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MEET THE TEAM



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental Sustainability team, Tierra Mía Austin's solution of a challenge facing our community is to provide full understanding of the zero-waste philosophy to Hispanic-owned and all community businesses to help them comply with the City of Austin's Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO). The urgency stems that by October 1, 2018 the URO's Organic Diversion will require all food permitted businesses to reduce or divert organic material from the landfill and noncompliance citations for permit owners will be between \$200-\$2000 per day per deficiency by the Austin Code Department.

Tierra Mía's mission is to educate the community on all components and benefits of diverting waste, to meet the city's waste reduction goal, and to ultimately provide a better environment for our youth. Our team approached our project by providing 3-free education seminars and participating at a food truck festival event. In addition, we created a pilot program documenting one specific restaurant's economic and environmental impact.

Our project involves partnerships with the City of Austin's Austin Resource Recovery Department, Organics by Gosh, and Casa Chapala Restaurant. We gathered inspiration for our project by touring Organics by Gosh, the official composting service for the City of Austin, where we first hand got to see (and smell) the second life of what would have been waste being turned into rich soil compost ready to be sold. Also, our team member Pamela Guerra became Zero Waste Professional Certificate holder in November 1, 2017, successfully completing the URO training and exam.

The 3 seminars took place the Saturday mornings of Feb 18, February 25th and March 11. To be prepared for the seminars we created and translated information material for the business owners in Spanish to help facilitate our presentation and discussions and to make sure everyone understood all components about the ordinance. Our hopes were to encourage them to become an environmental leader in taking community responsibility, and operating a waste free business. We wanted to let as many people know about the ordinance so when the outreach opportunity of the first ever Austin Food Truck Festival was presented we planned efforts to distribute the information. In total, we distributed and spoke to 59 food permit business owners.

The Tierra Mía Champions Pilot program started in February, when a local restaurant, Casa Chapala took the first steps and went to a zero-waste training. Everyone was educated on the new ordinance and were instructed that Casa Chapala will be choosing to compost as their form of complying with the food diversion requirement. After a 30-day trial run, the numbers came in and a total of 2,170 pounds of food scraps were diverted from the landfill and donated to



Organics by Gosh. With those numbers, the restaurant's Waste Management Bill was cut down 30% equaling a savings of almost \$350/month.

The major find of this project was truly the lack of knowledge in our restaurant community about the URO and food diversion requirements; Tierra Mía Austin believes that it's not only important that we continue our journey of spreading awareness and education, but it's imperative in order to reach the master plan of Zero Waste by 2040. To help the Hispanic-owned businesses, the website TierraMiaATX.weebly.com was created to help sustain Spanish language available resources. The team seeks to have this link added to Austin's Resource Recovery webpage.



ISSUE AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Public waste systems in cities cannot keep pace with urban expansion. As the Austin-Round Rock Area continues to grow, city officials are faced to open new landfills in order to properly ensure a healthy and safe area to live in. In 2011, Austin City Council voted to extend the life of current landfills by committing to a Zero Waste Plan by 2040. In order to divert an impactful amount of waste by then, the plan involves recycling and reducing waste by reusing products and then recycling and composting the rest. The city is so committed to this plan that they officially changed their name from Department of Solid Waste to Austin Resource Recovery (ARR); giving the resources a second chance and not be in the landfill for years to come. Since then, the city has adopted many policies in support of this plan, like the Climate Protection Plan or the Re-Use Austin store. However, the policy that will affect everyone is the Universal Recycling Ordinance with Organics Diversion requirement (URO).

