GTOPs Overview

About GTOPs

GTOPs provides matching grant funds to Austin organizations to increase access to technology, provide digital/technology training, and to increase access to the Internet, particularly in underserved segments of our community. GTOPs has one application cycle per year. Grant applications are reviewed and scored by a panel of qualified community representatives appointed by the Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission (CTTC), which has final approval over recipient selection.

Values

Vision: A community where all citizens have access to the Internet, devices, and knowledge needed to fully participate in digital society

Mission: To provide matching grant funds to Austin organizations for projects that create digital opportunities and promote digital equity in innovative ways

GTOPs values grassroots organizations who form community partnerships and work towards digital equity through creating innovative projects that use or reveal good or best practices. GTOPs is meant to provide seed funding to start new programs that can become self-sustaining.

Goals

- 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

GTOPs Award Pathways

Organizations applying for GTOPs may apply for any combination of GTOPs Core[1], GTOPs Capacity[2], and/or GTOPs Collaborative[3] for funding, as well as the Community PC Program for devices.

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[1] This document is primarily designed as a guide for GTOPs Core.

[2] For more information on GTOPs Capacity, please refer to the GTOPs Capacity Guide posted on the GTOPs website.

[3] GTOPs Collaborative is an independent grant opportunity that follows the same rules as GTOPs Core in every way except for that GTOPs Collaborative requires a robust collaboration between two or more Austin-based non-profit organizations and is a single award of $50,000.

GTOPs Core	GTOPs Capacity	GTOPs Collaborative	Community PC Program
• Traditional award pathway • Award Range: $10,000 - $25,000 • Total Funding Available: $300,000	• Mini Grant • Award Range: $150 - $2,500 • Total Funding Available: $50,000	• Funds a collaborative project • Award Range: $50,000 • Total Funding Available: $50,000	• Award Range: 10 - 30 Devices • Total Available: Dependent on inventory

GTOPs Focus Areas

GTOPs Goal Areas

When submitting a GTOPs application, organizations will have to select which GTOPs goal (listed on page 1 of this document) their project aligns with most. To ensure that GTOPs funds a diverse set of projects, at least one organization per GTOPs goal area will be funded.

Traditionally, GTOPs receives many applications under the "Increase knowledge and skills of digital and communications technology" goal, and few under the other two goal areas.

New and Small Non-Profits

Up to $100,000 in GTOPs funding is reserved for organizations making less than $1,000,000 per year. This requirement promotes equity for small and new non-profits by ensuring that funding does not only go to large, well-funded, established non-profits.

IT Middle-Skill Career Opportunities

Of the $300,000 in GTOPs Core funding, $50,000 is reserved for projects focusing on IT Middle-Skill Career Opportunities.

Organizations applying for funding under the IT Middle-Skill Career Opportunities[4] focus area must submit projects that provide opportunities for economically-disadvantaged Austinites to develop IT skills valued by the private sector and to obtain valuable IT certifications. To qualify for this funding, organizations will have to submit a supplemental application (detailed under the "Application" section) demonstrating their success at providing this service.

Creative Media Training and Development

Another $50,000 of GTOPs Core is reserved for projects focusing on Creative Media Training and Development.

Organizations applying for funding under the Creative Media Training and Development focus area must submit projects that serve economically-disadvantaged Austinites working at the intersection of the

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[4] This aligns with the Master Community Workforce Plan developed by Workforce Solutions: http://www.wfscapitalarea.com/MasterCommunityWorkforcePlan

creative media and technology sectors. This includes projects that provide access to and training in video game design, podcasting, radio/television/film, photography, and emergent virtual/augmented reality applications. This funding will not be made available to for-profit ventures. To qualify for this funding, organizations will have to submit a supplemental application (detailed under the "Application" section demonstrating their success at providing this service.

