

STAR Communities Rating System

In a Nutshell

STAR Communities is a national organization the goal of which is to help “cities and counties achieve meaningful sustainability through the first national framework for local community efforts.” Similar to OneSTL STAR Communities provides a framework and a set of tools for governments to become more sustainable. The STAR Community Rating System is an objective rating system for communities to gauge their progress.

The “How To”

[STAR Communities](#) was incorporated in April, 2012. The acronym stands for Sustainability Tools for Assessing & Rating Communities. National experts and local government practitioners met and devised the framework for the rating system. Since that time a more than 30 pilot communities have signed on to test and evaluate the program. As these communities finish their STAR requirements, reports will be made available on each city’s rating system and the tools used to get there. [The City of St. Louis](#) is one of the pilot communities from the program.

Any community can follow the STAR Communities system. [The STAR Community Rating System Version 1.0](#) is available for free download online. This document explains the entire program and gives the reader a good understanding of the rating system. For cities that want to participate there are [three levels of participation](#). The first level is the We’re a Participating STAR Community which allows a community to have all of the tools necessary to participate and to measure its own success. The second level is the We’re a Reporting STAR Community which sets your community on the path to recognized as a STAR certified community. The third level is We’re a Leadership STAR Community which sets your community on a structured program that keeps you on track toward your sustainability goals. This level gives you the opportunity to share best practices and approaches with other leaders. Communities wanting to participate in one of the three levels will need to pay a small fee.

It is also possible to purchase the [Technical Guide](#) which provides guidance on how a community can achieve a STAR Community Rating.

Planning & Zoning

There are no legal, legislative, or regulatory actions needed to participate in the STAR Communities program. There are [various ways to engage](#) the community rating process. The ultimate impact of pursuing sustainability goals will likely lead to the implementation of various policies and programs, covered by other tools within the One STL toolkit. Cities and counties can evaluate participating as a:

- Participating Community
- Reporting Community
- Leadership Community

The [STAR Communities website](#) outlines the differences in memberships and participation.

Dollars & Cents

The STAR Communities community rating system is new, having just launched into a pilot cities program in 2013. You can purchase the [Technical Guide](#) online which provides guidance on implementing the STAR Community program. The three levels of participation each have their own fee.

- We're a Participating STAR Community- \$500
- We're a Reporting STAR Community- \$1,500
- We're a Leadership STAR Community- \$5,000 to \$15,000

Measuring Success

This tool, in itself, is a holistic metric system. Where other tools provide methods to evaluate your success in implementing *one* specific tool, the STAR Communities community rating system measures an entire city across a [comprehensive set of measurement criteria](#).

The OneSTL Performance Measures can also be used to measure your community's success in implementing STAR Communities Rating System.

Discover More

You can [download](#) the free STAR Rating System to get started. You can purchase the [Technical Guide](#) for more detailed information. You can contact one of the [pilot cities](#) (which includes the [City of St. Louis](#)) discuss their experience launching the STAR community rating system. Or you can contact one of the [participating communities](#) enrolled in the program.

Case Studies

City of St. Louis, Missouri - STAR Communities Pilot City

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Description

The City of St. Louis is charging full-steam ahead with its sustainability efforts. Some of the keys to the City of St. Louis's sustainability efforts include capitalizing "on its dense area, existing infrastructure and rich heritage to preserve and restore" historic buildings. New buildings in the St. Louis area must meet certain energy efficiency and green building standards. Another key component is building bicycle-friendly which will encourage the public to use public transportation more frequently.

In early 2013, St. Louis released its [Sustainability Plan](#). A component of the plan includes the [Mayor's Action Agenda](#).

Cost \$0