

## Community Care Fund to launch two new assistance programmes

\*\*\*\*\*

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

The Steering Committee on the Community Care Fund (the Steering Committee) endorsed at a meeting today (October 17) that two new assistance programmes would be launched to support ethnic minorities and new arrivals, as well as residents of sub-divided units in industrial buildings who would have to move out as a result of enforcement action of the Buildings Department (BD) respectively.

The Community Care Fund (CCF) has reserved \$30 million to subsidise low-income and non-school-attending ethnic minorities and new arrivals from the Mainland to enroll in language courses provided by the Employees Retraining Board. The programme aims to enhance the employability of beneficiaries and facilitate their integration into the community. Application for the programme is expected to commence in the first quarter of next year. It is roughly estimated that about 60 000 people can benefit from the programme and the allowance to be provided for each application will range from approximately \$350 to \$700.

Target beneficiaries are ethnic minorities and Mainlanders who have entered Hong Kong for settlement for less than seven years and are not attending school. Their families should pass the means test establishing eligibility for assistance under specified assistance schemes or have a monthly income not exceeding 75 per cent of the median monthly household income of the corresponding household size. The specified income limit calculated based on the statistics for the 2nd quarter of 2011 is at the Annex.

In addition, the Steering Committee also agreed to provide relocation allowance to residents of sub-divided units in industrial buildings who would have to move out as a result of the BD's enforcement action to facilitate their early relocation. The allowance will be calculated according to the household size. The allowance for single-person households is \$2,100; allowance for two-and-three-person households is \$4,600; and households with four or more members will receive an allowance of \$6,100.

Applicants' families should pass the means test establishing eligibility for assistance under specified assistance schemes, or have a monthly income not

exceeding 75 per cent of the median monthly household income of the corresponding household size (see the Annex). The programme is expected to benefit about 900 households in the coming year at an estimated budget of around \$4.5 million.

The Steering Committee on the CCF also agreed in principle that the relocation allowance should be applicable to residents of sub-divided units in residential or composite buildings who would have to move out as a result of the BD's enforcement action. As such expansion of the scope of the programme will increase the complexity and operational difficulties, the BD shall, in the light of actual experience and effectiveness of the implementation of the programme in industrial buildings, submit proposal to the CCF on the expansion of the scope of the programme to cover residential or composite buildings.

The Steering Committee announced in April that \$730 million has been set aside to launch 10 assistance programmes in 2011-12 to provide assistance catering for the various needs of different groups. So far, six out of 10 assistance programmes have been rolled out. In addition, the CCF has also launched the programme to provide an allowance of \$6,000 to new arrivals in early October.

The CCF has earlier earmarked funds for implementing three other proposed programmes. Among them, the Steering Committee has endorsed the programme to provide subsidy for ethnic minorities and new arrivals to enroll in language courses at today's meeting. The Education and Medical Sub-Committees are studying the assistance programmes on enhancing after-school childcare service and financial assistance on dental services (including dentures) for the elderly respectively.

The CCF will roll out the remaining programmes in phases to help the underprivileged and families in need in the community.

Ends/Monday, October 17, 2011

NNNN