yet to apply for the subsidy. As of October 9, over 9 100 and 8 900 applications for the first and second tranches of the subsidy respectively were received under the CSS. Over \$2.2 billion in subsidies have been authorised for the first tranche payment, while more than 4 000 applications for the second tranche payment involving \$900 million in subsidies have been approved and authorised for payment. Some 200 applications were received for the enhanced subsidy scheme, among which more than \$20 million in subsidies have been disbursed to more than 110 successful applicants.

The FEHD spokesman said, "The Government announced earlier an injection to the Anti-epidemic Fund for the third round of measures, including providing financial support again to the catering sector. The new round of the subsidy scheme will provide subsidies 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 area of the premises as specified on the licence, for support of their business operation. It is estimated that the scheme will benefit about 17 000 catering outlets."

The spokesman said that, to avoid abuse, an applicant at the time of application shall declare that the food business is still in operation, and if the business is not run by the licence holder, an affirmation of the business operator on supporting the application of the subsidy scheme is required.

Moreover, each eligible catering outlet directed to close the whole of its licensed premises under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirement and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), including karaoke establishments, nightclubs and bars or pubs, is eligible for an additional one-off subsidy of \$25,000.

Eligible food licence, liquor licence or karaoke establishment permit holders should submit their applications to the District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the FEHD (to the corresponding licensing offices for liquor licences) in person or by mail. Food licence holders could also submit their applications through the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk). The deadline for application is November 12. The target is that upon receipt of the completed application form and supporting documents and after verification, the disbursement of subsidies could generally be made in approximately two weeks by crossed cheques to the corresponding licensed food premises.

The application form and guidelines can be downloaded from the website of the FEHD (www.fehd.gov.hk) or be obtained from District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the FEHD starting from 9am, October 13. For details, please visit the website of the FEHD.

The FEHD will notify its cooked food/light refreshment market stall tenants as well as cooked food stall operators in public housing development holding hawker licences separately the arrangement of applications for the subsidy under the Catering Business Subsidy Scheme.