



# TOWN OF BERLIN, MARYLAND

## Office of the Mayor

### *Press Release*

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Berlin Welcomes International Environmental Professionals**

### *Technical Assistance Project Focuses On Stormwater*

**(April 18, 2016)** --- The Town of Berlin, in partnership with the International City/County Management Association and the U.S. State Department, will host two environmental professionals, one from Malaysia and one from The Philippines, from April 30, 2016 to May 28, 2016.

“Berlin is known for forging strong partnerships. That’s how you get things done in a small community,” said Mayor Gee Williams. “We have been sharing best practices in stormwater management with communities throughout the state. Berlin looks forward to helping our international partners address their stormwater issues and benefiting from their ideas and perspectives on our local efforts to reduce stormwater flooding and damage,” he added.

The exchange has been arranged by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the organization that develops and advances professional local government management worldwide. Town Administrator and ICMA member, Laura Allen, will be the primary contact for the International Professionals hosted by the Town of Berlin.

The Professional Fellows Program brings emerging leaders in the fields of environmental sustainability; legislative process and governance; civic engagement; non-governmental organization (NGO)

management; economic empowerment and entrepreneurship; and journalism from around the world to the United States for intensive fellowships designed to broaden their professional expertise. Participants spend approximately one month in the United States, during which they receive hands-on exposure to national legislative offices, state legislatures, local government offices, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

“Our environmental professionals will be working on our stormwater projects, while they get to know our community and learn about our other sustainability efforts,” stated Town Administrator Laura Allen. “Berlin is a great fit for this program because we’re working on reducing flooding and improving water quality which is a challenge for most communities in Southeast Asia as well,” she added.

The program gives participants the opportunity to examine the relationship between civil society and government in the United States. They learn how respective agencies and organizations work to strengthen citizen participation, transparency, and accountability. The program also establishes structured interaction among American and foreign participants designed to develop enduring professional ties and lasting partnerships. More than 200 professionals are currently being hosted from around the world.

Through awards to 14 U.S.-based non-profit organizations and universities, including ICMA, professionals from approximately 50 countries and territories worldwide will get hands-on experience in public and private organizations across the United States in May. These exchanges benefit the participating American communities and institutions in addition to expanding networks of international cooperation on critical issues.

At the conclusion of their time in Berlin, the participants will travel to Washington, D.C., where they will take part in the Professional Fellows Congress from May 31 – June 2, 2016. The Congress marks the culmination of the exchange experience in the United States, providing a forum for participants to discuss best practices, meet other young leaders in their professions, and develop networks and concrete projects that they can implement upon their return home.

The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs supports exchange programs that increase mutual understanding between people in the United States and those from other countries. Approximately 50,000 individuals take part annually in exchange programs managed by the U.S. Department of State.

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