SWD invites applications for IT schemes for persons with disabilities

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) is inviting applications from today (January 27) until February 23 from eligible individuals and organisations for grants from the IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment (1st Round) (formerly known as the Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment) and the Central Fund for Personal Computers (43rd Round).

To help people with visual impairment (PVI) to have access to information technology for social inclusion, the SWD, under the auspices of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, launched the Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment in 2005. Over the years, the Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment has been supporting non-governmental and non-profit-making organisations, as well as tertiary institutions providing services or schooling for PVI to acquire advanced Chinese screen readers, Braille displays and accessories to facilitate PVI's surfing on the Internet, and to subsidise individual PVI with genuine financial difficulty to purchase these devices for study or employment purposes.

The Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment ended after the 30th batch of application in mid-2020. To continue its support for PVI, the SWD is now launching the IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment, with the relevant eligibility, scope of subsidisation, level of subsidy and more remaining unchanged.

Successful organisational applicants will be supported in full for purchasing a set of high-performance Chinese screen reader (capped at $9,800) and/or Braille displays (capped at $36,000) and/or accessories (capped at $66,300) on the reference list under the scheme. Successful individual applicants will be sponsored to purchase a set of high-performance Chinese screen reader with an amount not more than $9,800 and/or accessories/portable devices not more than $49,600 and/or Braille display not more than $32,400 on the same reference list.

Eligible organisations may lodge their applications by completing the designated forms. For applications by individuals, 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 together with the quotations for the items concerned. Invitation letters have been sent to the relevant organisations to invite nominations.

As for the Central Fund for Personal Computers, the Fund aims to assist eligible persons with disabilities in acquiring the required computer

facilities for self-employment or receiving supported employment services at home with guidance and follow-up services to be provided by the referral rehabilitation organisations or the Selective Placement Division of the LD. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

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

    For enquiries, please contact the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch of the SWD on 3586 3594, through email to eoimc@swd.gov.hk or by fax to 2834 7046.

    Details of the above schemes are available on the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk) and CyberAble.net (www.CyberAble.net). Information notes and application forms can also be downloaded from these websites.