

Subsidy for employers of long-term casual employees under Anti-epidemic Fund for construction sector to open for application next month

The Development Bureau (DEVB) announced today (June 29) that the subsidy offered to construction sector employers who have employed casual employees on a long-term basis will be open for application from July 6 to 31.

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If an employer in the construction sector has made contributions for a "casual employee" under the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Industry Schemes for at least 15 days in March this year, the employee will be regarded as a "qualified employee". An employer may apply for a subsidy of \$36,000 per "qualified employee". Successful applicants have to undertake not to make their employees redundant between August 2020 and January 2021 and to spend the full amount of the subsidy on paying wages to their "qualified employees".

The Government has appointed the Construction Industry Council (CIC) to handle the applications and subsidy disbursement. Applicants will have to download the application and undertaking forms from the CIC's website and submit the completed forms together with supporting documents via email.

Applicants have to authorise the MPF trustees to provide their MPF contribution data in March this year and from August 2020 to January 2021 directly to the Government and the CIC. The Government and the CIC will process the applications and determine the number of "qualified employees" and the approved subsidy amount based on the contribution data, which will also be used in the future for monitoring the applicants' compliance with their undertakings.

"We expect the subsidy will be disbursed to applicants within six to eight weeks upon receipt of applications. The CIC will notify the applicants of the results via email, and arrange for the disbursement of the subsidies by autopay," a spokesman for the DEVB said.

On the other hand, the one-off subsidy of \$20,000 offered to eligible suppliers of construction-related machinery and equipment rental under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund is open for application from June 23 until August 31. To submit their applications, applicants have to submit the completed application form together with supporting documents to the DEVB by email. Suppliers may visit the CIC's website for more details:

www.cic.hk/eng/main/anti_epidemic_fund_2nd/suppliers/.

The Government has launched two rounds of the Anti-epidemic Fund so far. As of yesterday (June 28), a total of more than \$4.3 billion in subsidies had been disbursed to some 440 000 construction workers and some

16 000 construction-related enterprises.