Starting in 2012, all types of businesses in the City of Austin were required to “ensure recycling is available to tenants and employees and in food service to establish [recycling plus] organics diversion programs” (Austin Resource Recovery Fact Sheet, 2012). All businesses were phased into the ordinance over a 5 year period, leading all commercial property owners to be subject to the URO by October 1st, 2017 and all food permitted businesses by October 1st, 2018. The ARR has taken a variety of forms of spreading the word including written materials, visual materials and events including a Zero Waste Professional Certificate Program Certificate (ZWPC). ZWPC is given to individuals who complete required training and receive a score of 80% or higher in the exam. These individuals are trained by the city to “ensure Austin business professionals have a comprehensive understanding of Zero Waste principals, the Universal Recycling Ordinance and how to help businesses comply” (ZPWC Terms and Conditions).

The URO is unique in terms that it is not an option. The ARR has a Business Outreach team who are fully committed to help businesses implement the URO requirements. Our 2018 HAL Environmental Sustainability team’s mission is to help educate the Hispanic-owned food business or any food permitted business in the community on all components and benefits of the URO requirements to help meet the city’s waste reduction goal. Not only are we motivated to help spread the word in order to divert waste from our landfills but to help business avoid violations of the ordinance, punishable by a fine of between \$200 and \$2,000 per deficiency, per day (§8.0 Austin Resource Recovery Administrative Rules).

OUR GOAL

Our priority was to provide awareness and resources for Hispanic owned businesses across the City of Austin and prepare them on the Universal Recycling Ordinance; the City's goal to be Zero Waste by 2040. The ordinance will require all food permit business to divert their food by this fall. Our first step was to get familiar and get our hands into the options to Divert Food. We had the privilege to tour Organics by Gosh, a landscaping outpost selling organic soil, with composting and recycling services. We toured the grounds and witnessed the process. With their advice and expertise, we decided to develop three free training seminars for Hispanic business owners. The seminars were facilitated in Spanish and materials were translated.



We discussed the city's goal of Zero Waste by 2040, how to complete an Annual Diversion Plan, the ways to divert food, and resources available to them. When the trainees completed the training session, they were classified as Tierra Mía Austin Champions. The passion and the urge to do more outreach kept us moving forward. We attended the ATX Food Truck Festival to continue that passion. During the festival, we talked to several food truck owners and asked for them to take a survey (before and after conversation), to see how much they knew regarding the ordinance and the city's plans of zero waste. The results clearly indicated that there is a need for more outreach and sharing to make them aware of the resources the community has to offer to stay in compliance. During the seminars, our first Tierra Mía Austin Champs, Casa Chapala, took the first steps and began diverting their food by composting. During the experiment, the results on how much waste was composted was impactful. If our entire restaurant community did everything in their power to become Zero Waste by 2040, we as a whole will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have a cleaner planet earth for our youth.

WHY WE TOOK ACTION?



Pictures like the one to the left are the reason why we must do something. The picture is The Great Pacific Garbage Patch that has a collection of plastic and floating trash between Hawaii and California. The patch is twice the size of Texas.

STEP ONE: ORGANICS BY GOSH TOUR



This is a drop off of composting materials being looked through the Organics by Gosh.



We discovered non - compostable products on the field. We need training sessions for the community ASAP! We believe that the community needs continuous training in order to master recycling and composting procedures.

After an extensive process....this is the final result. This takes almost a year to produce.



STEP TWO: TIERRA MIA AUSTIN SEMINARS

Thank you Casa Chapala for letting us use your home and allowing your fellow business peers be part of the movement.



Seminar One (February 24th)



Seminar Two (March 3rd)



Seminar Three (March 24th)

STEP THREE: ATX FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL

After sponsoring our seminars, we decided to educate even more restaurant owners. Tierra Mía Austin had several important conversations with food permit owners. Huge thanks to Austin Resource Recovery for giving us some materials to distribute at the festival.



TIERRA MIA AUSTIN IN ACTION



Become a Tierra Mía Austin Champion!

A Tierra Mía Austin champion, are businesses who voluntarily lead by example to implement the diversion of food before the ordinance is in place 100% by attending our training. We decided to focus our attention to a group of leaders who will take the initiative of being advocates of Tierra Mía Austin. These will be our Champions for the cause of saving the planet and following the ordinance to avoid any penalties the City of Austin will use to hold the community accountable.

