

Social Welfare

The Government designs its social welfare policies in conjunction with non-governmental agencies; so that governmental and non-governmental organisations both deliver practical social services that meet residents' needs. The Social Welfare Bureau spent over 2.9 billion patacas on social welfare services provided by 257 agencies in 2021.

In 2005, the Government started to offer the Old-age Allowance to elderly Macao permanent residents aged 65 or above. In 2021, the Old-age Allowance was 9,000 patacas a year. A total of 107,547 applications were approved (including 4,089 backdated cases from prior years) and, in all, 968 million patacas were paid to the elderly.

Social Welfare Bureau

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) is a government department that helps draft, coordinate, liaise, drive and execute the social work policies and social welfare of the MSAR. It provides individual and family assistance, and services for children and teenagers, and the elderly. It also offers rehabilitation services, anti-drug-dependence services, problem gambling prevention services, and social rehabilitation services. There are 12 social service facilities under its umbrella, providing direct services to citizens.

Family and Community Services

The Social Welfare Bureau has established four social services centres and one branch centre in Macao, providing individuals and families in need with general services, including personal and family counselling, financial aid, round-the-clock support, disaster relief, referral and legal consultation services.

The bureau also provides counselling and support for individuals facing domestic violence, and distributes various benefits and allowances including old age allowances and disability gratuities. In 2021, a total of 3,443 cases were handled by four social services centres and one branch centre, and various services were provided on 7,957 occasions according to needs, resulting in 3,079 families receiving regular subsidies, involving 4,683 individuals.

In 2021, Macao had one public shelter, 10 integrated family and community service centres, 14 community centres, 12 project based services, and five shelters

and temporary shelters, the majority of them being subsidised by the Social Welfare Bureau and operated by non-governmental organisations.

During 2021, 31 people were admitted to the Ilha Verde shelter, 366 people used the winter and heat shelter service. The 10 integrated family and community services centres provided services to 1,036,281 people; the 14 community centres provided services to 816,707 people; the 12 project-based services were provided to 1,347,746 people, and the five shelters and temporary shelters provided services for 326 people. In response to the pandemic, the Ilha Verde Temporary Shelter Centre was opened to provide shelter services for those in need of resettlement, with a total of 6,892 people staying

Children's and Youth Services

In 2021, Macao had 64 child-care centres, of which 41 received regular subsidies from the Social Welfare Bureau. By December 2021, child-care services in Macao offered about 9,643 quotas. Among the centres, a centre funded by the bureau provided parent-child services to 24,732 people during 2021, promoting play time between parents and children and creating harmonious family relationships. The Government provided the Priority Child Care Service for Children from Disadvantaged Families, so that disadvantaged families were given priority in receiving full-day service in subsidised child-care centres..

There are nine homes for children and adolescents in Macao offering short or long-term care and counselling for orphans, as well as children and adolescents who have been abandoned, who lack family care, or who are on the verge of a crisis as a result of family or social conflicts. In 2021, these homes housed 285 children and youngsters.

The Social Welfare Bureau is the only authorised organisation in Macao that deals with adoption services. It handled 13 such cases in 2021. The bureau is responsible for providing assistance to minors who become involved in judicial actions, in accordance with the social protection system. During 2021, the bureau processed 276 such cases in total. Moreover, the bureau, in conjunction with the community youth social work teams, provides counselling services under the community support scheme to youths between 12 years to 16 years of age who have committed criminal offences or misdemeanours.

Elderly Services

To recognise the significant contributions made by the elderly to Macao's social development, and to propagate and carry forward the traditional virtues of respect for the elderly as well as filial piety, in 2017 the Chief Executive of the MSAR designated the ninth day of September on the Lunar Calendar as the MSAR Senior Citizens Day, by way of an executive order.

Citizens holding Macao Resident Identity Cards aged 65 or above are eligible to apply for the Senior Citizen's Card. Senior Citizen's Card holders are entitled to the welfare and benefits offered by the public organisations and enterprises that have signed cooperation agreements with the IAS. By the end of 2021, the Social Welfare Bureau had issued a cumulative total of 97,613 Senior Citizen's Cards.

