

Taiwan Labor E-Newsletter

勞動力



簡訊

勞工給力 功勞矗立

NATIONAL MODEL
WORKER AWARD

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Expansion of Worker Relief Loans by an Additional 500,000 Loans

In order to assist workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, “worker relief loans” were announced on April 30, 2020. As of May 12, the number of loan applicants has exceeded the originally planned 500,000 loans. In order to expand care for affected workers, the Executive Yuan decided to increase the number of loans by an additional 500,000.

Banks provide their own funds for worker relief loans and the Small and Medium Enterprise Credit Guarantee Fund of Taiwan (Taiwan SMEG) provides 100% credit guarantee, with the Ministry of Labor (MOL) subsidizing loan interest for the first year. Workers with Taiwan ROC citizenship 20 years of age or older who have been affected by the pandemic can apply for loans. The maximum loan limit per person is NT\$100,000 over three years. The loan interest rate is calculated based on Chunghwa Post's two-year fixed deposit rate plus one percent, and is currently 1.845%. The first six months of the loan are a grace period and workers do not need to make payments towards the principal. Payments from the seventh to twelfth month go towards the principal. Starting the second year of the loan, monthly payments go towards the principal and interest. Workers with Labor Insurance do not need to provide extra proof of work; however, workers without Labor Insurance should provide relevant proof of their labor income. In order to speed up the review process for banks, the MOL has coordinated with banks to use the Simple Credit Score Sheet for Worker Relief Loans to certify the applicant's source of repayment. After review, the loan bank will send the application to the Taiwan SMEG for underwriting and loan verification, and then notify the applicant to sign the contract for the loan and allocate funds.

At present 35 banks and credit cooperatives have agreed to issue this loan. Workers who wish to apply can choose a bank they are familiar with to facilitate the process. For more information on Worker Relief Loans, please visit the Coronavirus Information page on the MOL's website.



Ministry of Labor Increases Efforts to Safeguard Workers' Livelihoods

In light of the development of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, providing timely safeguards for workers is just as important as preventing the spread of infection. In addition to measures such as the Recharge and Restart Training Program for workers whose hours have been reduced or who have been laid off, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) has continued to respond to feedback to strengthen measures for members of an occupational union who have no definite employer or who are self-employed, in order to take care of workers affected by the pandemic.

In order to stabilize labor-management relations, the MOL has launched the Recharge and Restart Training Program, Maintaining Employment Subsidy Program and Assured Immediate Employment Program to provide the training expenses, allowances, subsidies and immediate job opportunities in the public sector, thereby providing opportunities for workers who have had their hours cut and/or are facing a loss of income.

In order to provide for the basic livelihoods and promote employment for unemployed workers, the MOL is providing unemployment benefits, vocational training living allowances and accepting extra applications for the Tuition Fee Subsidies for Children of Unemployed Workers, as well as dedicated employment assistance for every worker through public employment service institutions. These efforts not only guarantee a basic standard of living for workers but also actively assist workers to return to the workplace.

In addition, in order to strengthen efforts to assist lower level wage earners, a monthly subsidy of NT\$10,000 is issued to “Members of an occupational union who have no definite employer or who are self-employed” and based on the principle of “giving priority to the disadvantaged, excluding the rich, and no repeat collection”. Three months will be paid at a time for a total of NT\$30,000 to each eligible worker. The Ministry is also coordinating with banks to issue workers relief loans which provide 100% credit guarantee through the Small and Medium Enterprise Credit Guarantee Fund of Taiwan. Workers can apply for a maximum loan amount of NT\$100,000 with the government subsidizing the interest for one year.

For more information on the Ministry of Labor's relevant measures, call the 24-hour toll-free hotline “1955” or “0800-777888”, or visit the MOL official website.



Disease Prevention Isolation Leave and Disease Prevention Care Leave are Excluded from Calculation of Average Wages

According to Article 2 Paragraph 4 of the Labor Standards Act, average wage refers to the average amount of wages earned in the prior six months from the day of calculation.

In response to the severe pneumonia with novel pathogens (COVID-19) pandemic, the government has issued a series of preventative measures. These measures include disease prevention isolation leave and disease prevention care leave, but the government did not require employers to pay wages for these types of leave.

Considering that wages may be reduced for workers taking leave, which in turn affects workers' severance, pension and occupational disaster compensation, the Ministry of Labor issued an interpretation order which states wages and days off incurred during disease prevention isolation leave and disease prevention care leave shall not be included in the calculation of average wages, in order to protect the rights of workers. The order is effective as of January 15, 2020.

For example, suppose a worker's date of termination is on April 17, 2020, their original average wage should be calculated using the period between October 17, 2019 and April 16, 2020. However, during this period the worker took 10 days of disease prevention care leave; these 10 days should be deducted and the starting date of calculation be pushed back to October 7, 2019.



