

## AGENDA



Thursday, October 16, 2008

**Office of Emergency Management  
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION****Item No. 15**

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**Subject:** Approve an ordinance authorizing the acceptance of \$80,000 in grant funds from the U. S. Department of Homeland Security; and amending the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Management Services Department Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund of Ordinance No. 20080908-002 to appropriate \$80,000 to build National Emergency Technology (NET) Guard teams of volunteers with information technology and communications expertise to assist our region in responding to and recovering from major incidents that cause significant damage or destruction to information technology and communication resources.

**Amount and Source of Funding:** Funding in the amount of \$80,000 is available from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Fiscal Note:** A fiscal note is attached.

**For More Information:** Harris Newman, Disaster Recovery Coordinator, CTM Network Security, 974-2456.

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The National Emergency Technology (NET) Guard program is a pilot program run by the Citizen Corps Program. Its purpose is to build NET Guard teams of volunteers with information technology (IT) and communications expertise to assist states and localities in responding to and recovering from incidents that cause significant damage or destruction to IT and communications infrastructure.

The teams will be managed at the local level, and deployed in response to a request from local or state authorities. The City of Austin has been chosen as one of the four urban areas to receive this grant and be part of this pilot program.

The City of Austin Technology Response Team (TRT) has partnered with communications and technology companies to create a volunteer organization that can quickly respond to a disaster affecting the City's Communications and Technology Management (CTM) Department, or other targets within the City's jurisdiction. This grant will allow the City of Austin to have a program under the Community Emergency Response Team to be part of the response to disasters affecting targets within the entire Austin urban area.

Currently, the program supports internal recovery of the City's CTM functions, as well as to support six fixed volunteer resource center sites that activate in the event of a disaster. This grant will be used to increase the number of TRT volunteers from 38 to 100 NET Guard volunteers. The existing TRT program will become Austin NET Guard and will benefit through partnership with the existing Central Texas Citizen Corps Program.

The CTM department has already recruited and credentialed thirty-eight volunteers from the local technology sector. Through partnerships with the City of Austin, Central Texas Citizen Corps Council, the American Red Cross of Central Texas, Dell Computers, Cisco, Sprint, Time Warner and many others, the region can create a strong volunteer force with abilities to prepare and respond to disasters. CTM also plans to utilize the team to do public outreach about mitigating damage to technology in disasters.

The Austin NET Guard team will recruit new volunteers through a resume-based application with criminal background checks. Volunteers will be trained through various classes.

This grant will be used to create a Mobile Volunteer Resource Center Site that can be used for response outside the City's jurisdiction. The program will also be improved by using disaster planning software to track volunteers as well as develop disaster plans for recovery planning. The program and its projects have the full support of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Communications and Technology Management Department for the City of Austin, including staff support for guidance of the program.

This grant will also be used for equipment purchases to allow the NET Guard team to be mobile and respond to sites across a three county region. This equipment will also allow CTM to respond quickly to disasters by having on hand equipment dedicated for disasters both internal and external to the City.

All department grant application requests are reviewed by the Budget Office prior to the submission to ensure that the grant minimizes the financial impact to the City.