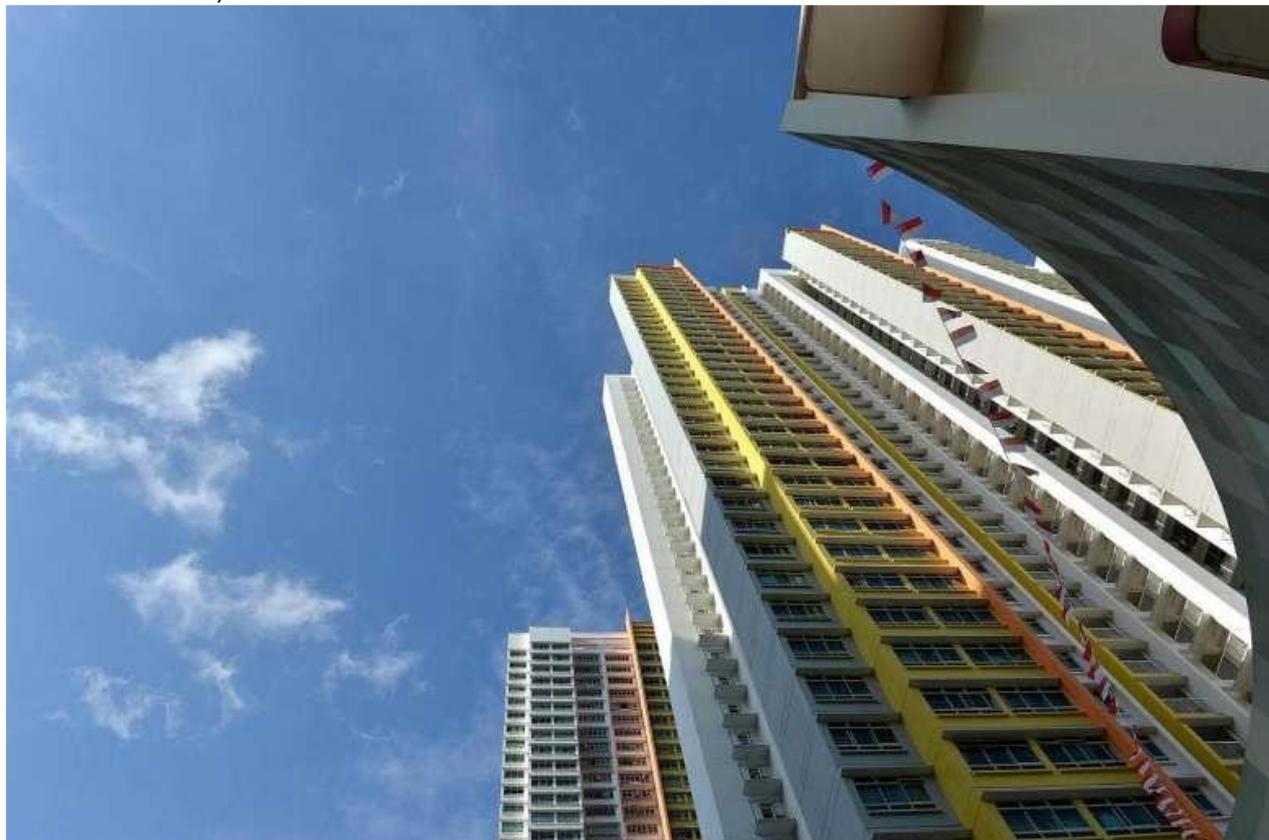


SkillsFuture works its way into Neighbourhoods

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SkillsFuture Network @ South West is to help people such as stay-home women and seniors who hope to work near their homes to find jobs. PHOTO: ST FILE

Residents to get advice on planning their learning, help on finding jobs near their homes

There are still many jobs available for Singaporeans, even as retrenchments have risen due to the slowing economy, Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam said yesterday.

He added that efforts will be stepped up to help people get these jobs and pick up the skills they need.

The Government has started to build up a team of advisers under SkillsFuture Engage, who will be sent around Singapore to guide people in picking courses and training relevant to them, not just for their current jobs, but also to prepare for the future.

The South West Community Development Council has also launched the SkillsFuture Network @ South West to help people - such as stay-home women and seniors who hope

to work near their homes - find work no farther than three bus stops or train stations from where they live.

These two initiatives are part of the push to take the national SkillsFuture scheme, which aims to help workers develop relevant skills and encourage lifelong learning, to the district level and into neighbourhoods, said Mr Tharman.

REACHING OUT TO SINGAPOREANS

“We must reach out to Singaporeans in all our neighbourhoods... We want to help people to plan the learning they need in their jobs and to meet their goals in life. ”

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER THARMAN SHANMUGARATNAM

Speaking at the launch of SkillsFuture Network @ South West at Taman Jurong Community Club, he said: "We must reach out to Singaporeans in all our neighbourhoods... We want to help people to plan the learning they need in their jobs and to meet their goals in life."

The Government's online job- matching platform JobsBank has about 68,000 jobs advertised, he said, but those looking for jobs often need to be trained in new skills.

Even Singaporeans who are employed and doing well in their jobs need to "keep refreshing and improving our skills", he added as he emphasised the importance of lifelong learning.

He acknowledged that it is not as straightforward trying to decide what courses to take as working adults, compared with when people are in school: "It is not an easy matter to plan this life of learning."

This is why the Government will spend the next one year training a group of advisers to help people on this front, he said of the SkillsFuture Engage initiative announced last month.

He added that the advisers will be "quite experienced people themselves".

At a separate event, Education Minister (Higher Education and Skills) Ong Ye Kung yesterday announced the SkillsFuture Fellowships, targeted at those who are already very skilled but want to "go one step further" to develop mastery in their field.

The fellowship offers a cash award of \$10,000, which can be used to pay for a course that can help them deepen their skills.

Giving an example, Mr Ong said: "An engineer can learn to be a master trainer so that knowledge and skills... can be better captured and transmitted throughout the organisation."

He added that these people can also become mentors to others.

For a start, 30 such awards will be given out next year, with an aim of increasing it to 100 over time.

Mr Ong also announced the SkillsFuture Employer Awards, which recognise companies that have been exemplary in developing their employees' skills.

Ten such awards will be given out next year, and the number will be increased gradually to 30.

Applications for both awards will open in mid-December, and more details on each of them will be released in due time, he said.

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