Premier Su Visits Ministry of Labor “1955” Worker Relief Hotline and Reminds Workers Relief is a Phone Call Away

Premier Su Tseng-Chang was accompanied by Labor Minister Hsu Ming-Chun and others on May 2 on his visit to the 1955 Worker Relief Hotline Center to observe 1955 staff answering calls. Premier Su said that it is the government's responsibility to support workers impacted by the pandemic. In addition to introducing a number of relief measures, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) should also provide multiple accessible channels for consultation to help workers overcome their difficulties.

Premier Su pointed out that in the face of the pandemic, the government has progressively launched the Recharge and Restart Training Program, Relief Employment Program and Relief Fast Employment Program. It is also providing NT\$30,000 in cash subsidies for workers who are self-employed or without a regular employer. At the same time, relief loans of up to NT\$100,000 are available for workers in financial difficulties. After the pandemic stabilizes, the government will continue to promote various measures to stimulate the economy so that employers will be able to earn revenue for their companies, and workers will be able to receive wages, thus ensuring that everyone can return to their normal lives. In addition to various relief programs to assist workers, Premier Su once again reminded staff that having multiple convenient and clear channels of dispersing information is key to helping workers quickly understand how to apply for and request various relief measures.

Labor Minister Hsu Ming-Chun said that 1955 is an important consultation platform for the MOL, providing employers and workers with information on various relief measures and labor law. In the past month, the number of calls to 1955 has increased tremendously. There has been an average of 30,000 calls per day inquiring about the Ministry's various relief measures. The MOL has rapidly expanded the hotline's capacity and increased manpower by 4.4 times manpower so staff can answer questions as quickly as possible. Minister Hsu also would like to remind workers that in addition to the telephone hotline, they can make use of the Coronavirus Information page on the MOL's website or Facebook page. In the future, the MOL will continue to promote various measures in response to the pandemic in order to assist workers to overcome their difficulties.



Image by Executive Yuan

“Workers Achievements Produce Exemplary Results” Labor Minister Hsu Expresses Thanks on May 1 Labor Day to the Nation's Workers with Video, and Paid Highest Respects to Hardworking and Brave Model Workers

The Minister of Labor (MOL) filmed a video for this year's Labor Day paying respect to 51 model workers and giving thanks to all hard workers in Taiwan, expressing appreciation for their dedication and contribution so that the world sees Taiwan's strength.

The MOL stated that the selection and recognition of model workers is an important annual event for the Ministry. It is the government's recognition of and tribute to workers. This year the slogan was “Workers Achievements Produce Exemplary Results,” which represents praise and respect for all the hard workers in the country. Although this year the commendation ceremony was postponed due to the pandemic, the selection was still carried out according to schedule. A fair and impartial selection committee carefully selected 51 model workers from the numerous workers recommended by various agencies and labor organizations from across Taiwan. These model workers have all showed outstanding performance in either the workplace or towards the stabilization of labor-management relations.

In addition, in order to truly let the public see the excellence of the model workers, the Ministry specially commissioned professional photographers to capture the focused expressions and diligent attitude of model workers at work. The MOL launched its official Facebook fan group on the eve of Labor Day and published the outstanding deeds of this year's 51 model workers, so the public may also share in their glory.

Lastly, the Ministry stated that even in the face of the current difficulties workers are still conscientiously sticking to their jobs, making it possible for Taiwan to weather the pandemic and showing the world what Taiwan is capable of.



The Ministry of Labor Broadcasts Live Workplace Safety and Health Activities to Call on Enterprises to Integrate Epidemic Preventive Measures into OSH Management Systems

The International Labour Organization (ILO) declared April 28 World Day for Safety and Health at Work. The Ministry of Labor has launched a series of workplace safety and health activities. This year (2020), in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry held a live broadcast of the Seminar for Promoting Workplace Health and Strengthening the Health of Country's Labor Force on Facebook, where Political Deputy Minister, Lin Ming-Yu, made a special appearance to call on the enterprise to integrate epidemic preventive measures into occupational safety and health management systems.

In his opening remark, Deputy Minister Lin expressed his thanks to businesses and laborers for their hard work and continuous effort during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also called on businesses to participate actively in workplace safety and health activities, safeguard occupational safety and health, take disease preventive measures, and ensure the health and safety of businesses and laborers.

OSHA Director General Tzou Tzu-Lien said The World Day for Safety and Health at Work aims to raise the public's awareness of occupational safety, protect laborers from occupational injuries or diseases, and establish a culture of safety and health. Through holding the workplace safety and health activities, OSHA anticipates the activities will bring about the active participation of government agencies, private enterprises, schools, employers, labor unions, and relevant occupational safety and health professional entities. Apart from preventing the pandemic in workplaces, the annual goal and a list of focal points regarding workplace safety and health activities were also announced to create friendly working environments and enhance the safety and health performance in all industries.

The seminar focused on workplace pandemic prevention and workplace health protection for middle-aged and elderly workers. The Ministry invited winners of the National Occupational Safety and Health Award (Innolux Corporation and Taoyuan General Hospital, Ministry of Health and Welfare) to discuss "how workplaces should cope with the invisible coronavirus" and "the value of promoting workplace health services". Experts and scholars in relevant fields were also invited to share their practical experiences in order to promote and strengthen worker health services.

