



INFORMATIONAL KIT

STAR Member Community





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

on the path to sustainability today!

STAR Communities invites you to become a STAR Member Community today and begin accessing tools and resources built by and for local governments.

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 subscription and the additional programs and packages designed for local governments across the U.S. and Canada.

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.

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.

Sustainability means different things to different people, so STAR provides a clear, data-driven approach to assessing communities' sustainability efforts. The STAR framework helps communities assess their efforts in seven key areas and define sustainability for themselves. This robust framework is necessary for communities to credibly track their progress toward overall sustainability objectives and to allow communities to compare progress with each other.

WHO DEVELOPED THE STAR COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM?

STAR was developed for local governments by local governments. Nearly 200 volunteers representing 50 cities and counties, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, national associations, universities, utilities, and private corporations contributed thousands of hours and diverse expertise to the development of the STAR Community Rating System.

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.

Built Environment	Climate & Energy	Economy & Jobs	Education, Arts & Community	Equity & Empowerment	Health & Safety	Natural Systems
Ambient Noise & Light	Climate Adaptation	Business Retention & Development	Arts & Culture	Civic Engagement	Active Living	Green Infrastructure
Community Water Systems	Greenhouse Gas Mitigation	Green Market Development	Community Cohesion	Civil & Human Rights	Community Health & Health System	Invasive Species
Compact & Complete Communities	Greening the Energy Supply	Local Economy	Educational Opportunity & Attainment	Environmental Justice	Emergency Prevention & Response	Natural Resource Protection
Housing Affordability	Industrial Sector Resource Efficiency	Quality Jobs & Living Wages	Historic Preservation	Equitable Services & Access	Food Access & Nutrition	Outdoor Air Quality
Infill & Redevelopment	Resource Efficient Buildings	Targeted Industry Development	Social & Cultural Diversity	Human Services	Indoor Air Quality	Water in the Environment
Public Spaces	Resource Efficient Public Infrastructure	Workforce Readiness		Poverty Prevention & Alleviation	Natural & Human Hazards	Working Lands
Transportation Choices	Waste Minimization				Safe Communities	

CERTIFICATION LEVELS

To drive continuous improvement, STAR Communities manages a certification program that allows communities to analyze their sustainability performance based upon the evaluation measures in the STAR Community Rating System. To become certified, a community must submit an online application detailing how they meet the evaluation measures in the Rating System, and then STAR performs a 3rd party verification.

Member STAR Community

A community that has expressed a commitment to the STAR Communities' mission and is using the STAR Community Rating System informally

Reporting STAR Community

Currently pursuing certification

Certified 3-STAR Community (200-399 points)

Recognized for sustainability leadership

Certified 4-STAR Community (400-599 points)

Recognized for national excellence

Certified 5-STAR Community (600+ points)

Recognized as top tier achiever in national sustainability



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

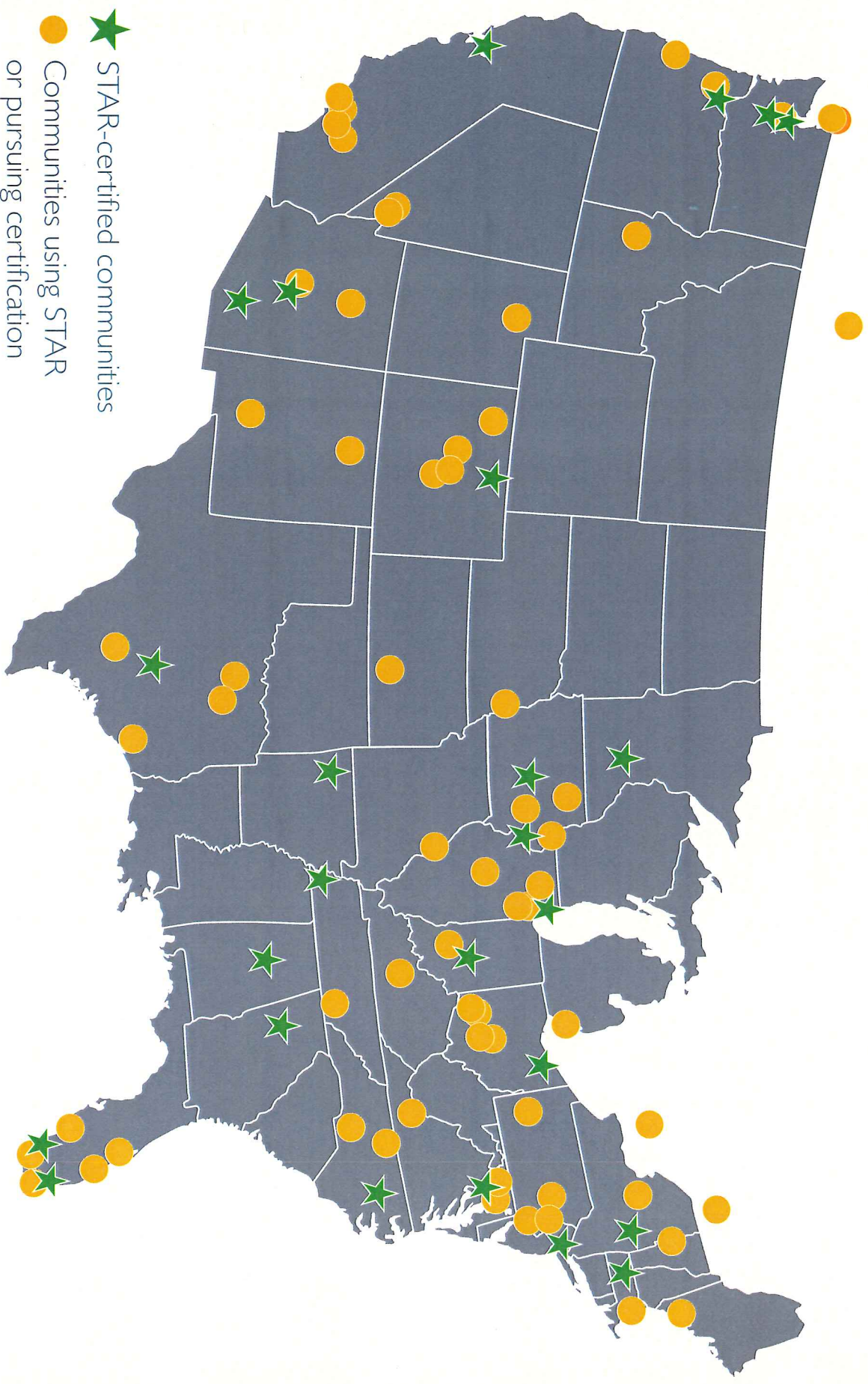
- Austin, TX
- Dubuque, IA
- Portland, OR
- Tucson, AZ
- Broward County, FL
- Evanston, IL
- Raleigh, NC
- Washington, DC
- Davenport, IA
- Memphis/Shelby County, TN
- Tacoma, WA

