



# 2023 Sustainable Jersey Annual Report

A YEAR IN REVIEW



# A Message from THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**The year 2023 was packed with hopeful activities across New Jersey and within Sustainable Jersey. As an organization, we increased our technical assistance, released innovative resources, convened another record-breaking New Jersey Sustainability Summit, continued funding local projects and broadened our partnerships to increase our impact. We worked hard to ensure communities across New Jersey have the resources they need to make progress on the critical issues of today.**

This annual report is an opportunity to look back and recognize the achievements made possible by Sustainable Jersey's dedicated and talented staff, Board of Trustees, partners and volunteers. Within this report, you will find examples of our results that were driven by our mission. Most importantly, you will be reminded that people from across New Jersey were supported and energized through grants, resources and the irrepressible Sustainable Jersey movement. We are thankful for the individuals who stepped up in 2023 and worked with us to positively impact communities and the state.

As New Jersey continues to approach and surpass critical thresholds in climate and other sustainability systems, and as ever greater burdens are placed onto local governments, we need each one of our partners and supporters now more than ever. The future compels us to build momentum. Get to know our leaders, find more ways to get involved and value our victories. The state must continue to minimize carbon emissions, preserve natural resources, increase the resilience of our communities, prepare students for climate change and a green economy, and activate climate leadership across the state. Thank you to the municipalities, schools, colleagues, funders, partners and friends whom we are proud and humbled to work with every day.

**Randall Solomon**

*Executive Director, Sustainable Jersey*



## VISION

To achieve a sustainable New Jersey, one community at a time.

## MISSION

Empower New Jersey communities to build a better world for future generations with the tools, training and financial incentives necessary to pursue critical sustainability initiatives.

# Our Core Programs

## MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL CERTIFICATION

As communities across the country struggle to make progress on sustainability goals, New Jersey's towns and schools are taking action and providing evidence of implementation. Sustainable Jersey's certification programs empower municipalities and schools to complete and document a set of rigorous standards that we call actions. The actions cover critical areas including resiliency, land use, public health, climate education, natural resource protection, transportation alternatives, green purchasing, energy and waste reduction, and more.



83%

of NJ Municipalities Participating

206

NJ Municipalities Certified



67%

of NJ Public School Districts Registered

357

NJ Schools Certified

### Certification Actions

Each year, our list of certification actions is enhanced to reflect the changing conditions in the sustainability field. This work includes the participation of New Jersey leaders and experts from federal and state agencies, universities, nonprofit organizations and the business sector.

## SUSTAINABLE JERSEY CERTIFICATION ACTIONS

### SUSTAINABLE JERSEY COLLECTIVE IMPACT

91%

of NJ Population Lives in a Registered or Certified Community

25.5K

Sustainability Actions Completed by Municipalities and Schools



“Sustainable Jersey is a valuable organization. As a green team volunteer, I used the hundreds of sustainability actions to give us ideas as to what we could do to become greener and now as an elected official, I see the big picture benefits from the policy guidance and funding that makes sustainability at the local level possible.”

– MICHELE LEE

Mayor, Borough of High Bridge, Hunterdon County; Sustainable Jersey Hero January 2023

“Sustainable Jersey for Schools provides actionable tasks that schools and districts can do to incrementally increase their sustainability program. Working toward certification is the perfect way to tackle something that can seem daunting.”

– CLARE NG

Science Teacher, Marine Academy of Science and Technology, Monmouth County Vocational School District; Sustainable Jersey Hero November 2023

Researched best practices and considered global/NJ imperatives



Worked with NJ municipal and school professionals to vet actions



Tested sustainability planning models



Updated select existing actions and developed new ones



Enhanced certification program

154 Municipal Actions  
105 School Actions



# How We Drive Change

## GRANTS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

We understand that implementing our recommended best practices requires significant capacity. That is why Sustainable Jersey connects participating communities with the financial and technical resources needed to complete actions and make progress towards a sustainable future. Multiple competitive grant and technical assistance opportunities funded by program underwriters and partner organizations are provided each year. In addition, trainings, workshops and webinars are made available to help participants move forward in the program. Through the Sustainable Jersey Grant Program, over \$7.6 million dollars in grants have been awarded to New Jersey municipalities and school districts since 2009.



