

# CITY OF AUSTIN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

Linking Austin with Communities  
and Businesses Around the World



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The [City of Austin International Program](#) is the City's focal point for international business, trade, educational and cultural activities.

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## NOVEMBER 2011

November is flying by already and it will be Thanksgiving before we know it! Already this month, the City of Austin International Program has hosted delegations from Ningbo, China and Kristiansand, Norway and is getting ready to host visitors from Croatia and Thailand.

We are also preparing for the exciting [upcoming forum](#) on workforce development needs in the logistics and manufacturing sectors. If you are a local employer in these sectors, we hope you'll join us for this event and share your perspective on this issue.

Channel 6 featured another one of the International Program's events on the most recent CityView! A great segment on the U.S. Japan World Smart Cities Forum can be [seen here](#) (coverage of the forum starts at minute 5:10).

We hope to see you at one of the great events on our international calendar over the next few weeks, and make sure to stop by Ten Thousand Villages tonight to pick up some holiday gifts and [support Austin Sister Cities International](#).

We want to hear from you! If you have an upcoming event or activity you would like us to mention in the newsletter, please email [Natalie Betts](#). Please submit events by the 10th of the month you wish to have your event featured. Please note that there will not be a December newsletter due to the proximity to the holidays and low number of events happening in late December and early January. Also [let us know](#) if you would like to be featured in a business or non-profit profile, and send us your feedback on our newsletter content.

## Thinking Local, Going Global: Austin Business Profile of the Month

This month we are delighted to feature local technical furniture maker, Formaspace, providing some excellent advice for small businesses about how to overcome exporting obstacles and how going global can positively impact your domestic brand. Formaspace was even [visited earlier this year](#) by U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk and is [featured on the USTR website](#) as a national example of how to grow a business through international partnerships and exporting.

## Formaspace

### Tell us about your company and its international reach:

[Formaspace](#) was originally founded as a commercial cabinet shop. In the 1990's the company was approached by Dell to design a sturdier, more flexible bench for their facilities and quickly found its focus shifting to technical furniture. In the last decade Formaspace added laboratory furniture into the mix. It was acquired in 2006 by Council Oak Investors and made the name change to Formaspace Technical Furniture in 2007. There was a period of massive growth following the change in ownership, as shown by Inc 5000 recognition 3 years running (2007, 2008, 2009). Due to Formaspace's focus on made to order industrial-strength design, its products have been in demand worldwide. Within the last 5 years, Formaspace has completed projects in Taiwan, China, Iraq, Chile, Canada, Mexico, Germany, Korea, Ghana, and many other markets.

### What obstacles did you face to exporting your products, and how did you overcome them?

Previously, the [U.S. Export Assistance Center \(USEAC\)](#) consulted Formaspace regarding export classification codes and labeling information, which facilitated a \$36K export transaction to Saudi Arabia. If USEAC hadn't helped, Formaspace might not have provided the proper paperwork, and the order would have been held in customs. The negative impact on the transaction and any possible future work would have been enormous, as it is unclear

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## Cultural Events

### November 14

Happy Hour and Travel  
Tales: Germany  
6:00-7:30 pm  
Scholz Beer Garten

Hostelling International presents this opportunity to share your favorite hostel stories and hear from a fellow traveler about her adventures in Germany.

### November 15

Austin International Good  
Neighbor Council Chapter  
Meeting Luncheon  
11:30 am

how and when Formaspace would have been contacted if such an event had occurred or how long it would have taken to resolve the issues.

USEAC has also assisted Formaspace's overseas activity by putting the company in contact with local contractors to assist with installs in foreign markets.

### How has expanding to international markets benefited Formaspace?

Besides economic benefits, expanding to international markets has increased Formaspace brand awareness worldwide. Bringing more attention to our overseas presence strengthened our position here on U.S. soil. We have entered more business agreements with other large companies in the U.S. now that we have shown we are capable of handling the necessary logistics of building and shipping overseas. It also brings more publicity - Formaspace's partnership with a company in the Asia-Pacific attracted the attention of US Trade Ambassador Ron Kirk during his recent visit to Austin, and he toured our facility.

### What tips do you have for other local businesses thinking about exporting their products?

Contact the [Austin U.S. Export Assistance Center](#) for assistance with tariffs, customs, and all matters associated with shipping overseas.

### What's next for Formaspace?

Following our move to a facility more than double its previous size, Formaspace has been working to establish new trade relationships and strengthen existing customer ties. This past August was the largest sales month in company history and we've had our production facility working at full capacity to meet that demand.

