



Texas Conference of Urban Counties

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TechShare

Sharing Information Technology Resources

Policies, Guidelines and Procedures

August 23, 2004

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TechShare Program
August 2004**

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1.0 TechShare Vision

Urban counties can save taxpayers' dollars and provide better service to their constituents through higher quality information-technology (IT) resources obtained at lower cost through collaboration.

2.0 TechShare Concept

TechShare is a program of the Texas Conference of Urban Counties (Urban Counties) created in the Spring of 2004. Through TechShare, counties can collaborate on technology projects and share costly information resources. Counties can pool their efforts to obtain higher quality technology resources at a lower cost.

The TechShare program includes collaborative *projects* and shared *resources*. Resources can be a shared *assets*, *expertise* or *services*.

TechShare projects are collaborative efforts where participants save money by sharing the cost of a project. Throughout this document, the term "project" refers to an organized effort with a fixed budget, duration and deliverables that provides value to participating urban counties. The project may involve system design, application development or acquisition, asset enhancement, services and other collaborative efforts under the TechShare program. Projects produce deliverables that are defined, accepted, and shared among the participating members. When a project produces a deliverable, it is the property of the Texas Conference of Urban Counties and can be shared by member counties at an incremental cost for providing the county with access to the deliverable.

TechShare projects can produce applications, systems, or other technology assets. These TechShare assets are owned by the Texas Conference of Urban Counties and are available for all to share. TechShare assets can include application software that is either developed or acquired through the program; licensing agreements that provide access to software products for all urban counties; specialized technologies tailored to county needs; and services such as call centers or training programs that are available to all.

TechShare expertise can be personnel with proficiency in project management, specialized technology skills, specialized consulting services, grant and funding acquisition services, or expertise in a particular system or technology.

By sharing information technology resources, urban counties will have access to higher quality systems built to Texas county requirements at a lower cost than if the counties each pursued their own individual technology initiatives.

3.0 TechShare Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of TechShare is to save taxpayers' dollars by providing a means for counties to pool their resources on a voluntary basis to improve and extend the capabilities of each county's IT infrastructure and systems.

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A secondary goal of TechShare is to provide a means for counties to share scarce IT resources that would not generally be available to all members or would be available but at a higher cost.

Through the TechShare program, the Urban Counties will accomplish the following objectives:

- Substantially reduce IT acquisition, development, maintenance, enhancement and operating costs for participating counties.
- Allow the development or acquisition of complex and innovative IT assets that meet the specific needs of Texas county government.
- Produce IT assets that are readily shared among members and are flexible to adapt to each county's unique processing needs.
- Optimize the use of scarce and skilled resources, such as:
 - √ Project management,
 - √ Systems design specialists,
 - √ Database analysts,
 - √ Technology infrastructure specialists, and
 - √ Other technology specialists.
- Provide direct benefits to county government, such as:
 - √ Improved services to constituents,
 - √ Increased management capabilities,
 - √ Increased productivity,
 - √ Reduced operating costs, and
 - √ Optimized county government operating procedures.
- Increase buying power and reduce costs through collaboration and cooperative purchasing of IT resources.
- Gain control of technical directions and future costs through shared ownership of IT assets.

4.0 TechShare Guiding Principles

The following principles will be used to guide decisions and activities of the TechShare program:

- TechShare will only pursue collaborative efforts that produce value and result in quantifiable savings for participating counties.

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- It is preferable to own systems and assets rather than lease or rent them.
- Although counties share application systems under the TechShare program, the “ownership” and “custodians” of data do not change. Application systems shared under TechShare must be designed and deployed to support county and local government ownership and control of data.
- Application systems developed or acquired through TechShare must support county government “best practices” and be adaptable to meet the unique processing requirements of each county.
- Each participating county will pay their pro-rata share of capital and operating costs for a project or resource, regardless of when the county joins the program. There will not be a financial benefit for a county to wait and let others pay for the capital costs of a project or resource.
- Counties that participate in projects and invest in the capital costs of resources obtained through TechShare may be reimbursed for their capital investment. As new counties or other government entities join the program and pay their pro-rata share of the cost to share the asset, a portion of the payment may be allocated to reimburse existing participating counties for their capital investment.
- Ownership of the intellectual property for TechShare assets should vest with the Texas Conference of Urban Counties for the benefit of the participating members.
- TechShare projects should return tangible value to participating counties within twelve (12) months of inception. Projects should be staged for rapid delivery to quickly provide direct benefits to participating counties.