# 2023 IMPACT



### SUSTAINABLE JERSEY GRANT PROGRAM

- 100** grants awarded to NJ municipalities and schools/school districts
- \$530K** value of grants awarded
- 161** grant applications reviewed



### TRAININGS

- 151** trainings, workshops, webinars
- 9,913** people participated



### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- 1,266** staff responses to technical assistance requests
- 102** municipalities/schools received technical assistance



### ADVANCED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/GRANT PROGRAMS

- 42** municipalities/schools participated in Sustainable Jersey-PSE&G Partnership Program
- 34** public schools, colleges and universities participated in Trees for Schools Program
- 31** municipalities received Community Energy Planning Assistance
- 8** municipalities received Local Health Assessment and Action Planning Assistance
- 6** public schools received funding as finalists in New Jersey Student Climate Challenge
- 3** public schools participated in Sustainable and Scalable Food Waste Solutions for Schools
- 1** municipality received Water Story Assistance
- 1** municipality received Equitable Communications Assistance

## FUNDING THE FUTURE: EXAMPLES OF 2023 GRANTS

- Asbury Park City (Monmouth County): Food Waste Diversion Program**
- Atlantic City (Atlantic County): Master Plan Open Space and Recreation Element**
- Clifton City (Passaic County): Environmental Resource Inventory**
- Collingswood Borough (Camden County): Food Waste Education & Outreach Campaign**
- Elms Elementary School (Ocean County): Outdoor Environmental Learning Center**
- Paramus High School (Bergen County): From Garbage to Garden Composting Program**
- Sparta Township (Sussex County): Green Business Recognition Program**
- Tewksbury Township (Hunterdon County): Oldwick Park Green Infrastructure Implementation**
- Trenton Central High School (Mercer County): Community Greenhouse**

# 2023 IN REVIEW

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Community Energy Planning:** To help municipalities identify energy initiatives to increase clean energy production, reduce energy use and cut greenhouse gas emissions, we created an assessment tool and a wide range of resources to support the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities' Community Energy Grant Program. We worked with 31 municipalities, 16 of which are overburdened, to help them develop a Community Energy Plan. Technical assistance included team building, a review of the municipality's community energy data and help identifying gaps and possible initiatives.

**Climate and Resilience Planning:** To assist municipalities with efforts to assess and address the impacts of climate change in their communities, we worked with New Jersey Future to develop the Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment Guide, a first-of-its-kind climate vulnerability assessment practitioner's guide.

**New Jersey Community Solar Project Finder:** To facilitate greater access to solar energy, we partnered with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to create the online New Jersey Community Solar Project Finder that allows New Jersey residents to search by zip code for community solar projects serving their community.

**Sustainable and Scalable Food Waste Solutions:** To address food waste in K-12 schools, we conducted a comprehensive food waste pilot study of three schools that collectively resulted in a 95% reduction in food waste. The schools composted any food waste generated and diverted 21,300 pounds of unopened food items to share tables. This resulted in the prevention of an equivalent of 207,720 pounds of carbon dioxide entering the atmosphere. A food waste toolkit for K-12 schools was developed and new and revised food waste actions were added to the Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification program. The project partners were Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

**Trees for Schools:** To mitigate climate change and its impacts, we partnered with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and The College of New Jersey to award 23 public school districts, two public charter schools, and nine public colleges and universities \$4.55 million to plant 3,000 trees on campuses across the state.



## SUSTAINABLE JERSEY REGIONAL HUBS

Atlantic-Cape May Counties Hub

Sustainable Bergen County Hub

Sustainable Essex Alliance

Sustainable Hunterdon Hub

Sustainable Hunterdon Schools Hub

Mercer County Sustainability Coalition

Monmouth County Hub

Ocean County Sustainability Hub

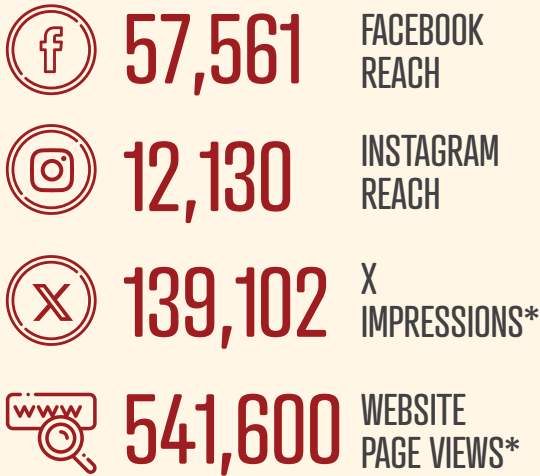
Somerset County Green Leadership Hub

Tri-County Sustainability  
(Camden, Burlington, Gloucester)

