



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission

**FROM:** John Speirs, Program Coordinator  
Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs

**DATE:** March 9, 2016

**SUBJECT:** 2016 Grant for Technology Opportunities (GTOPs) Awardees

The purpose of this memorandum is to request the Commission approve the GTOPs Grant Review Committee's recommended nine (9) 2016 GTOPs Awards, as recommended by the Grant Review Committee at its February 17, 2016 Final Deliberation.

### GRANT PROGRAM PURPOSE

[GTOPs](#) provides matching grant funds to Austin organizations for projects that create digital opportunities and foster digital inclusion

The goals of the program are to:

- Provide public access to computers and information technology, especially among underserved segments of our community.
- Provide information technology literacy, education, and training.
- Use information and communication technologies in innovative ways to serve the Austin community.
- Address the [2014 Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan](#) Goals.

### AWARDEE SELECTION PROCESS

Applications for the 2016 grant were accepted through December 8, 2015. The Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission appointed a Grant Review Committee comprised of six qualified community representatives. The City received a total of thirty-one (31) applications. The Committee eliminated eleven (11) applicants who were clearly not a fit with the program. The review board scored the remaining twenty (20) applicants based on the selection criteria outlined by the Commission including: the ability of the project to reduce disparities and increase technology access and/or literacy, program feasibility, community involvement, community benefit, and a clear plan for success. The applicants were given the opportunity to give a short oral presentation to the review board, followed by a question and answer session. After the final scores were tallied and discussed, the Committee voted on their final recommendations for full and partial awards.

## **FUNDING & SCORING GUIDELINES**

- 1) \$200,000 in GTOPs funds available
- 2) The minimum amount any organization any organization may be awarded is 70% of their request amount.
- 3) To ensure scores are consistent as well as fair, each judge's scores are normalized so that their average score across all applicants is 80%.
- 4) The highest scores generally receive the highest awards recommendation for each Priority Program, 100% of their request (minimum of \$10,000 and up to \$25,000).
- 5) Lower scoring but still above average applicants receive a partial awards recommendation as appropriate.

## **SCORING GUIDANCE**

- Reviewers were provided the opportunity to complete scores after hearing all presentations to serve for a comprehensive evaluation of scoring and assessment.
- Reviewers utilized a comprehensive scoring evaluation, building upon a statistical evaluation, to recommend organizations funded and not funded.
- Reflects Diversity of funding awards adhering to Commission recommended policy including Arts, Social, Education and Public Access.
- The Grant Review Committee's 2016 Recommendations were unanimous with strong consensus.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff requests the Commission approve the GTOPs Grant Review Committee's recommended 2016 GTOPs Awards. Upon your ratification and approval, the recommended GTOPs 2016 Awards will be submitted to the City Manager's Designee, Mark Washington, Assistant City Manager for approval to negotiate and execute contracts.

Attachment: Exhibit (A)

2016 GTOPS Recommended Awardees					
Organization, Program Name, Budget (Funding Award + Match) = Total 2016 Community Investment	Imagine Austin Priority	Top Tier Priority Program Area Served	Second Tier Priority Program Area Served	TOTAL Community Investment (Matching + Grant Amounts Requested)	Ratio of GTOPS to Program Cost
1) Boys Souts of America Capitol Area Council GTOPS Award 100% of Request: \$25,000	Creative Economy	Education & Workforce	Arts, Culture and Community	\$ 280,460	9%
<p>The Austin STEAM Scout Camp, a collaboration with the Capitol Area Council, BSA, the Girl Scouts of Central Texas and Anderson High School, is asking for funding to cover the cost of food, transportation and a portion of scholarships for up to 187 low income and underserved youth. Funding will primarily go to low income youth coming to the camp as part of our new year round STEM Scouts program.</p> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p>The camp will provide scholarships for low income youth during all 5 weeks of camp covering \$250 of the \$325 total cost.</p> <p>The camp will make scholarships available for at least 30% of the participants of the camp or 37.5 youth weekly.</p> <p>The camp will provide education in STEAM topics to 100% of the participants.</p>					
2) Austin Free-Net GTOPS Award of 98% of Request: \$24,500	Economic Development	Education & Workforce	Public Access & Civil Engagement	\$ 49,500	50%
<p>The Getting It Done program will provide critically needed adult basic education (ABE) support and digital literacy training for the homeless and transient population at Front Step's Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH).</p> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p>This program will employ an iterative review and evaluation process through monthly meetings between Front Steps and Austin Free-Net.</p> <p>Client progress within the digital literacy track will be evaluated through an ongoing assessment process, which will be tracked with AFN's client management system.</p> <p>New clients will take part in an oral assessment that identifies skill level, needs, and any real or perceived barriers to their technology success. This intake process will facilitate the development of a personal curriculum plan.</p>					
3) HACA Scholarship Foundation, Inc. GTOPS Award 96% of Request: \$24,000	Economic Development	Education & Workforce	Social, Health & Well-Being	\$ 50,300	49%
<p>The Lab Apprenticeship Program employs a train-the-trainer model that provides 17 public housing residents with training in computer lab management and facilitation. Program participants apply these skills by assisting public housing residents utilizing community-based computer labs located on HACA properties.</p> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p>417 unduplicated residents of public housing receive training and/or assistance through the program</p> <p>17 apprentices successfully completing the 24 hour initial training</p> <p>70% of apprentices increase their professional technology skills</p>					
4) The Arc of the Capital Area GTOPS Award 94% of Request: \$23,500	Economic Development	Education & Workforce	Arts, Culture and Community	\$ 61,100	40%
<p>The Digital Media Arts Education Lab at The Arc of the Capital Area provides student-centered technology training in both an intensive lab setting and as part of a professional artist program to enable people with I/DD to master digital and pre-employment skills that will increase their employability.</p> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p>Identify community partners for professional development partnerships (student projects), begin cultivation.</p> <p>Build awareness of the program in the community through participation in digital inclusion workgroup, program staff at The Arc, partnerships with other organizations, social media with the goal of bringing in additional lab users.</p> <p>Identify apprenticeship/mentorship opportunities for advanced students using connections in the digital inclusion workgroup, The Arc's board members, University of Texas Cowboys, Easter Seals.</p>					
5) Easter Seals - Central Texas, Inc GTOPS Award 92% of Request: \$23,000	Invest in a Compact and Connected Austin	Public Access and Civic Engagement	Education & Workforce	\$ 52,902	46%
<p>Easter Seals Central Texas (ESCT) in partnership with Austin Free-Net, will provide computers, internet access and computer training, for economically disadvantaged and low-income people with disabilities. These items will be provided as part of the self-sufficiency package required for each household enrolled in ESCT's Tenant Based Rental Assistance program.</p> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p>This program will employ an iterative review and evaluation process through monthly meetings between ESCT and Austin Free-Net.</p> <p>Clients will undergo pre/ post assessments of computer literacy to measure students' digital aptitude.</p> <p>The program trainer will record and track the assessments and learning outcomes for each client, using a student management system.</p>					



