STAR Communities is a nonprofit organization that works to evaluate, improve, and certify sustainable communities. We help cities and counties achieve a healthy environment, a strong economy, and well being for their residents.

Set Goals. Measure Progress.
Improve Your Community.
GET STARTED

The STAR Community Rating System is the first national framework and certification program for sustainable communities. This information package will provide you with details on the STAR Member Community Subqualification and the additional programs and packages designed for local governments across the U.S. and Canada.

STAR Communities invites you to become a STAR Member Community today!
WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY?
Every community is different, but the common goals are:
• a Healthy Environment
• a Strong Economy
• the Well-Being of the People in the Community

WHY IS SUSTAINABILITY IMPORTANT FOR COMMUNITIES?
Integrated efforts at the local level have a powerful and positive effect on the quality of life and future of a community. Sustainability also makes a direct impact by using resources efficiently and sparking innovation.

THE STAR COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM HELPS LOCAL COMMUNITIES GET THERE!
The STAR Community Rating System is the nation's first comprehensive framework and certification program for evaluating local sustainability. STAR's comprehensive set of local environmental, economic, and social metrics was developed by more than 200 technical experts over the course of 4 years in order to drive continuous improvement. Local leaders use the rating system's metrics to assess their current level of sustainability, set targets for moving ahead, and measure progress along the way.
Community Rating System

Community Rating System contributes the expertise of the development of the STAR Rating System. Contributions from associations, utilities, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and volunteers representing 50 cities and counties, state and federal agencies, and private corporations were developed for local governments by local governments. Nearly 200 communities collaborated with each other to proceed toward overall sustainability objectives and to allow communities to compare themselves. This robust framework is necessary for communities to credibly track their progress toward overall sustainability objectives in seven key areas and define sustainability for themselves. The STAR framework helps communities assess their efforts in seven key areas and define sustainability for different things to different people. So STAR provides a clear data-

About the Rating System

The STAR Community Rating System is the nation's first comprehensive framework and certification program for evaluating local sustainability encompassing economic, environmental, and social performance measures.
# THE STAR COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM

Goal Areas & Objectives are rated and evaluated in the online system, helping local leaders set goals and measure progress across all areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Built Environment</th>
<th>Climate &amp; Energy</th>
<th>Economy &amp; Jobs</th>
<th>Education, Arts &amp; Community</th>
<th>Equity &amp; Empowerment</th>
<th>Health &amp; Safety</th>
<th>Natural Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambient Noise &amp; Light</td>
<td>Climate Adaptation</td>
<td>Business Retention &amp; Development</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Culture</td>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>Active Living</td>
<td>Green Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Water Systems</td>
<td>Greenhouse Gas Mitigation</td>
<td>Green Market Development</td>
<td>Community Cohesion</td>
<td>Civil &amp; Human Rights</td>
<td>Community Health &amp; Health System</td>
<td>Invasive Species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compact &amp; Complete Communities</td>
<td>Greening the Energy Supply</td>
<td>Local Economy</td>
<td>Educational Opportunity &amp; Attainment</td>
<td>Environmental Justice</td>
<td>Emergency Prevention &amp; Response</td>
<td>Natural Resource Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Affordability</td>
<td>Industrial Sector Resource Efficiency</td>
<td>Quality Jobs &amp; Living Wages</td>
<td>Historic Preservation</td>
<td>Equitable Services &amp; Access</td>
<td>Food Access &amp; Nutrition</td>
<td>Outdoor Air Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Spaces</td>
<td>Resource Efficient Public Infrastructure</td>
<td>Workforce Readiness</td>
<td>Poverty Prevention &amp; Alleviation</td>
<td>Natural &amp; Human Hazards</td>
<td>Working Lands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Choices</td>
<td>Waste Minimization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Safe Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certified 5-STAR Community (600+ points)

Recognized as top performer in national sustainability

Certified 4-STAR Community (400-599 points)

Recognized for national excellence

Certified 3-STAR Community (200-399 points)

Recognized for sustainability leadership

Currently pursuing certification

Reporting STAR Community

STAR Community Rating System information

A community that has expressed a commitment to the STAR Communities mission and is using the

Member STAR Community

measures in the Rating System, and then STAR performs a 3rd party verification.