Eligibility

Following are the requirements to be eligible for GTOPs funding:

- Applicants must be incorporated, tax exempt organizations in Austin or its Extra Territorial Jurisdiction
  - Another organization may apply through a qualified 501(c)(3) organization who would serve as fiscal agent, be able to obtain standard insurance coverages, and comply with the standard terms and conditions of GTOPs
- Program must align with at least one of the GTOPs goals, as stated on page one of this document
- Applicant must have the ability to agree to the standard [GTOPs terms and conditions](#) with no exceptions
- An organization can submit a maximum of three letters of interest for GTOPs per grant cycle
- An organization may apply for no more than one program per grant cycle
- An organization can only receive GTOPs funding three times in a rolling five-year period
  - This requirement does not apply to GTOPs Collaborative
- Applicant must be able to provide or secure matching funds (in-kind, cash, and/or volunteer hours) equal to or greater than the requested funding amount

Evaluation and Scoring Criteria

GTOPs Goal Areas

In round 1 of scoring, the highest scoring application for each GTOPs goal area will proceed to round 2.

In round 2, the highest scoring application for each GTOPs goal area will be recommended for funding.

The 3 GTOPs goal areas can be found on page 1 of this document.

Organizational Income and Equity

Round 1: Review and Assessment

- The top two scoring organizations with reported annual revenues[5] between $0-$499,999 move on to round 2 scoring;
- The top two scoring organizations with reported annual revenues between $500,000-$999,999 move on to round 2 scoring;
- Of the remaining organizations, the highest scoring organizations move on to round 2 dependent on available slots.

Round 2: Review and Assessment

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[5] All reported annual revenues in this section are reported and analyzed as of the most recent fiscal years' end.

- The top two scoring organizations with reported annual revenues between $0-$499,999 are recommended for funding;
- The top two scoring organizations with reported annual revenues between $500,000-$999,999 are recommended for funding;
- The remaining funds will be distributed to the remaining organizations based on score and available funds.

Supplemental Focus Areas

- Round 1: The top two scoring organizations applying for funding under each of the supplemental focus areas move on to round 2 scoring;
- Round 2: The top two scoring organizations applying for funding under each of the supplemental focus areas are recommended for full funding;

In both rounds, applicants not scoring in the top two for the focus area will still be considered for GTOPs Core funding, dependent on score.

Scoring Criteria

The scoring criteria has been carefully chosen and weighted by the CTTC in accordance with the GTOPs mission and goals. While all criteria are important, some are more essential to meeting the Commission's expectations of a winning GTOPs proposal. Weighting the questions helps to ensure that only those best suited to GTOPs are scored highest.

I – GTOPs Goals - 15 total points

- This program plan has demonstrated alignment with the GTOPs Goals. (15 pts)

II - Community Impact - 30 total points

- The program plan and its objectives are well defined and serve a community need. (10 pts)
- This program plan demonstrates that if implemented it will have an ongoing/lasting, positive impact on the community. (10 pts)
- This program plan has demonstrated that it has collaborative partners within the community we are seeking to serve. (10 pts)

III - Evaluation of Success - 30 total points

- This program has a clear plan for success. Its goals and objectives are achievable, and its work plan is feasible. (10 pts)
- This program plan demonstrates its ability to evaluate its own success, and reviewers agree that its proposed measures for evaluation are viable and appropriate. (10 pts)
- The organization has provided documentation of demonstrated success as an organization. (10 pts)

IV - Budget and Fiscal Responsibility - 25 total points

- The organization that is executing the program plan is a fiscally responsible organization that will use City funds and matching criteria of the grant appropriately if awarded. (15 pts)
- This program plan has provided all required documentation, including its budget, which clearly shows its annual revenue and matching dollars (in-kind and/or cash). (10 pts)

Application Process

In the PartnerGrants system (https://partnergrants.austintexas.gov/home.do), there are five steps in the application process:

Round 1: Pre-Application – Letter of Interest

Round 2: Group Evaluation – Initial application review and assessment for Round 2 score

Round 3: Final Evaluation – Final committee application review and assessment for Round 3 score

Round 1: Pre-Application – Letter of Interest

The first step in applying for GTOPs funding is to submit a Letter of Interest to the Community Technology Services Division (CTS) via the PartnerGrants System during the submission window indicated in the annual GTOPs schedule. The Letter of Interest should include your:

- Organization's Legal Name
- City of Austin Vendor Code
- Executive Director's Full Name
- Executive Director's Email Address
- Executive Director's Primary Phone Number (Include Area Code)
- Brief description of your organization and its activities
- Description of the program for which you would like to apply for funding
- Select One:
  - GTOPs Core
  - GTOPs Collaborative
- Select One:
  - Continuing Program
  - New Program

If you do not have a vendor code, you can register for one via the Austin Finance Online Portal (https://www.austintexas.gov/financeonline/account_services/account/login.cfm).

