



2016

Thank you for your interest in applying for the 2016 GTOPs Grant offered by the City of Austin. With the gracious support of the Austin City Council, we are pleased to have \$200,000 in funds available to select-ed organizations.

GTOPs provides matching grant funds to Austin organizations that promote citizen access to information technology, or that offer literacy programs that create digital opportunities and foster digital inclusion, particularly in underserved segments of our community. GTOPs has one application cycle per year and offers individual grants of \$10,000 to \$25,000. Grant applications are reviewed and scored by a panel of qualified community representatives appointed by the Austin Community Technology and Telecommuni-cations Commission, which has final approval over recipient selection. In FY 2015, GTOPs grants were awarded to nine organizations.

The Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission wishes to encourage small, grass-roots, innovative programs to apply for GTOPs funding. To facilitate this, we encourage small groups to partner with an established organization that can serve as fiscal agent and assist in the grant process. The Grant Review Committee will consider a quality partnership positively when evaluating "community sup-port" of a proposal.

Please review this and complete the mandatory online orientation prior to submitting your application as it contains important guidelines and information you need to know to apply for this grant.

Thank you for interest in the program,

Lemuel Williams, Chair
Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission

Sharla Chamberlain, Program Specialist
City of Austin, Office of Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs

John Speirs, Program Coordinator
City of Austin, Office of Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs

Rondella Hawkins, Officer
City of Austin, Office of Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs

With the goal of ensuring there are a diverse set of programs funded, the recommendation is to allocate funds (in the final round of scoring) with regard to GTOPs Priority Goals as follows: Social, Health and Well-being; Arts, Culture & Community; Education & Workforce and Public Access & Civic Engagement.

The GTOPs Scoring Criteria (Priority Categorical Objective Areas), organizations are to (self identify in the GTOPs) application and categorize themselves in 1 -4 of the priorities in their order of preference :

- Social, Health and Well-being (including Family & Social Services)
- Arts, Culture and Community (including creative, relevant content creation and production)
- Education and Workforce (including educational programming, professional development and skills training)
- Public Access & Civic Engagement (including innovative capacity building for neighborhood and community organizations serving a wide variety of clients with a diverse set of needs)

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).

- *Lower scoring but still above-average applicants receive a partial awards recommendation as appropriate. The minimum amount any organization may be awarded is 70% of their requested amount while the Grant Review Committee reserves discretion to award funding scoring less than 70%. In the final round of scoring, the Grant Review Committee will consider rankings below 70% within the four categories listed above can also take into consideration a broad array of types of organizations, specific demographics and with a focus on the underserved, strong creative ideas for innovation, promotion of digital inclusion, and accessibility to everyone throughout Austin.*
- *The Grant Review Committee will recognize the strongest point delineation between those organizations funded and not funded. The point delineation serves to aid in the final award recommendation.*

All organizations are to (self identify in the GTOPs application) and provide a connection to the Imagine Austin – Digital Inclusion Priority Programs:

- Invest in a Compact and Connected Austin;
- Economic Development;
- Creative Economy;
- Healthy Austin.

Eligibility: All organizations in the City of Austin or its extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) are eligible to apply for the grant. Non-profit status is required and all programs must be for the benefit of the community. GTOPs is not a fund for private benefit. Funds will not be awarded for entrepreneurial development, inventions, start-up capital for business, or any other private benefit. (note: please see section IV for information on requirements you will be expected to meet should you be awarded a grant.) Programs having been funded at any level for three consecutive years will not be eligible for GTOPs for the two years following their third consecutive year. Programs deemed to be in default of a previous GTOPs contract are ineligible to apply.

Funding:

Grant Amounts - The total amount of available funding for FY 2016 is \$200,000. These funds will be divided among four categories with grant amounts between \$10,000 and \$25,000 and will be paid to awardees on a reimbursement basis in accordance with the Grantee's contract and City procedures.

Matching Funds - GTOPs requires a 1:1 recipient match for the value of the requested funds by the end of the grant term. This match demonstrates the recipient organization's commitment to the program and outcome. In-kind as well as cash matches are acceptable. In-kind match may include any combination of volunteer labor, professional services, skilled labor, materials, supplies, equipment, or facilities. See "Matching Funds Details" for more information.