Union County Hub

Urban Sustainability Hub

## MAKING AN IMPACT ONLINE: 2023 SNAPSHOT



*\*From both websites: Sustainable Jersey and Sustainable Jersey for Schools*

## 2023 GRANT UNDERWRITERS

PSEG Foundation  
New Jersey Education Association

## 2023 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PARTNERS/FUNDERS

Atlantic Health System  
Elizabethtown Gas  
Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Gardinier Environmental Fund  
The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation  
New Jersey American Water  
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
New Jersey Natural Gas  
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority  
PSE&G  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
South Jersey Gas

**New Jersey Sustainability Summit:** Over 500 hundred changemakers gathered at our Sustainability Summit to network, learn and take action. Sustainability exhibitors shared innovative resources and dozens of electric vehicles were displayed at the Electric Vehicle Ride and Drive and Fleet Showcase, including heavy vehicles and buses. Educational sessions focused on expanding the use of renewable energy, transitioning to electric vehicles, making communities more resilient to climate change, ensuring equitable access to resources for all and more.

**Partnership to Support Energy Efficiency:** We empowered communities to better manage energy use and access energy-efficiency programs and incentives through the Sustainable Jersey-PSE&G Partnership Program. Participating municipalities and schools were provided customized technical assistance and implementation support. Assistance options include Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign; Technical Assistance for Energy Efficiency in Municipal or School Facilities; and Commercial Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign.

**New Jersey Student Climate Challenge:** To empower public high school and middle school students to be climate leaders, we administered the New Jersey Student Climate Challenge. The student teams completed projects that addressed a cause or impact of climate change, such as an educational campaign about the environmental impacts of fast fashion; a demonstration project showing how black soldier fly larvae reduce methane emissions; and the promotion of pollinator gardens to reduce habitat loss caused by climate change. The program partners are the Drumthwacket Foundation and Atlantic City Electric.

**Community Equity Pilot:** We are working with Dunellen Borough to create a community demographic profile, assess the existing trusted sources for information within the community and develop an equitable municipal communications strategy. This will help the municipality more effectively share critical information with residents while strengthening our new Community Equity Profile priority action. This work is supported by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation.

# Our Shared Future



Sustainable Jersey will continue to empower New Jersey communities to build a better world for future generations with the tools, training, technical assistance and financial incentives necessary to pursue critical sustainability initiatives. Together we can build resilient communities, tackle climate change, advocate for social justice, preserve our state's natural resources and prepare the next generation to address future challenges.

## Supporting Climate Change Education

With funding from the New Jersey Department of Education, we will continue to provide professional development for New Jersey teachers and develop resources to help them implement climate education in their classrooms. We will conduct research to better understand public school teachers' approaches to climate change education, identifying areas requiring additional support to enhance teaching practices. We will expand the New Jersey Climate Change Education Hub by creating new inquiry-based lesson plans specifically designed for New Jersey and in alignment with the New Jersey Climate Education Student Learning Standards. By equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to understand the climate challenges, we help build the next generation of climate literate leaders, including policymakers, scientists, teachers, entrepreneurs and more, who will develop solutions and lead the green economy.



## Focusing on Sustainable Energy

Supporting municipalities and schools to reduce their community carbon footprint is a primary focus. Our targeted outreach and technical assistance will help them more effectively reduce energy use and emissions, increase renewable energy and apply for state and utility incentives for energy upgrades on facilities.



## Advancing Equity

Sustainable Jersey continues to strive to become more equitable, more inclusive and better prepared to do the work of advancing social justice while supporting municipalities and schools in New Jersey to do the same. In doing so, our organization commits to take anti-racist action and to oppose oppression in all forms. In 2023, we provided technical assistance to municipalities interested in advancing social equity, diversity and inclusion.



“If it were not for Sustainable Jersey, I don’t think we would have a community garden and we would not have started the journey to enhance our creative culture. Sustainable Jersey actions gave us ideas and direction to do these things and the certification process gave us the push to get them done in order achieve certification.”

