

Government to provide one-off extra payment to recipients of Working Family Allowance and Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy

The Government announced today (April 24) that, after the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2019 (the Bill), the Working Family Allowance Office (WFAO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency would adjust the computer system to make one-off extra payments to recipients of Working Family Allowance (WFA) and Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (I-WITS) proposed in the 2019-20 Budget as soon as possible.

Recipients who are eligible for the extra payment are those whose WFA/I-WITS applications were made in the Applicable Period (i.e. from first day of the month in which the Bill is passed to date of passage of the Bill; and six calendar months before that month), and eventually approved. For applications sent by post, the date of the post-stamp will be considered as the application date.

Starting from April 1, 2019, the claim period for I-WITS applications has been revised from the "past six to 12 calendar months" to the "immediate past six calendar months" before the application. In this regard, the WFAO will implement a one-off transitional arrangement: the claim period of the first application submitted by an applicant between April 1, 2019, and March 31, 2020, may cover the past six to 12 calendar months before its submission. Applicants may submit applications before the expiry of the Applicable Period having regard to their personal circumstances.

The extra payment is equal to the average monthly amount payable to the corresponding recipients in their most recently submitted (and eventually approved) applications in the Applicable Period. The amount varies from case to case.

In addition, a WFA household cannot receive Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) or Household-based WITS concurrently in the same month. WFA applicants and household members whose working hours have been aggregated for WFA applications cannot receive I-WITS concurrently in the same month. If, during the Applicable Period, a household receives WFA in some months and WITS in some other months, or is receiving CSSA on the date of the passage of the Bill, it is eligible for one single extra payment, the amount of which is the highest it is eligible for under the above schemes. This arrangement does not apply to WFA household members (i.e. non-WFA applicants; and household members whose working hours have not been aggregated for WFA applications) who receive I-WITS.

For enquiries, applicants may call the WFAO 24-hour hotline (2558 3000) or visit the WFAO's enquiry counters at 9/F, 181 Hoi Bun Road, Kwun Tong, or

visit the website of WFAO (www.wfa.gov.hk) or the thematic website of I-WITS Scheme (www.iwits.gov.hk).