3-STAR Community

- Albany, NY
- Cleveland, OH
- Fort Collins, CO
- Woodbridge, NJ
- Atlanta, GA
- Des Moines, IA
- Indianapolis, IN
- Birmingham, AL
- El Cerrito, CA
- Lee County, FL
- Chandler, AZ
- Fayetteville, AR
- Rosemount, MN



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.

BECOME A STAR MEMBER COMMUNITY!

Membership demonstrates your commitment to local sustainability and also supports ongoing research and development of the STAR Community Rating System to maintain it as the most comprehensive, cutting-edge framework for measuring local sustainability. Benefits include:

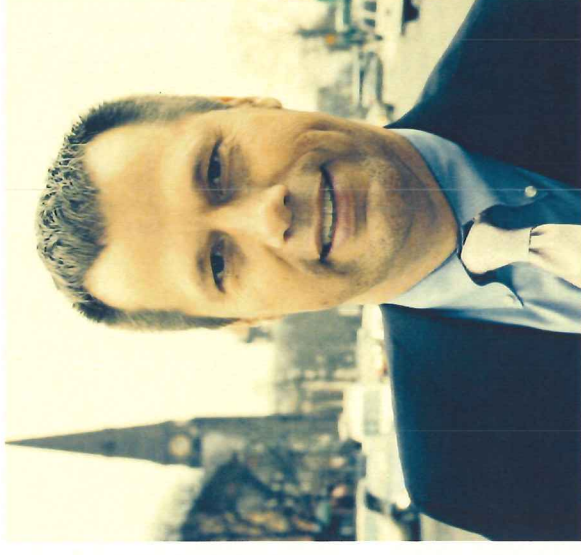
- Access to the latest versions of the STAR Community Rating System and its companion Technical Guide;
- STAR Communities' quarterly web-based training programs;
- The STAR Member Community logo for promotional use;
- The opportunity to support research and development of the Rating System through eligibility for technical and governance committee memberships;
- A public-facing webpage on our site, which includes the scores for certified communities;
- Access to up to 2hrs of assistance from STAR's technical team;
- Opportunities for participation in STAR-organized webinars and sessions at national conferences to showcase the community's work to a broad audience;
- Data storage for certified STAR communities; and
- The STAR Start-Up Kit, which includes the Intro to STAR training program; How-To Guide; Crosswalk; basic messaging tips and slide deck; and the Self-Assessment Tool.

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

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH STAR MEMBERSHIP?

1. Assess community sustainability efforts in a clear and data-driven way
2. Benchmark local efforts against the national standard for community sustainability
3. Integrate metrics into a new or existing comprehensive or sustainability plan
4. Get access to a framework and menu of best practices and policy solutions across the three pillars of sustainability
5. Build strategic partnerships within the community and with regional partners
6. Communicate a commitment to sustainability to residents, businesses, and funders
7. Receive national recognition for local efforts
8. Join the network of cutting-edge local sustainability leaders
9. Support on-going research and development of the Rating System in order to advance the field of sustainability science
10. Participate on STAR technical and governance committees

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.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Leadership STAR Community Program is a 12-month full support program, with cohorts starting March 1st and September 1st of each year. Communities interested in the Leadership STAR Community Program must submit an application, which is currently available for download from our website.

