

Technology Ascertainment Study
Proposal Summary
August 28, 2009

The City of Austin office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs (TARA) proposes to conduct a residential survey to ascertain citizens' engagement with information technology. The survey will address topics such as broadband penetration rates, City website participation, and computer literacy and ownership across demographic, geographic and economic strata.

The resulting data will be vital in determining community needs, infrastructure planning, economic development, e-government, and workforce development. Non-profit and citizen groups working toward digital inclusion throughout the Austin area will also benefit from this data in their program development and grant writing efforts.

TARA conducted the last such survey in 1998, and an earlier one in 1995 as part of cable franchise ascertainment. The City of Seattle, Washington conducted a similar survey in 2004, with valuable results. Seattle created a professionally-developed, comprehensive questionnaire and collected their data via telephone utilizing a survey contractor.

The Seattle survey cost was roughly \$40,000 total; \$17,000 for design and reporting, and \$23,000 for data collection. TARA expects the cost of such a telephone survey in 2010 will be roughly \$50,000 total; \$25,000 each for design and data collection.

With Austin-Free Net acting as the Fiscal Agent, TARA will solicit donations from Austin-Area non-profits and citizen groups to match a City contribution of up to \$25,000. By pledging to participate at a \$500 or \$1000 level, these groups will show their support for this vital project by funding its success.