

Rates of WFA to be raised from April 1 and one-off extra allowance for WFA recipients to be disbursed later (with photos)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, today (March 29) said that the rates of allowance of the Working Family Allowance (WFA) Scheme will be increased starting from the next claim month, further alleviating the burden of grassroots working families, encouraging continuous self-reliance through full-time employment and incentivising more families to join the labour market.

It was announced in the Policy Address last year that the rates of household and child allowances under the WFA Scheme will be increased by 15 per cent across the board with effect from the claim month of April 2024 (details at Annex), benefiting all households receiving WFA. Taking a four-person household with two eligible children as an example, the maximum monthly WFA they may receive will increase from the current amount of \$4,200 to \$4,830. Households submitting their WFA applications starting from May 2024 will benefit from the new rates of allowance.

On the other hand, after the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2024 (the Bill), the Working Family Allowance Office (WFAO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency (WFSFAA) will disburse a one-off extra allowance to WFA recipients as proposed in the 2024-25 Budget. It is expected that the extra allowance will be disbursed one month after the passage of the Bill at the earliest.

Households which made WFA applications during the applicable period that were eventually approved are eligible for the one-off extra allowance. The applicable period is from the first day of the month in which the Bill is passed by the Legislative Council to the date of passage of the Bill, and the six calendar months before that month. For applications submitted by post, the date of the post-stamp is adopted as the application date.

In order to be eligible for the extra allowance, new applicants or previous WFA recipients who have yet to submit applications during the applicable period should submit their applications before the applicable period expires (i.e. on or before the date of passage of the Bill). The extra allowance is equal to one half of the average monthly allowance in approved months in a recipient's most recently submitted WFA application, which was submitted within the applicable period and eventually approved. The amount varies from case to case.

If a WFA household is receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) at the date of passage of the Bill, the household is eligible for only one single extra allowance, which will be calculated based on the higher

amount the household is eligible to receive under the WFA Scheme or the CSSA Scheme. The rates of allowance of the WFA Scheme are determined on a monthly basis based on the household's income and working hours. The claim period of an application covers the six calendar months immediately before the submission of the application, and an eligible household has to submit an application for every claim period.

For enquiries, applicants may visit the website of the WFSFAA (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk) or call the 24-hour hotline (2558 3000) of the WFAO.

