

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE GOVERNMENT WAGE SUBSIDY

While the Economic Response Plan (ERP) Phase II extends the Government Wage subsidy until December, there are some important changes that people receiving the subsidy need to be aware of:

Employers must register in the Community Partnerships Program if they have insufficient work for their staff

The Community Partnerships Program provides productive employment opportunities to people on the wage subsidy or other Government benefits. If employers have insufficient work for their staff to meet the requirements under the wage subsidy they must register with MFEM.

Employers will not be able to receive the wage subsidy if staff are not working the required hours

People taking leave that would otherwise be unpaid will not receive wage subsidy pay for these days. The subsidy will continue to be paid for leave days such as annual and sick leave, and will be paid for hours undertaken through the Community Partnerships Program.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Part of the Economic Response Plan (ERP) Phase II, the newly established Community Partnerships Program will connect workers with tasks that contribute to community development. Projects will include those that target social development, environmental development and general community support.

The Community Partnerships Program takes the ERP Phase II support payments one-step further, by providing productive employment opportunities to those people on the wage subsidy or other Government benefits. The program also provides a labour force for a pipeline of projects which

increase the social and environmental well-being of the Cook Islands.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance the Hon. Mark Brown says: "By connecting the Government Wage Subsidy and Community Partnerships Program, we are ensuring that people receiving Government support have the opportunity to contribute to the social and environmental development of the Cook Islands."

In Phase II businesses will receive the wage subsidy through to December 2020 if they meet the eligibility requirements. In addition, for those individuals that are not engaged in the workforce for COVID related reasons,

the unemployment benefit is available, as is the Emergency Hardship allowance.

HOW TO REGISTER

If your business wants to be engaged in the program you must contact MFEM (details below) and provide information on the number of staff interested in engaging with the program and their relevant skills.

Telephone: +682 29511 ext. 8314

Email: mfem.economics@cookislands.gov.ck