The Process

Application – Applicants must complete the online application form (accessible via gtops.org) and submit it along with attachments provided by the deadline listed in this application kit.

Presentation – All applicants (with the exception of those eliminated in a first round contingency) will be given the opportunity to give a five-minute oral presentation followed by a five-minute question and answer session with the Grant Review Committee. Presentation times will be scheduled 4-6 weeks after the application deadline (see timeline for proposed date.) Presenters are allowed to bring one letter-sized handout only for each of the reviewers and for staff (please provide 9 copies.) For information on multimedia presentations, please see the "Frequently Asked Questions" section. An "audience summary" will be forwarded to applicants attending the oral presentations as soon as it is available.

Notification - Applicants will be notified of award decisions within 5 working days of final approval by the City Manager's authorized designee. Awardees will be briefed at that time regarding specific conditions, if any that need to be met before a contract is executed.

Contracting - Upon official notification of awards, grantees will have sixty (60) days to complete all necessary documentation to complete a contract with the City, including but not limited to an executed contract, signed W9, completed vendor setup form, and proof of insurance that meets City requirements. A checklist of insurance requirements is attached and also available on-line at www.gtops.org under the online application section. 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 not submitting the required documentation within the time limit will be deemed ineligible to receive funding for the year in which they were awarded. The next highest-scoring organization will be selected to receive the funding instead. The replacement organization's sixty (60) day deadline will begin upon official notification of the award.

Payment Schedule - Payment of the grant is made on a reimbursement basis. Grantees must supply detailed invoices of expenses before funds are released, in accordance with City procedures.

Selection

Overview - Programs will be selected for GTOPs by a review and confirmation process.

1. The Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission ("Commission") will appoint a Grant Review Committee comprised of qualified community representatives. The committee will include two non-voting members, a member of the Commission to act as chair of the Grant Review Committee and the GTOPs Program Coordinator to provide technical assistance and support to the Committee.
2. The City of Austin Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs office will examine each application for eligibility and pass qualified applications to the Grant Review Committee.
3. In the event there are more than 20 applications a "first round" of eliminations will occur. The Grant Review Committee will grade the applications on the selection criteria (see Grant Review Criteria). The twenty highest applications will be invited to give an oral presentation.
4. The Grant Review Committee will make recommendations to the Commission based on the selection criteria (Grant Review Scoring Criteria).
5. The Commission will vote on the recommendations and forward the results to the City Manager's authorized designee for final approval.
6. Upon final approval by the City Manager, official notifications of award will be sent to the winning applicants via email.

Grant Review Scoring Criteria— The Grant Review Committee will complete a review and assessment using a numeric scoring criteria for each applicant within four categorical objectives and in order of organizational preference (1-4):

- **Social, Health & Well-being (including Family & Social Services)**
 - **Arts, Culture & Community (including creative, relevant content creation and production)**
 - **Education & Workforce (including educational programming, professional development and skills training)**
 - **Public Access & Civic Engagement (including innovative capacity building for neighborhood and community organizations serving a wide variety of clients with a diverse set of needs)**
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- Full and partial grants will be awarded by rank by Program with final determinations made by the Grant Review Committee and approved by the Commission. Each applicant will receive a copy of their judging form after the awards have been announced.
 - The highest scores generally receive the highest awards recommendation for each priority categorical objective area, 100% of their request (minimum of \$10,000 and up to \$25,000).
 - Lower scoring but still above-average applicants receive a partial awards recommendation as appropriate. The minimum amount any organization may be awarded is 70% of their requested amount. The minimum amount any organization may be awarded is 70% of their requested amount while the Grant Review Committee reserves discretion to award funding scoring less than 70%. In the final round of scoring, the Grant Review Committee will consider rankings below 70% within the four categories listed above can also take into consideration a broad array of types of organizations, specific demographics and with a focus on the underserved, strong creative ideas for innovation, promotion of digital inclusion, and accessibility to everyone throughout Austin.
 - The Grant Review Committee will recognize the strongest point delineation between those organizations funded and not funded. The point delineation serves to aid in the final award recommendation.

