



**Date:** August 14, 2009  
**To:** **Interested Public**  
**From:** Chris Vein, Chief Information Officer  
**Subject:** City and County of San Francisco Participation in the Broadband Technology Opportunity Program Grant (BTOP) Next Steps

## MEMORANDUM

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The City and County of San Francisco (City) has decided not to participate in the first round of grant funding for the National Telecommunications and Information Agency's (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) grant. However, the City does plan to apply for a BTOP grant at the next opportunity which is anticipated before the end of the year. The reason for this decision is that the City believes that the best opportunity for a successful BTOP application involves a comprehensive, integrated approach to broadband that addresses all of the critical elements of digital inclusion—broadband access, equipment, applications, training and support. This integrated approach was not feasible in the initial round; however, we anticipate that a comprehensive approach will be possible in subsequent rounds.

On July 1, 2009, the NTIA issued a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) that describes the rules governing at least the first round of the BTOP grant process. The NOFA outlines critical rules concerning eligibility and evaluation criteria for the grant application process. The NTIA has divided the grant programs into three parts: (1) a maximum of \$1.2 billion for "infrastructure" grants, (2) \$150 million for "sustainable broadband adoption" grants, and (3) \$50 million for "public computer center" grants. This represents slightly less than one third of the total \$4.7 billion available during the initial funding round, reserving roughly two thirds of the funding (\$3.5 billion) for subsequent rounds.

Under the NOFA, Infrastructure grants are intended for projects which deploy new infrastructure to serve end users or end user equipment in unserved or underserved areas and community anchor institutions. The underserved portion of this program correspond to the access element of San Francisco's digital inclusion strategy. Sustainable Broadband Adoption and Public Computer Center Grants are for (1) programs designed to increase demand for and subscribership to broadband service and (2) projects that provide broadband to the public or a specific vulnerable population, e.g., the unemployed, low income, aged or disabled. These purposes correspond to existing City digital inclusion strategies including: recruitment, training and management of volunteers; managing and deploying training programs for online safety and responsibility; managing and deploying digital media and digital storytelling; enhancing





accessibility for seniors and disabled, and expanding capacity at computer centers at the Library, OEWD One Stop Shops, etc.

In subsequent funding rounds, the City intends to seek funding for creating technology ecosystems in low income, underserved neighborhoods, an integrated approach to broadband where new infrastructure would be complemented by access to content and services provided by community anchor institutions and programs for training and equipment distribution. The potential grant will seek to link infrastructure for San Francisco's underserved neighborhoods; a network connecting community anchors serving education, housing, health care, workforce development, digital media and public safety; and sustainable broadband adoption and computer centers will be appropriate for subsequent rounds.

In the coming weeks, the City will solicit interest from non-profits engaged in digital inclusion efforts for potential participation in a City BTOP grant application. The City's interest lies in three areas: (1) expanding broadband alternatives and adoption in the City's underserved neighborhoods, such as Bayview, Chinatown, Crocker Amazon and residents of low income housing; (2) reaching the City's vulnerable populations, such as low income families, elderly, people with disabilities, and non-English speakers and (3) using broadband for new opportunities for education, housing, health care, workforce development, digital media and public safety.



