

SWD invites applications for IT schemes for persons with disabilities

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) is inviting eligible individuals or organisations to submit applications from tomorrow (March 13) until April 17 for the IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment (7th Round). Eligible individuals may also apply for the Central Fund for Personal Computers (49th Round) during the same period.

The objectives of the IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment are to support non-profit-making and non-governmental organisations providing services or schooling for people with visual impairment (PVI) as well as tertiary institutions to acquire advanced Chinese screen readers, Braille displays of 40 cells and accessories/portable devices to facilitate PVI's browsing the Internet, and to subsidise individual PVI with economic difficulties to purchase these devices to meet their needs on studying or employment.

Subsidies will be granted to successful organisational applicants for purchasing high-performance Chinese screen readers (capped at \$9,800 per set) and/or Braille displays (capped at \$36,000 per set) and/or accessories/portable devices (capped at \$66,300 per set) on the reference list under the Scheme. Successful individual applicants will be sponsored to purchase high-performance Chinese screen readers with an amount not more than \$9,800 and/or accessories/portable devices not more than \$49,600 and/or Braille displays on the same reference list not more than \$32,400.

Eligible organisations may lodge their applications by completing the designated forms. For individual applicants, a nomination from subvented non-governmental rehabilitation organisations, the student affairs offices of local tertiary institutions, principals of local secondary/primary schools, or the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department (LD) is required, and the application should be submitted through the nominating organisation in the designated form. Quotations for the devices concerned must be submitted together with the applications. Invitation letters have been sent to the relevant organisations to invite nominations.

The Central Fund for Personal Computers aims to assist eligible persons with disabilities in acquiring the necessary computer facilities for self-employment or receiving supported employment services at home with the guidance and follow-up services provided by the referral rehabilitation organisations or the Selective Placement Division of the LD. Applicants must:

- (a) be users of rehabilitation services of and nominated by rehabilitation service organisations or the Selective Placement Division of the LD;
- (b) have difficulties in engaging in open employment;
- (c) provide a viable business plan which requires the use of computer facilities;

- (d) have financial difficulty in acquiring the computer facilities necessary for implementation of the business plan;
- (e) be capable of using a computer to carry out the business plan; and
- (f) obtain the consent of the nominating organisations or the LD to provide guidance and follow-up services after applicants' acquisition of the computer facilities.

Details of the above schemes are available on the SWD website (www.swd.gov.hk) and CyberAble.net (www.CyberAble.net). Information notes and application forms can be downloaded from the websites. For enquiries, please contact the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch of the SWD at 3586 3594, through email to eoimc@swd.gov.hk or by fax to 2834 7046.