



MEMORANDUM

TO: Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission

FROM: 2014 GTOPs Grant Review Working Group
Via: John Speirs, Program Coordinator, Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs

DATE: October 9, 2013

SUBJECT: 2014 GTOPs Review Working Group Commission Actions

The purpose of this report is to summarize the Commission adoption and direction of the 2014 Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) Working Group Recommendations.

Recommendations

1) GTOPs Performance Measures

The Commission approved the staff recommendation to further consult with members of the Grant Review Working Group and return with a report on October 9, 2013, recommending a potential City of Austin Budget Measure using the current Program Level measures as a Baseline.

2) Ethnic Diversity of Grant Review Committee

The Commission approved the inclusion of the Ethnic Diversity Policy Statement in the Grant Review Committee Application as recommended.

3) Absence of a protest process

The Commission approved the GTOPs Protest Process with further direction to staff to remove *the TARA officer or designee will have final authority to respond to any protest received*. Replace with: *A protest that has been verified by TARA staff will be provided to the Commission*

4) Reaffirmation of last year's structure for the Commission and Staff Roles

The Commission approved the GTOPs Structure for the Commission and Staff Roles as recommended.

5) Discussion on outreach opportunities to increase the visibility of programs offered by Austin Free-Net and channelAustin

The Commission approved the support of programs offered by Austin Free-Net and channelAustin with further direction to staff to remove the *pricing structure & service level detail* in the approval of support.

6) Review of current funding level of organizations

The Commission approved the GTOPs 2014 Funding Level of organizations as recommended.

7) 2014 GTOPs Grant Cycle Timeline

The Commission approved the GTOPs 2014 Timeline as recommended.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission

FROM: 2014 GTOPs Grant Review Working Group
Via: John Speirs, Program Coordinator
Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs

DATE: September 11, 2013

SUBJECT: 2014 GTOPs Review Working Group Recommendations

The purpose of this report is for the Commission to review and approve the recommendations of the 2014 Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) Task Force chaired by Melvin White, with members Taylor Overstreet and Elizabeth Quintanilla in attendance.

Introduction

The GTOPs program provides matching funds to Austin organizations and citizens' groups for projects focusing on use of information technology and connecting our citizens with computers and the Internet.

The task force recommends the Commission discuss the vision, mission and goals at the conclusion of this report, and recommend any changes as necessary.

Vision: A community where all citizens have access to the facilities and the necessary skills to participate in an emerging digital society.

Mission: To provide matching grant funds to Austin organizations for projects that create digital opportunities and foster digital inclusion.

Goals:

- Support programs that provide public access to computers and information technology, especially among underserved segments of our community.
- Support programs that provide information technology literacy, education, and training.
- Support programs that use information and communication technologies in innovative ways that serve the community.
- Provide seed funding for Austin community and non-profit organizations for their technological outreach efforts.

Recommendations

1) GTOPs Performance Measures

Discussion on GTOPs Performance Measures

Description Information

Description: Overall average achievement rate of GTOPs grantees to meet all of their program benchmarks.

Data Source: GTOPs progress tracking reports

Calculation: Mathematical average of GTOPs grantees' program benchmark achievement rates.

Rationale: Provides measure of utilization of GTOPs funding.

Program Level

In addition to the three outcomes developed at organization's discretion, the following outcomes are utilized to measure impact and value to the community; this is in the spirit to roll our outcomes to Austin priority digital inclusion indicators:

Increasing basic digital skills, including how to use the Internet productively and safely.

Increasing educational opportunities and career preparation for all ages.

Increasing people's social connections and expanding their personal networks.

Example

Denominator: Adult learners who complete one learning plan using the Learner Web software.

Rate: Percent of Adult learners who increase basic digital literacy skills, including how to use the internet productively and safely using the Learner Web Software.

Recommendation Options and Alternatives:

(1) Staff recommends the Commission provide direction to staff for further consideration with members of the Grant Review Working Group and return with a report on October 9, 2013, recommending a potential City of Austin Budget Measure using the current Program Level measures as a Baseline.

(2) The Commission can reject and amend the plan and provide additional direction to staff.

2) Ethnic Diversity of Grant Review Committee

The City of Austin wants to ensure that the 2014 GTOPS grant review process is fair and inclusive of the city's unique population. The selection process of Committee members will reflect the City of Austin's conscious commitment to diversity and inclusiveness. Therefore, the composition of the 2014 Grant Review Committee will embody Austin's eclectic spirit and broad diversity.

This policy statement will be included with the other qualifications for technology and non-profit background on the Grant Review Committee Application.

Recommendation Options and Alternatives:

(1) Staff recommends the Commission approve the inclusion of the Ethnic Diversity Policy Statement in the Grant Review Committee Application as recommended.

(2) The Commission can reject and amend the plan and provide additional direction to staff.

