

AGENDA



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	72947	Agenda Number	46.
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Meeting Date:	8/17/2017	Department:	Telecommunications and Reg Affairs
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Subject

Authorize negotiation and execution of an interlocal agreement with The University of Texas at Austin to develop a survey, conduct analysis, and develop a final report for the Residential Technology Study for a total amount not to exceed \$50,000.

Amount and Source of Funding

Fiscal Note

Funding is available in the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Budget of the Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs Department budget.

Purchasing Language:

Prior Council Action:

For More Information: Rondella M. Hawkins, TARA Officer, 512-974-2422

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

MBE / WBE:

Related Items:

Additional Backup Information

The Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs Office (TARA) manages the implementation of the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan (the Plan), adopted by the Austin City Council in 2014. The Plan is supported by the outcomes of a periodic residential technology survey (the survey) that evaluates and assesses residents' access to technology resources and literacy and training programs. This will allow the City of Austin to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the University of Texas at Austin – Department of Radio, Television and Film to develop the survey to be sent to households identified by examining neighborhood demographics, including data gathered during the previously conducted surveys which commenced in 2011 and 2014.

The Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission approved recommendations (20130508-010 and 20130612-008) that the City of Austin periodically engage in a residential technology survey to develop a profile of the information and communication technology means, skills, and needs in the community, and that it should be revised and administered. Approval of this item at three year intervals with recommended funding of \$50,000 for the survey.

Commencing in FY15, the City's Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs facilitated sessions with the City's Digital Empowerment Community of Austin (DECA) comprised of community-based providers, non-profits, educational institutions, and other service providers to develop a work plan to align services to resident and client technology needs and assist with implementation of the City's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan (Res No. 20141120-074). The survey is needed to support community digital inclusion programs and services in the most needed Austin neighborhoods in partnership with city agencies, non-profits, and the private sector. The survey instrument will select a random sample of approximately 5,000 households, with an additional oversample of certain neighborhoods, and asks respondents about their Internet access, adoption, and usage habits. The survey also will assess digital literacy and attitudes towards the Internet to create a comprehensive and granular picture of connectivity in Austin at the neighborhood level.

The sample of residents will be sent a postcard announcing that they have been selected to participate in the survey; a few days later, they will receive the survey with a postage-paid return envelope. A follow up reminder postcard will be sent a week later to participants who have not responded. Each survey recipient will receive a URL to complete the survey online instead of the paper-and-pencil version. Respondents should be able to complete the survey in less than twenty minutes.

In addition to the random sample survey, an in-depth qualitative analysis of the highest need population will be conducted via face-to-face interviews or focus groups. Survey design experts recommend face-to-face interviews as the preferred way to reach the least connected populations.

Under the agreement, the University of Texas at Austin – Department of Radio, Television and Film will provide the following scope of services, but not limited to, conduct and administer survey, conduct data analysis: participate in community workshops and forums; run scenarios and reports; assist at project team and public workshops; meeting attendance; prepare visualization of mapping tools; and presentation and preparation of final report. In addition, the University of Texas at Austin will utilize a Research Assistant funded by a University mentoring grant awarded to their team.

The agreement will be in effect for 9 months from last signature date unless otherwise amended.

This project is managed by the Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs.