

# 2023 Metrics for Communities



## **Communities are required to provide the following prior to evaluation:**

- Community Profile organized to follow the criteria and metrics. For repeat communities, call out what is new and/or implemented due to advisors' recommendations.
- Evaluation Tour Itinerary with start and finish times for each day
- Community Map with community boundaries and the tour route
- Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour.

## **The areas to be scored:**

Advisors will review Community Profiles, Community Maps, and Evaluation Tour Itineraries to confirm the appropriateness of the areas to be evaluated and contact communities prior to the tour so adjustments can be made.

- All areas (municipal, commercial, and residential) within the boundaries of the entrant's community/municipality (except as noted below) are scored and a representative portion of all areas must be included.
- Property to be scored, whether public or private, must be subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant's community/municipality.
- When a property does not meet these requirements, but the community's volunteers significantly impact the property with labor and/or funding, then advisors may include in their scoring the property not subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant community.
- A community may request recommendations for areas toured but not scored.

## **Metrics are noted with unique codes based on the criteria. Ratings include:**

**N/A** (Not Applicable): Communities should strive to implement all metrics; however, advisors will use N/A when a metric is not scorable in a community. N/A metric is not included in the point totals and does not affect percentages. Examples when N/A may apply in a metric: commercial/business areas do not exist; state or county statutes prevent implementation of a metric.

**Not Started** (0 points): programs or procedures are not in place.

**In Progress** (1-2 points): programs or procedures are developed, and a plan of action is implemented.

**In Place** (3-5 points): programs or procedures are utilized and beneficial.

**Surpassing** (6-8 points): programs or procedures are exceptional, utilized, and beneficial throughout the community.

## **Other:**

- The Evaluation Report's scoring, general observations, and general and criteria recommendations are based upon the community's efforts including its levels of participation in, or implementation of the metrics in each of the criteria.
- Future projects and programs are not scored.
- The scoring for the seven evaluation criteria is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community's location. Make sure the advisors are made aware of any challenges that were faced during the year.

<p><b>COMMUNITY VITALITY: Policies, programs, activities, and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and promote a sense of health and well-being. Includes, but not limited to, senior and community centers, libraries, museums, arts/cultural organizations, mentoring programs, schools, faith-based organizations, parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sports fields, water activities, trails, golf courses, and other active and passive recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities.</b></p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>	<p>Not Started 0</p>	<p>In Progress 1-2</p>	<p>In Place 3-5</p>	<p>Surpasses 6-8</p>
1. Master plan is implemented for current and future public green space, growth, and enhancements.					
2. An economic development plan is in place, implemented, and regularly evaluated.					
3. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.					
4. Active recreation opportunities such as water sports, golf, baseball, and soccer, are available and meet the needs of the community.					
5. Passive recreation opportunities such as hiking, nature trails, bird watching, and picnic areas are available and meet the needs of the community.					
6. Age-appropriate play areas and equipment are ADA-compliant, conform to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and are inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector.					
7. Participation in outdoor community events such as Bike-to-Work Day, Walk to School Day, and charity 5K events, are offered throughout the year.					
8. Public parks and green spaces are within a 10-minute walk of all neighborhoods.					
9. Alternative transportation programs are available such as bicycle, electric scooter, car/van pools, and ride sharing.					
10. Seating is available near walking, exercise, playground areas, and public transportation stops.					
11. Shade is provided for participants and spectators such as structures, shade sails, and trees.					
12. Cultural performances/events for art, dance, theatre, music, lectures, and/or cinema meet the needs of the community.					
13. Community celebrations and festivals are held throughout the year.					
14. Businesses are engaged and participate in community events.					
15. Community center is accessible and available throughout the year for all ages and abilities.					
16. Access to educational opportunities such as higher, adult, and vocational education is available.					

17. Public library resources are available and accessible for all ages and abilities.					
18. Municipal, business, and residential garden plots, rooftop gardens, community gardens, farmers markets, and/or Community Supported Agriculture are available.					
19. Secure food distribution programs, such as food pantries and hunger relief efforts, are available and include systems to elevate under-served individuals.					
20. Community-focused service organizations such as Rotary, Veterans, Chamber of Commerce, Scouting, and faith-based are present and active in the community.					
21. Volunteer boards are comprised of representatives from businesses and residents.					
22. Neighborhood organizations are in place and active.					
23. Volunteer programs have structure and the ability to record and track volunteer numbers and hours.					
24. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>		
<b>1. Community Vitality</b>					