GTOPs Application Scoring Criteria

Goals of DI Strategic Plan:

- Understand and Increase Usage of Digital and Communications Technology
- Address Potential Barriers to Digital Inclusion
- Develop programs to address need for Digital Literacy Training
- Develop programs to address need for Access via Reliable & Affordable Devices
- Develop programs to address Need for Language & Disability Accommodations
- Develop Relevancy & Advocacy Campaigns Within Specific Communities & Populations

I.---- 2014 Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan Goals - 15 total

This program plan has demonstrated alignment with the 2014 Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan. (15 pts)

II.---- Community impact - 30 total

- 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 collaboration partners w/ in the community we are seeking to serve.(10 pts)

III.---- Evaluation of success - 25 total

- 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. (5 pts)
- The organization has provided documentation of demonstrated success as an organization (10 pts):
 - New to GTOPs: Success in similar programs or of proposed staff and volunteers executing program plan.
 - Former GTOPs grant recipients: Historical reviews of programs funded through GTOPs.

IV.---- Budget and fiscal responsibility - 30 total

- The organization that is executing on the program plan is a fiscally responsible organization that will use City funds and matching criteria of the grant appropriately if awarded this grant. (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)
- The program plan outlines a plan for sustainability of the program beyond the GTOPs grant. (5 pts)

Basic Scoring for Criteria with 15 pts for I.1:

1. Does not address any goals of DI Strat. Plan.
2. Addresses issues that surround the goals of the DI Strat Plan.
3. Continuation of program previously funded; does not address current goals of DI Strat Plan.
4. Touches on one goal of DI Strat. Plan.
5. Touches on multiple goals.
6. Touches on two or more goals
7. Directly addresses one goal.
8. Directly addresses two goals
9. Directly addresses two goals and touches upon one other goal
10. Directly addresses three goals

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11. Directly addresses three goals and touches upon one other goal
12. Directly addresses four goals
13. Directly addresses four goals and touches upon one other goal
14. Directly addresses five goals and touches upon one other goal
15. Directly Addresses six goals

Basic Scoring for Criteria with 15 pts for IV.1:

- 1-3. No faith in organization's ability to manage funds and matching funds appropriately.
- 4-6. Grave concerns about organization's ability to manage funds and matching funds appropriately.
- 7-10. Prior track record raises concern of organization's ability to manage funds and matching funds appropriately.
- 11-12. Some concerns regarding organization's ability to manage funds and matching funds appropriately.
- 13-14. Concerns regarding organization's ability to manage funds and matching funds appropriately are alleviated by program plan and documentation about current capabilities of organization to manage funds and matching funds appropriately.
15. No question organization will manage funds and matching funds appropriately.

Basic Scoring for Criteria with 10 pts:

- 0.0 Does not fit criteria.
- 1.0 Fits with major weaknesses.
- 2.0 Fits with moderate weaknesses
- 3.0 Fits with minor weaknesses.
- 4.0 Fits with no discernible weaknesses; not remarkable.
- 5.0 Strong with moderate weaknesses.
- 6.0 Strong with minor weaknesses
- 7.0 Strong with no discernible weaknesses.
- 8.0 Extremely strong with moderate weaknesses.
- 9.0 Extremely strong with minor weaknesses.
- 10.0 Perfectly fits criteria and goals.

Basic Scoring for Criteria with 5 pts:

- 0.0 Does not fit criteria.
- 1.0 Fits with major weaknesses.
- 2.0 Fits with no discernible weaknesses; not remarkable.
- 3.0 Strong with moderate weaknesses.
- 4.0 Extremely strong with moderate weaknesses.
- 5.0 Perfectly fits criteria and goals.

Applications & Eligibility

Who is Eligible for GTOP Grants?

Recognized non-profit organizations such as a Neighborhood-Based organization administering digital divide type programs are eligible. Individuals must partner with an Austin or Neighborhood-based Organization to qualify. Grants are awarded to the organization, not directly to individuals. Programs* having been funded at any level for three consecutive years will not be eligible for GTOPs for the two years following their third consecutive year. Programs deemed to be in default of a previous GTOPs contract are ineligible to apply.

*New or separate programs submitted by previously funded organizations must be substantively different in goals, aims and projected outcomes than previously funded programs of the same organization. A high degree of scrutiny will be applied by City staff when accepting applications from previously funded organizations. The burden of proof falls on each organization.

What counts towards the 1:1 match required of applicants?