## Non-Profit Spotlight: Multicultural Refugee Coalition

Multicultural Refugee Coalition is on a mission to empower refugees settled to the Austin area towards self-sufficiency through education, community and reconciliation. MRC provides a welcome community and supportive services for refugees from war-torn and economically disadvantaged countries who now call Austin home. The organization has built a thriving community with 6 different programs serving over 400 refugees from 23 different countries with a limited budget of \$50,000 over the last couple of years. Co-founder and executive director Meg Goodman Erskine answered our questions about this small non-profit that's making a big impact in the lives of refugees in Austin.

### Tell us a little bit about your organization's history--how did you get started?

Multicultural Refugee Coalition became a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in May 2009 and was founded by 2 Liberian refugees and 2 American women who wanted to provide supplemental community services for refugees settled to the Austin area. When Johnson Doe and Paul Tiah first arrived as refugees from Liberia, no such services existed beyond the assistance of their resettlement agencies. They found the situation to be quite lonely and overwhelming and they didn't want this to be the case for other refugees as they settled. With the help of Meg Goodman Erskine and Sarah Stranahan, a supportive refugee community began to form where refugees and Americans could work together to provide assistance and a welcoming space.

Today the organization has grown to include 6 programs in the areas of "Pathways to Self-Sufficiency" including computer literacy and job skills and "Community Development" including sewing, soccer, gardening, sewing and youth and children's programs. In 2010, MRC served over 400 refugees from 23 different countries.

### Describe some of your organization's upcoming events or activities:

MRC shares a community center with Foundation Communities and has weekly programs on Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons. We also have a community garden in collaboration with the Sustainable Food Center and play soccer in the Austin Mens Soccer Association. These events are ongoing and we welcome anyone interested to get involved.

We are planning a dinner event in early 2012 so please check our website ([www.mrcaustin.org](http://www.mrcaustin.org)) and Facebook page (Multicultural Refugee Coalition) for more information about this and other upcoming events.

### What have we learned about the international community in Austin in your work with MRC?

Up to 1,000 refugees are settled to Austin every year from places such as

11.30 am  
El Gallo Restaurant  
[RSVP](#) by Noon on Nov. 14

**November 16th and Every Wednesday**  
Coffee Mornings for International Spouses  
10:00 am- Noon  
University Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall

Every Wednesday morning, Global Austin hosts gatherings to provide support, friendship and resources to those living in Austin because their spouses are here as students, scholars or professionals. Americans interested in meeting these visitors to Austin are also welcome. On November 16th, the Coffee Morning is celebrating Thanksgiving with Thanksgiving cooking demonstrations and a feast. International spouses will receive a book of Thanksgiving recipes. There will be no Coffee Morning the week of Thanksgiving but will resume Nov. 30.  
[Learn more](#)

**November 16**  
Latino and Jewish Discussion Panel  
Hosted by Texas Hillel  
5:30-7:30 pm  
Free  
Texas Union Santa Rita Suite

Ever wondered about the significance of little hat that Jewish men wear? Or wanted to know what makes Quinceañeras so special? Join the Jewish and Latino Student Coalition's expert panel for a discussion that will answer questions about both cultures as part of an initiative to build a Latino and Jewish Student Coalition at UT. This event is part of UT's [International Education Week](#).

**November 17**  
Treasures of the Benson Latin American Collection  
3:00-4:00 pm  
Free  
Sid Richardson Hall Room 1.108

Come see some of the Benson Latin American Collection's treasures, from Santa Anna's handwritten memoirs to maps of Mexican towns drawn by indigenous artists in the 1500's. This event is part of UT's [International Education Week](#).

**November 18**  
La Luna Negra Dance Theatre  
8:00- 10:00 pm  
\$26-32 general, \$10 students  
Bass Concert Hall

Chicago's Luna Negra Dance Theatre delivers richly textured and highly original

Congo, Bhutan, Iraq, Burma, Cuba and more. These refugees add so much to the international fabric of Austin, especially for those that get the privilege to interact with them. However, so many people don't even know that they are here. We would like the chance to engage and interact more with the larger international community of Austin so that the contributions and experiences of these refugees can become better known. Coming in 2012 we will have many opportunities to engage through hosted coffees, film screenings and other opportunities for cultural exchange.

