



MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission

THRU: John Speirs, Program Manager,
Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs

FROM: Jesse Rodriguez, Business Process Specialist,
Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs

DATE: April 14, 2021

SUBJECT: 2021 Grant for Technology Opportunities (GTOPs) Awardees

The purpose of this memorandum is to request the Commission approve 1) the GTOPs Grant Review Committee's recommended eleven (11) 2021 GTOPs Core Awards, as ratified by the Committee at the April 8, 2021 Final Deliberation.

GRANT PROGRAM PURPOSE

[GTOPs](#) provides matching grant funds to Austin organizations that promote resident access to information technology, or that offer literacy programs that create digital opportunities and foster digital inclusion, particularly in underserved segments of our community.

The goals of the program are to:

- Increase use of digital and communications technology devices
- Increase knowledge and skills of digital and communications technology
- Increase access to and usage of the Internet

AWARDEE SELECTION PROCESS

Letters of Interest for 2021 GTOPs Core were accepted from November 1, 2020 through January 8, 2021 and grant applications were accepted from January 18, 2021 through February 12, 2021. The Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission appointed a volunteer Grant Review Committee comprised of seven (7) qualified community representatives, all of whom remained on the committee for the duration of the process. The City received a total of twenty-nine (29) applications for GTOPs 2021 Core. The Committee scored these applications based on the selection criteria outlined by the Commission including: alignment with GTOPs, impact, success/feasibility, and budget and fiscal responsibility. The applicants proceeding to Round 2 scoring were given the opportunity to respond to questions generated by the Committee. After the final scores were tallied and discussed, staff developed recommendations for full and partial awards based on the funding & ranking guidelines as detailed in the next section. The Committee then selected the most preferred option, represented by the recommendation in this memorandum.

FUNDING & RANKING GUIDELINES

- 1) Full and partial awards evaluated for each GTOPs goal area.
- 2) \$300,000 in GTOPs funds available.
- 3) The minimum amount awarded to any organization is 70% of the requested amount.
- 4) The highest scores receive the highest awards recommendation.
- 5) Lower scoring but still above average applicants receive a partial awards recommendation as appropriate.

CONSENSUS

The Grant Review Committee achieved a majority consensus and all reviewers assigned a similar score to proposals from the assessment criteria and program goals. The funding recommendation represents the primary preference of five (5) of seven (7) reviewers, but received final support from all seven (7) reviewers.

RECOMMENDATION FUNDING METHODOLOGY

Funding is available per the \$300,000 allocated by City Council in the FY 2021 budget. The methodology for selection of the grantees is as follows:

- Priority is given to funding as many organizations as possible, with eleven (11) organizations being the upper limit in this recommendation.
- Organizations receive less funding the lower the score is, as funding and limits allow.
- The first-place awardee receives 100% of the request, with each subsequent awardee receiving 5% less than the previous awardee. The awards are then reduced from the lowest scoring organization up in order to accommodate as many organizations as possible without reducing any organization below the funding floor of 70% the request.
- One organization not assigned 70% of the request was allocated the remainder of the funds, equaling an additional 2.14% of the request.

Of the organizations recommended for GTOPs 2021 Core funding, eight (8) programs have received GTOPs Core funding in the past and three (3) programs have never been funded by GTOPs Core.

The Committee recommends eleven (11) organizations receive funding through GTOPs Core as represented below:

Organization name	Final Score	Request	Percent Awarded	Award
Film Society of Austin Inc	110.57	\$35,000	100.00%	\$ 35,000.00
E4 Youth, Inc.	110.29	\$35,000	95.00%	\$ 33,250.00
El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission	108.93	\$35,000	87.14%	\$ 30,500.00
Community Tech Network	108.86	\$35,000	80.00%	\$ 28,000.00
American Youthworks	107.71	\$35,000	75.00%	\$ 26,250.00
Communication Service for the Deaf	100.00	\$35,000	70.00%	\$ 24,500.00
Texas Folklife Resources Inc.	98.29	\$35,000	70.00%	\$ 24,500.00
Austin Speech Labs	97.43	\$35,000	70.00%	\$ 24,500.00
Anthropos Arts	97.07	\$35,000	70.00%	\$ 24,500.00
Girl Scouts of Central Texas	96.86	\$35,000	70.00%	\$ 24,500.00
Austin Free-Net	96.67	\$35,000	70.00%	\$ 24,500.00

Staff requests the Commission approve the GTOPs Grant Review Committee's recommended 2021 GTOPs Core Awards. Upon Commission ratification and approval, the recommended GTOPs 2021 Awards will be submitted to the Program Manager of the Community Technology Division in the Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs for authorization to begin contract negotiations.

Please feel free to contact me at Jesse.Rodriguez@austintexas.gov if you need additional information.

cc: Rondella Hawkins, Officer, Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs