

GTOPs

Helping Austin
Stay on Top
of Technology

**Grant for Technology Opportunities Program
(GTOPs)**

**Pre-Application Meeting &
Grant Writing Seminar**

By Sheena Colbath Harden, City of Austin

GTOPs Vision

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

GTOPs Mission

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

GTOPs Goals

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

GTOPs Facts

- **Grants amounts are \$5,000 to \$25,000 and require a 1:1 match**
- **GTOPs is a reimbursement grant (monthly increments)**
- **Contracts are generally a year long and usually begin in April of the grant year**
- **We receive between 20-40 applications annually; an average of 8 grants are awarded**

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Where to find the application:

- <http://www.gtops.org> click on "application"
- TARA Offices - \$1.20 per copy
Municipal Building
124 West 8th Street
Suite 210
***Ask for Jane or Sheena

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Timeline

- **November 12, 2008** - Review Board Applications Due
- **December 7, 2009** - GTOPs Applications Due
- **December 23, 2009** – Written Questions to Applicants
- **January 11, 2010** – Answers Due
- **February 5, 2010** - Oral Presentations
- **March 10, 2010** – Recommendations Presented

Before you apply

- Read the application and all materials carefully
- Make sure you are eligible
- Have a clear program and can deliver results
- Understand the Reporting and Insurance Requirements
- Note the 25 page limit, anything over will be thrown out
- Get your backing documentation in order

Application Overview

Cover Page

- Applicant organization, tax ID etc
- Fiscal Agent
- Project Description
- Grant Amount Requested & Total Project Cost

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #1

Organization Description:

Please describe your organization and explain your mission, membership policy, number of members, geographic boundaries, and accomplishments.

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #2

Project Description: Please describe your project and the community need it addresses. If relevant, describe how this project differs from services already available in the community. Where possible, indicate measurable outcomes that you expect to achieve if the project is successful. Please also identify your clients and where possible include demographic and geographic information.

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #3

Project Mission:

Describe how your project supports the mission and goals of the GTOP program.

Grants are for programs, not organizations – the grant for technology opportunities is not an opportunity for your organization to get more technology - unless it is to share it with others in the form of classes or public access

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #4

Community Impact:

Please describe how your project will have an ongoing and/or lasting impact on the community.

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #5

Community Involvement:

Please describe and demonstrate participation by neighborhood residents or other appropriate community members in your project (explain how you contacted them, how many became involved, and what sectors of your community they represent). Provide specific examples of how they participated in selecting and planning your project and how they will be involved in carrying out the project.

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #6

Implementation Plan/Workplan:

- a. List in chronological order specific steps you will take to complete this project.
- b. Next to each step, identify who will be responsible for carrying out the step or activity
- c. Estimate the date the step will be completed (month and year).

Real or tentative dates are OKAY

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #7

Evaluation:

Please describe how you plan to measure your success. Please present a clearly defined plan to evaluate and document the degree to which the project achieved its goals and objectives. You may include any tools, procedures or measure you will be using for evaluation as an attachment.

A mixture of qualified & quantified data is good

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #8

Budget:

On a separate sheet please provide a budget showing the itemized costs for your program and your matching funds. Please use the following categories:

Materials/Equipment, Personnel, and Services. A sample budget is attached to this application for your reference.

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Item Description	TOTAL COST	Source of Funds		
		GTOPs	Matching	Other
MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT				
5 computers – donated by Dxyosm	\$5,500.00		\$5,500.00	
5 copies of software package (system, word processing, spreadsheet, database, internet browser)	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00		
20 modems – donated by Gaojaw	\$700.00		\$700.00	
2 printers, cables & network software	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00		
PERSONNEL				
1 Lab Instructor, part time 20 hours/week @ \$20/hr for 30 weeks	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00		
2 Volunteer lab assistants, part time 10 hrs a week each \$12/hr value for 30 weeks	\$7,200.00		\$7,200.00	
1 part-time administrative assistant, 10 hours per week at \$10/hr for 30 weeks, paid for with City of Austin funds (ineligible for Match)	\$3,000.00			\$3,000.00
SERVICES				
Internet Connectivity for 20 computers for 9 months – discounted by Swojem	\$1,800.00		\$1,800.00	
Computer Engineers of Austin – Set up of new computers & printers, integration into lab network, set up internet connectivity; 4 hours of service donated @ \$100/hr	\$1,600.00	\$1,200.00	\$400.00	
TOTAL	\$34,000.00	\$15,400.00	\$15,600.00	\$3,000.00