5.0 TechShare Policies

The following policies are intended to support the goals and objectives of the TechShare program:

- 1. Collaborative projects and shared resources will be managed by Oversight Boards comprised of representatives from participating counties who are financially contributing to the collaborative project or shared resource.**

Oversight Boards will be established for each collaborative project and each shared resource.

Each Oversight Board is responsible for ensuring that the work done on a project or the improvements made to an asset are consistent with county needs and requirements.

Each Oversight Board will ensure that the assets developed or acquired comply with the standards adopted by the Board of Directors.

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Each Oversight Board will make periodic reports to the Board of Directors on the status of the collaborative efforts of the participating entities.

Each Oversight Board for an asset will manage the maintenance, support and operation of the asset for the benefit of the urban counties sharing the asset.

- 2. All contracts necessary to implement the TechShare program, conduct collaborative projects, support and maintain shared assets, and provide shared resources will be negotiated and administered by the Board of Directors.**

While an Oversight Board may be charged with the responsibility of evaluating proposals and recommending contracts as part of the program, only the Board of Directors may negotiate and execute contracts on behalf of the Texas Conference of Urban Counties.

- 3. The resources necessary to support the TechShare program will be managed through the Executive Director.**

Resources will be allocated to the various projects and shared resources based on the level of the financial stake of each participating county. Administrative and support costs for the program will be recovered as part of the project- and resource-sharing budgets approved by the Board of Directors.

- 4. The Board of Directors may adopt technical standards and guidelines necessary to facilitate the sharing of resources and to ensure TechShare assets are flexible and adaptable to meet county needs.**

The Board of Directors may ask the Information Technology Directors Group or other advisory entities to provide suggestions or recommendations regarding standards.

- 5. The intellectual property rights for all assets developed or obtained through TechShare will vest with The Conference of Urban Counties. Intellectual property rights include, but are not limited to, ownership of copyrights, trademarks and patents, software applications, enterprise license agreements, contracts, deliverables, and artifacts.**

In the case where urban counties pool their resources to increase market power and acquire licensed products, the Texas Conference of Urban Counties will hold the license and any other cooperative contracts as an asset under the program.

- 6. All responsibilities for data and information managed through the use of TechShare resources remain with the local county or other entity that is the custodian of record for the data.**

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While the Texas Conference of Urban Counties may provide assistance when local entities receive requests for data and information, it is not responsible for access or distribution to third parties of data managed through the TechShare program.

7. All member counties and approved public-sector partners may voluntarily participate in a collaborative TechShare project or voluntarily share a TechShare resource.

For those entities choosing to participate in the program, the following conditions will apply:

- The county or other approved public-sector entity will enter into an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the Urban Counties that provides a structure for governance of the program.
- A specific Addendum to the ILA will be developed for each individual project or shared resource, which will be submitted for approval to the counties wishing to participate.
- Participants must agree to prohibit further distribution of the assets of the program to non-participants.
- Members that finance the development of an asset may have their capital costs returned to them over time as part of the maintenance and operations budget for the asset. Payments may include provisions for the time-value of the capital investment. Such decisions shall be provided for in the appropriate Addendum of the ILA.

8. Asset-sharing budgets will be developed by each respective Oversight Board and presented to the Board of Directors for approval. The Board of Directors of the Urban Counties will establish the annual budget for each shared asset within the TechShare program.

Funding schedules will be developed in such a way as to ensure that all counties share equally, proportional to the appropriate cost drivers as defined in the budget, in the acquisition, development and maintenance of assets.

9. The Board of Directors may grant non-transferable, non-exclusive licenses for any TechShare assets to any organization or company.