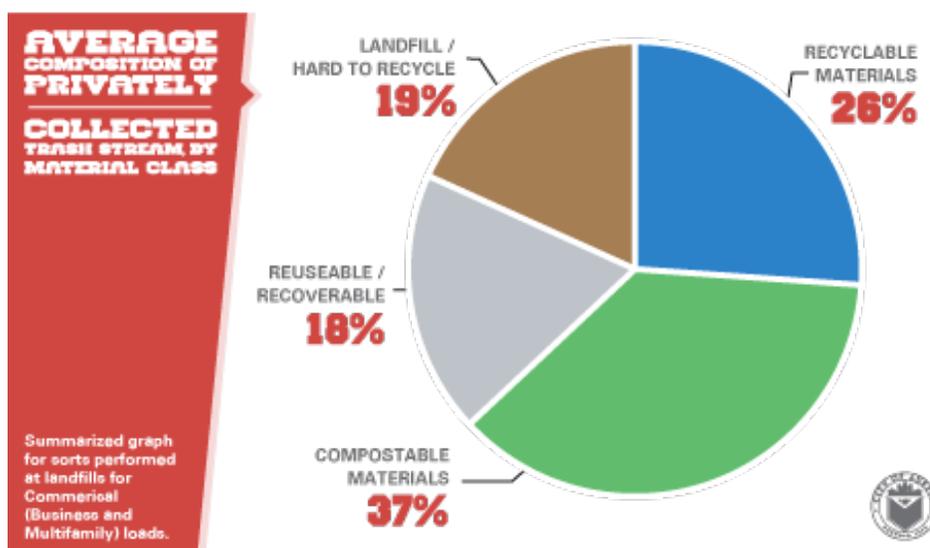


Casa Chapala's Staff takes the lead and becomes Tierra Mía Austin Champions.

TIERRA MIA'S MEASURABLE IMPACT

We all know that Austin is city unlike any other. A city with awesome folk, food and plenty of live music. Unfortunately, because our beautiful city is growing at a tremendous rate, so is our city's trash. And we are running out of space to put it!

Austin's commercial properties contribute to 75% of Austin's total waste. While only a mere 15% of waste is from single family homes.



(Figure A)

Upon taking a closer look at the trash taken to the landfill, according to Figure A, one will find that *“more than 80% of materials in the trash could have been recycled or composted. And to break it down even more, Organic/Compostable materials make up about 37% of materials sent to local landfills.”*

So to help improve those statistics and help Austin reach the Zero Waste goal, we first needed to measure the knowledge of our people attending our seminars in order to move forward.

(Refer to Appendix VI; Survey Questions)



(There were two more questions following question 5 but could not be answered due to the fact that the questions could only have been answered if our attendees had responded “Yes” to question 5.)

With the results of the the pre-survey, our team, Tierra Mía Austin, found that it was without a doubt that our attendees were NOT knowledgeable, not only in the URO, but in the Organics Diversion as well.

After completion of the seminar and pre-survey, the Tierra Mía Austin Champions of Casa Chapala decided to make a change!

Together, our Team Tierra Mía and our Champions embarked on a month long journey to reduce and divert not only recyclables but also to divert and reduce Casa Chapala’s organic resources as well.

MONTH PROGRESS

With the help of the City of Austin's Resource Recovery and our educational seminar, we were able to label bins for TRASH, ORGANICS AND RECYCLE, and post informational signs in both English and Spanish (Displayed in Figure B and Figure C). These tools helped guide our champions to sort waste, recyclables and organics accordingly.



