

## TRANSPORTATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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### **PRESS ADVISORY:**

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### **Travis County's T--Shirts for Hunger Project receives Outstanding Recycling Partnership Award**

**WHAT:** Travis County wins 1<sup>st</sup> Place for Outstanding Recycling Partnership

**WHEN:** Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>

**WHERE:** State of Texas Alliance for Recycling's (STAR) annual Texas Environmental Leadership Awards ceremony

Travis County (Austin, TX) has been selected as the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner of the Texas Environmental Leadership Award under the Outstanding Recycling Partnership category for the T-Shirts for Hunger Project. The Texas Environmental Leadership Awards are sponsored by State of Texas Alliance for Recycling (STAR), a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to increasing recycling and waste diversion rates by developing end-markets for recycled goods and supporting stakeholder groups throughout the state of Texas. The award program focuses on eight categories recognizing successes in education, partnerships, innovative programs, and leadership efforts of non-profits and local governments.

"Our award winners represent innovative programming and successful events that not only help conserve resources but also bring jobs and economic development opportunities to Texas," STAR Executive Director Sara Nichols said. "We are honored to recognize our award winners for all they do to further the STAR mission of increasing recycling rates in Texas, for Texans."

T-Shirts for Hunger is a collaboration with local non-profits, churches, and the Travis County Sherriff's Office, Transportation and Natural Resources Department, and Health & Human Services Department to provide re-usable bags for county-operated food pantries. Gently used t-shirts are donated through participating schools, churches, non-profits, and businesses and delivered to the Travis County Correctional Complex where inmates learn work skills by transforming the t-shirts into reusable shopping bags at no cost to the taxpayer. The newly created re-usable bags are then distributed with food to those visiting the food pantry or the seven Travis County Community Centers. Since its beginning in 2014, over 91,000 t-shirts have been diverted from area landfills.

**SAMPLE QUOTE FROM FOOD PANTRY:** Joy Stollings, Community Center Manager stated, the clients often ask, "Am I allowed to keep this bag - or do I have to give it back?" They definitely see it as a valuable gift. They also often say they like the cloth bags better than plastic – because they hold more groceries and

don't break. One client in particular started crying when she found out she could keep the bags – she said it would make a huge difference to her and her family since they were living out of their car.



<https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/environmental-quality/conservation/t-shirts>

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