



The mission of STAR is to advance recycling through partnerships, education, and advocacy, for the benefit of Texas.

STATE OF TEXAS ALLIANCE FOR RECYCLING

**ACTION GROUP AND
COUNCIL STANDARDS GUIDE**

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INTRODUCTION

USING THIS GUIDE

The purpose of this document is to provide clear procedures and policy standards for the development and management of STAR Action Groups and Councils.



COMMON ABBREVIATIONS:

The following abbreviations are used commonly throughout this document.

STAR – State of Texas Alliance for Recycling

BOD – STAR’s Board of Directors

ED – STAR’s Executive Director

SC – Steering Committee

STAR ACTION GROUPS AND COUNCILS

STAR's mission is to advance recycling through partnerships, education, and advocacy for the benefit of Texas.

STAR has two types of working member groups to address industry-related needs, regional and topical interests and the current issues of its members who share common concerns and unique recycling experiences.

Action Groups	Councils
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• more informal• less oversight• limited functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• have elected positions• require BOD approval to form• more functionality

Comprised of STAR members, Action Groups and Councils further the mission of STAR by facilitating the exchange of information among STAR members; serving as a technical resource for policy and infrastructure development; and building membership and fostering leadership for STAR. This is accomplished by:

- Sharing information and experience of common interest to group members;
- Providing input on policies and procedures;
- Networking (representation and participation) with other groups and committees and other affiliated organizations;
- Sharing and promoting STAR and member content;
- Offering training and education services to participants; and
- Establishing best practices and helping set the pace for the industry.

TYPES OF ACTION GROUPS AND COUNCILS

STAR Action Groups and Councils are organized into two types:

Regional	Topical
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• area -specific• cover large geographical areas with loose boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• subject specific• focus on a certain interest or category of recycling

HOW TO FORM A GROUP

Groups may be formed in the following ways:

1. By STAR Leadership– The Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors identify a need for an action group or a council and identify initial leadership to start the group.
2. By STAR Members – Passionate members of STAR work with STAR to start or reform an inactive Council.

STEP ONE: INFORM STAR STAFF

Contact STAR Staff if you are interested in forming an Action Group or Council. Staff can help you connect with other members in your area who may be interested in assisting in council formation or in participating once your Council is formed.

STEP TWO: IDENTIFY YOUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of Action Groups and Councils is to support the STAR mission through a variety of means. This support can include conducting the following activities, among others:

- Developing and conducting educational and networking events for diverse recycling and sustainability professionals;
- Research and promotion of specific recycling initiatives;
- Collaborating with other STAR councils across Texas; and
- Increasing STAR membership and local participation in STAR.

STEP THREE: ESTABLISH GOVERNANCE

TO FORM AN ACTION GROUP:

A STAR member in good standing must volunteer to serve as Chair of the Action Group for the duration of the group, including setting regular meetings, keeping meeting agendas and informal minutes, securing speakers, and otherwise oversee the success of all group activities.

TO FORM A STAR COUNCIL, APPLICANTS MUST:

1. Have a minimum of ten (10) STAR members in good standing who are committed to the group.
2. Select a Steering Committee of 3-10 members prior to seeking final approval to form Council from STAR BOD.
 - a. A Steering Committee must have at least three Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.
 - b. A fourth Officer position (Treasurer) and up to seven (7) at-large positions are optional.

The formational (first-ever) Steering Committee members and Officers of a Council may be self-designated STAR members in good standing who are willing to commit for a two-year term. Roles may be designated according to interest and abilities.

After formation, Steering Committees must adhere to the procedures outlined in this guide for electing, removing and replacing Steering Committee members and Officers.

STEP FOUR: SUBMIT FORMATION

Once the groups goals and objectives have been agreed upon and the Governance formed, contact STAR Staff and submit the following information:

1. Regional area or topic to be addressed by your Council
2. Governance members and contact information
3. Initial goals and objectives for first year of operation (Action Groups may have shorter terms)
4. Planned meeting schedule for first year of operation (Action Groups may have shorter terms)

FOR ACTION GROUPS:

STAR Staff will respond and assist you in establishing your group.

FOR COUNCILS:

STAR staff will forward this information to the STAR BOD for consideration of official recognition.

The application will be reviewed at the next monthly conference call and STAR Staff will inform you of their decision soon after the meeting.