Bins Labeled in the Casa Chapala Kitchen (Figure B)



Recycle Bin with informational Poster (Figure C)



MONTH FINDINGS

MARCH 1st - March 31st

Casa Chapala Tierra Mía Champs were able to divert the following:

- **2,170 pounds of Organic Resources**

With those numbers and the fact that the two 8-yard dumpsters previously used for ALL trash were NOT overflowing due to recyclables and organics being diverted, Casa Chapala's Waste Management Bill for the Month of March (received April 16, 2018), was cut down by 30%! That's a savings of \$300! Savings thanks to the newly gained knowledge of the Tierra Mía Champs!!

TESTIMONIALS

"I feel that diverting food waste is an easy way to help grow beautiful produce and trees the better way. I have now become more aware of the many pounds of food waste we move and how its very important to reduce and divert our waste to the landfill." Jaza M.

"Becoming a Champion has helped me become more aware of wasted produce usage and now I know that I can help the environment by diverting my wasted food" Jeanette A.

"Completing the Tierra Mia Seminar, has changed my perspective about recycling and composting. In my personal life, Ive started to become more aware of the types of paper, plastics, trash and food I throw away. Before I would just throw away anything into the trash. Now that I know there's a difference, I strive to toss my things in the correct bin." Maria B

"After taking the Tierra Mia Class and Learning about the URO, I feel that we are really helping our city become a cleaner and safer city by diverting food from landfills from" Felipe C.

"By having practiced food diversion at our restaurant for the past 30 days and seeing the money we have saved because of it, has made us more aware of all the food that is actually wasted. It has helped our kitchen staff be more resourceful and think more about what they are putting on the plate and that helps the food costs be more realistic so that we may focus on serving more realistic portions to our guests. Having used the food that normally wouldn't be in our recipes has helped save even more money for the business since we are buying less product and only ordering as needed." Lucina B

TIERRA MIA AUSTIN CHAMPIONS IN ACTION

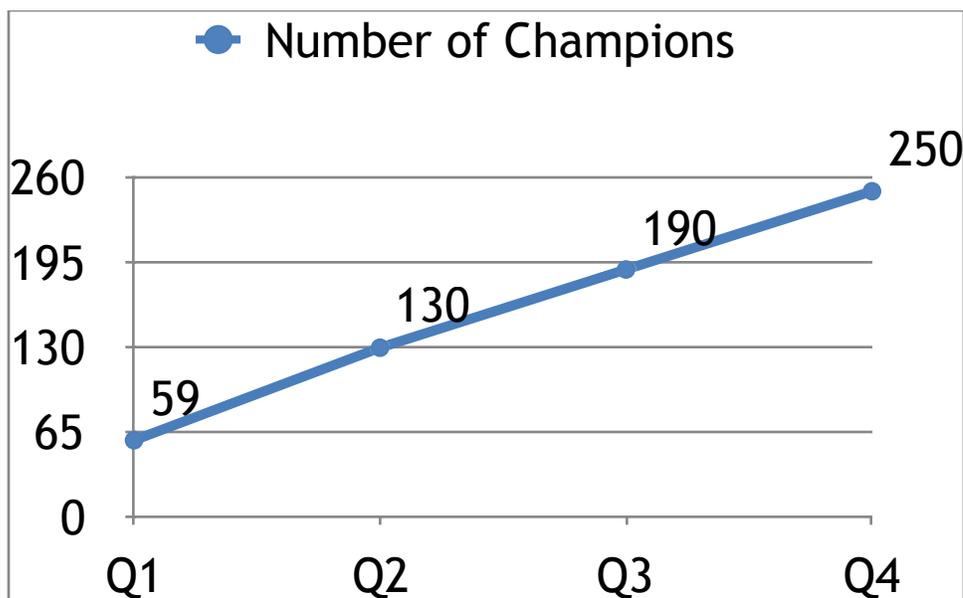


Tierra Mía Austin Champions at Casa Chapala are composting leftover foods that will be dropped off at Organics by Gosh

SUSTAINABILITY

As a result of the lack of knowledge in our restaurant community about the Universal Recycling Ordinance, Tierra Mía Austin believes that it's not only important that we continue our journey of spreading awareness and education, but it's imperative in order to reach the City's goal of Zero Waste by 2040. With the foundation that Tierra Mía Austin established in 2018, all restaurants of all shapes and sizes can follow the steps of Casa Chapala in becoming a Champion!