In 2021, Macao had 24 homes for the elderly, providing residential care services for weak elderly persons; 14 of them are subsidised by the Social Welfare Bureau, providing a total of 2,510 hostel places. In addition, there were six elderly service facilities providing day-care services to elderly persons with health problems who are unable to take care of themselves. There were other ten elderly day-care centres, 26 neighbourhood social centres providing entertaining services for the elderly.

In 2021, 2,066 senior citizens were housed in homes for the elderly, 601 senior citizens enjoyed services at day care centres, 5,688 senior citizens enjoyed services at elderly day centres, and 7,940 senior citizens used the services provided at social centres.

Macao's home care services are provided through one home care service team and six home care and support service teams operating under the three elderly day-care centres, two day care centres and one multi-service centre. The teams provide household and home care services to elderly persons who are weak and need others to take care of them, so that they receive proper concern and care. In 2021, a total of 1,336 cases were handled, of which 489 involved senior citizens living alone, and 847 in which the senior citizens were not living alone.

In addition, an elderly caring service network and a supporting network for senior citizens living alone are provided for single elderly people and households with two elderly persons. Tele-Assistant "Peng On Tung", an elderly hotline service for counselling and Elderly Home Safety Evaluation and Equipment Subsidy Scheme are also available.

Rehabilitation Services

In 2021, Macao had 11 rehabilitation homes, of which nine provide accommodation, training, social and leisure activities to mentally handicapped adults or chronic mental patients, and children aged 15 below with mental or physical disabilities; and two are halfway house and supported hostel for people recovering from mental illness. Moreover, there are 12 day centres which provide self-training programmes, group studies, rehabilitation treatment, regular activities and individual assistance to the hearing impaired, the mentally handicapped, people recovering from mental illness and the visually impaired, In 2021, the 11 rehabilitation homes provided services to 778 people, while the 12 day care centres offered services to 14,268 people.

In 2021, there were six sheltered workshops, vocational training centres and supported employment centres in Macao. Services were provided to 390 people. There were also four pre-schools/education centres to provide early special education

and training, and assistance for children with development disorders and impaired hearing. In 2021, the four pre-schools/education centres served 468 people.

The rehabilitation bus service in Macao is provided by two agencies. The IAS subsidises the cost of purchasing and operating rehabilitation buses. The service enables people with impaired mobility, the physically disabled and patients requiring haemodialysis to commute between their homes and hospitals. A no-reservation feeder service was also provided, which ran along two circular routes in the Macao peninsula and Islands District. The bus service allowed people with disabilities to commute to meet their friends and relatives, participate in cultural, recreational and leisure activities, and handle personal affairs. In 2021, the two agencies served 30,921 passengers.

Macao currently has two comprehensive rehabilitation service centres, including one designed for people with intellectual disabilities. Services provided by the centre include: small scale residential services to mildly and moderately mentally handicapped people aged between 16 to 55, which in 2021 served 19 people by providing independent living skills training; and provision of family resources services to the mentally handicapped and their families, which in 2021 served 14,303 people. The other centre is a comprehensive rehabilitation service centre providing vocational training and rehabilitation services which served 129 people in 2021. The Social Welfare Bureau provides professional assessment services to Macao residents who need to apply for or use rehabilitation services operated by agencies funded by the bureau, so they can find the most appropriate services. There were 126 cases of providing these services in 2021.

As at the end of 2021, the Disability Assessment Cards saw 26,061 new applications and 10,674 renewal applications, and 20,598 cards were issued by IAS.

Prevention of Drug Dependence

The Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Division and two community drug treatment centres under the Social Welfare Bureau provide comprehensive voluntary treatment and rehabilitation services for drug-dependent people. They include outpatient and residential drug addiction treatment, as well as drug counselling services. During 2021, a total of 456 drug addicts sought help, 91 of whom were seeking help for the first time.

