

Subsidy Scheme for Employment Agencies to be introduced under sixth round of Anti-epidemic Fund

The Labour Department (LD) today (February 18) announced that a Subsidy Scheme for Employment Agencies (EAs) will be introduced under the sixth round of the Anti-epidemic Fund to assist EAs to tide over the difficulties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

An LD spokesman said, "Due to the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the business of EAs has been seriously affected. In particular, the business of EAs providing foreign domestic helper (FDH) placement service has been affected since the Government has to admit FDHs in a gradual and orderly manner and impose flight suspensions to guard against the importation of cases. EAs that do not provide FDH placement service have also been affected due to the economic downturn brought about by the pandemic. The Legislative Council Finance Committee approved on February 15 an injection into the Anti-epidemic Fund to introduce various relief measures for eligible individuals and businesses hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, including a new round of one-off subsidy to EAs further to the round in 2020."

Under the Scheme, a one-off subsidy will be granted to EAs with a valid licence issued by the LD. A subsidy of \$50,000 will be granted for each main licence of an EA that provides FDH placement services. For EAs that do not provide FDH placement services, a subsidy of \$30,000 will be granted for each main licence. An additional subsidy of \$10,000 will be granted for each duplicate licence for a branch office of both kinds of EA.

The Scheme will be open for application in the middle of March. An EA eligible for applying for a subsidy under the Scheme must:

1. Hold a valid licence issued by the LD under section 52 of the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) or have submitted an application for licence renewal to the LD in accordance with Regulation 2 of the Employment Agency Regulations (EAR) (Cap. 57A) as at January 31, 2022. If the validity period of the current licence of the EA is less than two months as at the date of submission of an application for subsidy, the EA should first submit an application for licence renewal to the LD; or
2. Have submitted an application for the issue of a licence in accordance with Regulation 2 of EAR as at December 31, 2021, and the application was still under processing as at January 31, 2022.

Before a subsidy application is approved, an EA must hold a valid licence issued by the LD. If an EA has submitted an application to the LD for issue of a new licence or renewal of licence according to (1) or (2) above, the subsidy will only be disbursed to the EA after the LD has approved the licence application. EAs applying for a subsidy of \$50,000 will be required

to declare that they had provided FDH placement service on or before January 31, 2022, and may be required to submit documentary proof as necessary. Application details and guidelines will be announced in a press release and uploaded to the LD's Employment Agencies Portal (www.eaa.labour.gov.hk).

For enquiries about the Scheme, please contact the Employment Agencies Administration of the LD at 2115 3665.