

FEHD will enhance Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme

As the epidemic situation remains severe, the catering business is continuously affected by the social distancing measures. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (August 21) announced that the FEHD will enhance the Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme (CSS) under the Anti-epidemic Fund, to assist those who are eligible under CSS but have not submitted any applications for the first tranche of subsidy. Applications may be submitted by eligible licence holders of the four types of restaurants during the period between August 25 and September 14.

The enhanced scheme will open for application by those eligible licence holders of general restaurants, light refreshment restaurants, marine restaurants and factory canteens who are eligible for the CSS but have not applied for the first tranche of subsidy, including those food licence holders who have obtained the first tranche of subsidy from the Employment Support Scheme (ESS) but do not intend to apply for the second tranche of the ESS subsidy. Those applicants are required to be still in operation. Upon approval, the FEHD will provide subsidies ranging from \$125,000 to \$1.1 million to eligible licence holders in support of payment of employees' salaries for a three-month period (i.e. September to November of this year) according to the floor areas of the premises.

To avoid abuse, an applicant at the time of application shall:

- (1) undertake that there would be no redundancy of staff for three months on receipt of the subsidy;
- (2) undertake that not less than 80 per cent of the subsidies would be used to pay salaries of staff working at the premises during the period from September to November this year;
- (3) undertake to submit within a specified period a certificate issued by a Certified Public Accountant (practising) (CPA) on its total staff salaries and total number of salaried staff for each of the months covered by the subsidy;
- (4) submit a certificate issued by a CPA on its total staff salaries and total number of staff working at the premises (salaried or otherwise) for the month of March 2020 which would be taken into account in checking compliance after disbursement of subsidy; and
- (5) declare that he or she has not submitted/will not submit any application for the second tranche of subsidy from the ESS, to avoid double benefits.

For applicants who have submitted their applications for CSS in May to June this year and have received the first tranche of subsidy only need to submit all the necessary documents properly in accordance with the requirements of their original applications. The FEHD will, upon completing the vetting procedures, disburse the second tranche of subsidy under the scheme. For details, please see the press release issued by the FEHD on August 12 (<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202008/12/P2020081200623.htm>).

The application form for the enhanced scheme can be downloaded from the website of the FEHD (www.fehd.gov.hk) or be obtained from District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the FEHD. Eligible food licence holders should submit their applications to the District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the FEHD in person, by mail or through the FEHD website. The application period is from August 25 to September 14. The target is that upon receipt of the completed application form and supporting documents and after verification, the disbursement of the subsidies could generally be made in approximately two to three weeks by crossed cheques to the corresponding licensed food premises.

For details, please visit the website of the FEHD.