<b>FLORAL IMPACT: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of floral displays and seasonal accents for beautification, including but not limited to annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, colorful foliage, and cultivated and native plants for season-round interest for displays in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground plantings.</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Not Started 0</b>	<b>In Progress 1-2</b>	<b>In Place 3-5</b>	<b>Surpasses 6-8</b>
1. Plan developed each season for procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance of seasonal flower and holiday displays.					
2. Plant combinations are properly selected for location and environmental conditions, create visual interest, provide dramatic effect, and appear coordinated.					
3. In-ground flower displays are designed with mature plant heights, color, and texture in mind. Plants are healthy, robust, and floriferous.					
4. Hanging baskets and containers are in use, scaled to their surroundings, and have suitable plants that are robust and floriferous.					
5. Floral displays such as flowerbeds, raised beds, planters, hanging baskets, window boxes, carpet bedding, and mosaics are located throughout the community.					
6. Creative use of flowers such as flower towers, topiaries, logo displays, rotating baskets, and official town flower is used and appealing.					
7. Demonstration/display gardens with labeled flowers are available and promoted to the public.					
8. Training programs for proper floral display care and maintenance are available for seasonal staff and volunteers conducted by qualified personnel.					
9. Effective information and education about selection and care of flowers for beautification is available to the public.					
10. Efforts are in place to educate and raise the public awareness of the importance of flowers in the landscape.					
11. Programs to educate, encourage, and expand the understanding of the role and importance of pollinator and ecological habitats are available.					
12. Efficient water-wise strategies are in use, such as drought-resistant plants, use of gray water, and timing of irrigation.					
13. Regular pruning, dead-heading, weeding, removal, and replacement of dead plants is conducted on public and private properties.					
14. Appropriate fertilization procedures are implemented and effective.					
15. The community utilizes the expertise of growers, garden centers, county extension, and/or city departments to create and implement floral enhancements.					

16. Recognition programs are in place for attractive displays created by businesses and residents.				
17. Volunteers, including businesses and residents, participate in the design, planting, and care of flower displays.				
18. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.				
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
<b>2. Floral Impact</b>				

<b>LANDSCAPED AREAS: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of the managed landscape. This includes hardscape features, cultivated and native trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, succulents, edibles, evergreen topiaries, turf, groundcovers, and pollinator-friendly plant material.</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Not Started 0</b>	<b>In Progress 1-2</b>	<b>In Place 3-5</b>	<b>Surpasses 6-8</b>
1. Comprehensive plan to identify, protect, restore, and maintain natural areas (e.g., removal of invasives, no-mow areas planted with native grasses and wildflowers, succession tree plantings).					
2. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.					
3. Management plan developed for procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance of public landscaped areas.					
4. Qualified landscape personnel or experienced contractors are available to design, install, and maintain public landscape sites.					
5. Training programs conducted for proper landscape display care and maintenance are available for staff and volunteers.					
6. City landscape ordinance requires specifications for landscaping and maintenance for new and improved residential, commercial, and public development.					
7. Landscape displays enhance community entryways.					
8. Landscaping found throughout the community including public areas, parks, gateways, and key buildings.					
9. Appropriate plants are selected for location, environmental conditions, and impact.					
10. Best practices are implemented for proper maintenance, pruning, removal, and replacement of dead and overgrown plants.					
11. Action plan developed and implemented for the identification and management of invasive plants.					
12. Strategies developed to monitor and manage diseases and pests and communicated to the public.					
13. Best practices are used to manage lawn and turf areas, including mowing, edging, watering, weeding, and replacement of dead material.					
14. Lawn and turf areas display health and vigor.					
15. Mulch from renewable and sustainable sources is appropriately used by municipality and available to residents.					
16. Landscapes provide a sense of place and identity to the community and are preserved and well maintained.					
17. Effective use of naturalization, xeriscaping, and suitable plant varieties to enhance such features as traffic calming, bank stabilization, and water management.					

19. Innovative plans of action are used in the community, such as strategies for lower maintenance, rain gardens in parking lots, sensory gardens at playgrounds, and meditative gardens at health centers.					
20. Residential landscaping provides streetscape appeal and reflects community value in landscaping.					
21. School garden programs are in place and incorporated into the curriculum for multiple grade levels.					
22. Volunteers assist in design, installation, and/or care of public landscaped areas.					
23. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>		
<b>3. Landscaped Areas</b>					

