



## **City of Austin, TX Chief Sustainability Officer**





The City of Austin is located in central Texas Hill Country and has a population of more than 770,000 residents. It was chartered in 1839 as the capital of the Republic of Texas, and remained the state capital when Texas was admitted to the Union in 1846. It is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States, and is the cultural and economic center of the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Area with a population of more than 1.5 million.

In 2006, Austin was selected as the #2 Best Big City in “Best Places to Live” by Money Magazine and the “Greenest City in America” by MSN. Popular Science also ranks Austin high on their list of “The Greenest Cities” in the US. Residents of Austin are typically known as “Austinites” and their official slogan is “The Live Music Capital of the World”. Recently however, Austinites have adopted the unofficial slogan of “Keep Austin Weird”. This refers to the eclectic and progressive lifestyle of many Austin residents.

The city was founded as the Village of Waterloo in 1830, and was later renamed Austin in honor of Stephen F. Austin who is known as the Father of Texas. The Texas State Capitol was completed in 1888 and was advertised as the 7<sup>th</sup> largest building in the world at that time. Today, the building remains a significant part of the Austin skyline and is, in fact, taller than the US Capitol. Since its incorporation as a city, Austin has doubled in size every 20 years.

Austin has a humid subtropical climate, characterized by hot summers and mild winters. Though people often think of Texas as being dry, this is not the case in Austin, which is known for being green and for getting plenty of rain throughout the year. Temperatures in the summer months average 90 degrees (June until September). There are only 24 days when the minimum temperature falls below freezing. The city averages 300 days of sunshine each year and about 33.78 inches of rainfall. It rarely snows in Austin.

Politically speaking, Austin is an anomaly. While Texas as a whole is hailed as a largely conservative state, Austin has the second highest liberal voting population in the entire country for a city of its approximate size. Additionally, volunteering is extremely popular and Austin is renowned as the second-most charitable city in the nation.

Austinites are very engaged and active in local politics and are extremely vocal about their likes and dislikes. They have high expectations for their public officials and are not afraid to voice their displeasure to the top levels of city management and/or the media. They also expect deep involvement and high visibility at neighborhood meetings, school functions, parades, community events, and a variety of other engagements, no matter how large or small.

As a result of its highly educated populace and its universities (which bring in people from all over the world), Austin has developed a reputation as being a young and active cultural haven. Uniqueness is celebrated and encouraged. Partly due to the influence of The University of Texas at Austin and their school for Radio, Television, and Film, as well as an advantageous business climate and low-key celebrity culture, Austin has been the location for many motion pictures and television shows, including the current hit, “Friday Night Lights.” The city has taken advantage of this reputation and annually hosts the Austin Film Festival.

The city’s nightlife and music scene are also a significant part of Austin’s culture. Many Austinites flock to the legendary Sixth Street to enjoy the nightlife and live music offerings, which are plentiful and varied on any given night of the week.



Austin has a thriving economy that is rich in technology (the city is often deemed “Silicon Hills”). The largest employers include the University of Texas, the State of Texas, SETON Healthcare Network, Dell, IBM, the City of Austin, and Freescale Semiconductor. Other high-tech companies with a presence in the city include: Apple Inc., Hewlett-Packard, Vignette, AMD, Sun Microsystems, Samsung, and Intel. Additionally, Austin is rich in small businesses and is served by a strong network of independent, locally owned firms and organizations such as the Austin Independent Business Alliance.

## **Government:**

The City of Austin has a council-manager form of government. The City Council includes seven Council Members, including the Mayor. Council Members are elected at-large for staggered three-year terms. The Council Members' offices are in Austin City Hall.

The City of Austin is seeking to fill the position of Chief Sustainability Officer. This executive position will report to the City Manager's office and will work closely with city departments in the development, coordination, and administration sustainability policies and practices for the City of Austin. This position will be responsible for establishing a citywide sustainability program that includes assessing the impact of sustainability practices to the City and broad community at large, while balancing the City's shared objectives for a healthy environment, an excellent quality of life, and continued economic vitality.