Community must submit an online application detailing how they meet the evaluation

evaluation measures in the STAR Community Rating System. To become certified, a

that allows communities to analyze their sustainability performance based upon the

To drive continuous improvement, STAR Communities manages a certification program

CERTIFICATION LEVELS
WHO IS STAR CERTIFIED?

Twenty-five communities are STAR Certified as of April 2015. An additional 10+ are expected to certify this spring.

5-STAR Community
- Northampton, MA
- Seattle, WA

4-STAR Community
- Austin, TX
- Broward County, FL
- Davenport, IA
- Dubuque, IA
- Evanston, IL
- Memphis/Shelby County, TN
- Portland, OR
- Raleigh, NC
- Tacoma, WA
- Tucson, AZ
- Washington, DC

3-STAR Community
- Albany, NY
- Atlanta, GA
- Birmingham, AL
- Chandler, AZ
- Cleveland, OH
- Des Moines, IA
- El Cerrito, CA
- Fayetteville, AR
- Fort Collins, CO
- Indianapolis, IN
- Lee County, FL
- Rosemount, MN
- Woodbridge, NJ
NEARLY 100 COMMUNITIES IN THE US AND CANADA ARE USING STAR... THAT'S OVER 40 MILLION PEOPLE.
HOW DOES IT WORK?

The STAR Community Rating System was designed for use by local (town, city, or county) governments. While partnerships are encouraged, the governmental entity is the approved primary applicant in the STAR Community Rating System and Reporting Tool. Other community partners, organizations, universities, consultants, and federal agencies can become STAR Affiliates to support STAR Communities' mission (see website for info).

A community signs up for an annual membership, which begins at $500 a year. This membership provides basic access to the STAR Community Rating System and the tools and resources to start tracking sustainability performance. Member benefits are designed to help promote a healthy environment, a strong economy, and well-being for all residents, now and for future generations. Communities that are ready to get certified or that have already been certified have the option to add on additional services or packages as fits their needs.

To be certified, you will need full access to our online application, which is managed through our proprietary Online Reporting Tool. All applications for certification are submitted online and verified by STAR staff for accuracy. Data collection for certification takes on average between 6 months to a year. Certification lasts for 3 years from the certification date. Certified communities enjoy national recognition and other benefits.
The STAR Start-Up Kit, which includes the Introduction to STAR Training Program.

- Data storage for certified STAR communities, and
- Opportunities to showcase the community's work to a broad audience;
- Access to up to 2 hrs of assistance from STAR's technical team;
- A public-facing webpage on our site, which includes the scores for certified communities;
- Eligibility for technical and governance committees memberships;
- The opportunity to support research and development of the Rating System through the STAR Member Community Logo for Promotional use;
- STAR Communities quarterly web-based training programs;
- Technical Guide:
- Access to the latest versions of the STAR Community Rating System and its companion comprehensive, cutting-edge framework for measuring local sustainability benefits include:

BECOME A STAR MEMBER COMMUNITY!
WHAT ARE MAYORS SAYING?

"STAR lets us promote all the great things that we have done to make our community strong and resilient. It is positive feedback that lets our residents, taxpayers, businesses, investors, and community partners know that we are on the right track. The transparency and independence of the process builds confidence in our work."

DAVID NARKEWICZ
Mayor, City of Northampton, MA
First Certified 5-STAR Community

"The STAR Community Rating System has been a powerful and valuable tool for our city to assess the progress of our sustainability efforts. It will also help us identify gaps and hold us accountable for improving the quality of life for our residents."

Marilyn Strickland
Mayor, City of Tacoma, WA
First Certified 4-STAR Community
10. Participate on STAR technical and governance committees.

9. Support on-going research and development of the Rating System in order to advance the field of sustainability science.

