

Social Welfare Department
Information Note on the Central Fund for Personal Computers
(For Persons with Disabilities Engaging in Self-employment or
Supported Employment Service)

Introduction

1. To support persons with disabilities to integrate into society, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) all along encourages persons with disabilities to take up supported employment service or open employment. However, due to physical disabilities or other reasons, some persons with disabilities' opportunities of attending open employment or supported employment service are affected. To address the issue, SWD set up the Central Fund for Personal Computers (the Fund) in 1997 to assist persons with disabilities in acquiring computers for self-employment at home or receiving supported employment service at home.

Objectives

2. The Fund aims to assist eligible persons with disabilities in acquiring the required computer facilities and in implementing their business plans with guidance and follow-up services to be provided by the nominating rehabilitation service organisations or the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department (LD).

Management of the Fund

3. The Fund is managed by SWD. Rehabilitation service organisations and the Selective Placement Division of LD are invited to nominate eligible persons with disabilities to make applications. All applications are vetted and approved by the Central Committee on Information Technology for Rehabilitation Services. The Committee consists of independent members from the information technology (IT) sector, rehabilitation sector and social work sector who have cross knowledge in IT and rehabilitation as well as the representative of SWD. **The decision of the Committee on each application shall be final.**

Eligibility for Application

4. Applicants must:
- (a) be users of rehabilitation services of and nominated by rehabilitation service organisations or the Selective Placement Division of 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 rehabilitation service organisations or LD (nominating organisations) to provide guidance and follow-up services after applicants' acquisition of the computer facilities.

Nominating Organisations

5. Nominating organisations are required to assess:
 - (a) the applicants' capability in taking up open employment;
 - (b) the applicants' competency in using computers to carry out their business plan;
 - (c) the applicants' financial conditions; and
 - (d) the viability of the business plans.

6. Nominating organisations will:
 - (a) draw up an action plan to assist the applicants in implementing their business plans, including to assist them in obtaining job orders and suitable technical support, and provide the successful applicants with follow-up services for at least half a year;
 - (b) assist the successful applicants in using the subsidies to acquire the required computer facilities complying with copyright requirement and keep the relevant purchasing records for auditing; and
 - (c) submit a follow-up report half a year after the release of subsidies to assess the effectiveness of the applicants in using the computer facilities to carry out income-generating activities.

Special Provisions

7. The subsidy is one-off in nature. Successful applicants are entitled to keep the computer facilities purchased under the subsidies after the completion of the follow-up services by the nominating organisations.

8. In general, **a successful applicant is only eligible for the subsidy once in three years.** For re-application after three years, the Committee would consider the track records of an applicant. In this connection, the applicant and the nominating organisation are required to provide relevant information such as how the previously subsidised computer facilities have been utilised to implement the business.

9. Within three years after the funding approval, funds to improve or replace the computer facilities are expected to come from the income generated from the business activities or supported employment service carried out at home. A beneficiary of the scheme applying for a subsidy for the second time within three years must provide:

- (a) relevant documents delineating the supporting reason(s) warrant the Committee's special consideration; and
- (b) supporting documents certified by the nominating organisation fulfilling the following two conditions [in addition to the "Eligibility for Application" stated at paragraph 4]:
 - (i) the applicant has used the computer facilities purchased under the subsidy to implement the business plan and has generated income from the business;

- (ii) the computer facilities are out of order and not cost-effective to be repaired / are not repairable.

10. The Committee will consider supporting a second subsidy within three years after the funding approval only under exceptional circumstances. Thereafter, applicants should seek other funding if improvement or replacement of the computer facilities is still required.

Level of Subsidy

11. A successful applicant will normally receive a subsidy of **not more than HK\$15,000**. The Committee will consider the market price and the specific requirements of the computer facilities and related software for implementing the proposed business plan in approving the amount of subsidy (Please refer to **Annex** for examples of computer facilities and software which might be approved under the Central Fund for Personal Computers). Hence, the approved amount might be less than what the applicant requested. Moreover, the approved amount might also exceed HK\$15,000 for some individual cases with good justifications for specific requirements of the computer facilities and/or software for implementing the proposed business plan.

Application Procedure

12. Applicants are required to:

- (a) make their applications through rehabilitation service organisations or the Selective Placement Division of LD; and
- (b) send the completed Application Form for the Central Fund for Personal Computers (in duplicate) to the Marketing Consultancy Office (Rehabilitation) of SWD at Room 503, 5/F, West Coast International Building, 290-296 Un Chau Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon.

13. The applicants and the nominating organisations will be informed in writing of the result of the applications.

Procurement of Computer Facilities

14. Successful applicants must sign the “Letter of Acceptance” after having received the notification of application result and, as far as practicable, procure the required computer facilities **within four weeks** after the notification. In case a longer period of time is required for procurement, the applicants may contact the staff concerned of the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch of SWD for necessary arrangement. Successful applicants may procure the computer facilities from suppliers of their own choice according to the computer facility items as specified in the notification letter.

15. Applicants must send the original receipt or invoice to the Marketing Consultancy Office (Rehabilitation) of SWD (address: Room 503, 5/F, West Coast International Building, 290-296 Un Chau Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon) **within four weeks** after the notification. They must comply with the following conditions in seeking reimbursement of the subsidy:

- (a) the original receipt or invoice must indicate clearly the procurement of the approved items including the software copyright version as stated in the notification letter;
- (b) if the amount of the acquired computer facilities exceeds the approved amount, applicants have to bear the difference at their own costs;
- (c) applicants must meet the costs of repair, maintenance and installation of the computer hardware and software on their own; and
- (d) if cash rebate or cash coupon is offered when procuring the approved computer facilities, it must be stated clearly on the receipt or invoice. The amount of the cash rebate or cash coupon will be taken as a reduction in price when releasing the subsidy.

16. Applicants who operate business should register the business according to Business Registration Ordinance. Applicants may contact the Business Registration Office (telephone number: 2594 3146) for enquiry and application for exemption from payment of business registration fee and levy.

Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch
Social Welfare Department
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Annex

Examples of computer facilities and software which might be approved under the Central Fund for Personal Computers (For Reference Only*):

Computer Facilities

1. Desktop Computer
2. Notebook

Accounting Software

1. QuickBooks
2. MYOB
3. AccPac
4. DacEasy
5. Peachtree

Design and Music Software

1. Dreamweaver, Flash
2. Director, Freehand Firework
3. Photoshop, Illustrator, Web Publishing Collection
4. Acrobat, Pagemaker
5. CorelDraw, Corel Graphic Suite and AutoCad
6. PhotoImpact
7. Cool 3D
8. GiF Animator
9. Paint Shop Pro
10. Protocols
11. Digital Audio Workstation
12. Natation Software
13. Sound Card
14. MIDI Controller

Database Software

1. Microsoft FoxPro
2. Microsoft Access
3. Lotus EasySync Pro
4. FileMaker Pro
5. Gold mine

Statistical Software

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)

Anti-virus Software

Relevant software for anti-virus purpose

* The list does not include all possible models of computer facilities and software that may be considered. If applicants wish to apply for computer facilities and software which are not included in the above list, they should provide full justification for consideration by the Central Committee on Information Technology for Rehabilitation Services.

Accessories

1. Printer
2. Tablet
3. Router
4. Computer-aids, like trackball mouse, track pad, etc.
5. Portable Hard-disk