3) Absence of a protest process

The City of Austin wants to ensure that the 2014 GTOPS grant review process is fair and provides an opportunity for individuals to protest the results of the Grant Review Process, as with any other solicitation process that occurs within the City of Austin, a municipal corporation.

Per the approved protest procedures, the notice of intent to protest must be received within four calendar days of the Grant Review Committee's decision, and a formal protest within fourteen calendar days of time when proper notice should have been given about the facts relating to the protest. Protests received after the deadline are not reviewed. The Office of Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs (TARA) will receive and review the protest for the GTOPS process. The TARA officer or designee will have final authority to respond to any protest received.

Recommendation Options and Alternatives:

- (1) Staff recommends the Commission approve the GTOPS Protest Process to be included in the GTOPS Orientation materials as recommended.
- (2) The Commission can reject and amend the plan and provide additional direction to staff.

4) Reaffirmation of last year's structure for the Commission and Staff Roles

Commission and Staff Roles

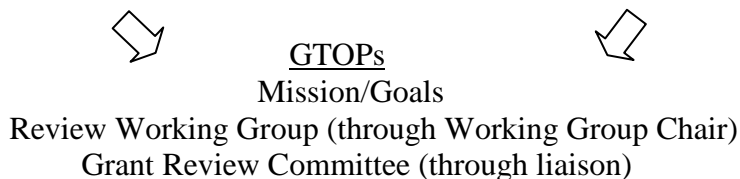
The 2013 Grants Review Working Group worked with Staff to formally set into written policy the roles and responsibilities of the Commission and City staff;

Staff

Grant Monitoring
Program Administration

Commission

Funding Recommendations
Application Review Criteria
Approving Grant Review Committee



Recommendation Options and Alternatives:

- (1) Staff recommends the Commission approve the GTOPS Roles and Responsibilities Flowchart as recommended.
- (2) The Commission can reject and amend the plan and provide additional direction to staff.

5) Discussion on outreach opportunities to increase the visibility of programs offered by Austin Free-Net and channelAustin

Staff is working to facilitate greater outreach and visibility opportunities for Austin Free-Net and channelAustin through the services under contract with the City of Austin offered to Austin area nonprofits.

Austin Free-Net (Fixed Net Service)

Technical Support:

- Develop partnerships and revenue generating programs.
- Define the process, procedures and pay scale for technical support services.
- Respond to service calls in the following priorities based on time the call is received by digital pager to technician to provide quality services:
 1. Existing City and community public access labs – 30 minutes response 95% of the time. Four (4) working hours on site response, if required, 95% of the time.
 2. City Social Services partners, GTOP grantees, service contract holders and special arrangements, such as discounted group rates for membership organization who have an annual contract with AFN – 30 working minutes response 95% of the time. Eight (8) working hour on site response, if required, 95% of the time.
 3. Any service call to a non-profit not covered by above – 60 working minutes response 95% of the time, on site response, if required, 95% of the time.

Recommendation Options and Alternatives:

- (1) Staff recommends the Commission approve the GTOPs Roles and Responsibilities Flowchart as recommended.
- (2) The Commission can reject and amend the plan and provide additional direction to staff.

6) Review of current funding level of organizations

Recommendation to keep range of funding per organization (\$10,000 to \$25,000). The task force recognizes the importance of GTOPs funding within our community, ensuring consistent with the realistic funding requests being received for GTOPs. In keeping with the realities of funding requests received for the program, staff proposes keeping the award amount to (\$10,000 to \$25,000). The Grant Review Committee felt the amount of \$10,000 supported seed projects that may have not been otherwise funded, including the Easter Seals - Digital Literacy for People with Disabilities Program.

Recommendation Options and Alternatives:

- (1) Staff recommends the Commission approve the GTOPs 2014 Funding Level as recommended.
- (2) The Commission can reject and amend the plan and provide additional direction to staff.

7) 2014 GTOPs Grant Cycle Timeline

October 1, 2013—Pending Commission approval and subsequent Budget Adoption; GTOPS Applications & Grant Review Committee Applications Released

October 2013 – Orientations scheduled throughout the month

November 29, 2013 – Grant Review Committee Applications Due (Applications sent to Commission December 6, 2013)

December 10, 2013 – GTOPs Applications Due

December 11, 2013 – Commission Meeting- Review Committee Selected

December 17, 2013 – *Tentative* Review Committee Orientation

January 12, 2014 – Written Questions Due (Reviewers)

January 20, 2014 – Written Responses Due (Applicants)

February 2, 2014 – First Round of Scores Due

February 14, 2014 – Tentative Oral Presentations

February 2014 – Final Deliberations

March 12, 2014 – Commission Meeting – Awards Recommendations Presented

Recommendation Options and Alternatives:

- (1) Staff recommends the Commission approve the GTOPs 2014 Timeline as recommended.
- (2) The Commission can reject and amend the plan and provide additional direction to staff.