M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission

FROM: GTOPs 2017 Working Group via John Speirs, Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs

DATE: September 14, 2016

SUBJECT: Grant for Technology Opportunities (GTOPs) Program 2017 Recommendations

The purpose of this report is for the Commission to review and approve the timeline for the 2017 Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) (Exhibit A). Staff will present an overview of GTOPs 2017 Grant Cycle and Digital Inclusion Strategy at the October 12, 2016 Tech & Telecom Commission meeting.

From the proposed timeline, the Commission will appoint a volunteer Grant Review Committee comprised of six qualified community representatives at the November 9, 2016 meeting. Staff will provide the Commission application materials for review to vote on appointments by November 4, 2016.

The Commission will then adopt the recommendations of the Grant Review Committee for GTOPs 2017 funding awards at its March 9, 2017 meeting.

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.

2016 AWARDEE SELECTION PROCESS

Applications for the 2016 grant were accepted through December 8, 2015. The Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission appointed a volunteer 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 committee, 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.

2016 FUNDING & SCORING GUIDELINES

1) $200,000 in GTOPs funds available
2) The minimum amount 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.

2016 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.
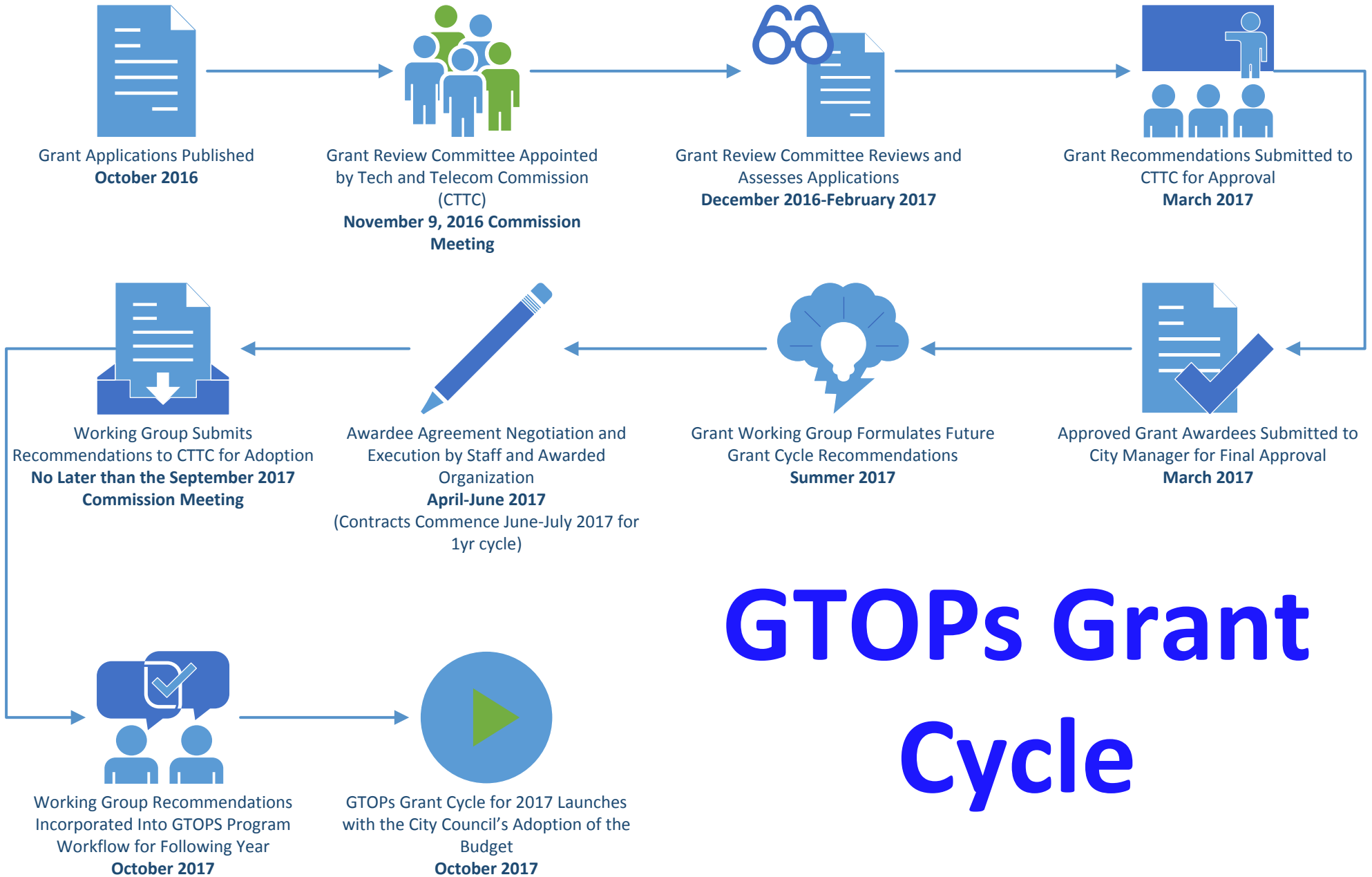
Exhibits

A) GTOPs 2017 Timeline and Grant Cycle

GTOPs 2017 Timeline

October 12, 2016   Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission
Regular Meeting: GTOPs 2017 Briefing

November 4, 2016   Grant Review Committee Applications Due

November 9, 2016   Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission
Regular Meeting: Grant Review Committee selected

December 6, 2016   GTOPs Applications Due

December 14, 2016   Grant Review Committee Orientation (Tentative date)
The Committee is required to attend an orientation meeting wherein they
will receive guidelines, instructions, evaluation forms and a packet of
grant applications.

January 8, 2017   Written Questions Due (from Reviewers)

January 16, 2017   Written Responses Due (from Applicants)

January 30, 2017   First Round of Scores Due

February 17, 2017   Oral Presentations (Tentative date depending on location)
The 15 highest scoring Grant applicants will be selected to give a five-
minute presentation followed by Q&A.

February 22, 2017   Final Deliberation (Tentative depending on location and need)
Once the ranking has been established, the reviewers will deliberate on
the final disbursement of grant monies. The highest-ranking proposals
within core program priories are generally given full grants with runners
up often receiving partial grants.
 * Final Scores to commission a few days before the Commission Mtg.

March 8, 2017   Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission
Regular Meeting
The final awards recommendations are presented to the Commission for
a vote at the regular March meeting. Once accepted, the award
recommendations will be forwarded to the City Manager for final approval.

GTOPS
GRANT FOR TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES

Grant Applications Published
October 2016

Grant Review Committee Appointed
by Tech and Telecom Commission
(CTTC)
**November 9, 2016 Commission
Meeting**

Grant Review Committee Reviews and
Assesses Applications
December 2016-February 2017

Grant Recommendations Submitted to
CTTC for Approval
March 2017

Working Group Submits
Recommendations to CTTC for Adoption
**No Later than the September 2017
Commission Meeting**

Awardee Agreement Negotiation and
Execution by Staff and Awarded
Organization
April-June 2017
(Contracts Commence June-July 2017 for
1yr cycle)

Grant Working Group Formulates Future
Grant Cycle Recommendations
Summer 2017

Approved Grant Awardees Submitted to
City Manager for Final Approval
March 2017

Working Group Recommendations
Incorporated Into GTOPS Program
Workflow for Following Year
October 2017

GTOPs Grant Cycle for 2017 Launches
with the City Council's Adoption of the
Budget
October 2017

GTOPs Grant Cycle