



Civic Action

A monthly update from the National Civic League

April 2016

Making Measurable Progress in Grade-Level Reading

By Doug Linkhart, President of NCL

Ralph Smith believes the actions we take to help young kids today will make a difference not only for those kids, but for the entire country. A veteran of the foundation community



and currently Managing Director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Ralph recently said "what crystallizes the moral imperative to act is the awareness and belief that acting can make a difference."

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (GLR) is a collaborative effort by funders, nonprofits, government agencies, and business leaders to ensure that more low-income children across the U.S. succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. The National Civic League is one of GLR's principal partners in promoting grade-level reading by third grade on a city-by-city, state-by-state basis.

Begun in 2012, GLR is nearly at the halfway point of its ten-year effort to engage communities across the country in this initiative. With more than 240 communities committed to the effort, GLR will be collaborating with the National Civic League to recognize the communities that are making the most progress at our All-America City awards in the summer of 2017.

The Campaign's work across the country has demonstrated that in order to make progress, you have to invest in the early years and the early grades with a focus on three key areas: improving school readiness, curbing chronic absence and expanding summer learning opportunities. To date 94 communities have made

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measurable progress on one or more of these goals.

The National Civic League is proud to be a partner in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading effort. For more information on GLR visit: www.gradelevelreading.net.

Be a part of the All-America City Experience. Attend AAC 2016

Join the National Civic League, [the 20 Finalist communities](#) and AAC sponsors for a three day learning and transformational event this **June 17th - 19th in Denver, Colorado.**



Every year at the All-America City Awards communities learn from each other, collaborate with each other and spur one another to seek and achieve greater impact. AAC is an experience in which people are transformed - where their passion and love of their community is rekindled and their commitment to improving it is redoubled.

Through concrete examples, interactive discussions and finalist presentations - you will walk away from the weekend with the knowledge, skills, contacts and inspiration you need to better support the youth in your community. For those involved in the process it is a once in a lifetime experience that draws together all sectors of a community fostering a real sense of pride and the confidence that together people can address even the most challenging problems.

National Civic League invites all members, AAC Alumni, and interested groups to enjoy and benefit from this three day learning experience.

[Register now to experience the All-America City Awards](#)

SolSmart - Recognizing and Supporting Solar Excellence

As a member of the NCL network, we wanted to share with you exciting news about the launch of a new, national effort: SolSmart. The program is slated to launch on April 27.

SolSmart is a national designation and technical assistance program that recognizes leading solar communities and empowers additional communities to expand their local solar markets through customized, no-

cost technical assistance. Funded by the Department of Energy, SolSmart aims to cut red tape, drive greater solar deployment, and make it possible for even more American homes and businesses to access affordable and renewable solar energy to meet their energy needs.

NCL is a proud member of SolSmart team, and has been working with dozens of partners to develop this innovative effort. In the next few weeks look for more details on SolSmart and how you can earn designation as a SolSmart community.

Beyond Simplistic Rhetoric - A National Conversation Around Healthcare costs and Economic Opportunity
(A National Civic Review Case Study)

Looking for a break from the often over-heated and simplistic rhetoric of the 2016 presidential primaries? For more than 30 years, the Kettering Foundation has brought together policymakers and practitioners of deliberative democracy to discuss the findings and insights of citizen deliberations on the day's most timely and controversial issues. Findings from the most recent forums will be released during Kettering's annual *A Public Voice* event. This year's event, to be held May 5 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., will focus on two issues important to all Americans: health-care costs and economic opportunity. [Read more about it in this article in the spring 2016 edition of the National Civic Review.](#)



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