<b>URBAN FORESTRY: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of trees on public and private lands.</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Not Started 0</b>	<b>In Progress 1-2</b>	<b>In Place 3-5</b>	<b>Surpasses 6-8</b>
1. Certified municipal personnel or trained arborist/urban forester actively manages the urban forest.					
2. Tree board and/or department is available and interacts with the community.					
3. Strategic plan addresses the role urban forest initiatives play in the green infrastructure of the community.					
4. Municipal ordinances enacted and enforced for tree planting and preservation on public and private property, including new construction projects.					
5. Policy enacted and enforced that includes performance requirements to meet the minimum crown canopy and succession planting.					
6. The municipality is an active member in urban forestry organizations, such as Tree City USA and state agencies.					
7. Best practices are used for appropriate selection and diversity of tree species, proper spacing, and planting depth.					
8. Best practices are used to manage tree health and public safety.					
9. Ordinance enacted and enforced for the handling and removal of damaged, dying, or dead trees on public and private property.					
10. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.					
11. Effective communication is available to the public of recommended trees, proper planting, "Right Tree in the Right Place," mulching, placement and spacing, and maintenance.					
12. Policies are implemented and education is available for the safe participation by volunteers in planting trees on public properties.					
13. Tree programs exist that highlight and honor historic trees.					
14. Innovative programs in place to increase, support, promote, and protect trees, such as civic native tree nursery, repurposing fallen trees, managing destructive pests, and urban orchards.					
15. Ongoing urban forest tree care training in place for staff and community volunteers.					
16. Policies are implemented for the protection of historic trees located on public and private properties.					
17. Public sites such as arboretums, parks, and cemeteries have tree identification labels and descriptive signage.					
18. Efforts are in place to educate and raise the public awareness of the importance of urban forestry.					
19. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					
<b>Totals:</b>			<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>4. Urban Forestry</b>					



<b>ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES: Environmental and sustainable leadership, policies, plans, and programs for water, resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; climate change issues, green Infrastructure, and alternative energy resources.</b>	Not Applicable	Not Started 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Environmental Boards are active and effective.					
2. Appropriate green infrastructure policies and techniques are used to reduce storm water run-off pollution, such as bio-swales, rain gardens, and permeable materials.					
3. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.					
4. The municipality has a Sustainability Action Plan that is accessible, reviewed annually, and promotes water conservation, alternative energy use, and responsible land management.					
5. Municipal employees and volunteers receive year-round training on environmental initiatives.					
6. Public awareness strategies regarding environmental issues are implemented and effective, such as the 3 Rs, Earth Day events, pollution prevention, "leave no trace" signs, landfill reduction, and community clean-up days.					
7. Green infrastructure and natural asset inventory mapping and information systems are implemented and regularly updated.					
8. Management strategies implemented for the effective adaptive reuse of buildings, structures, and land.					
9. Incentives are available for home and business energy audits, solar energy, and water conservation.					
10. Water conservation measures are used throughout the community.					
11. The municipality uses electric/alternative fuel vehicles in their fleet.					
12. Electric vehicle charging stations are located throughout the community.					
13. Residential and business curbside or collection sites available for trash, recyclables, and compostable collection.					
14. Recycling and trash containers are available and present themselves together in public areas with consistent labeling.					
15. Events and sites are available for drop-off of hazardous, household, electronics, and difficult-to-recycle items.					
16. Reuse opportunities are available such as clothing, books, household goods, resales shop, and equipment repair initiatives.					
17. Prepared food waste collection system is available and used by businesses.					

18. Educational programs for all ages are available and promoted for the use of environmental initiatives such as rain barrels, backyard habitats, pollinator gardens, rain gardens, solitary bee hotels, xeriscaping, chemical reduction, water conservation, and green business practices.				
19. School/youth programs and events encourage involvement in environmental initiatives, and participants are recognized for their efforts and achievements.				
20. Policies, procedures, and educational programs address light pollution.				
21. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.				
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
<b>5. Environmental Initiatives</b>				

<b>CELEBRATING HERITAGE: Recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources.</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Not Started 0</b>	<b>In Progress 1-2</b>	<b>In Place 3-5</b>	<b>Surpasses 6-8</b>
1. Historic Preservation, Historic Society, and Architectural Review Board are active and effective.					
2. Historic Preservation ordinances are enacted, enforced, and effectively provide commercial and residential designation, guidance, and protection.					
3. Communication of ordinances, policies, and restoration resources are easily accessible to businesses and residents.					
4. Incentives are offered to promote property preservation such as tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, and rebates.					
5. Natural and agricultural areas are designated, identified, and protected.					
6. Historic districts, neighborhoods, structures, and events are identified and designated.					
7. Cemeteries, monuments, and historical plaques are in place and well maintained.					
8. Archives, artifacts, and community records are collected, properly stored and preserved, and catalogued.					
9. Oral histories are collected, properly stored and preserved, catalogued, and utilized.					
10. Historical museums and interpretive displays are available and maintained.					
11. Community heritage and diversity are promoted through websites, publications, tours, interpretive signage, mobile apps, and educational programs for all ages.					
12. Programs are in place for the purchase, installation, and long-term maintenance of memorial features such as benches, trees, brick pathways, and lamp posts.					
13. Programs are available to bring history to life, such theater dramas, reenactments, historic characters at public events.					
14. Historical programs are in place to encourage youth involvement, such as classes and tours available to multiple age levels.					
15. Parades, festivals, events, and programs are held to commemorate the community's heritage, culture, and diversity.					
16. Volunteers or staff are properly trained and participate in maintaining historical sites, records, artifacts, and structures.					
17. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					
<b>Totals:</b>			<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>6. Celebrating Heritage</b>					

