

Special allowance for Working Family Allowance and Student Financial Assistance households to be disbursed under Anti-epidemic Fund

The Government announced today (June 5) that the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency (WFSFAA) will start disbursing a one-off special allowance under the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF) to eligible Working Family Allowance (WFA) households and Student Financial Assistance (SFA) households from June 9 to support low-income households under the deteriorating economic and employment conditions as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic. Applications are not required.

This arrangement is to relax the proposal of providing time-limited cash allowance to the unemployed and the under-employed as announced by the Chief Executive in January. Compared with the original proposal, each eligible WFA and SFA household will receive a one-off special allowance, regardless of whether these low-income households are unemployed or under-employed.

For WFA households, a household which has submitted an application (and eventually approved) from April 1, 2019, to February 21, 2020, (i.e. the day on which the AEF funding proposal was approved by the Finance Committee of Legislative Council) will receive a special allowance equivalent to two months of WFA payment based on the highest monthly amount it received in its most recently submitted and approved application during the above period. Households receiving means-tested SFA for pre-primary, primary and secondary students in the 2019/20 academic year will receive a special allowance of \$4,640. For households eligible for the special allowance under both the WFA and the SFA, the amount payable will be the higher amount of the above two cases.

The WFSFAA estimated that about 58 000 WFA households and about 145 000 SFA households would benefit from this special allowance.

The WFSFAA will disburse the special allowance based on the existing payment methods for the WFA or the SFA. Households are not required to make separate applications. After disbursement, the WFSFAA will inform the households concerned by short message service (SMS) or letters.

For enquiries, WFA households may call the hotline (2558 3000) or visit the website (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/wfao) of the Working Family Allowance Office under the WFSFAA. SFA households may call the hotline (2802 2345) or visit the website (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo) of the Student Finance Office under the WFSFAA.