

BUSINESS RECYCLING CASE STUDY

Hardin House – September 2018

Austin, Texas



When the recycling roll-off didn't show up for move-in....

"We have a mountain of cardboard....actually, an entire mountain range. But we didn't give in to throwing it into the landfill dumpsters we were given access to."

- Kathryn Parke, Hardin House

HARDIN HOUSE - BUSINESS OVERVIEW:

- Women-only, private dormitory
- Located in UT's West Campus
- Established in 1937
- 113 units, 6 buildings

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RECYCLING HIGHLIGHTS:

- » Residents generate high volume of cardboard, plastic film & foam during August move-in
- » Recycle 60 cubic yards of cardboard during 48-hour move-in
- » Reduced landfill trash from 5 to 3x per week
- » Management dedicated to recycling, even when snafus arise, such as during 2018 move-in
- » Buy-in from management
- » Convenient in-unit recycling bins encourage year-round participation

Challenges. Hardin House is a private dorm in West Campus, directly west of the University of Texas. Each August, 229 women move in during a 2-day period, producing a large volume of boxes, plastic film and Styrofoam. Yearly turnover also makes recycling education challenging for director Kathryn Parke and staff.

Solutions. Hardin House has taken proactive steps to reduce their landfill footprint during move-in and successfully implemented year-round diversion tactics.

During August Move-In:

- 2017: Contracted for 1 recycling roll-off and 1 landfill trash roll-off. Staff instructed residents leave cardboard boxes in the hallway. Staff broke down boxes and placed into recycling roll-off.
- 2018: Despite early planning, at the last minute, hauler unable to provide a recycling roll-off. Rather than sending cardboard to landfill, management rented a trailer to collect the material.

Year-Round:

- Used [Zero Waste Business Rebate](#) to retrofit bussing carts and purchase in-unit recycling containers to increase tenant convenience. Bussing carts enable staff to source separate instead of sifting through buss tubs.
- Implemented back-of-house composting in kitchen and created stations throughout the property for compost collection.
- Work with local organizations to donate reusable items after move-out.

Results.

- Reduced weekly landfill trash collection from 5 to 3 days/week, which has covered cost increases for recycling and composting collection.
- Recycled 60 cubic yards of cardboard during move-in 2 years in a row.
- 2018, diverted 100 lbs. of Styrofoam to [Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center](#).

Success Factors.

- Leadership's commitment to the environment and strong working relationship with staff makes buy-in easier.
- Hauler provided initial staff training to reinforce proper recycling and composting habits. The Director also personally touts the program, with education, at the mandatory yearly tenant meeting.

Looking Forward. The dorm hopes to lead by example and encourage other properties to implement zero waste best practices during move-in/move-out.

BUSINESS PROFILE:

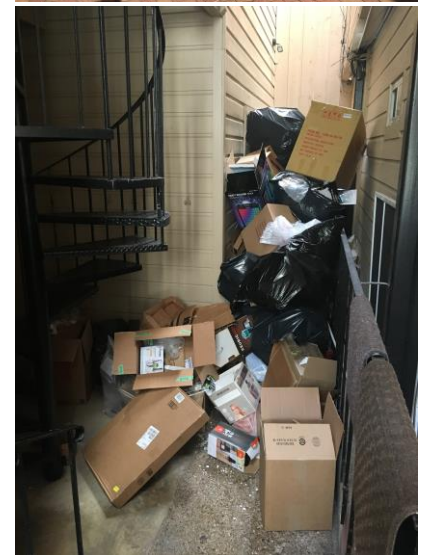
Type of Business » Women's Private Dormitory (Multifamily)
Neighborhood » West Campus
Zip Code » 78705
Building » 113 units with a commercial kitchen
New to recycling? » Started in 1970's

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:
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"Hardin House Mountain Range" created during move-in (Aug. 2017)