If you are applying as a fiscal agent with a sub-grantee, please acknowledge within the letter of intent that both parties will accept the City's Standard Terms and Conditions for the agreement.

Round 2: Application
Application Forms and Documents

As of 2019, GTOPs is utilizing a new grant portal, PartnerGrants.

The GTOPs application consists of:

- GTOPs Application
  - Applicant Information
  - GTOPs Priority Area

- ○ Austin Strategic Direction 2023 Alignment
  - ○ Organizational Annual Revenues
  - ○ Clients Served (demographics)
  - ○ Brief 50 Word Description of the Program
  - ○ Funding Requested
- Program Work Statement (a form addressing the below prompts)

  - ○ What are the goals and objectives of the program?
  - ○ Who does the program serve? Describe your target client population and how the Client Eligibility Requirements will be documented for the target client population.
  - ○ Describe the program strategy/strategies. Include description of program strategy/strategies provided by Program subcontractors. Provide enough detail so that the application reviewer is able to have a comprehensive understanding of your services and how they are delivered to clients.
  - ○ Describe the system used for collecting and reporting program data.
  - ○ Describe how the agency will evaluate the program's performance in achieving program goals.
  - ○ Describe the process for identifying problems or other issues in service delivery, designing activities to overcome these problems, and following up to ensure corrective actions have been effective.
  - ○ How does the agency coordinate with other agencies to refer and receive clients, to provide comprehensive services, minimize duplication, cover gaps in services, etc.? If you are not currently coordinating with other agencies, what is your plan for increasing coordination?
  - ○ If the funded program is a collaborative, describe how the collaborative is structured and how clients will be receiving services from different members of the collaborative.
  - ○ Describe your agency's involvement in community planning activities that are specific to the services provided under this program.
- Program Workplan
  - ○ This document notes the milestones, timeline, and required staff per milestone, to give a picture of how the program will progress.
- Proposed Program Performance Measures
  - ○ These proposed metrics will demonstrate that program impacts are measurable and reportable.
- Program Performance Measure Definitions
  - ○ This document offers definitions of terms used in the performance measures, as well as background on data collection, frequency, data being collected, data sources, and data generation processes.
- Program Budget and Narrative
  - ○ This document is a summary of the GTOPs program expenses, including expenses funded through matching sources.
- Funding Summary
  - ○ This document is the summary of revenue sources for the proposed program, including all match funding sources and related amounts. Verify the revenue total equals the program budget amount.

- Organizational Balance Sheet (example template accessible on the [GTOPs Website](#))
  - This document represents the most recent fiscal year-end report and is an upload to the application
- Organizational Income Statement (example template accessible the [GTOPs Website](#))
  - This document represents the most recent fiscal year-end report and is an upload to the application
- Certification of receipt and review of the GTOPs Orientation document (checkbox)
  - Be sure to keep an electronic and hard copy for your reference and records.
- **If you are applying for funding under one of the Supplemental Focus Areas:**
  - IT Middle-Skill Career Opportunities Focus Area
    - How has your program demonstrated success in this area in the past (e.g. IT job placement, certification, retention, and satisfaction rates)?
    - How has your program demonstrated successful partnerships with the private sector (e.g. formalized referral pathways, identified internship sites, interview guarantees)?
  - Creative Media Training and Development
    - What type of creative media training are you proposing (e.g. video game design, film, podcasting, photography, emergent virtual/augmented reality applications)?
    - How will this program demonstrate knowledge and adoption of creative media skills, capabilities, and career goals (e.g. increased interest in employment in this field, increased confidence in utilizing technology in this area, and increased skill in generating content in this area)?

Applicants may provide additional documentation to support the application in the following categories:
- Proof of matching funds (all matches must have a proof document, such as a letter of commitment, logs of pledged volunteers, copies of checks, etc.)
- Audited financial statement report from the most recent fiscal year's end
- Any other attachments to support the application (DO NOT include printed brochures, fliers, photographs, or other promotional materials. Any such material will be discarded.)

Video guides on how to use PartnerGrants can be found at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjZ3szFEanXdlhcul3812uw .

