

Trainee aerospace technicians to get more money

Allowance raised to \$1,100 a month from \$900, with 70% funding from WDA

■ BY CAI HAOXIANG

ASPIRING aerospace technicians will receive a bigger allowance during their training, in a bid to retain them in the industry.

They will receive \$1,100 a month instead of \$900, for up to nine months.

About 150 trainees are earmarked for this new Place and Train Aerospace Technician Programme over the next two years, said a joint statement from the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i).

WDA will fund 70 per cent of the monthly allowance, and the trainee's company the rest.

The e2i will administer this new programme, which was announced by Minister for Trade and

Industry Lim Hng Kiang at SIA Engineering Company (SIAEC) yesterday, during a ceremony to mark National Day, which falls on Monday.

Acknowledging the need for the hike, the joint statement said the \$900 monthly allowance "cannot compete well with other job offers given the current tight labour market".

Mr Lim, in his speech, said the aviation and aerospace sector, which employs more than 18,000 people, has been growing an average of more than 12 per cent a year since 1990.

"Much of that growth is driven by Asian demand, and Singapore is well-positioned for this," he said.

Singapore companies, exceeding 100, make up one-quarter of Asia's maintenance, repair and overhaul market.

Meanwhile, SIAEC said its productivity initiatives will save it \$10 million over a 12-month period.

It will share the gains from the initiatives' first phase, from February to June this year, with its workers. About \$600,000 will be given to them, or \$105 a worker on average.

For the next 10 years, Singapore aims to have productivity growth of 2 per cent to 3 per cent a year in a move to raise incomes in a sustainable manner.



An aerospace technician rewiring the interior of a passenger plane to convert it into a freighter aircraft. The aviation and aerospace sector employs more than 18,000 people and has been growing steadily, driven by Asian demand. ST FILE PHOTO

Several companies, including Singapore Aero Engine Services, International Engine Component Overhaul and Singapore Jamco, will place 80 trainees on the new programme next year.

In welcoming the higher allowance, the chief executive of the Association of Aerospace Industries (Singapore), Mr Aloysius Tay, said it would "incentivise trainees to consider a career in the aerospace industry".

He added that the cost of their training is much higher than in other industries, causing their starting pay to be low.

It is about \$1,200 a month.

However, he added, "once trained, aerospace technicians can become highly skilled and highly mobile professionals who are in demand by companies worldwide".

haoxiang@sph.com.sg