

Information Notes on The Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment

Introduction

1. People with visual impairment (PVI) require computers aids, such as screen readers and Braille displays, to access via personal computers (PC) a wide variety of information. Although such facilities are provided in certain service points in the community (such as Cyber Points provided by the Home Affairs Department), extending the distribution of such computer aids to communal access points and assisting PVI to acquire such high-performance facilities can increase their opportunities to get in touch with the digital world, and to meet their studies or employment needs respectively. To these ends, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (HKJCCT) has kindly donated a grant for the setting up of a subsidy scheme for the purchase of computer aids for PVI.

Objectives

2. The Scheme aims to:
- (i) support the acquisition of high-performance Chinese screen readers, such as *Chinese JAWS* or its compatible, and Braille displays, such as *Focus 40* or *PAC Mate* or its compatible, to be installed at the communal access points of PVI such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), self-help groups and educational institutions;

and

- (ii) subsidise individual PVI who requires information technology (IT) for the purpose of studies or employment but has genuine financial difficulty in the purchase of the high-performance Chinese screen readers and Braille displays.

Administration of the Scheme

3. A grant of \$7.15 million was allocated by the HKJCCT to the Social Welfare Department (SWD), which takes up the administration of the Scheme. All applications are vetted by the Central Committee on Information Technology for Rehabilitation Services. The Committee is chaired by the Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services) and comprised of individual members from IT, rehabilitation and social work fields who have cross knowledge or experiences in IT and rehabilitation. The decision of the Committee on each application shall be final.

Scope of Support

4. The scope of support of the Scheme covers the following two types of computer aids:

- (i) ***High-performance Chinese screen reader***, such as *Chinese JAWS* or its compatible, which demonstrates stable and satisfactory performance in PC of specifications prevalent in recent years; and

- (ii) **Braille output display of 40 cells**, such as *Focus 40* or *PAC Mate* or its compatible.

5. A list of the models already vetted as endorsed items for these two types of computer aids by the Committee is at Annex 1 for reference. For models other than those above cited or on the reference list, prior approval has to be obtained from the Committee. The subsidy granted will be solely for the purchase of relevant computer aids and no cost such as those of the after-sale service, maintenance, other optional/ peripheral items or upgrading of computer facilities, will be borne by the Scheme.

Beneficiary

6. There are two categories of beneficiaries under this Scheme, namely:

- (i) **Organisations**

Non-profit NGOs providing services/ training/ education for PVI, such as social welfare NGOs serving PVI, self-help groups for PVI, schools for the blind and local tertiary institutes; and

- (ii) **Individual PVI**

Individuals with visual impairment who demonstrate a need for high-performance computer aids to facilitate their use of IT for the purpose of studies or employment, but their schools/ employers do not provide such aids and they cannot afford such aids due to genuine financial difficulty.

Eligibility

Organisation applicants

7. The Scheme primarily supports the service units of organisations mentioned in paragraph 6(i) above having no high-performance Chinese screen readers and Braille displays for the use of PVI/ students with visual impairment, with a view to providing more communal access points equipped with such aids. Priority will be given to organisations which provide IT services for relatively more PVI/ students with visual impairment.

Individual applicants

8. Apart from not possessing the computer aids supported by the Scheme, individual applicants must also meet the following conditions:

- (i) Nominated by rehabilitation units of SWD, subvented non-governmental rehabilitation organisations, students affairs offices of local tertiary institutes, principals of local secondary and primary schools, or the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department (applications must be submitted through one of these nominating organisations);
- (ii) Proven to be in genuine financial difficulty in the acquisition of computer aids supported under this Scheme;
- (iii) Possessing basic competency in using IT and demonstrating the needs for such aids for studies or employment; and

- (iv) Not having received subsidies from other charitable funds such as the Employaid Fund or the Central Fund for Personal Computers in the past five years for acquiring high-performance Chinese screen readers or Braille displays.

Special Provisions

9. ***Organisation applicants*** have to ensure that they will carry out reasonable measures to facilitate priority access by PVI to the PCs installed with these aids.

10. For ***successful individual applicants***, they will only be eligible for each category of the subsidy covered by the Scheme once. They are required to enter into a declaration that they will not resell or transfer any of the supported aids to other persons.

11. Successful ***organisation 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). Successful ***individual applicants*** will be supported for a set of high-performance Chinese screen reader with an amount not more than HK\$9,800, whereas the maximum support level for Braille displays will be at 75% of its price or not more than HK\$27,000, whichever is the less.

12. All successful ***organisation*** or ***individual applicants*** are required to meet the acknowledgement requirement of the HKJCCT by putting a

name plate (provided by SWD) at a conspicuous space of the supported aids or by using any other means.

13. For successful *organisation* or *individual applicants*, it is their responsibility to observe the Copyright Ordinance and other related ordinances in the purchase/ use of the supported computer aids and the related IT facilities. The HKJCCT and SWD accept no responsibility whatsoever incurred from the applicants' failure to comply with the Copyright Ordinance and other related ordinances during the purchase/ use of such aids and facilities.

Application Procedures

14. SWD will send out invitations for application to eligible organisations and individual PVI at half-year intervals through newspaper, on SWD's homepage or by mail. Generally speaking, *organisations* and *individual applicants* will be notified of the results two months after the deadline for application.

15. Applications from *organisation applicants* can be made on a prescribed application form with the quotations for the required items.

16. *Individual PVI applicants* must seek the nomination of the organisations mentioned in paragraph 8(i) above and submit an application through the nominating organisation on a prescribed application form with the quotations for the required items. The nominating organisation is

required to:

- (i) assess the applicant's needs for computer aids;
- (ii) assess the applicant's IT competency;
- (iii) assess the applicant's financial situation; and
- (iv) assist the applicant in the use of IT with the aids, and provide the necessary follow-up/ technical support to facilitate their studies or employment.

17. Once the application is approved with notification letter issued, the *organisation* or *individual applicant* may procure the necessary computer aids in one month's time. Payment would be arranged by reimbursement upon the valid receipt shown. SWD may render direct payment to the supplier according to the invoice where necessary.

Enquiries

18. Enquires can be made to the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch of SWD at telephone number: 2892 5652 or e-mail: srm3@swd.gov.hk.

Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch
Social Welfare Department

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List of Endorsed Models of Computer Aids

High-performance Chinese Screen Readers

Chinese JAWS;

Dolphin Supernova;

Dolphin LunarPlus; and

Dolphin Hal.

Braille displays (40 cells)

Focus 40 Braille Display;

PAC Mate;

BrailleSense;

Power Braille ;

BrailleLite M20;

BrailleNote PK;

BrailleVoyager; and

SuperVario.