

GRANT FOR TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES (GTOPs)



CITY OF AUSTIN

**Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs &
the Austin Telecommunications Commission**

Grant Review Committee Orientation

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Process

There are several parts to this process: preliminary evaluation, oral presentations, final scoring, deliberation and grant recommendations. For the preliminary evaluations you are asked to take a look at _____ and score them using the evaluation sheet or electronically using a spreadsheet. After those scores have been totaled, the top twenty applications will move on to the oral presentations round. I will email you which applications have moved up. At this time you will need to read any applications not in your preliminary set that have been selected to move forward. Each of the top twenty applicants will be given the opportunity to give a short presentation on their program and answer questions from the judges. You may change your scores at any time during or after the oral presentation until the final deliberation is complete. There is a section on your evaluation sheet for comments on the oral presentations and feedback on the written application. We encourage you to provide as much feedback as possible.

Commission Liaison

A liaison from the Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission will attend all meetings and monitor communications, providing guidance and feedback during the process and will serve as Chair of this committee. This person will have the authority to resolve conflicts if necessary. Please read the "Certification of Understanding" for more information.

Identification

Appointments to the review board as well as your completed judging forms are a matter of public record. In order to allow judging without bias or reprisal from applicants, your judging forms will be de-identified by the use of a confidential numbering system.

You will be assigned a judging number and will not be identifiable by name in relation to any of the judging forms you submit. All judging forms should be marked only with your assigned judging number.

Your judging number is: _____

Communication with applicants

Do not contact any of the applicants or their sponsoring organizations directly. If you have questions, please email them to the listserve. I will send them, de-identified, to the program contact and will forward the response to the listserve for the benefit of all the reviewers.

Written Evaluations

You may copy and type or hand write in your scores for each applicant using the enclosed form or you may tally your scores electronically using a spreadsheet program. I will provide you with preformatted spreadsheets upon request.

Presentations/Q&A Session

Applicants making it past the elimination round will give a short oral presentation to be followed by a brief question and answer session. Keep in mind that this will be a short meeting with each applicant. Complex questions may be better addressed in advance, in writing. The oral presentations will be recorded for public record.

Scoring and comments

Your judging forms and communications will be a matter of public record. A copy of your final scores and feedback will be sent to the applicants after the final awards are given. Please be constructive in your comments. Inappropriate or inflammatory comments will not be accepted. Keep in mind that overall scores are graded by the 100 points scale wherein 70-79 is a "C" or average grade. No questions should be given a zero unless they are left blank, completely unreadable or nonsensical. By the same token, full marks should only be given to perfectly written, complete and thorough answers. Reviewer feedback is encouraged.

Timeline

January 14, 2009	Oral Presentations Grant applicants will be selected to give a five-minute presentation followed by Q&A.
January 26, 2009	Final Deliberation Once the ranking has been established, the reviewers will deliberate on the final disbursement of grant monies. The highest-ranking proposals are generally given full grants with runners up often receiving partial grants.
February 11, 2009 Meeting	Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission Special Called The final awards recommendations are presented to the Commission for a vote at a special called meeting. Once accepted, the award recommendations will be forwarded to the City Manager for final approval.

Judging Criteria

Please remember that your judging forms and communications will be a matter of public record. A copy of your final scores and feedback will be sent to the applicants after the final awards are given. Please be constructive in your comments. Inappropriate or inflammatory comments will not be accepted.

The Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Vision: A community where all citizens have access to the facilities and the necessary skills to participate in an emerging digital society.

Mission: To provide matching grant funds to Austin organizations for projects that create digital opportunities and foster digital inclusion.

Goals:

1. Support programs that provide public access to computers and information technology, especially among underserved segments of our community.
2. Support programs that provide information technology literacy, education, and training.
3. Support programs that use information and communication technologies in innovative ways that serve the community.
4. Provide seed funding for Austin community and non-profit organizations for their technological outreach efforts.

Selection Criteria:

- Address the needs of technology underserved populations
- Show benefits to the neighborhood(s) or community
- Clearly define the problem(s) within the community to be served and describe its severity
- Provide opportunities for volunteerism and participation in the planning and implementation by those the project will serve
- Plan for building community awareness and knowledge of the project
- Promote interaction of many parts of the community, e.g. business and residents, people of different income levels, ages, racial and ethnic groups
- Demonstrate that the proposed project is well planned and ready for implementation, the budget is a reliable representation of the project's planned expenses and that the proposed match is secure and ready to expend. GTOPs requires a 1:1 recipient match for the value of the requested funds.
- Illustrate the vitality of the organization as a whole and the sustainability of the project, if applicable
- Provide creative and practical means of addressing the community's problem(s)
- Identify anticipated outcomes and potential impacts that are both realistic and measurable
- Clearly describe what technology will be used for the project and its appropriateness given the goal(s) of the project
- Provide for equipment maintenance and support and replacement.
- Illustrate a lasting/on-going benefit to the community

Glossary of Terms

Cash Match : the value of cash contributions donated to the program

Citywide organizations : a group with a majority of its members residing, or operating businesses, in the City of Austin or its extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and whose purpose is to improve the quality of life for a particular community of people or of interests in one neighborhood or citywide.