<b>OVERALL IMPRESSION: Adequate and effective amenities are provided and in good condition. The community is welcoming, attractive, and leaves a positive impression.</b>	Not Applicable	Not Started 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Signage ordinances are enacted and enforced, such as for temporary stake signs, billboards, and permanent signs for businesses.					
2. Ordinances are enacted and enforced to address issues such as overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, public nuisances, unregulated garage sales, and empty storefront windows.					
3. Code enforcement/compliance officer is on the municipal staff and all codes are enforced.					
4. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.					
5. Community infrastructure is in good condition to include but not limited to roadways, road shoulders, curbs, corner pads, medians, sidewalks, railroad crossings, sewers, transformers, and utility poles.					
6. Community amenities are in good condition, such as signs, site furnishings, public restrooms, water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, crosswalks/pavement markings, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles.					
7. Residential, municipal, and business structures and in good condition, including but not limited to buildings, decks, and patios, related to lack of vandalism, graffiti, broken windows, peeling or faded paint, and rust.					
8. First impressions are positive in residential, business, and municipal areas. Condition of buildings, grounds, and yards are neat and in order.					
9. Pet waste policies are posted and enforced, and pet clean-up stations are available and stocked throughout the community.					
10. Programs exist and are effective to address graffiti, litter, and nuisance areas.					
11. Ample parking with good lighting is available throughout the community.					
12. Non-plant seasonal decorations are used in key areas.					
13. ADA standards are implemented throughout the community, such as public buildings, parking, sidewalks, public transportation, and trails.					
14. Gateway entry features exist and are prominent, welcoming, and maintained.					
15. Wayfinding signage is visible, attractive, and in appropriate locations throughout the community.					
16. Public art features such as banners, murals, and statues are used, attractive, and in effective locations throughout in the community.					

17. Community is welcoming and promotes inclusivity such as cultural, ethnic, faith, age, and orientation.					
18. Volunteers participate in community improvement initiatives, such as Adopt-A-Spot, Habitat for Humanity, River Sweep, home repair programs, disaster relief, and clean-up days.					
19. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>		<b>Actual Points</b>		<b>Percent</b>
<b>7. Overall Impression</b>					

<b>EVALUATION TOUR PREPARATION AND ACTIONS: Community's readiness prior to and the action during the Evaluation Tour including an Informative Community Profile, preparedness prior to Advisors' arrival, and effective content during the Evaluation Tour.</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Unmet 0</b>	<b>Met 1</b>
1. Community contact was available for pre-visit meeting for introductions and discussion of preparations.			
2. Community Profile was provided to Advisors at least two weeks prior to the first official tour date.			
3. Community Profile includes contacts with emails and positions.			
4. Community Profile from a returning community includes what is new and implemented from previous Advisors' recommendations (scored as Not Applicable for a new community).			
5. Community Profile includes a map with tour boundaries and a daily itinerary.			
6. Evaluation Tour provided a representative cross-section of the community.			
7. Advisors met with elected/appointed municipal leaders and staff.			
8. Advisors met with the business and non-profit community.			
9. Advisors met with volunteers.			
10. Advisors met with the media.			
11. Advisors were asked to give a presentation.			
12. A tour wrap-up session was conducted with a community representative.			
13. Enough time was allotted for Advisors to work on the Evaluation Report in a quiet place with adequate Wi-Fi.			
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions</b>			

**DISCLAIMERS:**

1. Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour. Please note that the metric calculations contained herein are final, and each community is encouraged to focus on any changes during the following year's entry in the America in Bloom Level 3 program.
2. All information is given to the best of America in Bloom's knowledge and is believed to be accurate. Your conditions of use and application of recommendations and/or suggested products are beyond our control. There is no warranty expressed or implied regarding the accuracy of any given data or statements. America in Bloom specifically disclaims any responsibility or liability relating to the use of the recommendations and/or suggested products and shall under no circumstances whatsoever, be liable for any special, incidental, or consequential damages which may arise from such use.
3. Reference herein to any specific commercial products, processes, or service by trade named trademark manufacturer or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation or favoring by America in Bloom. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.