During the implementation of our project, Tierra Mía was able to meet and educate 59 different Mexican restaurants in the Greater City of Austin. This was done by simply hitting the streets and visiting with restaurants and inviting them to attend one of our 3 seminars. With the backing of the City of Austin, and partnerships with small businesses such as Organics by Gosh, Tierra Mía Austin can truly make an impact. Our impact would generate over 250 Champions a year which would help divert over 5.5 million pounds of food! Imagine what that would do for our Planet?



Tierra Mía's goal is to offer a specific avenue for hispanic owned restaurants to easily become compliant with the City's ordinance and have access to resources to guide them through the process. We created TierraMiaATX.weebly.com to help facilitate our goal. We seek to have this link added to Austin's Resource Recovery webpage.



Additionally, to promote accountability and sustainability, to become and maintain Champion status, all restaurants would be held to a 3 step process:

- 1) Training and Education-** Learning what to divert and how to divert.
- 2) Becoming a Champion-** Getting the entire staff certified and setting up proper diversion equipment in the restaurant; recycling and composting bins, laminated signs, submitted diversion plan, etc.
- 3) Yearly Audits-** An audit will be done yearly to inspect that diversion plans are submitted and that the restaurant is meeting proper standards to continue to be a Champion.

Tierra Mía Budget

Expenses	Description	Actual
Marketing	Facebook Campaign	\$ 30.00
Event Swag	Pots, Soil, Logo	\$ 51.61
Big Frog South Austin	Team T Shirts	\$ 82.23
Sticker Mule	Tierra Mía Austin Decals	\$ 58.00
Total		\$ 221.84

In-Kind Donations and Services	Description	Actual
Michael Angulo	Tierra Mía Austin Logo	\$ 200.00
Austin Resource Recovery	Flyers and Containers	\$ 75.00
Casa Chapala	Breakfast Tacos	\$ 150.00
Casa Chapala	Event Space	\$ 600.00
Mi Mundo	Classified	\$ 80.00
Organics By Gosh	Drop Off Compost	\$ 5.00
Total		\$ 1,110.00



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



SPECIAL THANKS TO:





REFERENCES

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- City of Austin, Austin Resource Recovery Chapter 15-6. “Administrative Rules.” *Administrative Rules*, 2012.
- “Austin’s 2015 Community Diversion Study.” *Home*, www.austintexas.gov/2015DiversionStudy.
- “Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO).” *Home*, www.austintexas.gov/uro.
- “OBG Web- Zero Waste- Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO).” *Organics By Gosh*, www.organicsbygosh.com/obg-web-zero-waste-austin-universal-recycling-ordinance-uro/.
- “Leading Change.” Waste Management 2016 SR, sustainability.wm.com/

APPENDIX

I.



Multifamily Residential Properties

Multifamily properties including:

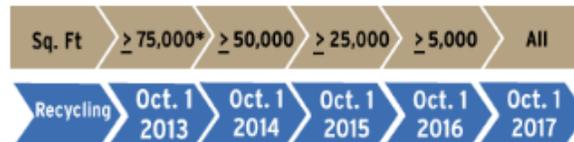
- Apartments
- Condominiums
- Mobile home parks
- Private funded dorms
- Assisted living facilities



Commercial Non-Residential Properties

Non-residential commercial properties, including:

- Retail
- Medical facilities
- Hotels and Motels
- Religious buildings
- Commercial office buildings
- Private educational facilities
- Industrial and Manufacturing Facilities



* Only commercial offices, educational facilities, medical facilities, and religious buildings

** Mixed-Use properties can report Commercial and Multifamily spaces separately, or aggregate information on a single Annual Diversion Plan as a commercial property. The affected date for a Mixed-Use property is based on the predominant use (majority of square footage used) of the facility.