6)	<b>Texas Folklife Resources</b> <b>GTOPs Award 90% of Request: \$22,500</b>	Creative Economy	Arts, Culture & Community	Education & Workforce	\$	84,300	29%
<p>“Stories From Deep in the Heart” is a collaborative project of Texas Folklife with the Austin Independent School District and KUT 90.5FM Austin that provides in-depth communication technology and audio documentary training to students and teachers at AISD schools, with a focus on low-income communities. Participants create broadcast-quality documentaries on local or family traditions.</p>		Outcomes	<p>5-day institute for 15 teachers and 5 students will feature experienced radio producer and folklorist Rachel Hopkin as guest instructor. Participants will learn all aspects of producing an audio story.</p>	<p>Teson and Texas Folklife staff will hold 1 district-wide, 90-minute “Stories” in-service workshop for 10-15 AISD teachers.</p>	<p>Students will promote their stories on our PRX site (Public Radio Exchange), Texas Folklife website and “Stories” Tumblr blog, facebook and twitter pages. They will pitch their stories to local public radio stations (KUT and KOOP) and be available for interviews if their stories are selected for broadcast</p>		
7)	<b>Austin Children’s Museum</b> <b>GTOPs Award 88% of Request: \$ 22,000</b>	Creative Economy	Education & Workforce	Public Access and Civic Engagement	\$	90,836	27%
<p>EdExchange offers professional development for educators working with Austin’s low-income, culturally diverse youth. During the Spring Thinkery delivers experiences to strengthen 300+ students’ knowledge of technology and related skills by learning coding, digital fabrication, 3D printing, circuitry, robotics and more to advance their academic and professional futures.</p>		Outcomes	<p>Thinkery will deliver a 5-part professional development series to 20 educators to empower them to deliver creative applications of technology to their students.</p>	<p>Evidence of students using 21st century skills (collaboration, creative problem solving, critical thinking, and communication) using modern technology to solve challenges;</p>	<p>Thinkery will work with educators to develop and deliver programming activities to 300+ students.</p>		
8)	<b>Meals on Wheels and More, Inc *</b> <b>GTOPs Award 86% of Request: \$ 15,050</b>	Healthy Austin	Social, Health, and Well-Being	Public Access and Civic Engagement	\$	46,187	36%
<p>Meals on Wheels and More respectfully requests \$20,000 in funding from the GTOPS program to help fund our pilot program, Technology for Seniors, which helps connect homebound elderly adults connect with the internet. MOWAM provides tablets, internet sign up, and tech support for our eligible and interested clients.</p>		Outcomes	<p>Hire part time Project Manager for MOWAM Technology Project (8-10 hours per week)</p>	<p>Enlist volunteers to help initially with in-home training; answer questions from clients; visit clients a minimum of one time a week for 8 weeks.</p>	<p>Purchase of additional tablets for senior pilot technology program</p>		
*Denotes first time GTOPS recipient.							
9)	<b>Knowbility, Inc.</b> <b>GTOPs Award 81.80 % of Request: \$20,450</b>	Economic Development	Education & Workforce	Social, Health, & Well-Being	\$	45,450	50%
<p>ATSTAR is an online professional development training course for educators. Its purpose is to improve educational and social outcomes for students with disabilities. ATSTAR is a student-centered professional development model, created to improve educational, social, and vocational outcomes for students with disabilities. ATSTAR teaches multi-disciplinary school-based teams to make evidence-based decisions about AT solutions for their students.</p>		Outcomes	<p>Gather baseline data on AT expertise in Austin Independent School District</p>	<p>Introduce the ATSTAR online curriculum and support system to school districts to help school based teams learn to meet the technology access needs of K-12 students with disabilities. This includes distributing the ATSTAR program throughout school districts for no-charge or at a greatly reduced price.</p>	<p>Support the online learning with facilitated train-the-trainer sessions and an active online community of practice.</p>		
Total 2016 Community Investment: \$						761,035	