

Sabah starts distribution of RM670m stimulus package

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By: Larry Ralon



File photo from Bernama.

KOTA KINABALU: Distribution of the RM670 million stimulus package announced by the State Government on March 25 to ease the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak in Sabah has begun.

“I am pleased with the status of the implementation of the Sabah Covid-19 Stimulus Package. I have directed the Sabah Covid-19 Command Centre to continue to monitor the distribution of aid,” said Chief Minister, Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, in a statement.

As of Tuesday, the RM300 one-off special aid had been channelled to 63,092 people under the vulnerable group with a total value of RM18,927,600.

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This group comprises general aid recipients (19,795 people), orphans (2,559), senior citizen aid (28,779), children’s aid (6,527), disabled and critically ill patients (2,294), disabled employee allowance (1,871) and aid for those who have lost ability to work (1,267).

Food aid amounting to RM874,100 has also been distributed to 1,818 Sabahan students in the peninsula from public and private institutions of higher learning. The aid was distributed to the students through the Sabah-Kuala Lumpur State Relations Office.

Similarly, RM500,000 has been channelled to the Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to assist students in its main Kota Kinabalu campus, as well as in its campus in Labuan, Sandakan and non-resident during the Movement Control Order (MCO).

Aid amounting to RM4,461 has been channelled to 131 people at quarantine centres while RM193,200 has been distributed to 966 families under home quarantine.

A total of RM2,354 has also been channelled to temporary quarantine involving 20 vagrants. To date, the total assistance for this category was RM200,015. The amount increases over time depending on the number of people under investigation (PUI) placed at the Quarantine Centres.

The RM500 one-off aid to patients or patients family members have been channelled to 134 Covid-19 patients amounting to RM67,000.

As for the RM500 one-off aid to affected people, the Rural Development Ministry has processed payments to 15,713 poor and hardcore poor households with aid amounting to RM7,856,500.

For B40 group, a total of 1,050 out of the 41,115 recipients under the category of being not listed in the e-Kasih system has received aid amounting to RM315,000, while 9,141 people out of 169,630 people under the farmer, breeder and fisherman category have received aid amounting to RM2,742,300.

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Aid for a total of 13,132 taxi, bus and truck drivers are being processed by their respective categories with a total allocation of RM3,939,600.

A total of RM69,300 has also been channelled to 231 people under the mountain guide, porter, freelance tour guide and freelance artists category.

Meanwhile, a total of 30,000 people have been estimated under the Sabahans working in the peninsular category. From the figure, a total of 13,870 can be processed under the first phase involving RM4,161,000.

For assistance to those directly affected by Covid-19, aid in the form of food have been channelled directly to families in 60 State Constituencies involving 158,143 family heads with aid amounting to RM 12,750,000.

Food aid distribution is ongoing throughout the State. The State Government has allocated RM40 million under the Sabah Micro Credit Fund.

The allocation will be channelled through the Sabah Credit Corporation where small traders can apply for loans ranging from RM300 to RM2,000 with zero interest rate and repayment period of up to three years.

The Micro Loan will benefit about 20,000 small traders, farmers, breeders, fishermen, bus and taxi drivers and tour guides affected by the pandemic in the Sabah.

Under this initiative, loan repayments are as low as 28sen per day/RM8.33 per month and maximum of RM1.85 per day/RM55.55 per month.

To assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who are also affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, the State Government has allocated RM50 million to the Sabah SME Fund.

The loan facility will also be managed by Sabah Credit Corporation which offers loans from RM250,000 up to RM1,500,000 with a low interest rate of 3.5 per cent and a term of 10 years.

“The assistance is not only to help SMEs stay resilient but also to retain their employees, take care of the welfare of employees and staff in these difficult times,” said Shafie.

Both of these provisions will be channelled to the Sabah Credit Corporation in April 2020 and are expected to be accepted by small traders and SMEs once the MCO is over.

Special contributions has also been allocated to those in the frontlines with an allocation of RM10 million for their food and needs.

Of this, RM1 million has been allocated to eight agencies, respectively, namely the State Health Department, Immigration Department, police, Civil Defence Force, Rela, Sabah Eastern Sabah Security Command and the Customs Department.