#### What are the opportunities for getting involved with MRC?

We welcome volunteers to get involved in our programs, especially those that may have various language skills. On Thursday evenings for our job program we could use some help in advising on career planning. We have a variety of skilled professionals settled here that could use some help to get back into their field. On Saturdays we could use some help from skilled sewers for our sewing program as well as any ESL professionals. We could also use some help from those that would love to engage with youth and children. Please let us know if you are interested in getting involved. We can be reached at [info@mrcAustin.org](mailto:info@mrcAustin.org).

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### Featured International News Story: [Mexican Truck Is First In Delayed NAFTA Program](#) *National Public Radio*

The North American Free Trade Agreement, passed in 1993, was supposed to allow trucks from both Mexico and the United States to drive on highways on either side of the border. Implementing this provision was stalled for almost two decades due to concerns about safety and losing American jobs. But on October 21, the first Mexican truck crossed into Texas under this provision. Approximately 10 more Mexican trucking companies are undergoing certification so that they too can drive on U.S. highways.

Trade with Mexico is highly important to the Texas economy: Texas exported nearly approximately \$71 billion to Mexico in 2010, according to the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#). Mexico is Texas' #1 trading partner and trade between our state and Mexico has remained strong despite rising violence in the country ([San Antonio Express-News](#)).

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### Access a Free International Directory of Trade Service Providers at [GlobalTrade.net](#)

If you are an importer or exporter or want to become one, GlobalTrade.net can connect you to over 12,000 trade service providers--agents, distributors, traders, and export intelligence providers--at no cost.

If you are a trade service provider--[sign up to create a profile](#) and reach over 50,000 importers and exporters that may need your services every month.

GlobalTrade.net was launched in November 2010 and in less than a year has become heralded as the single go-to-resource for the International Trade Services community. The network spans three continents. The online directory's founding partners include the U.S. Commercial Service, UK Trade & Investment, HK Trade & Development and Kompass.

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### Workshops, Classes, and Networking Events

#### November 11

Latin American and Caribbean Forum:  
Current and Future Projects at the North American Development Bank  
Speaker: Hector Manuel Camacho, CFO, North American Development Bank  
7:30 - 9:00 am  
Grossman International Center- UIW  
San Antonio, TX  
[RSVP](#)

#### November 15

North America's Corridor Coalition Regional Meeting  
featuring a  
Logistics and Manufacturing Workforce Roundtable Discussion  
12:00-4:00 pm  
Free  
Zilker Clubhouse

Local employers are invited to a lunch and roundtable discussion focused on the logistics and manufacturing workforce needs of the Austin metro region.

contemporary dance in a distinctive style that blends the discipline of ballet with the fiery energy of Latin and Afro-Caribbean forms and rhythms. There will be a post-performance talkback immediately following the show.

[Learn more](#)  
[Buy tickets](#)

#### November 29

Mario Moreno: Cantinflas  
1943 El Circo  
7:00 pm  
Free  
Mexican-American Cultural Center

The Cine de Oro Fall Film series features Mario Moreno, considered the greatest comedian in the history of Mexican cinema. His performances satirized the class struggle of Mexico. He was also famous for his unique use of language, word-play, and entendre. The film is in Spanish with English subtitles.

[Learn more](#)

#### November 30

Border Music: David Hidalgo and Marc Ribot  
8:00 pm  
\$24-32, discounts available for UT students, faculty, staff, and seniors  
Bass Concert Hall

Guitar meets guitar as Texas Performing Arts hosts the U.S. premiere of this rocking post-roots, pan-Latin, rave-up/descarga.

[Learn more](#)  
[Buy tickets](#)

#### December 29-30

Shen Yun  
2:00 and 7:30 pm  
\$50-150  
The Long Center

A performance by Shen Yun is a presentation of traditional Chinese culture. It features masterful choreography and graceful routines ranging from grand classical processions to ethnic and folk dances, with dancers moving in stunning synchronized patterns. Music from a full live orchestra combines the best of Chinese and Western composition.

[Learn more](#)  
[Buy tickets](#)



### Conferences

#### November 15

Constitutional Design and Conflict Management in Africa  
8:00 am -5:30 pm  
Free  
AT&T Conference Center

Leading global scholars and practitioners will debate new case studies of constitutional

Participants will have the opportunity to share their perspectives with representatives from Workforce Solutions, the City of Austin, NASCO and fellow business leaders. During lunch, attendees will hear from keynote speaker Tony Yarell of FreightWatch International about the growth of this Austin-based cargo security company.

