

SWD to invite applications for IT schemes for persons with disabilities

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) will invite applications from tomorrow (October 31) until December 6 from eligible individuals and organisations for the Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment (29th Round) and the Central Fund for Personal Computers (41st Round).

The objectives of the Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment are to support non-governmental and non-profit-making organisations providing services or schooling for persons with visual impairment (PVI) to acquire advanced Chinese screen readers, Braille displays and accessories to assist PVI to surf on the Internet, and to subsidise individual PVI in need to purchase these devices for the purposes of studying or employment and with genuine financial difficulty. Previous beneficiaries of the scheme may re-apply if there are proven genuine financial difficulties and needs for study or employment purposes.

The items supported under the scheme are advanced Chinese screen readers, Braille displays of 40 cells and accessories/portable devices.

Successful organisation applicants will be supported in full for purchasing a high-performance Chinese screen reader set (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 high-performance Chinese screen reader set with an amount not more than \$9,800 and/or accessories/portable devices not more than \$49,600 in value and/or Braille displays on the same reference list not more than \$32,400 in value.

Eligible organisations may lodge their applications by completing the designated forms. For individual applications, 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 applications 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 rehabilitation service 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 has to use computer facilities;
(d) have financial difficulty in acquiring the required computer facilities;
(e) be capable of using computers 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 at 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 website (www.swd.gov.hk) and CyberAble.net (www.CyberAble.net). Information notes and application forms can be downloaded from the websites.