8. Join the network of cutting-edge local sustainability leaders.

7. Receive national recognition for local efforts.

6. Communicate a commitment to sustainability to residents, businesses, and funders.

5. Build strategic partnerships within the community and with regional partners.

4. Get access to a framework and menu of best practices and policy solutions across the three pillars of sustainability.

3. Integrate metrics into a new or existing comprehensive or sustainability plan.

2. Benchmark local efforts against the national standard for community sustainability.

1. Assess community sustainability efforts in a clear and data-driven way.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH STAR MEMBERSHIP?
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS & PACKAGES

Communities ready to begin tracking and reporting data and/or pursuing certification have 2 options: (1) You can add-on the Reporting Tools package or (2) you can participate in the Leadership STAR Community Program. See details below.

+ REPORTING TOOLS PACKAGE ($1,000 per year)

The Reporting Tools Package supports you as you collect and track data in the STAR Online Reporting Tool. Access to how-to videos and recordings and 1 hour of technical assistance each month is included. Communities can pursue certification at their own pace with this package; when ready, submit for verification and pay the verification fee. Post-certification, the package provides 24/7 access to your STAR data and a public facing report for your city/county.

+ LEADERSHIP STAR COMMUNITY PROGRAM ($7,000 one time fee)

Through this 12-month program, Leadership STAR Communities work together in a cohort to achieve milestones together, with STAR Certification as the goal. Communities have extensive access to STAR Communities staff and on-call experts, online tools, training programs (both web-based and in-person), technical assistance and other services associated with the STAR Community Rating System.
process. See the online application for more information.

Communities (TFN) manages our scholarship fund and participates in the selection
national philanthropic partners. The Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable
Program fee scholarships are available for each round through the generosity of our

Community verification fee (required for STAR Certification),

person training at the start of the program year, extensive technical assistance, and your
Program fee covers travel expenses for 2 members of your team to attend an in-

The Program fee is $7,000 per community plus the $500 STAR Member Community fee.

available for download from our website.

Leadership STAR Community Program must submit an application, which is currently
cohorts starting March 1st and September 1st of each year. Communities interested in the
The Leadership STAR Community Program is a 2-month full support program with

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM OVERVIEW
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM DETAILS

The Leadership Program is a transformative experience for communities – it has provided a springboard for civic engagement, cross-agency coordination, integrated budgeting and performance management, partnerships with philanthropy, and economic development.

In addition to achieving certification, communities report that the program has helped them to build a local culture of sustainability and target areas for future investment:

• **Evanston, IL** developed a Livability Academy program where all local government staff will receive training on the city's goals and objectives tied to their Livability Plan and recent STAR Community Rating.

• **Broward County, FL** developed a 4-STAR Broward Branding Toolkit to educate community partners and local leaders on how to leverage the STAR rating to increase economic development opportunities.

• **Seattle, WA** held a staff appreciation lunch for nearly 200 contributors to their STAR certification. Mayor Murray and sustainability staff presented the city's strengths and weaknesses highlighting that together they would work to solve equity and affordability challenges in the city.

• **Tucson, AZ** integrated STAR's metrics into Plan Tucson and is updating their website to provide better citizen engagement tools. **Phoenix, AZ** followed with a similar course of action; their General Plan is currently under review.
You want a premium package with the full range of benefits already included.

Training programs (both web-based and in-person).

You could use extra technical assistance and support from STAR staff and on-call experts, and

You want to be certified within a year.

LEADERSHIP STAR COMMUNITY PROGRAM ($7,000 one-time fee)

You want to pursue certification at your own pace.

Included.

You want basic technical support; how-to videos and 1 hour of technical assistance each month is

Included.

You are ready to start reporting and tracking data in the Online Reporting Tool

REPORTING TOOL PACKAGE ($1,000/Year add-on)

You want to support the integrity and evolution of the STAR Community Rating System.

Leaders.

You want to demonstrate your commitment to sustainability and join a network of sustainability

resources to help get started.