Application Guidance

Program Funding Match

GTOPs requires match funding equal to or greater than the requested grant amount. Potential sources of match funding include the following: Cash, in-kind donations, and volunteer hours. Details of each are listed below:

Cash Match

Monies organizations have "in hand," such as donations received and other unrestricted funds. A fundraising plan is acceptable documentation of match for the application, but cash match may only be applied toward a grant contract when it is expended. No City of Austin funds of any sort may be counted as match.

In-Kind Donations

These include any services, materials, or facilities given to organizations at no cost, such as:

- Professional Services: Donated professional services or skilled labor may be valued at a "reasonable and customary rate," normally billed for the same. A resume, curriculum vitae, invoice, or other documentation is required to validate the rate applied.
- Materials: Donated materials or supplies such as computers, furniture, software, or paper.
- Facilities: Any ongoing business expense such as security, maid services, building maintenance, and landscaping will NOT be allowed.

Volunteers

The volunteer labor rate is set annually by Independent Sector and approved by the Government Accounting Standards Board. For GTOPs 2020, volunteer hours are valued at $25.43 per hour, an increase from the previous year's valuation of $24.64 per hour. Premium rates are not acceptable. For hours donated that merit a higher rate, they must be considered "Professional Services" and reported as an In-Kind donation.

Program Budget

Please follow the guidelines below when completing the Program Budget to submit in the GTOPs Application. Verify the total expense amount in the Program Budget equals the total revenue amount in the Summary of Revenue Sources. Confirm expense and revenue amounts are equal for each of the three categories: City Award, Matching, Total.

Personnel

Salaries and Benefits: Percentage of appropriate employee's salary and benefits. Example: Key full-time staff for the project include our Director of Programs; Program Coordinators who develop, lead, and support individualized case management services and our enriching out-of-school time programs; and our Volunteer and College Persistence Coordinator who recruits, trains, and supervises volunteers and academic coaches.

Operating Expenditures

General Operating Expenses - Example: Facility and related expenses, percentage of appropriate supplies, and professional staff training necessary to support activities. Supplies include program materials, curricula, and printing costs for programs and student recruitment.

Direct Assistance and/or Other (To Clients):

Food/Beverages for Clients - Example: Healthy snacks for students during After School Computer Lab Hours, as well as breakfast and lunch for students, volunteers, and mentors during Saturday programs.

Financial Assistance for Clients - Example: Capital Metro bus passes for students traveling to activities at the computer lab, such as After School Hours. A portion of this budget will also provide student support and scholarships.

Other - Example: Internet service provided to clients to support their training.

Capital Outlay

Example: Equipment valued over $5,000/unit. Three bids must be secured for capital outlay items.

> The organization is encouraged to provide year-end, audited financial reports from an independent certified public accountant which states a professional opinion about the organization's financial practices; specifically, whether the financial statements "fairly present the financial position of the organization" without any inaccuracies or material misrepresentations. Other eligible annual reports include a review report or compilation report provided by an independent CPA firm.

- If the organization does not have financial statements provided by an independent CPA, please provide the most recent fiscal year-end financial statements (including balance sheet and income statement). Additional information may also be requested.

Round 3: Question and Answer

Organizations moving on to Round 3 will have an opportunity to respond to questions generated by the grant review committee. This Q&A will be the final input for organizations to inform Round 3 scoring and assessment.

Review, Scoring, and Award Process

Round 1: Pre-Application – Letter of Interest

City staff will evaluate the submitted Letters of Interest for alignment with GTOPs and determine eligibility for next level review.

Round 2: Application Review and Scoring

After the applications are final and submitted, the Grant Review Committee scores each application (mid-December to early January). Applications will move to Round 3 scoring depending on the evaluation and scoring criteria listed above and available slots. Notification will be sent to all applicants in early January notifying them whether they were selected to proceed to Round 3 scoring.

Reviewer Questions and Applicant Responses

In early January, questions are generated by the reviewers and will be sent to the progressing applicants. Generally, applicants are given one to two weeks to respond to questions. Please refer to the annual GTOPs Schedule for specific dates. Responses generated from this process will inform Round 3 scoring.

Round 3: Final Committee Review and Scoring

About 21 organizations are expected to move on to Round 3 scoring. For Round 3, the Grant Review Panel will consider the remaining applications along with their corresponding questions and responses and deliberate as a panel.