In 2021, there were two drug-treatment rehabilitation service shelters, serving 44 people; one drug-treatment service for families with young drug addicts; an outreach treatment service for drug-dependent youths; and two outreach treatment services for addicts in Macao. The outreach drug addiction treatment services were used by 10,107 people; outreach services designed for drug-dependent youngsters and problem juveniles were used by 3,341 people; and services designed for the family members of drug addicts were provided to 799 people. In 2021, the Bureau cooperated with a non-governmental institution to commence a youth employment assistance and family support programme, organising 14 training courses which were attended by 236 people, providing internships for 37 participants, 15 of whom were employed, and providing a range of support to 62 family members.

The IAS also helped an organisation to provide a free outpatient service to help people quit smoking, which in 2021 helped 246 people.

Prevention and Treatment of Problem Gambling

The Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Division – Chi Ai Hin is a service unit responsible for providing counselling services and professional training to problem gamblers, and implementing community education promoting responsible gambling. In 2021, the Central Registry System of Individuals with Gambling Disorders received 78 new cases seeking assistance. Community organisations were also commissioned to provide a round-the-clock gambling counselling hotline and online counselling service, which received 1,142 and 1,945 requests for assistance through telephone calls and online platforms, respectively.

In order to further enhance the quality of responsible gaming work in Macao, the Social Welfare Bureau, together with representatives from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, the Education and Youth Development Bureau, the University of Macau and the Macau Polytechnic Institute, formed an inter-departmental "Responsible Gaming Working Group" with experts and scholars. In 2021, responsible gaming implementation indicators were established and implemented in stages, implementing relevant responsible gaming actions and supporting facilities of Macao social services and related agencies, reviewing their compliance levels, and providing improvement plans and ongoing follow-ups. In the first stage, the gambling disorder prevention and control collaborative organisations were reviewed, and a total of 12 organisations reached the standard of "Responsible Gaming Implementation Model Units". In addition, four new responsible gaming kiosks were added in 2021, resulting in a total of 11,510 logins to 59 kiosks.

Social Rehabilitation Services

Provided by the Department of Social Reintegration under the Social Welfare Bureau, social rehabilitation services mainly assist the court to implement non-custodial sentences and measures, such as parole, supervision for probationers, labour in lieu of penalty, suspension of proceedings, judicial restoration, and implement education and supervision orders for youth offenders, such as rehabilitation, community service order, rule abiding order, probation order and half-way home order, aiming to assist offenders with restoring law-abiding lives and reintegrating into society.

During 2021, 669 and 197 cases of discharged offenders and young offenders were handled, respectively. In addition, a half-way house for discharged offenders and a half-way house for young offenders provided services for 27 and 22 people, respectively.

Social Security Fund

The Social Security Fund Authority is under the supervision of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, and is responsible for implementing various policy measures concerning social security and managing relevant resources.

The Social Security Fund was set up on 23 March, 1990, with a primary objective of providing social security to local employees. With the exacerbated social phenomenon of ageing, residents' demand for universal coverage is growing. In November 2008, the Government announced the Social Security and Old-age Pension System Reform Program. Its core aim is to build a double-tier social security system, founded on the first-tier social security system, so that all Macao residents can have the chance to enjoy basic social protection, particularly old-age protection, to improve their quality of life, with more ample protection for retirement life supported by the second-tier, non-mandatory Central Provident Fund.

Social Security System

Law No. 4/2010 - Social Security System came into effect on 1 January 2011. It is the first tier of the double-tier social security system. This system operates according to the principles of social insurance. Its income derives from the contributions of employees, employers and arbitrary contributors, employment fees for non-resident workers, appropriation from gaming, a one-percent appropriation from the recurrent income of the Government Budget, three percent of the central executive budget balance by the end of every fiscal year, and the income of the investment of the Social Security Fund.

Contributions

The Social Security System comprises an obligatory contribution system and an arbitrary contribution system. Employees and their employers are required to make obligatory contributions to the Social Security Fund, at an 90 patacas per month (60 patacas by employers and 30 patacas by employees), and other residents who comply with the relevant legal requirements can make contributions by enrolling in the arbitrary system, with the full amount of contributions – 90 patacas per month, to be paid by the beneficiaries themselves.