The Board of Directors may grant authorization to external entities to share TechShare assets under these conditions, at a minimum:

- All entities must enter into non-disclosure agreements that prohibit further distribution and/or sharing of the asset.
- The entity must agree that in utilizing the asset, it will communicate the

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origin and ownership of the asset to users.

- The entity must agree to hold the Urban Counties harmless with respect to any claims or litigation resulting from the use of the asset.
- No implementation assistance or end-user training will be provided unless the entity chooses to contract with the Urban Counties to obtain those services.
- Fees to external entities associated with sharing the asset will be based on the standard fee schedule adopted by the Board of Directors for the asset.

10. The Urban Counties will abide by the antitrust laws of the United States and the State of Texas in the overall administration of the TechShare program.

11. Travel costs for the members of the Oversight Boards, project teams, and other appropriate teams or groups formed in the course of this program may be reimbursed through TechShare, provided that sufficient funding has been authorized in the respective project or resource-sharing budget.

6.0 Guidelines

The following guidelines are designed to support the policies of the TechShare program.

6.1 *Management Guidelines*

This section outlines the duties and responsibilities of the various entities involved in the TechShare program.

Board of Directors

- Establish and revise policies governing the TechShare program.
- Approve the creation of projects, acquisition of assets, and sharing of resources through the program.
- Approve the revenue and expenditure budgets for the activities within the program.
- Review and approve all contracts, procedural documents, manuals, and other guidelines pertaining to the management of the program.
- Designate a chairperson for each Oversight Board.
- Establish informal working groups or advisory groups, where appropriate, on the

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recommendation of Oversight Boards or the Executive Director.

- Review project, asset management, and resource-sharing proposals and authorize the solicitation of counties for participation and funding.
- Approve funding models and fee structures for collaborative projects and shared resources.
- Review and approve contracts and contract amendments.
- Approve the participation of external entities in TechShare projects and sharing of resources, *i.e.*, assets and expertise.
- Adopt technical standards, with input from the IT Directors Group.
- Promote TechShare activities and program participation.

Executive Director

- Develop and revise policies governing the TechShare program and recommend approval to the Board of Directors.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration through the TechShare program and recommend the creation of projects to implement those opportunities.
- Assemble, review, and recommend approval of the revenue and expenditure budgets for activities within the program.
- Serve as an *ex-officio*, non-voting member of all Oversight Boards.
- Administer all contracts, procedural documents, manuals, and other guidelines pertaining to the management of the program under the guidance of the Board of Directors.
- Assign and manage resources of the TechShare program, including contracts, agreements and consultants.
- Review and approve travel reimbursement requests for each project or shared resource.
- Recommend the establishment of informal advisory groups or working groups where appropriate to further the objectives of the program.
- Develop project proposals and recommend the solicitation of counties for participation and funding.
- Develop funding models and fee structures and recommend their adoption by the Board of Directors.
- Recommend the participation of external entities in TechShare projects to the Board of Directors as appropriate.
- Prepare and present detailed and summary financial information necessary for

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the administration and management of the program.

- Render invoices, receive funds, establish and maintain appropriate accounting records, establish and utilize an appropriate cost accounting system, and manage accounts receivable.
- Provide information to member counties and potential program participants to increase awareness of the program and the opportunities for sharing and collaboration therein.
- Promote TechShare activities and program participation. Serve as the communication and distribution center for all information related to the program.

Oversight Boards

- Provide management and oversight for TechShare projects and shared resources.
- Review and approve budgets, funding models and fee structures to support TechShare resources.
- Review and approve draft requests for proposals and other supplier solicitation documents as appropriate.
- Review supplier proposals, recommend qualified supplier(s), review project or asset management plans, recommend procurement strategies, and conduct preliminary contract negotiations. Refer recommendations to the Executive Director for the selection of suppliers to support TechShare.
- Monitor and direct project or asset maintenance and support activities, including contract compliance, and recommend necessary contract amendments or other contractual actions.
- Establish procedures and oversee the review and testing of deliverables, artifacts, and work products. Certify deliverable completion in writing and forward documentation to the Executive Director.
- Participate in status meetings and provide timely review and input to deliverables as required.
- Coordinate project activities with informal advisory groups or working groups as appropriate.
- Organize the activities of user groups where appropriate. Receive advice and recommendations from user groups.
- Develop any recommended follow-on proposals for additional projects or resource sharing.
- Recommend termination and/or closure of project activities where appropriate.