[RSVP by November 11th](#)

#### November 16 and Every 3rd Wednesday

Texas-Asia Business Series  
Presented by the UTSA International Trade Center  
7:30- 9:00 am

Nov. 16- Doing Business in Korea: Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and Delegation Report  
Speaker: Melinda Rodriguez, Alamo Asian American Chamber of Commerce  
\$15 AAACC/ITC Members, \$20 Non-members  
Quarry Golf Club  
San Antonio, TX

Covering the most up-to-date topics in Asia, the Texas – Asia Business Series provides the latest industry and market information presented by experts who have one result in mind - growing your business. The Texas – Asia Business Series consists of a series of monthly breakfast meetings held on the third Wednesday of every month. Each meeting will be packed with information and resources that provide a take-away value for your global enterprise, all while you enjoy coffee and breakfast.

[Learn more](#)  
[Register](#)

#### November 16

East Africa Market Size, Access, and Trade Policies  
Webinar  
11:00 am Central Time  
\$45

With 230 million consumers and a regional GDP of over \$114 billion, East Africa is becoming recognized among top consultancies as the next frontier for U.S. businesses and investments. You will hear from the Commercial Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Kenya and from U.S. companies doing business in the region. You will also hear how the USG finance agencies can support your efforts. They will provide you with answers to your questions during a highly focused and interactive webinar setting.

[Learn more and register](#)

#### November 16

Do You Speak Global?  
with the UT Center for International Business and Research  
2:00-3:30 pm  
Free  
McCombs School of Business Room 3.304

Symbols, gestures, items of clothing and behaviors say a lot, and like words, may mean different things to different people across the world. An interactive discussion and game will help you learn how to be a more engaged traveler and as a result, a more effective global communicator. This is event is part of UT's [International Education Week](#) (Nov. 14-18th).

#### November 16

Business Culture in Brazil  
Hosted by the Asian Business Student Association  
5:30-6:30 pm  
Free  
Location TBA

Want to learn about doing business in Brazil? Professor Orlando Kelm will discuss the Brazilian business culture--everything from dress code to business manners. This is event is part of UT's [International Education Week](#) (Nov. 14-18th).

#### November 17

Responding to International Waves of Political Change: US Foreign Policy and 1989  
Speaker: Mary Sarotte  
12:15 pm  
Free  
Sid Richardson Hall Room 3.122, UT Campus

The world changed dramatically after 1989. The cold war ended, Germany unified, NATO expanded and Russia was left on the periphery of Europe. Drawing on her most recent book, 1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe, and her current research, Dr. Mary Sarotte will explore these topics as well as the legacy of these monumental events for international relations today. Light refreshments provided.

[Learn more](#)

#### November 17 & 18

case studies of seven African countries and an innovative database of political institutions across all of Africa. The conference is open to policymakers, practitioners, researchers, students, and the public.

[Learn more](#)  
[Register](#)

#### December 5-6

Bank and Financial Institution Special Asset Executive Conference on Real Estate Workouts  
Special Assets \$695,  
Standard \$1,795  
Dallas, TX

This installment of IMN's series of Bank and Special Asset Conferences on Distressed Real Estate will feature discussions on loan sales, the macroeconomy, mezzanine loans, the latest strategies for loan workouts, and more.

[Learn more](#)  
[Register](#)



#### Trade Missions

##### February 20-24, 2012

Ports and Maritime Technology Trade Mission to India

U.S. Dept of Commerce  
Chennai, Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Kolkata

Application Deadline:  
November 18  
\$3,560 SMEs/\$3,760 large firms

India, one of the world's fastest growing economies, presents lucrative opportunities for U.S. companies that offer products and services in the maritime transport industry. A Trade Mission led by the U.S. Department of Commerce offers an attractive entrée for U.S. ports and maritime tech firms and associations given India's complex market.

[Learn more](#)

##### April 22-28, 2012

Automotive Parts and Components Business Development Mission to Russia

U.S. Dept of Commerce  
Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Samara

Application Deadline:  
January 6, 2012  
\$4,652 SMEs/ \$5,401 large firms

This mission is designed to provide an opportunity to explore Russia's rapidly expanding car and truck assembly market to a diverse

Capital de las Oportunidades  
Radisson Hotel Town Lake

This event is designed to help Latin American investors interested in Austin with their relocation or expansion plans. If you are a service provider for international businesses in Austin and would like to participate in this event, please [email](#) the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. To sign up for an expo table, click the link below.

[Learn more](#)

#### November 29 & 30

Complying With U.S. Export Controls  
Hosted by Austin Community College and Austin U.S. Export Assistance Center, Dept of Commerce  
AT & T Executive Education and Conference Center

This two-day program is led by Bureau of Industry and Security's (BIS) professional counseling staff and provides an in-depth examination of the Export Administration Regulations (EAR). The program will cover the information exporters need to know in order to comply with U.S. export control requirements on commercial goods.