In 2021, a total of 359,000 beneficiaries made their contributions. They included around 293,000 employees and 66,000 voluntary contributors (including in-service public servants registered in the retirement and pension system). The contributions totalled around 390 million patacas.

Various Social Security Benefits and Allowances

According to the current social security system, eligible beneficiaries are legally entitled to pensions, disability allowance, unemployment allowance, sickness allowance, funeral allowance, marriage allowance, birth allowance and compensations for respiratory occupational diseases.

In 2021, various benefits were given to 139,000 people, 129,000 of whom received pensions. Besides, allowances were given to 24,000 people. Social security payments totalled about 5.37 billion patacas, including around 4.8 billion patacas for pensions (including the additional payment in January).

Non-mandatory Central Provident Fund System

Law No. 7/2017 - Non-mandatory Central Provident Fund System (or non-mandatory CPF) came into effect on 1 January 2018. It is the second tier in the double-tier social security system, and was established to enhance retirement protection for citizens of the MSAR, and to fill a gap in the existing social security system.

The non-mandatory CPF consists of an allocation system and a contribution scheme and. An account holder may make regular contributions via a contribution plan, and seek wealth accumulation through investment, making better preparation for an ample retirement protection in future.

In 2021, in accordance with the above-mentioned laws and regulations, the Social Security Fund completed the report on a review of the “Non-mandatory Central Provident Fund System”. This revealed that the system operated smoothly in the first three years of implementation, with good progress and results. However, due to the pandemic’s impact on the economy, it was recommended to set up a three-year observation period (2021-2023), and carefully consider the process of implementing the mandatory CPF by constantly listening to the opinions of society, and taking into account Macao’s economic recovery after the observation period.

Individual Account of Non-mandatory CPF

MSAR citizens falling into the following categories may become individual account holders of non-mandatory CPF:

1. Aged 18 or above;
2. Under the age of 18, but registered into the social security system in accordance with the law

An individual account of non-mandatory CPF comprises a sub-account managed by the government, a contribution sub-account, and a preserved sub-account.

Contribution Scheme

There are a joint provident fund scheme and an individual provident fund scheme under the non-mandatory CPF. A joint provident fund scheme is designed for an employee. A participating employee and his or her employer make a contribution equivalent to five percent of the employee's basic salary on a monthly basis. An individual provident fund scheme is designed for all account holders with a monthly minimum contribution amount of 500 patacas, and a maximum amount of 3,300 patacas. The maximum and minimum caps to the contribution are linked to the Law on the Minimum Wage for Workers. In 2021, 267 employers and a total of around 25,000 employees joined the non-mandatory CPF scheme; and about 78,000 people joined the individual non-mandatory CPF scheme. The contribution can be invested into the pension funds under non-mandatory CPF for wealth accumulation, and managed by qualified fund management entities. By the end of 2021, there were seven fund management entities providing 42 open-end pension funds.

Upon termination of employment, the employee may be entitled to the accumulated benefits in the employer's part, according to the length of contribution and the applicable vesting schedule. Since an individual non-mandatory CPF account is portable, the benefits in the contribution scheme will not be cleared and withdrawn due to employment termination, and can maintain the account for continued investment.

Allocation Scheme

Account holders who are alive on 1 January in the allocation year, and meet the following requirements within the year prior to the allocation, are eligible for a one-off Incentive Basic Fund of 10,000 patacas:

1. Permanent residents of the Macao Special Administrative Region;
2. Aged 22 or above; and
3. Resided in Macao for at least 183 days.

If the Government's budget implementation in previous fiscal years allows, account holders who fulfil the above requirements may receive the special allocation of funds if there is a budget surplus. These amounts are recorded in sub-accounts managed by the Government. The funds provided may be kept for accumulation, or transferred to the contributor's account or preserved sub-account for investment through proper transfer application.

In 2021, there were 608,000 Provident Fund Individual Account holders, of whom 9,444 initially fulfilled the requirements and were eligible for 10,000 patacas of the Incentive Basic Fund. In view of the fact that the SAR government's public finances did not record a budget implementation surplus in 2020, the special allocation funds for the budget surplus were not released in 2021. At the end of

January 2022, the maximum accumulated appropriation and interest income of an account holder's sub-account managed by the Government was 77,000 patacas. If an account owner was eligible for the special allocation of a budget surplus since 2010, and has never transferred out, transferred or withdrawn funds from the government-managed sub-account, the accumulated interest income was up to 11,326 patacas.

