

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – Making London More Inclusive**Blind in Business Charitable Trust**

Amount requested: £138,000

Adv: Tania Bronstein

Base: City of London

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £98,700

The Charity

Blind in Business (BiB) is a national charity based in the City whose main activity is to help blind and visually impaired (BVI) graduates to obtain employment, but it also supports employees diagnosed with sight loss to remain in employment. The charity advises employers on recruitment and on-the-job support for BVI staff and engages them in events to acquaint users with their staff selection processes. Additionally, every year, BiB works with c250 BVI young people still at school to widen their career aspirations. In 2014/15, BiB assisted 100 graduates, 37 of whom secured jobs.

The Application

BiB has requested £46,000 per year for each of three years. This breaks down as:

- (a) £36,000 for salary costs (exclusive of on-costs) of a full-time Employment Manager who supports graduates throughout their journey to employment;
- (b) £5,000 as a contribution towards the salary of a Life Coach Manager (4.1 hours per week of his salary, inclusive of on-costs and pension);
- (c) £5,000 for capital to purchase assistive equipment and software.

The Recommendation

BiB has a track record of helping its very disadvantaged users to obtain rewarding jobs with high quality employers. The grant recommended is towards harder-to-raise revenue costs, and its level adjusted based on financial merits and beneficiaries in London.

£98,700 over three years (3 x £32,900), towards 70% of the inclusive salary costs of a full-time Employment Manager (£27,900) and 11% of the inclusive salary costs of a full-time Life Coach Manager (£5,000).

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
07/05/2009	£75,000 (3 x £25,000) to support BVI school leavers into work)

Background and detail of proposal

In 2012/13, 39% of all BVI graduates in the UK were in full-time jobs six months after graduating, compared to 59% of their sighted peers (Higher Education Statistics Agency). Technological advances enable BVI people to do almost any job, but they need support and confidence to compete for vacancies. BiB supports graduates through all aspects of securing a job, while 20 alumni in banking, law, and other professions enhance this work by volunteering as inspirational role models. BiB also advises employers on the skills needed to support BVI employees to succeed in their jobs. The charity has extensive contacts in the City (including with employers such as Bank of England, PWC, Allen and Overy, and others) who engage in events to skill up BVI job hunters to present their skills, potential, and capabilities to prospective employers.

BiB is funded by way of general appeals to charitable donors, which result in large numbers of small donations (In 2014/15, 80% of 48 funders, including 13 livery companies, provided grants under £3K). This application reflects this approach, and seeks a contribution towards general costs rather than funds for a specific project. Due to lack of experience of the requirements of the larger funders and foundations, BiB cannot show the standards of most other applications received. Officers have helped BiB to meet some of the Trust's key requirements, but it must be noted that financial and other information received has been inconsistent. If funding is agreed, officers will refer BiB to the Cranfield Trust, which you fund specifically to help grantees on development, evaluation, financial planning, and good practice.

BVI people face barriers to employment so it is notable that nearly 40% of BiB's users secure jobs every year. Given that many charitable donors specifically fund equipment for disabled people, the grant advised is for revenue towards wages, which is harder to raise from charitable sources. The advised grant level takes into account BiB's large free reserves holding (above its policy level), and the fact that, although most beneficiaries live in London, not all of them do. Some BiB events are held in Birmingham and the service is promoted in 30 universities across the UK.

Financial Comments

Forecast income in the current year is £256,150 of which £79,850 (31.2%) had been confirmed as at 10 September 2015. The charity relies heavily on small donations and has made applications to donors amounting to £92,300 in 2015/16, which is included in the budget below. However, not all applications are usually successful and the charity advises that it is realistic to expect 50% to be successful. If that success rate materialises then the surplus of £45,679 shown in the table below will reduce to a break-even position.

A break-even position at year-end would leave free reserves amounting to £185k at that time, which equates to 10.5 months' worth of total expenditure compared to the charity's reserves policy to hold 9 months' worth.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Independently Examined Accounts £	2015/16 Current Year Forecast £
Income and Expenditure		
Income	208,564	256,150
Expenditure	213,830	210,471
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	6,645	45,679
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(11,911)	-
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(5,266)	45,679
Operational Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover before funds transfer	(2.5%)	17.8%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	29,676 (14%)	30,000 (12%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	184,954	230,633
How many months' worth of expenditure	10.4	13.1
Reserves Policy target	160,372	157,851
How many months' worth of expenditure	9 months	9 months
Free reserves over/(under) target	24,582	72,782