TARA Office Briefing

John Speirs, Program Manager
Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs Office

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Increasing Broadband Access

ATX Digital Access Forum

- Stories from Austin community members about their experiences with digital access such as home internet and computer devices.

- https://www.speakupaustin.org/digital-access-tara

ConnectionTest ATX

- This platform on Speed Up America's platform surveys respondents via wireless and wireline connections to test their speed, both upload and download, and advertised speed they are paying for internet service.

- Pitch for technical buildout to OpenAustin scheduled for mid-February

2021 Residential Technology Study Update

A. Update our understanding of technology access (connections, devices, digital skills) citywide in 2021.

1. How residents access and use the internet
2. Challenges and barriers residents face (particularly during COVID-19)
3. How internet access and use varies by demographics

>> Mostly <u>quantitative</u>

Qualitative is useful for #2. Need to leverage insights from past/ongoing qualitative efforts (e.g., Mission Capital/United Way focus groups).

B. Understand challenges and barriers facing the least digitally included, and what resources or programs might help.

1. Evaluate awareness and access to services
2. Connect communities to existing resources, if appropriate
3. Identify challenges and needs that are not served by existing resources or services

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Surveys and data on existing services can tell us about current usage, but not about non-usership and needs beyond existing services.

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Methods to consider for stipend to GTOPs Reviewers

Research goals:

Evaluate the City's precedent for payment.
Understand what is reasonable to consider .
Identify challenges and needs that are not served by existing structure.

Potential methods, based on the goals:

	Gift Cards	Stipends	Volunteer Position
Benefits	Low-effort to issue, existing policy in place	Offers one-time payment for time	Maintains volunteer aspect of program
Limitations	May not benefit all participants	Stronger financial requirements, may not be as timely for payment	Limits number of potential participants due to time required
Relative level of effort	Low-Med	Med-High	No Change
Resources needed	Budget Required | Formal Sign-off by Law/Purchasing | Commission Approval		