OPERATIONAL STANDARDS – COUNCILS ONLY

COUNCIL STEERING COMMITTEES

Steering Committees are elected by all eligible members of the Council's general membership. Only STAR members in good standing are eligible to vote.

The Committee should consist of at least three (3) Officers and no more than ten (10) total individuals. Only STAR members in good standing are eligible to serve on the Committee. Individuals who are not members of STAR may attend Council meetings, but they are not eligible to vote or direct Council activities.

TERM LIMITS:

Committee members will serve until the expiration of their term which is two (2) years and thereafter, if willing, until their successors are chosen and seated.

Committee members may not serve over six (6) years of service without a one (1) year break. Members will resign their position in the event they cannot uphold member responsibilities.

OFFICERS:

Officers are dedicated volunteer members of the Steering Committee, elected annually from within during the first meeting after elections by a quorum of the Steering Committee members.

At a minimum, a Steering Committee must maintain a Chair, Vice-Chair/Co-chair, and Secretary to lead the group forward through meetings and events. A fourth Officer position of Treasurer is also recommended to manage the budget process. All remaining positions shall be considered At-Large but may have specific duties as determined by the Committee.

1. **Chair.** The Chair of the Steering Committee will preside at all meetings of the Committee, except as the Committee Members will otherwise determine, and will have such other powers and duties as may be determined by them. It will be the Chair's duty and he or she will have the power to see that all orders and resolutions of the Committee are carried into effect.
2. **Co-chair or Vice chair.** In the absence or disability of the Chair, his or her powers and duties will be performed by the Co-chair or Vice Chair. The Co-chair will have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Committee will from time to time designate. Service in the position of Co-chair or Vice Chair is deemed preparatory to service as Chair, and in accepting the position of Co-chair, an individual agrees to serve as Chair if so elected at the next election.
3. **Secretary.** The Secretary will record, in documents kept for the purpose, all votes and proceedings of the Committee at its meetings and make them available to STAR.
4. **Finance Officer or Treasurer.** The Finance Officer will manage all accounting and submit any budget requests to STAR.

ALL STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Duties of all Steering Committee members include:

- regularly attending Council meetings;
- communicating with STAR, each other, and the Council general membership;
- promoting local and statewide events; establishing/running regular meetings; and
- assisting with the Annual Work Plan and overall success of the Council.

ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Councils must develop annual work plans including an associated fiscal implication and submit to the Executive Director to be included in the annual budget. Not all requests will be approved. Events should be either cost neutral or revenue generating. STAR staff will send Council Chairs/Co-chairs reminders for these annual plans. Work plans and budgets will be reviewed and approved by the STAR Board of Directors.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Committee members will excuse themselves from discussions and votes when the matter at hand affects the individual personally or professionally and could result in financial or other valuable benefit to the individual.

ELECTION AND VACANCIES

Steering Committees are elected by all eligible members of the Council's general membership during the Annual Members Meeting. Only STAR members in good standing are eligible to vote. Councils should help ensure that all eligible Council members are provided the opportunity to vote.

Officers are dedicated volunteer members of the Steering Committee, elected from within the Steering Committee during the first meeting after elections by a quorum of the Steering Committee members.

Any vacancy in any existing Officer or Steering Committee position may be filled during any meeting by a quorum of the Steering Committee members. Such successor in office will hold office for the unexpired term of the predecessor.

RESIGNATION:

Any Committee Member may resign by delivering their written resignation to the Chair or other Officer of the Steering Committee.

REMOVAL:

The Committee may remove any Officer appointed by the Committee with or without cause by a vote of a majority of the entire number of Committee members then in office.

Any Committee member who has not resigned, but who has been absent for more than 4 consecutive meetings, has violated the policies outlined in this Guide, or is otherwise unable to fulfill their responsibilities as a

Committee member, may be removed by the other Committee members during any meeting.

MEETINGS

At a minimum, it is recommended that Councils meet monthly, with alternating Steering Committee and general membership meetings. A calendar of meetings should be established on an annual basis in coordination with STAR Staff and periodically adjusted as needed.

All Committee members are to notify the Chair if they are unable to attend any Committee meeting.

SPECIAL MEETINGS:

Special meetings of the Committee may be called by the Chair or by any three Committee Members and will be held at the place designated in the notice or call thereof.