The city already has of a growing number of long-term environmental initiatives. Austin has considered itself one of the most environmentally conscious communities in the country. Among US cities, Austin was ranked 19<sup>th</sup> by Popular Science and 13<sup>th</sup> by SustainLane.com for its environmentally sustainable initiatives among US cities. The city established a nationally recognized green-building program since the 1980's, Austin Energy is considered one of the nation's most innovative electric utilities, and the Solid Waste Department's Zero Waste Goal is to reduce the amount of waste Austinites send to the landfill by 90% by the year 2040.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

The Chief Sustainability Officer will:

- Identify, review and assess the city departments' current sustainability services and programs. Evaluate programs for best practices, duplications or overlapping programs within the various departments. Assess current sustainability goals and strategies to bring greater coordination of services citywide. Streamline identified opportunities for improvement.
- Develop a comprehensive policy and a strategic performance plan for the city that encompasses current goals, best practices, and moves the city towards the next step of a more environmentally sustainable future.
- In collaboration with departments, will evaluate, enhance, and develop metric systems that monitor and assess progress towards achieving performance goals at all appropriate organizational levels.
- Develop and implement marketing and educational programs that inspire the community to embrace environmental sustainability practices and changes the thinking, behavior and practice of individuals, organizations and government by focusing on sustainable development.

- Coordinate activities with departments that accomplish all levels of conservation and sustainable development within the city to include green purchasing, energy conservation, solid waste recycling, green building, resource and water conservation, green house gas reduction, renewable resources, government funding, and environmental reporting metrics.
- Perform highly complex forecasting and cost/benefit analysis to enable executive city leadership to make informed decisions that focus on optimizing social and environmental impacts of sustainability program initiatives.
- Provide oversight and direction of research and analysis of city and community sustainability needs to determine program direction and goals.
- Serve as a skilled facilitator who works collaboratively with boards and commissions, committees, or other governing boards to develop strategic direction and integrate the city's sustainability policy and practice. Develop partnerships and work with community members, organizations and other government agencies to establish a citywide sustainability program and to integrate sustainable practices.
- Act as the official departmental representative to the CMO, elected officials, outside agencies and the community; explain, justify, and defend department programs, policies, and activities; and, negotiate and resolve significant, and controversial issues pertaining to sustainability. Brief and advise City management regarding sustainability programs.
- Respond to and resolve sensitive inquiries, complaints and issues from both internal and external sources.

**The Ideal Candidate will:**

- Possess a minimum of 7 years of sustainability related experience to include a minimum of 2 years in a managerial capacity. The successful candidate will be an innovative individual who identifies the tools and resources needed to stay current in the field. He/she will need to demonstrate superior project management skills and have the ability to effectively develop and define a sustainability plan for the City of Austin.
- Be a master collaborator who will work effectively in relationship building and garner trust with departments to ensure that the city's sustainable short and long term goals, and strategic plan meet and exceed the city's goals of becoming the most sustainable city without compromising the quality of life for future generations.
- Possess advanced oral and written communication as well as a strong ability to educate, persuade and mobilize resources. He/she must have the ability to influence at all levels and functions in order to make sustainability a priority and inspire people into action. He/she must be able to adhere to the highest ethical and moral standards and be able to display transparency.



- Possess high-level planning, budget and financial management experience in a high performance management organization. He/she must be financially astute and be able to understand and communicate the long and short-term benefits of sustainability efforts into cost savings. He/she should be able to establish meaningful performance metrics to track and measure success. The ideal candidate will need to have an understanding of sustainable technology as it relates to energy, waste, carbon emissions, green building and other areas.
- Be passionate and understand current concepts of conservation and sustainable development including green purchasing, energy conservation, solid waste recycling, green building, resource and water conservation, green house gas reduction, renewable resources, government funding opportunities, and environmental reporting metrics.
- Demonstrate strong leadership and innovative thinking in the development of exemplary policies and programs that promote an environmentally sustainable future without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
- Be a highly approachable leader, who can openly accept and work effectively in a climate of interaction, communicating up and down the organization. Must display a willingness to work collaboratively with business, organizations, institutions and residents to develop solutions and implement action plans to address the challenges and opportunities inherent in the relationship between environment, equity and the economy.

### **Education and Experience:**

A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited four year college or university is required with major coursework in Business Administration, Public Administration, Environmental Management, Environmental Science, Environmental Engineering, Urban Planning, Architecture, or another job related field. Seven (7) years of sustainability related experience with a minimum of 2 years in a managerial capacity. A Masters degree may substitute for 2 years of sustainability related experience.



### **Salary:**

The City of Austin is offering a competitive salary commensurate with experience and a comprehensive benefits package. Relocation assistance will be available for the successful out of area candidate.

### **How to Apply:**

Interested applicants should forward a cover letter and resume to:

**resumes@affionpublic.com**

**Reference: Austin CSO**

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