



Economic
Development
CITY OF AUSTIN

MEMORANDUM

TO: The City of Austin's Technology Commission

FROM: Dan Martinez, Business Process Specialist
Austin Economic Development – Community Technology Division

DATE: October 14, 2026

SUBJECT: Grant For Technology Opportunities Program 2027 Action Plan

Background

The City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan, as adopted by [Resolution No. 20141120-074](#), includes every Austin resident having an opportunity to be fully engaged in digital society, accessing and using digital and communications technology. Austin Economic Development (AED)– Community Technology Initiative is the lead office for implementation of this plan. The Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) is a grant administered by AED – Community Technology Initiative directed at improving the community's ability to fully participate in the digital society to achieve the goals of the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Purpose and Process

The purpose of this report is to review the significant changes coming to the 2026 cycle of the GTOPs. Each year, AED – Community Technology Initiative performs a review of the prior grant cycle in preparation for the next year of grants. For this year's annual strategic planning and review process, feedback surveys were deployed to all GTOPs applicants and reviewers. Contractor closeout reports also have process feedback questions, the response of which were included in the analysis. Additionally, staff observations collected throughout the year were considered. Lastly, staff held a community updates and feedback session to receive input on the proposed changes and poll for additional programmatic suggestions. From these data sources, an Action Plan was drafted. This Action Plan is being presented to the Technology Commission for evaluation and feedback.

Please feel free to contact me at dan.martinez@austintexas.gov if you need additional information.

Dan Martinez, Business Process Specialist

Date

cc: Khotan Harmon, Community Technology Officer, AED – Community Technology



**Economic
Development**
CITY OF AUSTIN

Attachments

Attachment A – GTOPs 2027 Action Plan



Attachment A: GTOPs 2027 Action Plan

Action Item 1: Updates and Changes to GTOPs

1. **Updated GTOPs Budget and Pathways:** Indefinite hiatus status for the GTOPs Capacity pathway. GTOPs pathways will be consolidated down to just GTOPs Core and GTOPs Mini. GTOPs Core funding will remain stable at \$320,000 in total funds and eight \$40,000 awards. GTOPs Mini will be budgeted for an additional two awards, for a total of eight individual awards set at \$10,000 each.
2. **Changes to GTOPs Core Focus Areas:** In order to better strategically align GTOPs programs, we will revamp the focus areas and moving them from bonus point categories to mandatory tracks. There will be five tracks to select from:
 - a. **Workplace Digital Skills Training:** Trainings that focus on building basic to advanced skills to participate in the modern workplace. e.g: learning how to set up your computer, Microsoft suite, or high-level coding, web design, etc.
 - b. **Digital Creator Support:** Trainings that focus on building digital creator skills so that people can fully participate in the digital world. e.g: Creating digital art, podcasting, music editing, video game design/development, etc.
 - c. **Free/Low-Cost Public Access Internet Options:** Creation of computer or technology labs that are open to the public. e.g. a computer lab, maker space or easily accessible printing services, which must be free/low-cost and open to the public.
 - d. **Device Distribution:** Free or low-cost device-related distribution or other services. e.g.: low-cost device programs or free or discounted repair services, for laptops, desktops, tablets, or mobile devices.
 - e. **Open Source/Public Resource Creation:** Creation of a resource that other organizations or community members can use at no cost. e.g: digital skills curriculum, social service navigation database, open-source software for public benefit
3. **Standardized Performance Measures:** GTOPs staff will generate a list of proposed performance measure both corresponding to the selected focus area and cross cutting measures. Custom measures will still be accepted but every application will be expected to have some representation of preconfigured metrics that they report on.
4. **Changes to Demographics Requirement and Bonus Points:** Information provided on the demographics section of GTOPs Core application has not netted any benefits to the understanding of applicant or proposed program. Demographics section will be overhauled to provide more specific information as to which specific population



programs are designed to serve. This updated section will be used to allocate priority population based bonus points.

5. **GTOPs Performance Based Timeout Enforcement:** GTOPs awardees who are not within 100% to -20% of meeting half or more of their end of year performance metric expectations will be timed out of applying for the upcoming GTOPs cycle. Evaluation is based on the final results of the penultimate cycle.

Action Item 2: Revisions to GTOPs Core Application Process

1. **Edits to GTOPs Core Application Narrative Sections:** Application sections will receive a reduction in character/word limits for both the direct narrative portions of the application and the narrative document uploads.
2. **Alternative GTOPs Core Application Submission Methods:** GTOPs staff will offer alternative methods to submit the final GTOPs application. All fields that are currently hosted within the application form and are not uploadable documents will be transferred onto a new form that can be submitted via email if the application website is down or temporarily unavailable.
3. **GTOPs Applications Presumed Final After Submission:** GTOPs staff will consider all applications final upon submission. It is incumbent upon the applicant to work with GTOPs staff to make any corrections to their application. Corrections to applications will only be accepted ahead of the final application deadline.
4. **Removal of the Q+A process:** Over the last few cycles, applicants and review panelists have expressed that the Q+A phase has been cumbersome and onerous. This step has often confused more than clarified the process. GTOPs staff will remove this step entirely for the upcoming cycle.
5. **Other changes to GTOPs Application:**
 - a. **Updates to the FTE application exhibit:** This form has caused confusion in the past for applicants and review panelists. This form will be updated for ease of understanding.
 - b. **Proof of Match requirement addition:** Proof of match section of application will be required rather than optional.

Action Item 3: Updates to the GTOPs Core Review Panel Process

1. **Overhaul of the GTOPs reviewer feedback form and process:** While we have encouraged reviewers to offer detailed feedback, we have noticed a lack of specificity in the feedback provided over the last few cycle. To encourage panelists to offer stronger feedback, the scoring and feedback form will be overhauled to require more specificity in an effort to provide stronger comments back to applicants.