

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

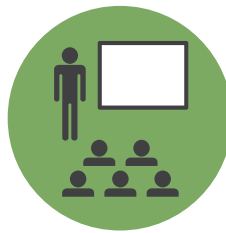
MINIMUM ORGANICS DIVERSION REQUIREMENTS:



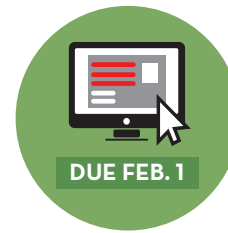
Keep food scraps and other organic material out of landfills



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



DETAILS ON PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

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



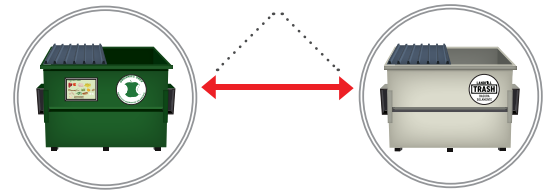
Signs – Illustrate onsite organics diversion program and/or acceptable materials and include information in English and Spanish.

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/organicsdiversionplan. 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.

Not More Than 25 Feet Apart



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