

Rating System Verification

Policies and Processes

General Verification Policies

- STAR Communities strives to provide a consistent, rigorous and impartial review of every application to the STAR Community Rating System.
- STAR Communities will verify every application internally through the organization's verification team. This team will have the utmost competence and will include personnel with the right level of technical skills and knowledge.
- All applications will be reviewed in a timely manner and applicants will receive feedback as quickly as possible.
- STAR Communities will conduct a transparent and open review of its verification process on a regular basis and will be open to changes as needed. The review will help to ensure that the verification process is accessible for applicants and rigorous enough to uphold the standards.
- STAR Communities intends to operate the rating system verification process in accordance with the ISEAL Assurance Code.

Applicants and the Verification Process

STAR Communities verifies every applicant's final, submitted documentation in the STAR Community Rating System and provides each applicant with a formal STAR Community Rating Level. A STAR Community Rating lasts three years following verification; however applicants may re-submit an application at any time prior to the three-year mark to receive a new STAR Community Rating Level.

STAR Communities will provide each applicant with an impartial reviewer, who has not worked directly with the community previously. This will help to ensure fair and accurate verification of STAR Community Rating Levels. All reviewers will have formal training in the STAR Community Rating System and in the key elements of each content area.

Verification Process Overview

1. Applicants will have as much time as needed to complete their application; however, there is an annual fee for access to the online reporting tool.
2. Applicants are encouraged to conduct a thorough Quality Assurance/Quality Control review of their submissions prior to submittal for a formal verification by STAR Communities.
3. Once submitted, the application will be locked and applicants will no longer be permitted to make revisions to the application.
4. STAR Communities' verification process involves two-phases: an initial verification and a final verification. STAR Communities' goal is to review all materials and provide an initial STAR Community Rating Level to the applicant within thirty to sixty calendar days of the submission. Applicants will be provided with their STAR Community Rating Level as well as information on any measures they were denied or other significant point alterations. Upon receiving initial verification results, applicants may opt to accept their Rating Level as assigned or revise and resubmit their application. Revised applications shall be submitted within 30 calendar days of receipt, unless a formal request for extension is requested. Requests for extension must be

reasonable and provide valid reasons as to why revisions cannot be completed within the allocated time period. Upon resubmittal, STAR Communities shall have 30 calendar days to complete the final verification of any measures modified or added. A final verification notification shall be sent to the applicant with information on grading and scoring. Applicants may either accept the final scoring or request an additional review of specific measures by the goal leaders from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). There is no set time frame for the TAG review. *See Attachment 1: STAR Communities Verification Process*

5. During the initial verification period, the reviewer will not contact the applicant except to confirm the validity of the submission. After the initial verification, a meeting may be scheduled with the reviewer to clarify any comments. The applicant may contact the reviewer during the 30-day resubmission period to confirm applicability of a measure or receive further clarification. During the final verification review, the reviewer may contact the applicant to question details relating to the submission.

Levels of Review

The following are the two levels of review that are applied to evaluation measures in the STAR Community Rating System:

- Level 1.** Reviewer determines that all requested data has been submitted
- Level 2.** Reviewer determines that submitted data is relevant and accurate

- All credit submissions will receive a Level 1 review.
- Reviewers apply a Level 2 review to approximately 60% of credit submissions.
- Credits receiving Level 2 review will be determined semi-randomly.

Criteria for Credit Denial

Reviewers may deny points for any of the following reasons:

- The applicant's submittal documentation failed to supply all the requested information.
- The applicant's submittal documentation is not relevant to the applicable STAR Community Rating System standard.
- Where applicable, the preliminary step is inaccurate or incomplete.
- The applicant's submittal documentation is inaccurate.

If credit is denied, the reviewer will indicate the reason for denial.

Criteria for Altering the Points Assigned to an Outcome Measure

- Reviewers may change the number of points an applicant receives on Outcome measures only when partial credit is available or applied.
- Reviewers will allot the full amount of points to applicants whose data show full achievement of the stated Outcome.
- Reviewers may assign partial credit when the applicant's submittal documentation meets the criteria in the Points Appendix of the Technical Guide to the STAR Community Rating System.

Attachment 1: STAR Communities Verification Process

