

Rebates, financial aid most helpful: survey

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REBATES and direct financial assistance are seen to be the most helpful government measures in the current crisis, although most people think personal initiative is more important than relying on government help to cope, the first in a series of Institute of Policy Studies surveys shows.

The Perception on Policies of Singapore survey - 'Resilience in the Economic Crisis' - polled 817 Singapore citizens and permanent residents in mid-February this year.

Respondents considered rebates and direct financial aid to be most useful across all age groups, the findings show. Also, the perceived usefulness of job-training and re-training programmes declined with age - they were rated most useful for those in their 20s.

Eighty-two per cent of respondents agreed that 'people should rely more on personal initiative and sacrifice than the government to cope with the crisis'.

More than half said the crisis has not affected their savings, income or employment yet. But savings seem to have taken the first hit of the three, with 39 per cent of respondents saying they are worse off in that respect, compared with 29 per cent for income and 23 per cent for employment.

On average, respondents said they could cope for an average of 8.5 months after the loss of a main source of income.

Should that happen, 83 per cent said they would rely on savings, 31 per cent would take any job and 28 per cent would rely on family and friends. Those in their 20s are most willing to take any job, while those above 50 are willing to take the largest average pay cut of 37 per cent.

The survey also explored Singaporeans' attitude to foreigners working here during this crisis.

The majority of respondents were indifferent, though 26 per cent felt personally worse off. From a national perspective, 34 per cent said Singapore is better off with foreigners working here.