

Social service agencies to get more than \$100m over three years to help attract, retain talent



Minister for Social and Family Development Masagos Zulkifli (in green) at the Social Service Tribe Festival at Paya Lebar Quarter Plaza on Feb 23. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM



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SINGAPORE – More than \$100 million will be channelled over the next three years into helping social service agencies (SSAs) attract and retain talent.


Under the new Transformation Sustainability Scheme, the agencies will be able to apply for funding of up to \$200,000 each to improve their organisational capabilities in areas like volunteer management and innovation, said Minister for Social and Family Development Masagos Zulkifli on Feb 23.

The scheme, to help such agencies better support social service professionals, was launched by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and the Ministry of Social and Family Development.

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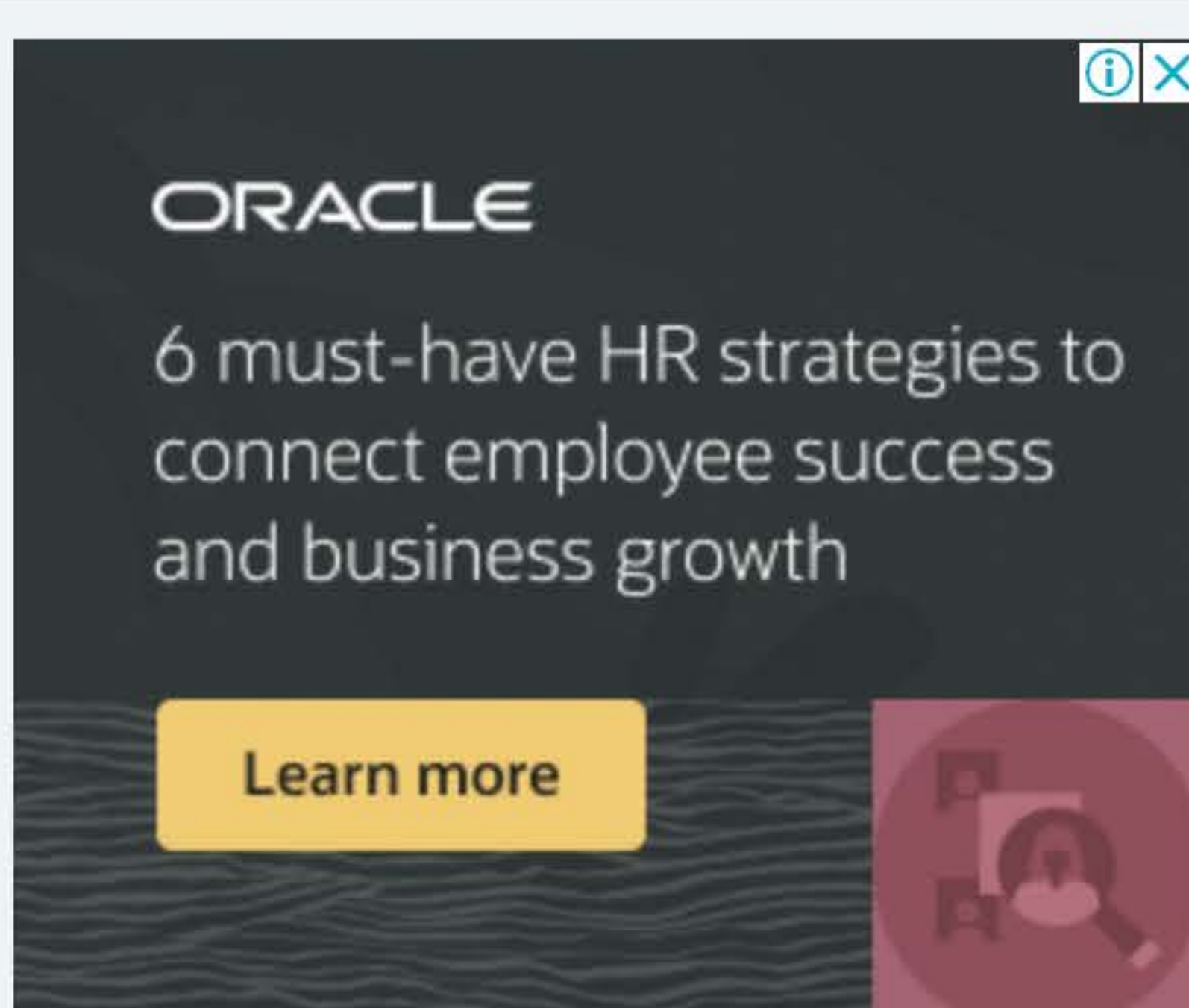
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The scheme comes at a time when the sector has grown from more than 15,000 social service professionals in 2019 to more than 20,000 in 2022.

Speaking at the Social Service Tribe Festival at Paya Lebar Quarter Plaza, Mr Masagos said: “We want to continue to give our social service professionals a good working environment to thrive in and to fuel their passion and commitment.

“Many say that working in a positive work environment enables them to do their work well.”



Social service professionals at the two-day festival showcased more than 30 different jobs in the sector to help prospective employees and students understand the different career pathways.



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While SSAs are known for their direct services to clients, the truth is that the agencies need to be strong in various areas such as people management, digitalisation and innovation to excel, Mr Masagos said.

For example, when an SSA adopts digital solutions, social service professionals in direct services can focus more on supporting their clients, Mr Masagos added.

In 2022, NCSS launched the Organisational Health Framework for Social Services, which provides agencies with an assessment tool to diagnose their organisational health and identify areas for improvement.

To date, more than 75 SSAs have used the framework.

Once the agencies have figured out their strengths and areas for development through the framework, they can benefit from funding from the newly launched scheme to build up their capabilities in specific areas, Mr Masagos said.

The scheme seeks to build stronger SSAs and an even stronger social sector, one in which professionals can find a meaningful career, he added.

The funding is timely for SSAs like the Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) and Care Corner Singapore, which are both looking to strengthen capabilities like hiring and adopting technology.

Mr Christian Chao, chief executive of Care Corner Singapore, said that as SSAs seek to better address complex needs, they need to innovate and develop capabilities to serve the community better.

Those capabilities, which can take the form of technology or partnerships, are areas where help is needed, he added.

Mr Gasper Tan, CEO of SOS, said the scheme will enable the organisation to invest in strengthening staff and volunteer competencies, while also building up capacity and capability to address the growing complexity of mental health needs in Singapore.

He added: “The funding will also continue to equip the next generation of leaders in SOS to advance its 24/7 services in crisis care, to meet the evolving needs of distressed individuals at risk of suicide.”

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