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Information Technology Directors Group

- Serve as a resource to help the Board of Directors and the Executive Director evaluate new ideas, projects, and resources for TechShare.
- Assist the Executive Director in developing TechShare proposals to start new projects or initiatives under the program.
- Develop technical standards to provide a framework for technical integration within the program, including, but not limited to, methodologies, applications, communications, infrastructure, and the like.
- Recommend the adoption of standards to the Board of Directors.
- Provide technical consultation and direction for all Oversight Boards.
- Conduct periodic project and asset reviews to insure compliance with adopted standards.
- Promote TechShare activities and program participation.

Advisory Groups and Working Groups

- Serve as resources to help the Board of Directors and Executive Director evaluate new ideas, projects, and resources for TechShare.
- Assist the Executive Director in developing TechShare proposals to start new projects or initiatives under the program.
- Provide input to Oversight Boards, the Board of Directors and the Executive Director as requested to aid in the oversight of the program, projects, and shared resources.

6.2 Oversight Board Membership Guidelines

Participating entities will designate representatives to serve on Oversight Boards. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors will appoint a chairperson for each Oversight Board.

Oversight Board membership may be limited at the discretion of the Board of Directors as specified in the TechShare ILA.

Voting strength on Oversight Boards will be set forth in the Addendum for each collaborative project or shared resource. Voting strength on Oversight Boards can be adjusted at the discretion of the Board of Directors if the size of the Oversight Board has been limited due to the large number of participating entities.

6.3 Travel Guidelines

The following travel guidelines are intended to provide the maximum proportion of available funds toward the actual development of TechShare assets. Additionally,

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adherence to these guidelines will help contain costs that are incurred to administer and manage them.

These guidelines were developed with the understanding that the time spent by participants on TechShare activities is a cost to their respective organizations and is a valuable resource that should be conserved. Generally, time spent on teleconferencing and other “at home base” activities is preferable to long periods of travel. Therefore, all parties that utilize travel funds to support TechShare are requested to follow the guidelines outlined in this section.

TechShare business should be conducted in a timely manner. When immediate action is required, consider teleconferencing, fax transmission, email, and other alternatives to face-to-face meetings.

Meetings should be held at the offices of appropriate contractors or suppliers, at member locations, or at the Urban Counties office. Expenses for meeting space and travel should be minimized whenever possible.

To ensure proper administration, and to minimize potential budgetary impacts, all requests for travel expense reimbursement must be submitted to the Executive Director within sixty (60) days of the last day of the meeting or when the expense was incurred to be eligible for reimbursement.

6.4 User Group Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to assist the Oversight Boards in the management of user group activities. As a “best practice” in information technology management, user groups will be organized for any shared asset, regardless of the number of members sharing the asset.

User groups are organized for the purpose of gaining input into county requirements for improving shared assets. The Urban Counties recognizes the benefits of receiving input from user groups and encourages strong and active participation. Maintenance and enhancements for shared assets will be driven by users through both the Oversight Board and user groups.

Participation in user groups is voluntary. Any member or external entity sharing financially in the maintenance of an asset is eligible to participate in a user group. Individuals participating in user-group activities must be approved by the member or external entity that the individual represents.

All costs associated with participation in user-group activities are the responsibility of the county or other entity participating in the user group.

User groups will not be official Urban Counties administrative or operating entities and are organized solely to provide input to Oversight Boards.

7.0 How TechShare Works

Counties wishing to participate in TechShare adopt an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the Urban Counties. An Addendum to the ILA will be adopted for each project in which a county chooses to participate or asset the county chooses to share.

