



COMPOSTING BUSINESS CASE STUDY

Capital Kitchens – Fall 2018

Austin, Texas



“While we wanted to compost, it seemed like a daunting task. I used the rebate to hire professionals who did the work for me and very thoughtfully set up a system that worked well for me and the clients.”

– Trish Wesevich, Owner
Capital Kitchens

CAPITAL KITCHENS – BUSINESS OVERVIEW

- Commercial kitchen space available for rent
- Located in strip center
- Serve 20-30 food trucks, catering businesses
- Opened in 2012
- Helped launch 45 local consumer packaged goods companies



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HIGHLIGHTS

- » Used \$1,800 rebate to hire zero waste consultants to create and implement customized diversion program that included compost
- » Reduced recycling contamination while concurrently adding compost collection
- » 6 months after implementation, 90% correct usage of all diversion programs
- » Diverting over 2,000 lbs/month of organic material (produce scraps, meat trimmings, napkins)

Challenges. Capital Kitchens is a shared commercial kitchen that rents space to 30 businesses, primarily mobile food vendors. The owner did not know where to start to comply with the URO Organics Diversion requirements, especially since clients already experienced challenges educating staff to recycle right.

Solutions. Capital Kitchens connected with Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) Business Outreach Team staff to understand how to comply with the URO, in advance of the effective date. The business decided to use the Zero Waste Business Rebate to hire professionals to create a holistic zero waste program, to save the owner time and hassle. The consultant successfully completed the following:

- Implemented new policies, such as requiring Capital Kitchen clients to sign a contract requiring clients’ staff to participate in zero waste training
- Provided training to all clients on what can be recycled and composted
- Created signage specific to materials generated at Capital Kitchens

Results. Thorough tenant education and easy-to-use diversion stations the small business owner saved time and money working with the consultants.

- Compliant with the URO Organics Diversion requirements
- Marketing tactic for Capital Kitchens to attract sustainable vendors and for clients, highlighting they operate out of a zero waste kitchen

Success Factors. Professional consultants with zero waste expertise handled all the set-up of the new compost program, from helping identify a hauler, to education. Having consultants made the process less intimidating and saved time for the business owner. Kitchen tenants are accountable via an addendum to the owner-client contract, requiring clients to agree to Capital Kitchens’ Zero Waste policy. The contract includes a commitment to zero waste, recycling and composting correctly, placing plastic film in the dedicated container, and training staff.

Looking Forward. Capital Kitchens continues to encourage their clients to work with a food rescue organization, Keep Austin Fed, to keep safe-to-consume food out of the compost, and divert the food to feed hungry people.

BUSINESS PROFILE

Business Type » Commercial kitchen
Neighborhood » South Manchaca
ZIP Code » 78745
Building » 3,600 sq. ft.
Employees » 2 full-time
New to recycling? » No, started in 2012

AUSTIN RESOURCE RECOVERY

Austin Resource Recovery’s Business Outreach Team offers free consulting services to help businesses reduce waste, recycle materials and comply with Austin’s Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO). Please contact us at:
P » (512) 974-9727
E » commercialrecycling@austintexas.gov

RESOURCES

www.austinmaterialsmarketplace.org
www.austintexas.gov/department/austin-green-business-leaders



Educational reminders for staff.