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #9

Attachments:

REQUIRED - annual revenue statement (one page summary)

REQUIRED – summary of revenue sources (e.g. other City of Austin grants)

REQUIRED - documentation of in-kind match (labor and items) and cash match, as appropriate (e.g. letters of commitment, memorandums of understanding)

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #9

Attachments:

OPTIONAL – Evaluation tools, procedures and/or measures

OPTIONAL - documentation of community support for the proposed project

OPTIONAL - copies of facility diagram, technical plans, equipment list and/or construction drawings, as appropriate

OPTIONAL - if the project requires remodeling, construction or other physical improvement, attach permission from the property owner

OPTIONAL - anything else a reviewer should know about your proposed project in the form of a brief narrative

GTOPs Application Overview

Question #9

Prohibited Attachments:

- color brochures or other marketing materials
- photographs
- media including CDs, DVDs, Videos or CD-Roms

NOTE: Keep the 25 page limit in mind!!!!

Scoring

- Scored out of 100 points, questions are weighted
- If there are more than 20 applications there will be TWO rounds of scoring
- Applications will be divided among reviewers and scored based on written application only
- The top 20 will be asked to give an oral presentation
- Scores and feedback will be sent to ALL applicants when awards are finalized by the City Manager

Scoring

1. The program and its objectives are well defined and serves a community need. (10 points)
2. This project is a clear fit with the mission and goals of the GTOPs Program. (20 points)
3. This project has demonstrated that if implemented it will have an ongoing/lasting positive impact on the community. (5 points)
4. This project has demonstrated that it has community support and participation. (10 points)
5. This project has a clear plan for success. Its goals and objectives are achievable and its work plan is feasible. (10 points)

Scoring

6. This project has demonstrated its ability to evaluate its own success and that its proposed measures for evaluation are viable and appropriate. (5 points)
7. This project has shown that it is a fiscally responsible organization that will utilize City funds appropriately if awarded this grant. (10 points)
8. This project has clearly shown that it will be able to meet the requirement of 1:1 matching funds and that their planned use is appropriate to the program. (10 points)

Scoring

9. This project has provided all required documentation, which clearly shows its annual revenue and matching dollars (in-kind and/or cash). (10 points)
10. Applicant has convinced me that they have the capacity to complete this project successfully and I would recommend that this project be awarded its requested dollar amount for GTOPs. (10 points)

Oral Presentations

- Not scored but will effect your score
- Not mandatory but HIGHLY recommended
- 5 minute presentation – be prepared to be timed, give an overview of the program and be ready for questions
- 5 minutes of Q&A
- 1 page handout
- Multimedia ONLY if necessary to demonstrate your program (e.g. no PowerPoint!)
- You may bring several people but we recommend no more than 3

Grant Writing Tips

.....Before you apply:.....

- Be sure you understand the insurance requirements
- Understand that this is a reimbursement grant
- Be prepared to provide monthly reports
- Understand that you must have a 1:1 match
- Be sure your goals are measurable and that you can collect and provide hard data

Grant Writing Tips

Tips for writing a winning GTOPs grant

- Make certain your program is a clear fit with the mission and goals of GTOPs
- Demonstrate community involvement through letters of commitment, sign up sheets etc.
- Base your budget on actual numbers, don't round; also make your budget easy to read with clearly defined columns and rows showing requested dollars and matching funds
- Do not inundate the reviewers with anecdotal evidence; don't use cute/fake names or jokes

Grant Writing Tips

Tips for writing a winning GTOPs grant

- Do not use technical jargon, explain in clear and simple language
- Emphasize the good your program will do in the community rather than the 'dire need' you have for the funding
- Show who will be doing what, when
- Demonstrate a clear plan for evaluating your success
- Proof read your document for grammar, spelling and mathematical errors

10 minute Break!

**When we come back:
Grant Writing Basics**

Grant Writing Basics

- Myths & Realities
- The Grant Process
- Boilerplate Proposal
- Style Issues
- Researching Grants
- Applications & Attachments
- Final Submission

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Grant Writing Basics – Myths & Realities

“Isn’t a grant the same as free money?”

No, sorry! It is a contract. By entering into a grant you are promising to fulfill certain goals and obligations.

Grant Writing Basics – Myths & Realities

“My organization does good work in the community and we’re highly regarded. Isn’t that enough to deserve a grant?”

