

**LegCo Panel on Manpower
New Employment Programmes for the Middle-aged**

Background

- The Government is very concerned about the employment situation of the middle-aged. The Re-employment Pilot Programme for the Middle-aged, implemented by the Labour Department since February 2001, provided induction training subsidy to employers to encourage them to recruit unemployed people aged 40 or above and offer induction training to them. By the end of December 2002, the programme has helped nearly 5 000 participants find jobs.
- Based on the experience learned from the pilot programme, the Labour Department will launch two new programmes, namely the “Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged” and the “District Employment Programme for the Middle-aged”, to strengthen our services to those aged 40 or above and who have been unemployed for more than 3 months.
- The programmes, each lasting for one year and costing about \$10 million, will be implemented by the Labour Department. About 3 500 people are expected to benefit.

The Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged

- To encourage employers to engage the middle-aged unemployed and provide three months on-the-job training for them, the employer will be granted a \$4,500 training subsidy, i.e. \$1,500 per month for 3 months in respect of each participating job-seeker. About 2 000 job-seekers are expected to benefit from this programme.
- The Labour Department will provide job matching services and arrange interviews for participating job-seekers.
- To ensure that appropriate jobs and training are provided to participants, employers applying for on-the-job training subsidy should fulfill the following requirements:
 - (a) hold a valid Business Registration Certificate;
 - (b) offer full-time jobs and salaries not lower than the market rate;
 - (c) formulate on-the-job training plans and offer training in the first three months of employment;
 - (d) assign experienced staff as mentors of participants;
 - (e) undertake not to displace existing staff with the participants.
- The Labour Department will vet the relevant information or visit the employers

and participants to understand their work and training.

District Employment Programme for the Middle-aged

- At the district level, the Labour Department will, on a pilot basis, join hands with NGOs to provide diversified employment support for the middle-aged unemployed and to place them in the district where they live.
- The Labour Department will make use of the district network of NGOs to identify new vacancies, and to canvass vacancies from those who are not frequent users of the Labour Department's recruitment service.
- The Labour Department will refer the unemployed participants to NGOs for comprehensive employment and support services. The department will pay service fees to NGOs. The department will negotiate with NGOs for implementation details.
- The department will have a mechanism to monitor the service quality of NGOs. This includes handling complaints and checking the employment details, the employment contracts and wages records of participants, etc. Where necessary, officers of the department will visit the workplace of the participants to cross check the information provided.
- About 1 500 persons are expected to secure jobs through this programme.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau (Labour Branch)
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