Volunteer labor, In-Kind donated professional services, and donated materials and supplies specifically related to the program are eligible as a match (unless paid for through another City of Austin program.) Any cash provided to the organization, or pledged to the organization for the program is also eligible. The match requirement must be fulfilled by the end of the grant term.

Can I pay the organization's staff salaries through the GTOPs grant?

Staff salaries not directly related to program administration will be counted as "Administrative Expenses." Up to 30% of grants awarded may be used for administrative expenses. See the entry on expenses under "Administrative & Award Questions" below for more detail.

Is the purchase of new equipment for my organization an acceptable use of City funds?

No. The Grant for Technology Opportunities is NOT an opportunity for your organization to get better technology. Grant applications whose primary focus is on upgrading internal systems may receive a lower score. That said, up to 30% of grants awarded may be used for administrative expenses including office and computer equipment. See the entry on expenses under "Administrative & Award Questions" below for more detail.

What is a Fiscal Agent?

You will need a person to handle and account for your award funds and any cash you've raised that is part of your match. Your organization will most likely be able to act as its own fiscal agent and you won't need to hire one. If need be you may select another group or individual to act as your fiscal agent. This person will act as the authorized representative of your organization. An individual can serve as your fiscal agent provided the person obtains a tax identification number (easy to do) and files an additional form with the IRS at the end of the year. It is more usual to arrange with a non-profit organization or business to act as your fiscal agent if you are an individual. Your program fiscal agent can either charge you for the service or donate time as in-kind match. The cost of fiscal agent services can be included in your program budget.

What types of support letters should be included in application?

The best are letters of financial support (matching funds), letters pledging volunteer staffing and services or donating equipment or supplies. General letters of support should explain precisely why the organization is qualified to develop the program.

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Will I be at a disadvantage if I collaborate with only one Austin organization?

Community participation is only one of many criteria in awarding grants, but the City is very interested in programs that are able to develop relationships among groups with related interests.

How Should I evaluate

The Grant Review Committee will appreciate clear and concise answers to all of the questions. Also, it is better to submit your strongest letters of support than to inundate the reviewers with as many as you can get. Please do NOT attach printed brochures, videotapes, fliers, photographs or other promotional materials, or blank /cover pages with your application, as they will be discarded.

Should I be selected to give an oral presentation what may I bring? Are multimedia presentations allowed?

Presenters are allowed to bring one letter-sized handout only for each of the reviewers and for staff (please provide 9 copies.) You may arrange to make a multimedia presentation only under certain conditions and with restrictions. The allowance of multimedia presentations is intended only to allow arts and media groups to visually illustrate their programs when verbal or written communications are not adequate. This is not intended for presenters to utilize PowerPoint or other presentation programs to outline their presentation, show photographs or videos of participants or otherwise reinforce what is already being demonstrated via the written proposal and/or oral presentation. If an applicant intends to utilize multimedia all materials must be delivered to the TARA office no later than 10 days prior to the presentations in a format usable by City equipment. Media will be pre-loaded on City equipment for use at the presentation. For more information on multimedia formats available please contact John Speirs at 512.974.3510.

Why are different selection criteria weighted higher than others?

The selection criteria has been carefully chosen and weighted by the Commission in accordance with the GTOPs mission and goals. While all the 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.

Protest Process

The City of Austin wants to ensure that the GTOPS grant review process is fair and provides an opportunity for individuals to protest the results of the Grant Review Process, as with any other solicitation process that occurs within the City of Austin, a municipal corporation. the notice of intent to protest must be received within four calendar days of the Grant Review Committee's decision, and a formal protest within fourteen calendar days of time when proper notice should have been given about the facts relating to the protest. Protests received after the deadline are not reviewed. The Office of Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs (TARA) will receive and review the protest for the GTOPS process.

A protest that has been verified by TARA staff will be provided to the Commission.

Administrative & Award Questions

What kinds of expenses are allowed?

Any program related expenses as outlined in your budget may be allowed including computer equipment, teaching supplies, Internet connection fees etc. Rent/Mortgage, utilities and administrative salaries may reimbursed up to 30% of your total grant in most cases (unless any portion is already paid for through any City of Austin program in which case 0% is reimbursable.) Reimbursement guidelines are available on-line at www.gtops.org under the online application portal.

What kinds of expenses are not allowed?

