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Reading, PA Chosen to Mentor the Fall 2015 Leadership STAR Community Program

New Set of US Cities and Counties Embark on Path to STAR Certification

<http://www.starcommunities.org/press-releases/fall-2015-leadership-star-community-program-begins/>

October 12, 2015 - Earlier this month, The City of Reading was chosen to mentor and lead the 6 new cities and counties that comprise the Fall 2015 Leadership STAR Community Program as they endeavor to earn STAR certification. Last May, Reading led the charge and became the first municipality in the state of Pennsylvania to achieve certification under the national STAR Community Rating System, receiving a score of 234.1, which qualifies the City as a 3-STAR Community, recognized for "national excellence" in sustainability.

"It's an honor to be chosen as mentors to help other communities examine their practices to improve their livability," commented Reading Mayor Vaughn D. Spencer. "Not only are we able to help other communities, but our STAR Certification also positions us for future funding and demonstrates a clear outcome-based approach. Mentoring other communities through this living, dynamic certification helps us all, including the City of Reading, identify where there is still room to grow."

On October 6-7, Brian Kelly, Executive Director of Redesign Reading, met with representatives from all 6 communities gathered in Washington, D.C. along with STAR staff and mentors from Raleigh, NC for a two-day training event. STAR staff walked the new communities through the STAR Community Rating System framework and evaluation measures and led them through a variety of hands-on exercises to begin the process of data collection and develop an action plan for the year. Kelly shared best practices and tips for project management, working with partners, and implementation planning.

"Increasingly communities around the country want to track and measure the impact of their efforts to make their cities livable. Reading was an early adopter, and was invited to help mentor other communities around the country. STAR is a living process...we are taking our lessons learned to improve local sustainability efforts, joining a national coalition of cities who are committed to improving local quality of life," noted Kelly.

Just as Reading did, this new group of communities sees the Leadership STAR Community Program and STAR certification as the next logical step in their local sustainability efforts. "Sustainable cities provide a healthy environment, support a strong economy, and continually improve the well-being of the community," said Hilari Varnadore, Executive Director of STAR Communities. "The data and information that Reading gathered through the process should help them continue to make improvements that benefit the whole community."

To learn more about the STAR Community Rating System, visit the STAR Communities website at www.STARcommunities.org. To learn more about sustainability in Reading, visit www.redesignreading.org or contact the Mayor's Office of Sustainability through <http://www.readingpa.gov/sustainability>.

STAR Communities works to evaluate, improve, and certify sustainable communities. The organization administers the STAR Community Rating System, the nation’s first framework and certification program for local sustainability. For more information, visit www.STARcommunities.org. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter [@STARCommunities](#).

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