Sorry again. The second thing you must understand is that grants are given to programs, not organizations. Specific problems + specific solutions = results!

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Grant Writing Basics – Myths & Realities

“Once I’ve been chosen, they’ll just cut me a check, right?”

That depends. Some will give you the funds up front, others will only reimburse costs. Some require matching funds be in place. Know which kind you are applying for before you apply!

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Grant Writing Basics – Myths & Realities

“They won’t actually check to see if the work has been done, will they?”

You bet they will. Most contracts allow agencies to take back 100% of the money (with interest) if the program objectives are not met. Read all the requirements!

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Grant Writing Basics – Myths & Realities

“I don’t understand part X of the application but that big agency/foundation doesn’t care about my little program, who should I turn to for help?”

Actually, grantors love to hear from you!
No question is a stupid question.

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Grant Writing Basics – Myths & Realities

“If I write a good grant am I guaranteed success?”

I wish that were true. A 5% return is considered very good. Remember to choose the right grant – more on that in research.

Grant Writing Basics – Writing the Proposal

A good grant:

- May take up to a year to write
- Is not the same as a grant application
- Is the business plan for a program
- Shows a clear need and solution

Grant Writing Basics – Writing the Proposal

The basic process

- Research the need from the ground up
- Find solutions – include stakeholders
- Formulate a program
- Write a boilerplate proposal

Grant Writing Basics – Writing the Proposal

A Boilerplate Proposal is like a resume you will tailor to different job applications

It will help you figure out if there are any pieces missing in your research and development

It forces you to construct clear language describing your program

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

- Summary/Introduction: Introduces the essence of who you are and what you do and should include:
 - Name and location of your organization and what kind (501 (c)3)
 - Mission, Vision and values
 - Identification your clients (include demographic and geographic data when appropriate)
 - A short synopsis of your program including a statement of need and your proposed solution

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

- Need: Tells the reviewer about the problem you plan to solve if you are awarded the grant.
 - Clearly identify the problem in simple terms
 - Provide evidence of the problem using **PRIMARILY** your own first-hand research in the field as well as statistics and quotes from authorities
 - If the problem exists in more than just your area show data to support that the problem is nationwide/worldwide
 - Do not over dramatize the problem – grant reviewers want to read about successful, robust organizations not ‘poor, starving’ ones that need help
 - It’s not about you, it’s about the people you serve

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

- Program Goals & Objectives: Says what you hope to accomplish in relationship to the problem
 - Goals: general statements regarding what you hope the result of your program will be in relation to your solution to the Problem
Sample Goal: “The goal of the Animal Shelter Dog Walker program is to provide dogs with daily exercise and human contact to increase health, sociability and adoptability.”

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

Objectives: the quantifiable outcomes of the program. Note: don't confuse objectives with methods; the methods are the means, the objectives are the ends.

Objectives should:

- SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound)
- be realistic – you are going to be asked to deliver (over promise, under deliver)
- say who changes and in what way
- state the direction of change (increase or decrease)
- give a projected percentage of change based on your research (be conservative, don't go above 25% unless your funder requires it)
- state when/how often it will be measured
- Sample Objective: “Reduce the number of dogs returned to the shelter by 10%, measured monthly.”

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

Project Description: Tells the reviewer what **methods** (the who, what and when) you will be utilizing to fulfill your goals and objectives and should:

- describe where the project will be occurring (not just the address but the type of facility and why you chose it)
- who will be involved (include names if you have them) and describe positions, titles and responsibilities
- state when events will occur (if you don't have a definite schedule then you may wish to show the order of happenings without dates e.g. "In the first week of the program we will...")

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

Evaluation: tells the reviewer how you will measure your goals and objectives and should:

- include what data you plan to collect to measure your goals and objectives
- how you plan to collect it and who will collect it
- how it will be analyzed and by whom

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

Actual Budget (Quantitative): shows the cost to run your program in a table or similar format. Identify which costs are directly related to the program and which are administrative

HINT: Don't round off your numbers. This shows the reviewers that you have a clear picture of the actual cost of your program. Base your numbers on research and be prepared to show supporting documentation.

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

Budget Narrative: provides a rationale for each item on your budget and should include:

- **Personnel:** short job descriptions and a little about what each person will be doing for the project
- **Non-Personnel:** describe how you arrived at your figures such as, “According to bids from three office supply stores, the average cost for new desks of the type our project requires are...”
- **Future funding:** some applications will want a paragraph or two on future funding. This is the place to discuss your plans for how you plan to fund the program after the grant period.