Ongoing business expense such as security, maid services, building maintenance, and landscaping are not allowed. Reimbursement guidelines are available on-line at www.gtops.org under the documents section.

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Matching Funds Details

Match Requirements

Your match components must be appropriate to the goals of your program.

Your match must be expended during the life of the program — matching funds spent before or after the contract period cannot be counted. The one exception is for design work where you may include, as a match, a conceptual plan or technical specifications completed before your application submittal, (provided it was not City funded) if it was necessary to complete these in order to submit a cohesive proposal for a matching fund program.

You cannot count assistance from City staff or funds from other City sources as match.

Although you cannot count most of your time spent preparing your application as match, you are allowed to include in your match package 10 hours (valued at \$100) representing the effort you have put into the preparation of your application. In the Personnel section of the budget, enter “Application Prep” under “Item” and “\$100” under “In-Kind.”

Professional services or skilled labor can be donated as match or hired for a fee, but professionals who donate their services cannot also receive compensation from the award money. This ensures that persons hired to provide services are selected on the basis of their qualifications, not on their ability to donate services.

Your total match package can include components from any combination of the following:

Volunteers: The value for volunteer labor (flat rate) is **\$23.40 per hour**. Premium rates are not acceptable. See “Professional Services” for hours donated that merit a higher rate.

In-Kind donations: These include any services, materials or facilities given to your organization 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. Thirty percent of donated rent/mortgage and/or utilities costs may be counted in most cases (unless paid for through another City of Austin program.)

Cash Match: Monies your organization has “in hand” such as dues paid to your organization and approved for use on your program and monies collected for your program by going door-to-door in your neighborhood are acceptable. A fundraising plan is acceptable documentation of match for the application but cash match may only be counted toward a grant contract when it is expended. Funds from other City departments are not eligible match.

Competitive applications will be able to demonstrate that your community match is secure. Listed below are various types of documentation you may attach to your application for this purpose.

Volunteer Pledge Documentation

Sign-up forms showing names, addresses (including zip codes), phone numbers, number of hours each person is willing to donate, and type of labor.

Phone log showing the same information as a sign-up form plus a column showing the date you secured each person’s volunteer time over the phone. Although this requires you to do a question-and-answer session with each volunteer and fill out the form for each, this may be the fastest way for you to get commitments.

Pledge letters or emails from individuals promising to donate a specific number of hours and explaining what type of work each will do for your program.

Pledge letters from community council chairs, agency volunteer coordinators, etc., stating they will personally be responsible for rounding up a specific number of their members for a specific number of hours to do specific tasks. For example, “Our organization will provide five part time instructors for computer lab training.”

Professional Services Pledge Documentation

A signed letter on company stationery indicating what services will be provided, when , and what the customary rate is for the services

Materials Pledged Documentation

Pledge letters on company letterhead or via e-mail pledging a specific material donation and its retail value. For example, "\$500 in lumber from Home Depot to build workstations for an East Austin Community Lab" or "\$250 donated photocopying for one-time printing of a newsletter to promote the Dove Springs Technology Fair."

Invoice or bid form showing type of donation and value. For example, "Design of 8.5"x11" advertising flyer (\$250), printing 5,000 copies (\$250), postage and distribution (\$700) donated by Jan's Mailing House for Seniors-on-the-Web Program, to be delivered week of 6/05/09."

Cash Match Documentation

Fundraising plan: If your cash match is not secured by the application deadline, provide a detailed fundraising plan including a timeline and stating methods for raising cash and how much money you expect to raise with each method or event. If you need to raise a lot of money be sure to describe the fundraising experience of the individuals or organization involved. Your fundraising plan will be reviewed for credibility. If you are applying for grants to other programs as a portion of your fundraising plan, be sure to provide us with a list of programs you will be approaching, amount you are requesting from each, and their funding decision dates.

Photocopies of bank statements: If you have already collected your cash match, a copy of a recent bank statement for the account in which you are holding the funds is a good way to show that you are ready to proceed.

Photocopies of checks: This is a good way to show both that you have the money in hand and how many people from your community assisted in your efforts.

Photocopies of commitment letters: If your program has been granted or promised funding but you haven't received the money by the time of your application deadline, or the funding is dependent upon your program receiving a GTOPs award, you can provide letters of commitment from the donors or programs on their letterhead.