ORGANICS DIVERSION TIMELINE

By Oct. 1, 2018, all food enterprises* will be required to ensure their employees have convenient access to organics diversion services.

Food service enterprises include:

- Grocers
- Farmers' Markets
- Food and Beverage Industry (restaurants, bars, catering)



II.

ARE YOU AFFECTED BY THE UNIVERSAL RECYCLING ORDINANCE (URO)?

Make sure your property or business is in compliance before applying.

MINIMUM RECYCLING REQUIREMENTS

By Oct. 1, 2017, property owners/managers at all commercial and multifamily properties must provide tenants and/or employees convenient access to recycling. Learn more at austintexas.gov/URO

- 

1. Sufficient recycling capacity for tenants and employees
- 

2. Convenient access to recycling services
- 

3. Recycling services for paper, plastics #1 and #2, aluminum, glass, cardboard
- 

4. Bilingual recycling education and informational container signs
- 

5. Online submission of Annual Diversion Plan
DUE FEB. 1

MINIMUM ORGANICS DIVERSION REQUIREMENTS

Affected food permitted businesses must reduce or divert organic material from the landfill. Requirements phase in over 3 years beginning Oct. 1, 2016. Learn more at austintexas.gov/BizOrganics

- 

1. Keep food scraps and other organic materials out of landfills
- 

2. Bilingual informational signs
- 

3. Annual bilingual education for employees
- 

4. Annual online submission of Organics Diversion Plan
DUE FEB. 1
- 

5. Convenient access to collection containers (if using compost collection services)

III.

UNIVERSAL RECYCLING ORDINANCE: ORGANICS DIVERSION

Fact Sheet for Food Permitted Businesses

CUT WASTE, CUT COST AND COMPLY WITH AUSTIN'S UNIVERSAL RECYCLING ORDINANCE

WHO IS AFFECTED? WHEN?

The Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO)'s Organics Diversion standards support Austin's Zero Waste goal by requiring food permitted businesses to reduce or divert organic material (e.g. wasted food, yard trimmings) from the landfill. The URO intends to increase the life of local landfills, reduce harmful environmental impacts and encourage economic development.

Date Affected	Oct. 1, 2016	Oct. 1, 2017	Oct. 1, 2018
Food-Permitted Area (sq ft.)	≥ 15,000 Sq. Ft.	≥ 5,000 Sq. Ft.	ALL

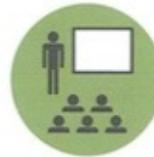
MINIMUM ORGANICS DIVERSION REQUIREMENTS:



Keep food scraps and other organic material out of landfills



Bilingual informational signs



Annual bilingual education for employees



Annual online submission of Organics Diversion Plan



Convenient access to collection containers (if using compost collection services)

COST-EFFECTIVE OPTIONS TO REDUCE ORGANIC WASTE:

- Reduce purchase of organics and/or packaging by working with suppliers
- Replace single-use material with reusable material (e.g. use plastic crates for deliverables rather than cardboard boxes)
- Prevent waste (e.g. offer reduced portions, use smaller plates, use bulk condiments)
- Recover surplus food (e.g. use items in specials, sell 'ugly' produce or day-old baked goods)
- Donate leftover food to feed people
- Donate food scraps to farms or organizations to feed animals
- Recycle yellow grease (i.e. used cooking oil)
- Compost organic material using commercial hauler or onsite composting system
- Other innovative methods, as approved by director in writing



AustinTexas.gov/organics • (512) 974-9727

IV.

DETAILS ON PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

Organics Diversion – Divert organic material from landfill using multiple methods (e.g. food donation, composting).