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

Conclusion: will contain most of the same information as your introduction but will be shorter in length. Recap the problem, solution, what you're asking for and how it will be used.

Grant Writing Basics – The Boilerplate

Cover Letter or Letter of Interest:

no more than a few paragraphs long; include:

- the name and location of your organization and type
- the name of your project
- the amount of your request
- a short summary of your program
- who to contact with questions
- a short list of what is enclosed

Grant Writing Basics – Style Issues

- Treat your grant application like a contract
- Avoid big words or complex language. If a 12-year-old child can't understand it, it's too technical or complicated.
- Don't use acronyms
- Use your city and state after your name for non-local grants
- Do not use cutesy nicknames or fake names when describing your clients, just say “the client”

Grant Writing Basics – Style Issues

- Do not use jokes, ever
- Do not use jargon, explain what things mean in simple terms
- Use the funder's language when appropriate
- Show, don't tell – do not use persuasive language, simply allow the reader to draw their own conclusions from the facts you provide (don't draw the conclusion for the reader)
- Show your work (cost & time allocations)

Grant Writing Basics – Style Issues

- Don't use too many words because people will get bored quickly and won't want to continue reading what you're trying to say and what you have to say is really important so you want to avoid dense paragraphs and long sentences when all you have to get across is something really simple, do you see what I mean?

Shorter is better!

Grant Writing Basics – Style Issues

- *“When you catch an adjective, kill it.”* – Mark Twain;
Do not use flowery adjectives or too many descriptive words.
- Write unified paragraphs and use transition sentences
- Use bold headlines and make the first sentence in each paragraph the strongest.
- Use summary charts to demonstrate the meat of the proposal

Grant Writing Basics – Style Issues

Proofread! – Don't use friends.

1. someone on your planning team
2. someone in your organization who is not on your planning team
3. someone in your field who is not in your organization
4. a professional writer/editor
5. a 12 year old child

Your application represents your organization!

Grant Writing Basics – Style Issues

Once you get feedback, start editing your proposal.

- Make it sleek and solid
- Read the first sentence of each paragraph
- Make sure each chart and graph stands on its own
- Take out any extra words

For example:

“Many of the animals that come to us had homes originally but became lost because of neglect or abuse.”

“Most of our animals are homeless due to neglect or abuse.”

Grant Writing Basics – Research

- Grant writing = values matching
- Look deeper than general categories
- Create a one-sheet research tool that includes your Mission, Vision and Summary
- Look at 990s (other grants given, officers)
- Create a good filing system with one file/tab per potential funder
- Document everything, including phone calls

Grant Writing Basics – Research

Types of grants:

- Federal
- State
- County
- City
- Foundation
- Corporation
- Fellowship

Grant Writing Basics – Research

- Don't limit yourself to one type of grant
- Treat your budget like a puzzle; it's illegal to double bill!
- Be aware of deadlines
- Be flexible

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Grant Writing Basics – Research

Resources for research:

Regional Foundation Library

1009 East 11th Street, 2nd Floor

Phone: 512-475-7373

Email: RFL@austin.utexas.edu

<http://foundationcenter.org> (Foundation Directory Online)

<http://tgci.com> (The Grantsmanship Center)

<http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/stategrants>

<http://www.guidestar.com>

<http://www.nonprofits.org/>

Grant Writing Basics – Applying

- Each application is unique and may have its own format, use your boilerplate to copy and paste sections, making adjustments where necessary
- Read guidelines and requirements carefully!
- Understand their expectations
 - Insurance
 - Reporting
 - Reimbursement
 - Matching
 - Restricted or Unrestricted

Grant Writing Basics – Attachments

- documentation of in-kind support
- letters of support from community leaders (pick the strongest)
- a list of your board of directors (% they give)
- IRS 501(c)3 letter
- financial statements
- proof of insurance
- a 4-color processed, glossy one-sheet summary (use a professional designer)

Grant Writing Basics – Final Submission

- Proofread, again!
- Check figures on budget
- Check that all signature lines have been signed
- Make a copy for your file
- Double check deadlines
- Note on your calendar when you expect to hear from them to follow up
- Send certified mail

Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs)

Thank you!!!

Questions? Need an appointment to discuss your program?
Feel free to contact me:

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