Fund Withdrawal

To meet the objective of providing more ample retirement protection, in general an account holder must be aged 65 or above, and must fulfil other withdrawal conditions, before he or she can apply for fund withdrawal from his or her individual account. In 2021, there were 14,000 approved applications for withdrawals, resulting in a disbursement of 810 million patacas.

Public Housing Policy

The Housing Bureau strives to implement the Government public housing policy rationally to prioritise the allocation of public rental housing resources, with priority to be given to low-income families.

To meet the people's housing needs, the Infrastructure Development Office has launched a number of public housing projects since 2007. More than 10 Home-Ownership Scheme Housing and public housing projects were completed, including Edificio do Lago, Taipa; the public housing estates in Seac Pai Van; Bairro da Ilha Verde Building; the, second phase of the Mong Ha Public Housing project; and reconstruction of the sports centre. Public housing projects that are underway include: Rua Central De Toi San Public Housing Estate; Avenida de Venceslau of Morais Public Housing project, and B4, B9 and B10 of New Urban Zone Area A public housing phase 1. Tender procedures for the public housing design and construction on the five plots “A1”, “A2”, “A3”, “A4” and “A12” in the New Urban Zone Area A were completed in September and October 2021.

To implement the housing scheme for senior citizens proposed in the policy address, around 1,800 open-style units (T0) and the auxiliary social service facilities were built on a piece of land of 6,828 square metres adjacent to Areia Preta Av. Nordeste.

Public Housing

Public housing units are distributed in the form of leasing by the Government to families of weak financial standing or with special difficulties. Families of weak financial standing are defined as those whose monthly household incomes and net asset values fall beneath the legally stipulated levels as stipulated by Executive Order. The allocation and leasing of public housing are regulated by Law No. 17/2019 – Legal System for Public Housing and By-law No. 30/2020 – By-law of Rules for the Implementation of the Legal System for Public Housing.

The Housing Bureau launched a new round of open applications for public housing in November 2017. After a review of the applications, a waiting list was announced in February 2019, covering 6,355 households. As at December 2021, 3,627 households had been allocated housing, and 2,325 households gave up their applications or were delisted.

Public housing was open for ongoing application from 20 August 2020 onwards. As at 31 December 2021, the Housing Bureau received a total of 4,431 applications, 1,976 of which were accepted and 1,288 were withdrawn or rejected..

Home-Ownership Scheme Housing

In the early years, Home-Ownership Scheme housing units were sold to families on the Housing Bureau’s waiting list on terms and at prices stipulated in the land grant contracts by the bureau in accordance with Decree-Law No. 13/93/M.

Pursuant to Law No. 10/2011 – “The Home-Ownership Scheme Housing Law” re-promulgated by Executive Order No. 200/2020, the construction of Home-Ownership Scheme Housing is led by the Government and executed by the Housing Bureau or other public authorities appointed by the Chief Executive.

Home-Ownership Scheme Housing is intended to assist Macao residents of a particular income level and financial situation to meet their housing needs, and to promote a housing supply that suits the practical needs and purchasing power of Macao residents.

The process of allocating 1,900 multiple-room Home-Ownership Scheme housing units to those who submitted general applications at the end of 2013 is still under progress. As at 31 December 2021, a total of 1,883 family applicants were allocated housing units.

General application for 3,011 housing units began at the end of November 2019. The first batch of detailed assessments was completed in July 2021, with 2,307 eligible applications, 429 applications under legal procedures, 199 ineligible applications, 44 withdrawn applications, and 32 applications with changed priorities. This was followed by the second batch of detailed assessments, with 700 accepted applications.

A new phase of general application for 5,254 housing units was conducted from 14 July to 30 November 2021. A total of 11,707 applications were received. Detailed assessments were conducted accordingly. The priority list will be announced in 2022.

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