

Community Care Fund to provide \$6,000 allowance to new arrivals from low-income families

The following is issued on behalf of the Community Care Fund Secretariat:

The Steering Committee on the Community Care Fund (CCF) finalised at its meeting today (June 29) the proposal to provide a one-off allowance of \$6,000 to new arrivals from low-income families who are aged 18 or above and have entered Hong Kong for settlement.

The allowance will provide low-income new arrivals with additional resources to facilitate their adaptation and integration into the community. The proposal is expected to benefit more than 200 000 people.

Chairman of the Steering Committee on the CCF, Mr Henry Tang, said, "Providing low-income new arrivals with the allowance is in line with the CCF's objective to help people who are in need. In drawing up the details of the proposal, we have fully taken into consideration the views of Legislative Council members and those from various sectors. Considering that it is a 'one-off' allowance, we will adopt more relaxed vetting criteria and streamline the procedures to minimise the administrative costs in order to help more people in need."

He said, "The Secretariat of the CCF is working out the implementation details of the programme. We will take into account the views from the community to ensure the programme's smooth implementation."

Beneficiaries of the programme should reach the age of 18 on or before March 31, 2012 and have settled in Hong Kong for less than seven years as at that date. At the time of application, they should be receiving assistance under the specified assistance schemes (Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme, financial assistance schemes for students under the Student Financial Assistance Agency, or waiving mechanism of public hospitals (excluding one-off waiver)), or the monthly household income of their families should be less than the specified income limit (see annex).

For applicants from families that are not receiving assistance under the specified assistance schemes, they shall declare in writing that their household income

is less than the specified income limit. The Secretariat of the CCF will conduct audit checks on applications. Applicants may be requested to provide further information on their household income.

Applicants should send completed application forms together with relevant documentary proof to the Secretariat of the CCF between October 3, 2011 and June 30, 2012. Details of the application procedures will be announced in September.

The Secretariat will arrange direct payment of the allowance into the bank accounts of the eligible beneficiaries. Alternatively, applicants may collect order cheques in person.

In the Appropriation Bill 2011, the Financial Secretary earmarked funds for additional injection into the CCF to provide assistance to those in financial need, including new arrivals.

The Government will seek funding approval from the Legislative Council as soon as possible for injection into the CCF. The estimated total expenditure will be within \$1.5 billion, including administrative costs not exceeding 2 per cent of the estimated disbursement amount.

The Steering Committee on the CCF announced earlier that 10 assistance programmes would be launched in 2011-12, and that further study would be conducted on three other programmes. The assistance programmes will be rolled out by phases. The respective sub-committees are following up on the implementation of these programmes and holding discussions on other proposals.

Ends/Wednesday, June 29, 2011

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