

'Keluarga Malaysia' benefits in Budget 2022 include single parent families. Here's how

Friday, 10 Dec 2021 07:32 AM MYT

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Some 500,000 single parents with children are expected to benefit from this aid. — Picture by Firdaus Latif

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 10 — A slew of Budget 2022 initiatives worth RM8.2 billion has been allocated for *Bantuan Keluarga Malaysia* to help families in need with parents receiving assistance as well.

These initiatives are expected to benefit some 9.6 million recipients with a monthly household income of less than RM5,000.

About four million people earning less than RM2,500 will receive RM1,000 in aid if they have no children, RM1,500 for up to two children or RM2,000 if they have three children or more. Those with incomes of RM2,501 to RM5,000 will receive RM400 if without children, RM600 for up to two children and RM800 for three or more children.

There is also assistance of RM500 for eligible single parents, which means that a single parent with three children earning less than RM2,500 can get RM2,500 in cash aid.

Some 500,000 single parents with children are expected to benefit.

Single mothers will also get additional help under the *JaminKerja* initiative which provides incentives in the form of wage subsidies to employers to hire single mothers and unemployed women, housewives and women on flexible working arrangements.

To encourage employers to hire women from these groups, the government will subsidise 30 per cent of salaries for the first six months and 40 per cent for the next six months.

This is of significance as the pandemic has caused a high number of job losses and unemployment.

Overall, the RM4.8 billion *JaminKerja* initiative seeks to create 600,000 job opportunities via employment incentives, job placements under Malaysia Short-term Employment Programme (MySTEP) and upskilling and reskilling programmes for 220,000 participants.

Budget 2022 stands out for its strong agenda to empower women.

The government is making it compulsory for all public listed companies to appoint at least one female director.

A sum of RM230 million will be allocated for women entrepreneurs through BSN, Agrobank, Dananita (Mara) and Tekunita (Tekun) programmes while RM6.25 million is allocated to the MyKasih Capital Programme to provide basic business capital assistance, guidance and training to promote online business for 5,000 participants.

To assist working mothers, RM30 million is reserved to set up nurseries in government buildings, especially in public hospitals and universities. The government is also encouraging flexible working arrangements.

Individual income tax relief up to RM3,000 for payment of nursery and kindergarten fees has been extended until the year of assessment 2023.

To protect women, the police's Sexual, Women and Children Investigation Division (D11) will be given an RM13 million boost to add 100 new posts to strengthen the force.

The government will also allocate an additional RM10 million to build more special shelters for women.

Basic personal hygiene kits will be given to 130,000 female teenagers in the B40 category.

Also, RM4.5 million will be channelled to local support centres to protect victims of domestic violence while RM11.5 million is to help subsidise mammogram tests and cervical cancer screening tests.