

Quality Growth Communities—Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Quality Growth Community?

A Quality Growth Community is one that is certified by the Utah Quality Growth Commission as having completed a comprehensive planning process covering economic development, housing, conservation and infrastructure efficiency. Certified Quality Growth Communities gain access to a bundle of benefits. These benefits include preferred loan terms for water loans, preferred access to critical land conservation funds, preference for certain transportation funds, preferred access to CDBG and CIB funds, as well as special recognition from the governor and the Quality Growth Commission, and the right to use the Quality Growth Communities name and logo. Over time, the bundle of benefits will expand as additional state agencies develop preferences that can be added.

What happens if a Community chooses not to become a Quality Growth Community? Are they penalized for their decision?

No, a community is not penalized if it is not a Quality Growth Community. From the beginning, this program has been designed to reward those who choose to participate, without penalizing those who don't. For example, if a community applies for a water loan, the decision-making criteria for that loan would be the same as they are now. If a community qualified for a loan in the past, it would still qualify. The difference is that a Quality Growth Community would receive better loan terms. The Quality Growth Community might pay a lower interest rate, or have a longer time for repayment than a similar community that was not a Quality Growth Community. This program is voluntary — no community is forced to participate.

The requirements for certification are pretty tough to meet, how can a small, poor community ever get certified?

Clearly, small communities with limited resources will need help to complete these requirements. The Quality Growth Commission and the State are working on ways to provide technical assistance to small communities wanting to participate in this program. Discussions are taking place with legislators in the hope of obtaining funding for such things as circuit rider planners and community planning grants. Additionally, the Utah Transit Authority, UDOT, DCED, and other state agencies have offered to work with communities in various ways to help them meet the requirements of Certification.

What does a Community have to do to be certified?

Apply—In order to become certified, a community must complete all of the requirements spelled out in the definition of a Quality Growth Community ([link this directly to the definition](#)), and will submit an application ([link this directly to the application materials](#)) to the Utah Quality Growth Commission. The Commission will evaluate the applications and certify those communities which the commission deems to have met all the requirements.

Three year roll out —For three years, starting January 21, 2004, a community may get access to the benefits on a provisional basis by submitting a plan for meeting the requirements. The plan will describe the steps the community will take, and the milestones it will reach, as it makes progress toward achieving compliance with all the requirements by January 2007. After January 2007, a community will not be able to get the benefits until they can meet all of the requirements.

Regional Cooperation—If a community has difficulty meeting the certification requirements on its own, it may join forces with neighboring communities to meet the requirements. For example, a foothill community may have difficulty meeting the affordable housing requirements, while a neighboring community may have trouble meeting the conservation requirements. By working together, and pooling their assets, these two communities may work together to get certified.

What is the relationship between the Quality Growth Communities program and the 21st Century Communities program?

For now, the 21st Century Communities Program will continue to be rural Utah's program for quality growth planning, but it will be strengthened by having all of the benefits of the Quality Growth Communities Program added to it. Currently designated 21st Century Communities will be automatically be certified as Quality Growth Communities. Communities that are already working toward their 21st Century Communities designation can receive the three year provisional status by submitting their plan for progress in the 21st Century Communities Program, and will be eligible for all the benefits of the program. Communities that have not started in the 21st Century Communities Program, and are in a region where they are eligible for 21st Century Communities designation, may choose either program.

Eventually, the two programs may be merged, but for now, they will both continue to operate offering small communities two paths to achieve certification and to get access to the benefits.

What about Water Districts, Service Districts and other similar entities?

Are they also eligible? Yes, they are eligible for certification as a Quality Growth Service Provider. A service provider must complete an infrastructure plan for the services they provide, and demonstrate that they have cooperated in their planning with the communities that they serve. Certified Service Providers will have access to all of the benefits available to certified communities.

Who else besides the Quality Growth Commission is supporting this program?

The following organizations support the Quality Growth Communities Program:
The Utah League of Cities and Towns
The Utah Association of Counties

The Utah Association of Special Districts
The Utah Homebuilders Association
The Utah Association of Realtor
The Utah Water Quality Board
The Utah Board of Water Resources
The Utah Drinking Water Board
The Permanent Community Impact Board
The Community Development Block Grant Board
The Utah Transportation Commission