The program fee is \$7,000 per community; plus the \$500 STAR Member Community fee. The program fee covers travel expenses for 2 members of your team to attend an in-person training at the start of the program year, extensive technical assistance, and your community's verification fee (required for STAR Certification).

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



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.

WHAT TRACK IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

MEMBER STAR COMMUNITY ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (\$500/year)

- You are looking to start tracking sustainability performance and want basic access to tools and resources to help get started.
- You want to demonstrate your commitment to sustainability and join a network of sustainability leaders.
- You want to support the integrity and evolution of the STAR Community Rating System.

+ REPORTING TOOLS PACKAGE (\$1,000/year add-on)

- You are ready to start reporting and tracking data in the Online Reporting Tool.
- You want basic technical support: how-to videos and 1 hour of technical assistance each month is included.
- You want to pursue certification at your own pace.

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

- You want to be certified within a year.
- You could use extra technical assistance and support from STAR staff and on-call experts, and training programs (both web-based and in-person).
- You want a premium package with the full range of benefits already included.

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.

SERVICE	BENEFITS	COST
STAR Community Membership	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.	\$500 (annual)
+ Reporting Tools Package	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.	\$1000 (annual)
+ Verification Fee	This fee covers the costs of initial and final verification of your STAR application and includes a report from STAR Communities' technical team.	\$1,500 (one-time)
+ Leadership Program	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.	\$7,000 (one-time)
+ Custom Workshops or Trainings	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.	\$2,500 (one-time)

Certification isn't the end of your STAR journey! Certified communities receive additional member benefits and can add on additional services designed to promote their certification or aid in implementation.

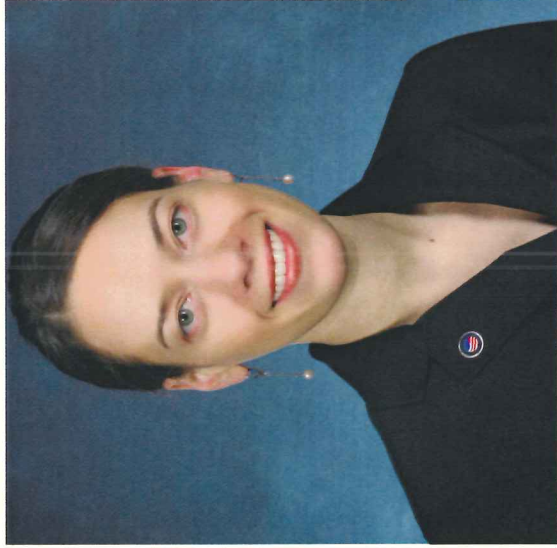
SERVICE		BENEFITS	COST
STAR Community Membership		Certified members receive all the benefits of regular members, plus storage of all certification data until the community is ready to recertify. The community's public facing STAR Certification report is also included.	\$500 (annual)
+ Certified Community Tools & Support Package		The Certified Community Tools & Support Package provides all of the benefits of STAR Membership and the Reporting Tools package, but is designed to address the needs of the Certified Community. The package includes preferred status for national publicity, discounted fee on future verifications, basic STAR PR Support, and a certification plaque. The community's public facing STAR Certification report is also included.	\$1000 (annual)
+ Implementation Assistance		Get help from STAR staff to take on priority areas identified through your STAR application. Assistance can include custom reports of your community's strengths and weaknesses, comparative analysis reports of certain Objectives, case studies on Outcomes, and/or other custom implementation projects.	\$1,500 (one-time)
+ STAR PR		The STAR PR package greatly increases the visibility of your sustainability accomplishments and supports you as you tell your STAR story. Includes a custom Branding Kit, press release, certification results slide deck and talking points, lapel pins, a road sign, an infographic, and up to 3 hours of technical assistance. Custom STAR PR packages are available upon request.	\$2,500 (one-time)
+ Custom Workshops or Trainings		Begin implementation of priority projects based on STAR analysis. Examples include: Integrating Metrics from STAR into Plans, Reports, or Budgets; and/or Going from STAR-Certification to Implementation.	\$2,500 (one-time)

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

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Click on “Shop” in the top-right corner of our website become a STAR Member Community
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*

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

STAR staff are happy to talk over our subscriptions and packages to make sure that you have all of the information that you need. Contact us at:

- Email: info@STARcommunities.org
- Phone: 855-890-STAR
- Website: www.STARcommunities.org

*NOTE: The Leadership STAR Community program requires an application and is a 12-month program that commences March 1 and September 1 of each year.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

For questions or to schedule an informal call,
please contact us at:
(855) 890-STAR

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