



**STRATEGIC
SUSTAINABILITY
CONSULTING**

Troy Rehabilitation & Improvement Program, Inc.

Strategic Sustainability Consulting (SSC) worked with Troy Rehabilitation and Improvement Program, Inc. (TRIP) to instill their organization with green and sustainable values. As a result of these efforts, TRIP became one of the first organizations rewarded with the NeighborWorks™ Green Organization designation.

The Challenge

Long before the term “green building” was coined, TRIP practiced just that. They rehabilitated old inefficient buildings—removing asbestos and lead, and creating healthy, sustainable homes throughout New York’s Capital District community. Recently, inspired by a few individuals within their ranks, TRIP realized “green” actions were a missing yet vital part of their mission to create vibrant sustainable communities. So when NeighborWorks America offered TRIP support for implementing sustainable practices and pursuing the new [NeighborWorks Green Organization \(NWGO\) designation](#), they seized the opportunity.

TRIP had a firm commitment to action, but did not have a clear idea of how to approach the process. They pondered such questions as: What sections of the designation would apply to them? How would they organize the data needed for their due diligence? What did they need to include in their formal policies to ensure that their efforts would endure over time?

The Solution

Working with TRIP’s Green Team leaders, SSC provided the organization with a systematic approach to their assessment and planning process.

- **Keep the end in mind** – Having the designation as a focus provided the incentive to take continuous action. SSC helped them fine-tune their vision. TRIP found that the assistance provided, “really moved (us) forward in understanding what we were looking for and striving for.”
- **Assess current practices** – The engagement kicked-off with a review of TRIP’s practices across all lines of business, indicating they would need to report on progress for 8 of the 10 sections of the NWGO guidelines. The operational assessment revealed gaps—in both current practices and formal policies.
- **Set a clear roadmap** – Working from an action plan, tailored to bridge the gap between vision and practice, TRIP worked efficiently to create a solid structure for future action. This included:
 - Developing a list of documents needed to support their assertions.
 - Working with templates created specifically to streamline TRIP’s existing data gathering and organizing process.
 - Fine-tuning policy documents, based on feedback, to ensure ongoing progress over time.
- **Stick to the schedule** – Weekly meetings provided a time to answer questions and adjust the action plan. Having regular live meetings, with a forward looking agenda followed by clearly defined next steps, “kept the pressure on.” Sticking to the schedule created important momentum by requiring the team to devote time to the project, collect information, and get ready for the calls.

The Results

In just five weeks—two weeks ahead of schedule—TRIP had all their documentation in place and stood ready to apply for the NeighborWorks™ Green Organization designation. Their hard work and commitment paid off as they became one of the first organizations recognized as a NeighborWorks™ Green Organization. As one Green Team member said, even if TRIP didn’t “get the designation, it [was] totally worthwhile... We could not have done it without you!”.

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