[Learn more and register](#)

#### December 1

Save the Date!

Trade Opportunities Between Austin and Thailand in the Tech Sector  
City Hall  
Free

Speaker: Former Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand Korn Dabbaransi

For more information and to receive email updates on the details of this event, please [email Ben Ramirez](#).

#### December 8

GlobalAustin Citizen Diplomacy Reception and Networking Event  
5:30-7:30 pm  
Marker 10, Hyatt Regency Hotel

As a Citizen Diplomat, meet eight distinguished visitors from the Russia at this international networking event. These emerging leaders were selected by the U.S. State Department to visit communities in the U.S. for professional appointments and community hospitality. Their program focuses on Administration of Multi-Campus Universities: Governance Structures and Management Strategies. Complimentary parking and appetizers.

[Learn more](#)

#### December 9

Business Opportunities in Vietnam  
Webinar  
8:00-9:15 Central Time  
\$35

This webinar is part of a series of webinars leading up to the [2012 Trade Winds-Asia](#) business development conference and trade mission. Held on the 9th of every month until May 2012, each webinar will focus on a different country that Trade Winds-Asia will visit. The December webinar will focus on Vietnam, with Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia to follow in the coming months.

[Learn more](#)

[Register](#)

## News and Announcements

On **November 10th**, local fair trade retailer [Ten Thousand Villages](#) on South Congress will be hosting a **Shopping Benefit Night for Austin Sister Cities International**. A portion of the proceeds from purchases made between **5:00 and 9:00 pm** will support the local committees that foster friendly relationships and cultural understanding between Austin and our Sister Cities around the globe. Stop by on November 10th to purchase fair trade items for your home, do some early holiday shopping, and support this vital member of Austin's international non-profit community!

[Hostelling International](#)'s Southwest Texas Council is accepting applications for an **international travel scholarship** as part of its effort to encourage the pursuit of world exploration. The [application](#) deadline is **November 11th** at 5:00 pm.

On **November 18th** and every other Friday, the **Honorary Consul General Bernard Buecker** provides office hours at the International Center of Austin from 10:00 am- 3:00 pm. Individuals requiring authentication of a German document, German notarization, matters involving German inheritance,

cross section of companies selling goods and services into the automotive sector. As the richest of the BRIC countries, Russia remains one of the most promising markets for U.S. exporters. Sales of cars and trucks in Russia are currently growing at an annual rate of 30 percent.

[Learn more](#)

**May 14-22, 2012**

Trade Winds- Asia  
Business Development  
Conference and Trade  
Mission

U.S. Dept of Commerce  
Singapore, Thailand,  
Malaysia , Indonesia,  
Vietnam

\$1,950-\$3,950 SMEs  
\$2,850-\$4,850 large firms

As an official U.S. Dept of Commerce conference and multi-sector trade mission, the Trade Winds Forum is your company's connection to business opportunities in Asia! Singapore, an ideal launching point for expansion throughout the region, will be the host city for Trade Winds Asia. A series of [webinars](#) on Asian markets will precede the mission.

[Learn more](#)

[Register](#)

To find out about more multicultural events happening in Austin, [visit the Austin International Experience calendar.](#)

business or other general matters may arrange an appointment by calling (210) 226-1788.

The U.S. Department of Commerce has [uploaded a series](#) of online **Market Videos** on emerging markets that U.S. companies should be thinking about tapping into: China, India, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

If you are a small non-profit that uses email marketing, the service provider that is sending you this newsletter (Emma) is [awarding free lifetime email marketing services for 25 non-profits](#) at the end of the year. All non-profits with less than 10 employees are eligible to [apply](#). The application deadline for "Emma 25" is **November 21st**. We would love to see an Austin international non-profit win this great prize!

The International Trade Center at the University of Texas-San Antonio now has a **full-time trade consultant** based right here **in Austin!** Lisa McDonald is available to help local businesses with their import and export needs. Contact her at (512)-517-8873 or [Lisa.mcdonald@utsa.edu](mailto:Lisa.mcdonald@utsa.edu).

The U.S. Commercial Service's **National Export Initiative** has several upcoming webinars that can help your company start or increase its international sales. **Webinars** are available on on export planning and strategy, documentation and regulations, and on specific markets and countries. See the full list at [their website](#). Files from past webinars are also available for download.

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