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Each project will be managed by an Oversight Board composed of representatives from the counties who are collaborating on the project. Decisions related to the project will be made by the Oversight Board.

Each shared asset will be managed by an Oversight Board composed of representatives from the counties sharing the asset. Decisions related to enhancements or improvements to the asset will be made by the Oversight Board.

The Urban Counties Board of Directors will provide oversight of the program as a whole. The Board of Directors will request input or advice from the Information Technology Directors Group regarding technical issues related to the program.

Many ideas and suggestions will be submitted for the TechShare program. When a new idea or suggestion is submitted, the Urban Counties may organize an informal working group to research, develop, and evaluate the idea for TechShare. The working group may be composed of representatives from the Board of Directors, Executive Director and staff, county leadership, IT Directors Group, subject matter experts, or others who have an interest in the idea or suggestion. Once the initial research and assessment has been completed, the working group can develop a TechShare proposal for consideration by the Executive Director and the Board of Directors. Working groups will provide a valuable resource for the program. County participation in the working groups is an important activity that will help develop new ideas for the TechShare program.

8.0 Procedures

The procedures outlined in this section are designed to provide a structure for the administration and operation of the TechShare program.

8.1 Project Proposals

The following step-by-step procedure should be used to develop, review, and approve proposals for TechShare projects.

Responsibility	Activity
County working groups, comprised of elected leaders, IT Directors, subject matter experts, and other interested staff.	1. Works with Executive Director and staff to prepare TechShare proposals to initiate a project or acquire a resource.
Executive Director	2. Ensures proposals meet TechShare format and content requirements.

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Responsibility	Activity
Executive Director (continued)	3. Distributes proposals to Board of Directors and Oversight Board members, as appropriate, for review. Shepherds proposals through the review and approval process.
Board of Directors	4. Conducts proposal review and determines disposition. If not accepted, returns to proposer with appropriate feedback. 5. Approves proposal for distribution to members to solicit participation.
Executive Director	6. Prepares Addendum to Master ILA. 7. Distributes proposal with Addendum to Master ILA to counties to solicit participation.
County Commissioners Courts	8. Reviews proposal and returns responses. If participating, Commissioners Court must approve Addendum. 9. Appoints representative(s) to the Oversight Board.
Executive Director	10. Collects responses and makes recommendation for proceeding.
Board of Directors	11. Reviews responses. Determines whether to proceed. If not, provides feedback to members. 12. If proceeding, authorizes Executive Director to organize Oversight Board.
Executive Director	13. Organizes Oversight Board.
Chairperson, Board of Directors	14. Appoints chairperson for Oversight Board.
Oversight Board	15. Proceeds with project. Provides quarterly status reports to Board of Directors.

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8.2 Project Proposal Format

TechShare project proposals should be prepared in the following format.

1. Cover Sheet

Contains minimal information regarding the title of the project, organization preparing the proposal, names of the people preparing the proposal, and date of preparation.

2. Project Description

Describes the scope of the project, including goals, objectives and outcomes, as appropriate.

3. Value Proposition

Provides justification for the investment of funds in the project. Estimates the value to the members. Justifies the need for collaboration under the TechShare program.

Expected benefits and savings should be quantified and expressed in terms that can be communicated to elected officials, county leaders, and stakeholders.

4. Background Information

Furnishes the reader with a background and history to better understand the purpose of the project. Provides specific information related to benefits, cost savings, productivity increases, return on investments, and the value proposition to participants.

5. Task Statement and Schedule

Provides a specific list of tasks to be completed and defines the project schedule.

6. Sourcing or staffing strategy

Suggests methods for obtaining the services, supplies and/or products needed to complete the project.

7. Cost Estimates

Provides cost estimates for the project, linked or associated to deliverables and potential assets.

8. Funding Model

Estimates the amount of funding needed and the number of participants required. Funding models must include an estimated project cost for administration expense.

9. Other Elements

Includes any other information of value pertinent in evaluating the proposal.

8.3 Asset or Resource Acquisition

The following step-by-step procedure should be used to acquire products, services, or assets for the program.

