

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

COMMISSIONER TODD STAPLES



BROADBAND TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

The Texas Department of Agriculture is seeking qualified individuals to assist in the review of applications submitted to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), a program created and funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Information about the review process and role of reviewers is below. Please read through the brief summary and contact us if you have additional questions. Thank you for your attention and I hope you will consider assisting the state in this important role.

Program guidelines for BTOP outline an opportunity for states to provide input in the application evaluation process. The Texas Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Public Utility Commission of Texas and the Texas Public Safety Commission, is to review applications to BTOP and make funding recommendations to the NTIA.

More than 100 applications seeking to improve broadband access for Texans have been filed with NTIA through the BTOP. The state wishes to develop application review committees to assist in evaluating and scoring these applications as they relate to the State of Texas' policy on broadband, which can be found at:
http://www.texasagriculture.gov/vgn/tda/files/1848/32865_Priority%20for%20Review%20and%20Recommend.pdf.

BTOP includes three funding categories: 1) for the development of broadband infrastructure; 2) for the development of public computer centers; and 3) for the development of sustainable broadband adoption programs. The goal is to establish at least one review committee to consider applications to each funding category.

Generally, reviewers should have a good understanding of the requirements for funding and deploying broadband technologies, as well as the benefits of broadband deployment to public facilities and its application in the advancement of work force skills, economic development, health care, and education. A reviewer may also have experience working with constituent groups to accomplish the goals of BTOP, for example operating a public computer center or establishing programs to improve computer skills.

If you are interested in volunteering as a reviewer, please e-mail your qualifications, along with a signed confidentiality/non-disclosure form, to broadband@texasagriculture.gov. Also, please indicate your preferred area of review from the three funding categories outlined above.

Please respond by September 23rd.