You are looking to start tracking sustainability performance and want basic access to tools and

MEMBER STAR COMMUNITY ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION ($500/Year)

WHAT TRACK IS RIGHT FOR YOU?
STAR has set up our programs and services around a Membership+ model. Communities become members, and then add on additional services that meet their needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAR Community Membership</td>
<td>Access to the latest versions of the Rating System and companion Technical Guide; quarterly web-based training programs; webpage on the STAR website and the STAR Member Community logo for promotional use; up to 2hrs of assistance; eligibility for various committee memberships; and the STAR Start-Up Kit. Membership also supports ongoing research and development of the Rating System.</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Reporting Tools Package</td>
<td>Gain access to STAR’s customized online platform to collect and track sustainability data; watch how-to videos recordings; receive up to 1hr of technical assistance per month from an assigned STAR coordinator. The Reporting Tools package is required for communities pursuing STAR certification.</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Verification Fee</td>
<td>This fee covers the costs of initial and final verification of your STAR application and includes a report from STAR Communities' technical team.</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Leadership Program</td>
<td>Twice a year, Member Communities can join the Leadership program to pursue certification as part of a group. Leadership Communities share resources and tools; learn from facilitated conversations with other leaders, experts and funders; receive tech support from a dedicated STAR coordinator; are assigned a mentor community. Reporting Tools package and Verification Fee are included.</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Custom Workshops or Trainings</td>
<td>Bring together key staff and local partners to learn how to use the rating system or kick off data collection efforts. Examples include: Getting Started with the Rating System, and Aligning Your Sustainability Plan with the Rating System. Regional workshops can also be held for multiple communities interested in working through STAR together.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>STAR Certification to Implementation: Integrating Metrics from STAR into Plan, Report, or Budgets; and/or Coordinating from Implementation of Priority Projects Based on STAR Analytic Examples Include: PR packages are available upon request. A road sign, an infographic, and up to 3 hours of technical assistance. Custom STAR</td>
<td>Trainings and Custom Workshops or + Custom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>Outcome, and/or other custom implementation projects: Weaknesses, comparative analysis reports of certain objectives, case studies on weaknesses, comparative analysis, can include custom reports of your community's strengths and application assistance can include custom reports of your community's strengths and</td>
<td>+ Assistance + Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>STAR Certification Package: The community's Public facade in the STAR Certification Report is also included. Publicly discounted fee on future verifications, basic STAR PR Support, and a</td>
<td>Package + Support + Tools + Certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500</td>
<td>STAR Certified membership and reporting tools package that is designed to address the needs of the certified community. The package includes preferred seats for national STAR Community membership and the reporting tools package that is designed to address the</td>
<td>Membership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE VALUE OF BENCHMARKING

"The STAR rating process gave us the framework for a deep dive sustainability assessment - to identify where we are strong and where there is more we can do. The assessment is also a great tool to engage our community partners around shared goals and opportunities for further action."

JILL SIMMONS
Director, Office of Sustainability & Environment, Seattle, WA
Certified 5-STAR Community

"We are proud to be recognized for sustainability leadership by STAR and are excited about the potential to benchmark our progress along with other cities working in urban sustainability. The City of Cleveland Office of Sustainability gained important feedback on both our successes and opportunities for improvement by participating in STAR."

JENITA MCGOWAN
Chief of Sustainability, City of Cleveland, OH
Certified 3-STAR Community
commences March 1 and September 1 of each year.

*NOTE: The Leadership STAR Community Program requires an application and is a 2-month program that

- Website: www.STARCommunities.org
- Phone: 855-890-STARK
- Email: info@STARCommunities.org

have all of the information that you need. Contact us at:

STAR staff are happy to talk over our subscriptions and packages to make sure that you

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

1. Click on "Shop" in the top-right corner of our website become a STAR Member
2. If you'd like the Reporting Tools package, you can select it in the Shop
3. Register online and pay via credit card or request to pay by check
4. Start receiving benefits (services, tools, publications, etc.) day of payment

HOW TO GET STARTED
WE’RE HERE TO HELP!
For questions or to schedule an informal call, please contact us at:
(855) 890-STAR

STAR COMMUNITIES STAFF
Alex Helling, Technical Specialist
Aaron Lande, Operations & Member Relations Manager
Lacey Shaver, Community Engagement Manager
Hilari Varnadore, Executive Director
Kristi Wamstad-Evans, Technical Manager

CONTACT US
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20002
(855) 890-STAR