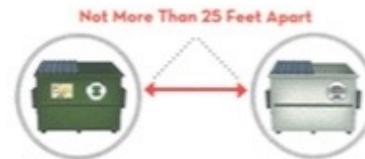


Signs – Illustrate onsite organics diversion program and/or acceptable materials and include information in English and Spanish.

Education – Instruct employees on organics diversion program when hired and periodically thereafter.

Organics Diversion Plan – Each year, submit an Organics Diversion Plan at austintexas.gov/odp. This plan describes diversion efforts and must be submitted by Feb. 1.

Convenient Access to Diversion Containers – If using compost collection services, collection containers must be placed within 25 feet of landfill trash containers.



HELPFUL TIPS:

- **Disposal Stations:** Place clearly marked recycling, organics and landfill trash containers next to one another when possible. Color coding practice is blue for recycling, green for organics and black for landfill trash.
- **Green Team Lead:** Designate at least one employee to take ownership of the organics diversion plan and regularly check that items are discarded in correct containers.
- **Garnishes & Sides:** Avoid inedible or rarely eaten garnishes. Implement an “ask first” policy for sides or additional items to ensure customers want the item.
- **Condiments & Cutlery:** Keep condiments, service ware, napkins, straws and other disposable accessories behind a counter to avoid unnecessary use.



RESOURCES:

Feed people:

- City of Austin Food Donation Guidelines & Resources: austintexas.gov/page/eating-food
- Keep Austin Fed: keepaustinfed.org
- Central Texas Food Bank: austinfoodbank.org

Feed animals:

- Growers Alliance of Central Texas: sites.google.com/site/growersallianceofcentraltexas

More information:

- E.P.A. Food Recovery Hierarchy: epa.gov/sustainable-management-food
- U.S. Zero Waste Business Council: uszwbc.org
- Feeding America: feedingamerica.org

For Questions or Assistance

Please contact the Business Outreach Team at
512-974-9727

or

CommercialRecycling@austintexas.gov

More information about the Universal
Recycling Ordinance is available at:
austintexas.gov/uro

V.

ALOJADO POR EL GRUPO DE LÍDERES HISPANOS DE AUSTIN

Ordenanza Universal de Reciclaje

Todo lo que necesita saber!



El 1ro de Octubre estará aquí antes de que lo sepas!
En esta fecha, se requerirán todas las empresas de alimentos para asegurar que sus empleados tengan acceso conveniente a los servicios de desviación de comida.

Organizaremos 3 seminarios **GRATUITOS** para ayudarlo a cumplir:

Todas las empresas de alimentos están invitadas!

Restaurante Casa Chapala
9041 Research Blvd. Suite 100
Austin, TX. 78758
(Desayuno ligero sera servido!)

Los seminarios serán de las 9-10 AM:

Febrero 24

Marzo 3

Marzo 24

Cosas que cubriremos:

Que es desperdicio cero?
Plan de desviación anual
Maneras de desviar su comida
Recursos



Sabian Que???



Austin Resource Recovery
Proporciona una amplia gama de servicios diseñados para transformar los residuos en recursos mientras se mantiene limpia nuestra comunidad.



Zero Waste Business Rebate

Empresas calificadas pueden recibir hasta \$1,800 en reembolsos para comenzar, ampliar o mejorar el reciclaje, el compostaje u otros programas de cero desperdicio.



VI.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Do you know about the Universal Recycling Ordinance: Organics Diversion?

Based on a total of 59 responses:

- 80% answered *NO*
- 20% answered *YES*

2. How would you describe your interest in organics diversion?

Based on a total of 59 responses (summarized):

- 45% had no clue what “organics diversion” was
- 10% said “Recycling”
- 45% said “A lot of interest”

3. How much information do you know about “Organics diversion”?

Based on 59 responses:

- 90% said None
- 10% said Some

4. Have you turned in your Organics Diversion Plan?

Based on 59 responses:

- 100% said *NO*

5. Are you diverting your food waste?

Based on 59 responses:

- 100% said No