Community-media groups : Provide training in a community multimedia center and/or expands distribution.

Cross-neighborhood or citywide projects : Projects that link neighborhoods together, reach communities of interest not bound by geography or serve residents citywide.

Facilities : Space for the project to be conducted.

In-Kind Match : the value of goods and/or services donated to the program (as apposed to cash)

Marketing/outreach : Increase marketing/outreach of a community technology program and/or increase volunteer recruitment.

Matching Funds : Cash or in-kind contributions given to a program or sponsoring organization

Materials : Donated materials or supplies such as computers, furniture, software, or paper.

Neighborhood-based organizations : a group with the majority of its residents residing, or operating businesses in a commonly recognized neighborhood and whose purpose is to improve the quality of life in that area.

Professional Services : Donated professional services or skilled labor (valued at a 'standard' rate for the same work done in the field.)

Public access : A technology center or Internet terminal is open to the public.

Volunteer Labor : Donated work by individuals (valued at \$16 per hour.)



**GTOPs GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE
CERTIFICATION OF UNDERSTANDING**

Name (Print) _____, 200_ Review Board

Signature

Date

I (above), hereby certify by my signature that I have read and understand all of the GTOPS review board orientation materials and agree to adhere to the roles and responsibilities below.

GTOPs Reviewer Roles & Responsibilities

It is the role of the GTOPs reviewer to thoroughly read, review and score each written application given to them for evaluation using the GTOPs selection criteria; further, to listen to oral presentations given by applicants (as selected using GTOPs procedures) and participate in a question and answer session following the presentations; further, to assign a final score to each application (as selected using GTOPs procedures) to the best of their ability using the GTOPs selection criteria.

It is expected that reviewers will follow the laws of the United States, the State of Texas and the City of Austin when acting as a GTOPs reviewer.

It is the duty of the reviewer to be thoughtful and fair in judging the applications, to review and evaluate each applicant based solely on the candidate's GTOPs application without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, immigration status, medical condition, and/or disability, to judge only in accordance with GTOPs selection criteria, and to ask for clarification on the same as needed.

It is also the duty of the reviewer to score applicants objectively without conflict of interest, bias or regard to any prior relationships with any applying organization, its employees, agents, or representatives. Conflict of interest as applicable to the Grant for Technology Opportunities review board is defined as the reviewer, any member of his or her immediate family, and/or his or her employer having a professional affiliation with any of the GTOPs applicants to the best of the reviewer's knowledge. If a reviewer is unable to judge objectively in accordance with the above statements, then they will recuse themselves from judging any and all relevant applicants.

It is also the duty of the reviewer to reveal to the review board, Commission Liaison, and City Staff any information regarding a conflict of interest under those guidelines. Should a conflict of interest, as defined above, arise, the reviewer will recuse themselves from judging any applicant with whom they have a conflict of interest.

It is the responsibility of the reviewer to treat each applicant, the Commission Liaison, City staff and fellow reviewers with dignity, respect, honesty and integrity.

It is expected that reviewers will keep all GTOPs related commitments, attend all meetings, meet all deadlines and participate fully in communications.

The reviewer understands the role of the Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission Liaison and will defer to his or her judgment in matters relating to this process.

Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission Liaison Roles & Responsibilities

It is the role of the Commission Liaison to provide guidance, resolve issues and manage any conflicts relating to the GTOPs process; further, to supervise the review process including the oral presentations, scoring, and selection of final recommended grantees and/or facilitate achieving consensus regarding the same; further, to make judgments relating to the review board process when necessary and appropriate; further, to report the activities, progress and results of the GTOPs Review Board to the Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission as appropriate.

It is NOT the role of the Commission Liaison to review the GTOPs applications or to influence the review board's scores in any way.

It is expected the Commission Liaison will follow the laws of the United States, the State of Texas and the City of Austin when acting in their role as Commission Liaison.

It is the duty of the Commission Liaison to be thoughtful, fair and to act without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, immigration status, medical condition, and/or disability in supervising the review board.

It is the responsibility of the Commission Liaison to treat applicants, reviewers and City Staff with dignity, respect, honesty and integrity.

It is expected that the Commission Liaison will keep all commitments, attend all meetings, meet all deadlines and participate fully in all GTOPs related communications.