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## Austin billing, collections company plans expansion, 150 new jobs

By [Barry Harrell](#)

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

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Austin-based billing and collections company Gila Corp. is moving ahead with plans for a \$5 million expansion that could create 150 local jobs over the next two to five years, company officials say.

To assist in the expansion, the company is applying for a special designation from the Texas Enterprise Fund, which could result in a tax rebate of up to \$1.25 million. But first, the Austin City Council must sign off on the designation — which could happen at its Aug. 4 meeting — followed by final approval from the Texas Enterprise Zone Program.

The designation requires that the expansion fall into a designated Enterprise Zone, or that the company fill at least 35 percent of its new jobs with people who are "economically disadvantaged," according to the program.

Receiving the designation could result in Gila Corp. getting a rebate on state sales and use taxes for some expansion-related expenditures, according to the Texas Enterprise Zone Program. For Gila Corp., the maximum possible refund is \$1.25 million, based on the size of its proposed project.

Gila Corp. CEO Bruce Cummings said his company could go forward with the expansion plans even without the designation, but the tax refund "would definitely help," he said.

Founded in 1991, Gila Corp. provides outsourced collections, billing and other financial services through its two divisions, Gila Group and Municipal Services Bureau. The company has about 600 clients nationwide, including a number of state and local government entities.

Gila Corp. currently employs more than 300 locally in a variety of jobs, including call center operators, payment processors, IT technicians and software developers, Cummings said. Most of the 150 new jobs would likely be in call center and payment processing, Cummings said.

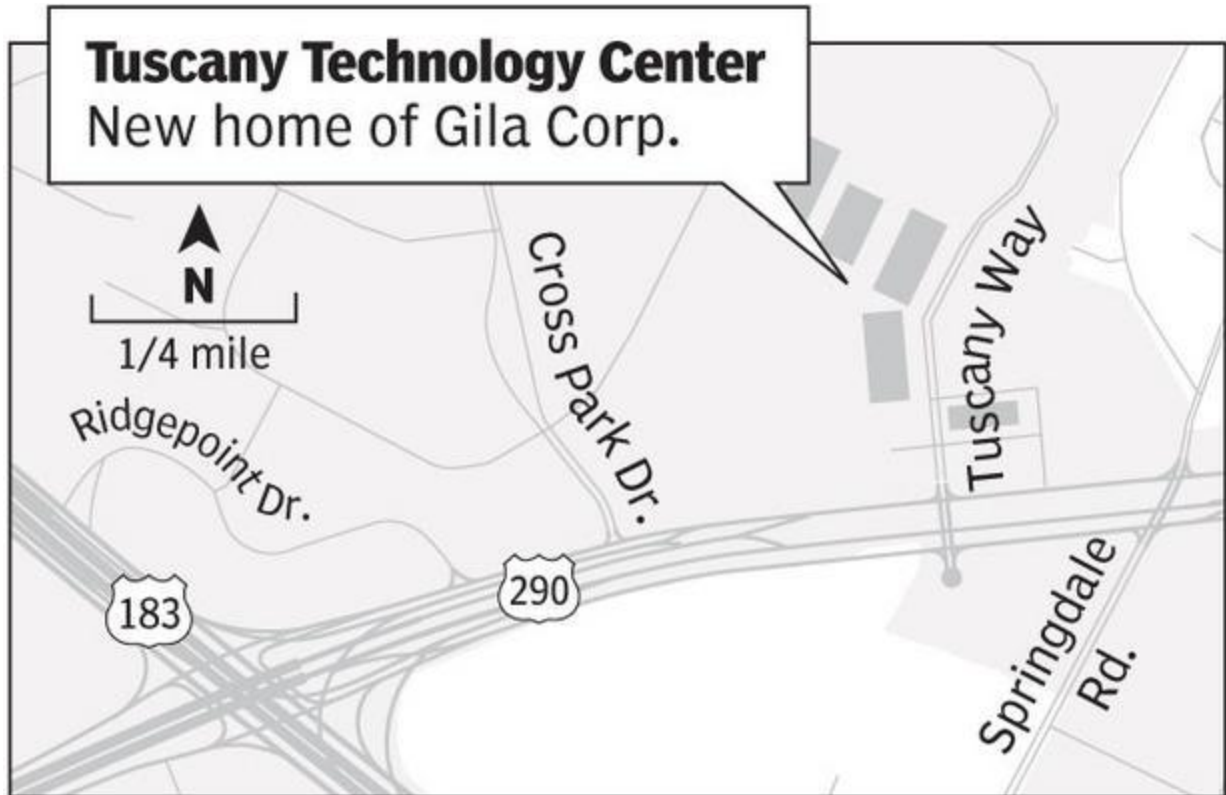
Those jobs typically pay about \$14 per hour, with incentive bonuses available, he said.

The proposed new jobs would be part of Gila's move from its current offices off Airport Boulevard into a new 55,000-foot facility at Tuscan Technology Center, a business park at 8800 U.S. 290 East. The company hopes to have the move "wrapped up by the end of next month," Cummings said.

Gila Corp. is privately held, and Cummings declined to release revenue figures. He said the company has seen steady revenue growth and expects more to come. He said the Texas business climate and the Austin business community have played a role in that success.

"There's a lot of call centers that have come available around the country with the downturn in the economy, so we looked at moving our location," he said.

"But when we did a full assessment of quality of life, the type of people we'd like to hire as well as the pro-business climate in Austin, we made the decision to take over another facility in Austin instead of moving outside the state."



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Courtesy of JB Goodwin