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Responsibility	Activity
Oversight Board or working group, as indicated above	1. Prepares Request for Proposals for services or products and forwards to Executive Director. Includes list of potential vendors or suppliers.
Executive Director	2. Reviews RFP and vendor list for legal sufficiency and compliance with Urban Counties and TechShare rules and procedures. 3. Announces and distributes RFP to prospective vendors or suppliers. 4. Receives proposals and coordinates review with Oversight Board.
Oversight Board	5. Evaluates proposals and recommends preferred vendors or suppliers. 6. Documents results of evaluation and submits results to Executive Director.
Executive Director	7. Reviews Oversight Board recommendation and determines selection. 8. Arranges contract negotiations with Board of Directors concurrence. 9. Negotiates contract and forwards final recommendation to Board of Directors.
Board of Directors	10. Reviews and executes contract.
Executive Director	11. Notifies Oversight Board and assigns resources.
Oversight Board	12. Manages project or asset. Reports on contract compliance to Executive Director.
Executive Director	13. Administers contract.
Oversight Board	14. Provides quarterly status reports to Board of Directors.

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8.4 Asset or Resource Acquisition RFP Format

The following list of requirements is suggested as a starting point for developing solicitations for TechShare RFPs for services and products. The RFP for each situation should be crafted to address the participating counties' specific needs and requirements for the project, asset, or resource.

1. General Requirements

- Introduction and Background
- Texas Conference of Urban Counties and TechShare Overview
- Statement of Purpose and Intent, Goals and Objectives of the Procurement
- Planned Calendar of Events
- Pre-Proposal Conference
- Cost of Proposal Preparation
- Proposal Submission Requirements
- Receipt of Proposal
- Evaluation of Proposal
- Oral Presentations
- Proposal Clarifications
- Evaluation Criteria and Weighting
- Award
- Rejection of Proposals

2. Technical Requirements

Project-specific requirements for the products and/or services needed:

- Scope
- Design Considerations
- Standards
- Integration and Interfaces
- Implementation Requirements

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- Licensing Requirements
- Hardware/Software Platform(s)
- Database Platform(s)
- Documentation Requirements

3. Statement of Work

- Description of the tasks, activities, and deliverables required.

4. Vendor Qualifications

- Firm expertise, qualifications and capabilities
- Staffing expertise, qualifications and capabilities
- Firm references
- Staff references

5. Contract Requirements

- Draft contract for the project.

6. Appendices and Forms

Formats and forms.

- Requirements Matrix
- Firm References
- Staff References
- Cost Proposal

8.5 Asset Distribution

For each asset to be shared among the counties and other participating entities, the Oversight Board should develop an Asset Distribution and Sharing Procedure based on the specific nature of the asset.

For example, if the asset is an application software system, the Asset Distribution and Sharing Procedure would include provisions for installing the software, converting data (if necessary), testing the installation, confirming production status, and the like. The Asset Distribution and Sharing Procedure could also include provisions for updating the application as new versions or releases become available.

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The specific nature of the asset will dictate the information required in the Asset Distribution and Sharing Procedure.

The Asset Distribution and Sharing Procedure must describe the provisions required to protect the source code and all intellectual property of The Texas Conference of Urban Counties.

Before an asset can be approved for distribution, the Asset Distribution and Sharing Procedure must be reviewed by the IT Directors Group. The IT Directors Group, along with the Oversight Board, can then recommend to the Board of Directors the specific actions needed to distribute and share the asset.

8.6 *Travel Budget and Expense Reimbursement*

The Urban Counties Board of Directors will develop guidelines for travel and expense reimbursement that will apply to all TechShare activities. The guidelines will be consistent with the policies and guidelines of the member counties.

In cases where the approved budget for a project or asset maintenance and support includes funding for reimbursement of travel expenses, the Executive Director will publish and disseminate the guidelines to all participants, along with the appropriate forms and documentation requirements for travel expense reimbursement.

Requests for reimbursements for travel expenses will be submitted to the Urban Counties for review, approval, and reimbursement.