

FEHD to provide financial support for catering, commercial bathhouse and places of public entertainment sectors under sixth round of Anti-epidemic Fund

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (February 15) that to provide further relief to the sectors directly affected by the tightened social distancing measures, applications for the Catering Business Subsidy Scheme, the Food Courts Subsidy Scheme, the Commercial Bathhouse Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme and the Places of Public Entertainment Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme under the sixth round of the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF) will commence next Monday (February 21) until March 21. The spokesman also reminded business operators that applications for relevant subsidy schemes under AEF 5.0 will close at 5pm this Friday (February 18). Late submissions will not be entertained. A total amount of over \$670 million in subsidies has been disbursed for relevant subsidy schemes under AEF 5.0 so far.

To provide relief for catering premises providing dine-in services, the new Catering Business Subsidy Scheme under AEF 6.0 will provide a one-off subsidy ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000 to eligible licence holders of general restaurants, light refreshment restaurants, marine restaurants and factory canteens in operation according to the floor areas of the premises as specified on their licences. It is estimated that the scheme will benefit over 17 700 licensed catering outlets.

Moreover, for each eligible catering outlet mentioned above, if it is also running a karaoke establishment, nightclub and bar or pub and has closed the whole of its licensed premises as directed under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirement and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), it is eligible to apply for an additional one-off subsidy of \$50,000 according to the respective business.

The Government will also continue to provide financial support to licensees of eligible food factory licences in food courts inside shopping malls. "Food court" means a place inside a shopping mall comprising licensed food factories and adjoining seating area (with both tables and chairs/stools) provided by the property management/owner of the shopping mall for non-exclusive use by its visitors, which may include patrons of the licensed food factories. Each licensee of an eligible licensed food factory in operation is eligible for a one-off subsidy ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000 according to the licensed area of its premises. If the business is not run by the licence holder, an affirmation of every business operator(s) on supporting the application of the subsidy is required. About 1 700 licensees of eligible licensed food factories are expected to benefit from

the scheme.

As regards cooked food/light refreshment market stall tenants as well as persons holding a hawker licence and operating cooked food business in public housing developments, each tenant or licensee is eligible to apply for a one-off subsidy of \$50,000. It is expected to benefit about 1 000 operators.

Separately, the Commercial Bathhouse Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme will provide a one-off subsidy of \$100,000 to each eligible licence holder of a commercial bathhouse. The Places of Public Entertainment Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme will provide a one-off subsidy of \$100,000 for each eligible holder of a places of public entertainment licence (PPEL) (excluding cinema operators eligible under the Cinemas Subsidy Scheme) and \$20,000 for each eligible holder of a temporary places of public entertainment licence (TPPEL). The schemes are expected to benefit the licence holders of around 50 commercial bathhouses, about 570 PPEL holders and TPPEL holders.

A spokesman for the FEHD reminded that corporate applicants shall hold a valid Certificate of Incorporation under the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622) with status "live" as shown in the Integrated Companies Registry Information System of the Registrar of Companies throughout the application for subsidy under AEF 6.0. In addition, the applicant should not be bankrupt/wound-up or subject to any bankruptcy or winding up procedure/proceedings throughout application to the date of receiving the subsidy.

For eligible holders of a food licence, liquor licence, karaoke establishment permit, commercial bathhouse licence and places of public entertainment licence, the application forms and guidelines can be obtained from various District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the FEHD starting from February 21. The application documents and details of the schemes can also be downloaded from the website of the FEHD (www.fehd.gov.hk). The applicants can submit their applications for the appropriate scheme through the FEHD website. They can also submit their applications to the concerned District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the FEHD (to the corresponding licensing offices for liquor licences) in person or by mail. The deadline for application is March 21.

The spokesman stressed that the FEHD will expedite the internal processing of the applications received for the subsidy schemes under AEF 6.0 with a view to disbursing subsidies to eligible applicants as early as possible. For approved applications, the FEHD will disburse the subsidies by crossed cheques to the correspondence addresses of the licensed premises registered in the FEHD.

The FEHD will distribute application forms separately to its cooked food/light refreshment market stall tenants as well as hawker licensees who operate cooked food business in public housing developments. They do not need to make applications online.

The spokesman also reminded operators of relevant premises that applications for the Catering Business Subsidy Scheme, the Food Courts Subsidy Scheme, the Commercial Bathhouse Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme and

the Places of Public Entertainment Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme under AEF 5.0 will close at 5pm on February 18. A total of over 19 500 applications have been received so far. The FEHD is expediting the processing of the applications received with a view to disbursing subsidies to eligible applicants as early as possible. Up till yesterday (February 14), payments were authorised for over 8 000 applications, with subsidies totaling over \$670 million having been mailed to the applicants by crossed cheques.