Final Award Recommendation

The Grant Review Committee will score and rank the applications using the above-stated evaluation and scoring criteria and recommend awardees to the CTTC. Each applicant will receive a copy of their evaluation feedback form after the awards have been announced.

- The CTTC will vote on the recommendations and forward the results to the City Manager's authorized designee for final approval.

- Upon final approval by the City Manager, official notifications of award will be sent to the winning applicants via email within 5 working days.
- Awardees will be briefed at that time regarding specific conditions, if any, that need to be met before a contract is executed.

Full and partial awards will be evaluated for each GTOPs application with final determinations made by the Grant Review Committee and approved by the Commission.

The minimum amount any organization may be awarded is generally 70% of their requested funding amount. However, the Grant Review Committee reserves the right to award less than 70% of an organization's request when taking into consideration funding additional organizations, types of organizations funded, demographics served, innovative projects, community digital inclusion goals, and accessibility for everyone in Austin.

The Office of Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs (TARA) is the designated department to receive and review any dispute/protest for the GTOPS process (digital.inclusion@austintexas.gov).

Contract Negotiation

Upon official notification of awards, grantees will complete all necessary documentation to finalize a contract with the City, including but not limited to an executed contract, signed Form W9, completed vendor setup form, and proof of insurance that meets City requirements.

The contract term is generally a period of 12 months, July 1 to June 30.

Application Document Amendments

In most cases the official award will not match the requested funding. For this reason, grantees will have an opportunity to amend application documents such as the Program Budget and Narrative and the Program Performance Measures. If no changes are needed, application documents can be pushed through as contract documents in the PartnerGrants system.

Certificate of Insurance Liability Form

The Certificate of Liability Insurance Form is required to sign and execute the agreement for organizations receiving funding. Please see the Insurance Information Form Guide for more detail on insurance requirements.

- The Community Technology Services division coordinates with Risk Management to determine specific insurance requirements for each organization (variable dependent on scope of work).
- Page 1 of the Insurance Information Form Guide provides a list of the specific endorsements as well as the most common coverages requested by the City.

Signed Contract

Until ALL documentation requirements are met and all parties have signed the contract, the City has no responsibility to reimburse the organization for any expenses incurred. Any organization that has not submitted the required documentation within the stated time limit will be deemed ineligible to receive funding for the year in which they were awarded. The funding will be awarded to the next highest-scoring organization.

Contract Monitoring and Closeout

Contract Monitoring

Monthly Financial Reimbursement Requests

GTOPs is a reimbursement grant. Organizations shall submit request for reimbursement of expenditures by the 15th of month following the expenditures via the PartnerGrants system.

Payment will be remitted within 30 days of the receipt of a complete and accurate reimbursement request, including supporting documentation. Requests should be aligned with the contracted budget. Adjustments to the contracted budget must be as mutually agreed upon by the City and the grantee.

Quarterly Program Performance and Demographics Reports

Grantees will be required to submit performance reports and demographics reports by the 15th of the month following the close of each quarter in the PartnerGrants system. Reports are due:

- October 15
- January 15
- April 15
- July 15

If the above dates fall on a weekend or City observed holiday, the due date is the first business day after the above date.

Contract Closeout

The final closeout report will be due 60 days after the contract term ends, rounded to the end of the month. Listed below are the submissions included in the final report:

- Program Financial Summary
- Capital Inventory Certification
- Tax Status Certification
- Total Program Performance
- Program Summary
- Checklist Completed
- Three Pictures of the Program (high resolution)
- Total Program Demographics

Summary of Resources

- GTOPs Website:
  - GTOPs.org
- Standard GTOPs Terms and Conditions:
  - http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Telecommunications/DigitalInclusion/GTOPs_Base_AGREEMENT_Final_2019_Approved_Version.pdf
- Grant Portal (PartnerGrants):
  - https://partnergrants.austintexas.gov/home.do
- PartnerGrants Youtube Guides:
  - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjZ3szFEanXdlhcul3812uw
- Vendor Code Registration:
  - https://www.austintexas.gov/financeonline/account_services/account/login.cfm
- Insurance Information Form Guide:
  - http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Telecommunications/GTOPs_Risk_Management_Insurance_Summary.Guidance.pdf