# SAVORING AUSTIN'S FOOD TOURISM

Supporting the restaurants behind Austin's visitor economy

**STEPHANIE ROSENDAHL**

Regional Director, Austin Market
Texas Restaurant Association

AUSTIN TOURISM COMMISSION | NOVEMBER 2026

TEXAS SCALE + REACH

# RESTAURANTS ARE AN ECONOMIC ENGINE

The scale of the industry behind Texas dining and hospitality.

**58,426+**
OPERATORS STATEWIDE

**1.5M**
EMPLOYED WORKFORCE

**$140B**
GROSS ANNUAL REVENUE

**34,000+**
PROSTART STUDENTS

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**$1.99**

**RETURNED TO THE TEXAS ECONOMY FOR EVERY DOLLAR SPENT IN A RESTAURANT**

Restaurant spending moves through farms, distributors, landlords, utilities and paychecks, extending its impact well beyond the dining room.

Source: National Restaurant Association data

HOW TRA SUPPORTS THE INDUSTRY

# PROTECT. ADVANCE. EDUCATE.

TRA supports restaurants from policy and compliance to business resources and the future workforce.

## PROTECT

Advocacy, legal defense, regulatory compliance and member protection at the local, state and federal level.

## ADVANCE

Benefits, revenue programs, cost savings and operational tools that help restaurant businesses grow.

## EDUCATE

Training, workforce development, the Texas Restaurant Foundation, ProStart and future talent.

# RESTAURANTS ARE PART OF THE AUSTIN EXPERIENCE

TRA's perspective: sustaining the businesses that create the culinary experiences visitors come here to enjoy.

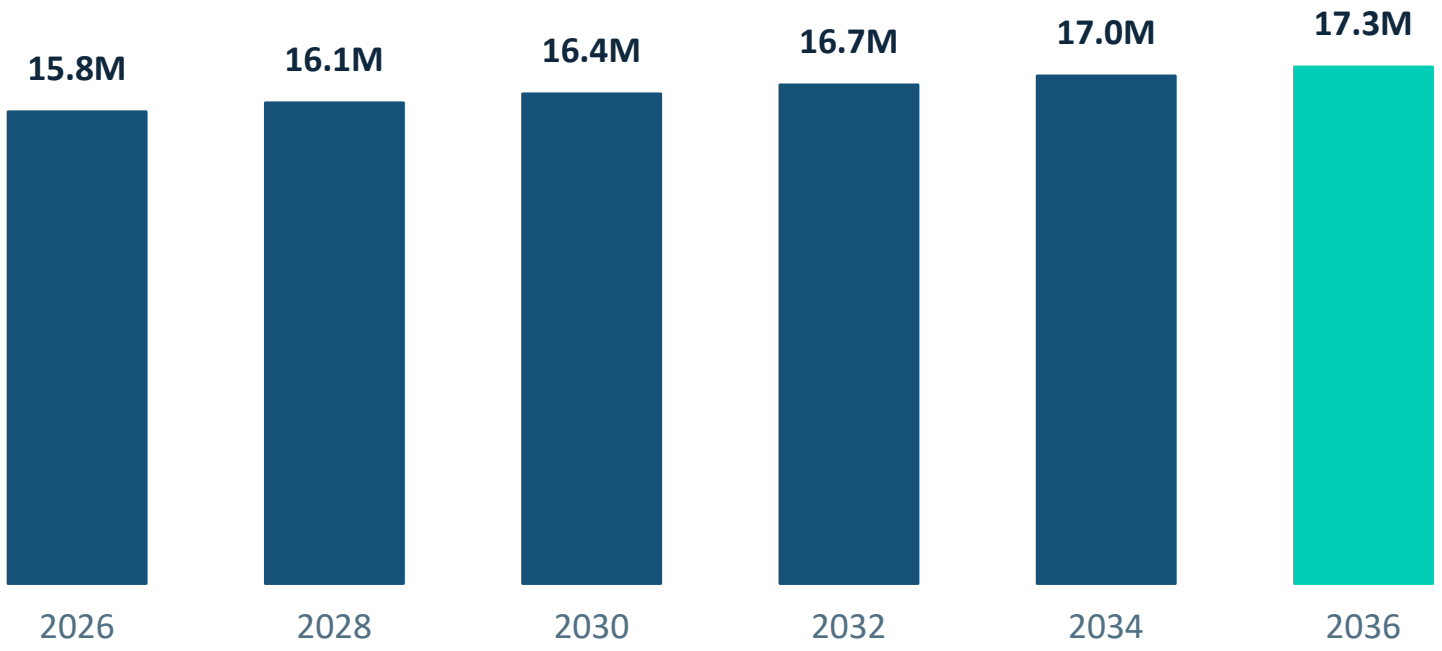
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|---|---|---|
| 01 | **DESTINATION** | Local restaurants help define the experience and identity visitors associate with Austin. |
| 02 | **ECONOMIC IMPACT** | Visitor dining supports operators, employees, suppliers and surrounding businesses. |
| 03 | **COMMUNITY** | Independent and local concepts create experiences visitors cannot simply replicate in another city. |

**Our lane: helping the restaurant ecosystem remain strong enough to support Austin's visitor economy.**

WORKFORCE OUTLOOK

# GROWTH IS COMING. FINDING THE PEOPLE IS THE CHALLENGE.

Restaurant and foodservice employment is projected to continue growing through 2036.




**17.3M**

**PROJECTED JOBS BY 2036**

For Austin, the opportunity is not only job creation. It is building sustainable hospitality career pathways and retaining talent in a high-cost market.

Source: National Restaurant Association, based on historical BLS data. 2026 and 2036 values; intervening bars are illustrative.

# BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HOSPITALITY TALENT

Education and industry connection are central to a stronger workforce pipeline.

**34,000+**

**PROSTART STUDENTS**

**250+**

**SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

**PROSTART**

Career and technical education connecting students to restaurant and foodservice careers.

**TEXAS RESTAURANT FOUNDATION**

Workforce development, education and investment in future industry talent.

**LOCAL CONNECTION**

TRA chapters connect schools, students and employers through scholarships, industry relationships and hands-on support.

Statewide figures from TRA source deck.

OPERATING REALITY

# A CELEBRATED INDUSTRY WITH VERY THIN MARGINS

Recognition and demand do not erase the cost pressures facing restaurant operators.

**1 IN 3**

**OPERATORS REPORTED NOT BEING PROFITABLE DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 2026**

- **FOOD + INPUT COSTS**
- **LABOR + RETENTION**
- **RENT + OCCUPANCY**
- **INSURANCE + UTILITIES**
- **COMPLIANCE + REGULATION**

**A thriving culinary tourism economy depends on restaurants that can remain financially sustainable.**

Source: National Restaurant Association

OPPORTUNITY FOR AUSTIN

# KEEP AUSTIN A GREAT PLACE TO EAT, WORK + VISIT

A strong visitor economy and a strong restaurant economy reinforce one another.

## 01 SUPPORT THE PEOPLE

Strengthen hospitality career pathways, training and connections between students and employers.

## 02 SUPPORT THE BUSINESSES

Help restaurants access resources and operate in a predictable, sustainable business environment.

## 03 SUPPORT THE DESTINATION

Continue elevating Austin's local culinary identity as an essential part of the visitor experience.

**Austin's restaurants are part of why people want to experience our city. Our job is to help the businesses and people creating those experiences succeed.**

# THANK YOU

## QUESTIONS + DISCUSSION

**STEPHANIE ROSENDAHL**
Regional Director, Austin Market
Texas Restaurant Association
srosendahl@txrestaurant.org

**txrestaurant.org**