

Community Care Fund launches three assistance programmes

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

The Community Care Fund today (September 26) launched three assistance programmes benefiting various groups including ethnic minorities and new arrivals, the severely disabled, and recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) who are Tenant Purchase Scheme (TPS) flat owners.

The three programmes are the Financial Assistance for Ethnic Minorities and New Arrivals for Taking Language Examinations scheme administered by the Home Affairs Department (HAD), and the Special Care Subsidy for the Severely Disabled scheme and the Subsidy for TPS Flat Owners on CSSA scheme administered by the Social Welfare Department (SWD).

The programme to provide financial assistance to ethnic minorities and new arrivals for taking language examinations aims to subsidise eligible persons to take international public examinations for Chinese and English proficiency for continuing education or employment, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and enabling their early integration into the community. The number of beneficiaries for the two-year programme is around 3 000. Following tendering procedures, the HAD has commissioned the New Home Association (NHA) to implement the programme.

The programme to provide a special care subsidy for the severely disabled aims to provide severely disabled persons living in the community and requiring constant attendance with a special care monthly subsidy of \$2,000 for a maximum period of 12 months, so as to relieve the burden of these severely disabled persons and their families in meeting the costs for care. It is expected that about 3 800 people can benefit from the programme.

The programme to provide a subsidy for TPS flat owners on CSSA will provide CSSA recipients who are also TPS flat owners with a one-off subsidy of \$2,000 to relieve their financial burden. It is estimated that 1 300 households can benefit from the programme.

The target beneficiaries, application procedures and enquiry channels of the three programmes are as follows:

Financial Assistance for Ethnic Minorities and New Arrivals for Taking Language Examinations

Target beneficiaries: Non-school-attending persons from low-income families who have passed the means test establishing eligibility for assistance under specified assistance schemes, or whose monthly household income is below the specified income limit. Applicants who have obtained a pass or above (or a specified result) in a specified international public examination may apply for full reimbursement of examination fees.

Application procedures: Applicants can download the application form from websites of the CCF, the HAD or the NHA. Alternatively, they may obtain the application form from the Public Enquiry Service Centres of the HAD, Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities or District Service Centres of the NHA. Eligible persons may submit their applications from today to September 25, 2013, to apply for full reimbursement of examination fees.

For more information on the eligibility criteria and application procedures, please visit the websites of the CCF (www.communitycarefund.hk), the HAD (www.had.gov.hk) or the NHA (www.nha.org.hk), or refer to the programme's leaflet.

Enquiry hotline: 2815 5799.

Special Care Subsidy for the Severely Disabled

Target beneficiaries: Those below the age of 60 and living in the community and receiving the Higher Disability Allowance under the Social Security Allowance Scheme as at July 31, 2011. Their monthly household income should not exceed 75 per cent of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income applicable to their household size.

Subsidy for TPS Flat Owners on CSSA

Target beneficiaries: CSSA recipients who have been TPS flat owners for five years or more as at July 1, 2011, and are living in the flat.

Application procedures: For the programmes to provide a special care subsidy for the severely disabled and a subsidy for TPS flat owners on CSSA, letters enclosing application forms will be issued by the SWD to notify the persons concerned starting from next week. Applicants are required to submit the completed application form together with all necessary documents by post or by hand to the CCF Team of the SWD on or before November 30, 2011. Upon completion of the required procedures, letters will be issued to the applicants notifying them of the results of their applications. The payment is expected to be disbursed in December 2011 the earliest.

For details of the assistance programmes, please visit the CCF website (www.communitycarefund.hk) or the SWD website (www.swd.gov.hk).

Enquiry hotlines: SWD hotline (2343 2255) or the CCF Team of the SWD (3422 3090).

The Steering Committee on the Community Care Fund announced earlier that 10 assistance programmes would be launched in 2011-12, and that further study would be conducted on three other programmes. So far, six assistance programmes have been rolled out, benefiting various groups including the handicapped, children, new arrivals, patients and ethnic minorities.

Ends/Monday, September 26, 2011

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