QUORUM:

At any meeting of the Committee, a majority of Steering Committee members then in office will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. At any meeting at which a quorum is present, the vote of a majority of those present will decide any matter regarding the Committee.

MEETING FORMAT:

Meetings may use any format to ensure the greatest number of members are able to attend.

Contact STAR Staff for additional meeting support.

OPERATIONS STANDARDS – ALL GROUPS

ACTION GROUP AND COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Each Action Group and Council is responsible for defining goals and objectives in support of STAR’s mission. Each group will be relatively self-governing, so there is flexibility and leeway in how your group operates. However, group has the responsibility to implement the following standards in support of the overall STAR mission.

1. **An Action Group or Council’s purpose and goals will reflect the current goals of STAR.** Each group will establish in writing and periodically review with STAR its primary goals and objectives to ensure they support STAR’s overall strategic plan.
2. **Representatives from groups are encouraged to attend STAR Board of Directors meetings and other Council meetings throughout the year.**
3. **Each Action Group and Council Steering Committee will designate at least one liaison(s)** to assist in coordinating Council activities and positions with the STAR Staff, STAR Board of Directors, committees, and other Councils, affiliated organizations. The liaison is typically the Council Chair, but other Steering Committee members may serve as the liaison. The liaison is encouraged to join occasional STAR Board of Director calls to provide updates on your Council’s activities.
4. **STAR Action Groups and Councils will promote STAR membership to participants.** STAR membership is not a requirement for STAR Council participation at events but is highly encouraged to continue to build the STAR alliance throughout the state.

CONTROLLING FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Members may not speak for STAR, the Action Group or the Council unless authorized to do so. If you are asked to speak on behalf of a STAR Council, you must inform the STAR Staff prior to agreeing to the engagement.

Group members will fully support all decisions made by the STAR Staff, the STAR BOD, and the group’s governance, and will respect the confidentiality of its meetings.

GROUP MISSION OR VISION STATEMENT:

STAR groups will collectively work on our mission to advance recycling through partnerships, education, and advocacy for the benefit of Texas. All groups have that same mission.

A group is welcome to create their own vision or mission statement which conveys how the group is specifically working to help advance recycling from within STAR.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP:

STAR Membership is not a prerequisite to participate in regular Council or Action Group activities such as meetings. Councils and Action Groups may set additional membership requirements such as region, industry, or focus as needed.

Councils are encouraged to help grow membership as membership dues help fund Council and STAR's mission.

FINANCES:

All group expenses must be submitted as a written request to STAR Staff and approved in advance.

DISSOLUTION AND/OR INACTIVITY:

In the event a group no longer operates in a manner consistent with STAR's mission or priorities, STAR's ED and BOD may act to dissolve it. Groups will be afforded written notice of inconsistencies and allowed an opportunity to address the dissolution recommendation with the STAR Board of Directors before further action is taken.

If a Group's leadership becomes inactive for six months, the ED and Board of Directors will work to determine whether activities can be expected to resume within a desired timeframe. If leadership is not able to sustain Council functions, the STAR Board of Directors may act to officially deactivate a Council or Action Group.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STANDARDS:

STAR staff must be notified when you want to announce or publicize:

- Public meetings
- Educational activities/events
- Announce achievements and awards
- Share recycling information and updates

All communications that are developed and/or disseminated by a group must be approved by STAR Staff, including but not limited to the development of a social media account, graphics, videos, and newsletters.

ACTIVITY RESOURCES

There are many resources that groups can use to support their events and public meetings.

Social media like on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can be updated by staff to share an event.

Event standards:

- All Action Group and Council events must display the STAR Mission Partners slideshow, provided by STAR staff.
- All communications shall be proofed by STAR staff prior to public release to ensure consistent and valid communication.

ACTIVITY RESOURCES – ASK STAR STAFF ABOUT:

- event registrations and tickets
- information sharing on social media
- surveys to collect information/feedback
- email blasts and polls through mass email platform
- group forum platform
- Inclusion of events on STAR website
- Donation/sponsor letter, tax-exempt form, and other form templates
- And more – just ask if you have a specific need and we will try to help!

At least bi-weekly, STAR staff will provide an updated list of new/renewed STAR members to Council leaders.