– **MARK OLSON**

*Commissioner, Village of Ridgfield Park and Chair, Sustainable Ridgfield Park, Bergen County*



“Sustainable Jersey offers unique insight into how cities and municipalities throughout New Jersey are planning and implementing various sustainability, resiliency and greenhouse gas reduction policies and projects. The ability to work across multiple towns and cities and to see firsthand the types of projects being implemented, is unique across the United States. The competition to ‘go green’ brings out the best ideas and solutions to help move businesses, residents and visitors to our municipalities go green while helping to grow the local economy.”

– **ADAM ZELLNER**

*President, Greener by Design*

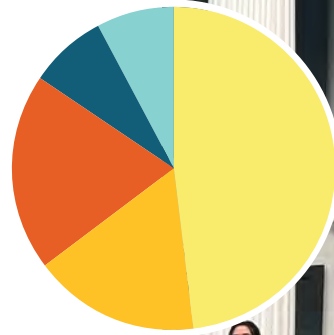


# FINANCIAL

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

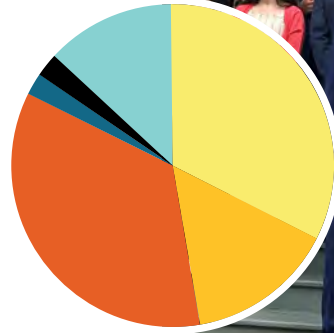
### FY2023 FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

<span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> Certification Programs	\$2,038,670
<span style="color: #FFC300;">■</span> Small Grants Program	\$705,832
<span style="color: #FF8C00;">■</span> Other Programs	\$832,035
<span style="color: #008080;">■</span> Management & General	\$325,219
<span style="color: #4682B4;">■</span> Fundraising	\$325,231



### FY2023 REVENUE

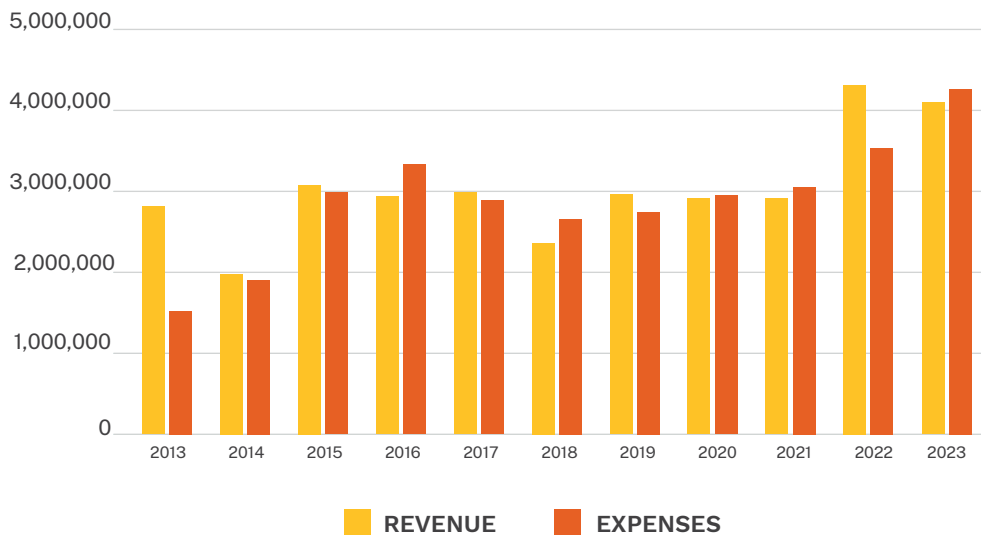
<span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> Grants with Donor Restrictions	\$1,316,500
<span style="color: #FFC300;">■</span> Grants without Donor Restrictions	\$597,869
<span style="color: #FF8C00;">■</span> In-kind Revenue*	\$1,438,464
<span style="color: #008080;">■</span> Special Events	\$79,439
<span style="color: #4682B4;">■</span> Contributions	\$99,396
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> Program Income	\$519,738
<span style="color: #000000;">■</span> Other	\$8,135



\*Reflects grants awarded to The College of New Jersey to support the Sustainable Jersey programs



### ANNUAL REVENUE VS. EXPENSES



	REVENUE	EXPENSES
2013	\$2,828,144	\$1,505,182
2014	\$2,021,696	\$1,936,816
2015	\$3,026,085	\$2,983,085
2016	\$2,940,223	\$3,277,876
2017	\$3,001,239	\$2,910,337
2018	\$2,435,838	\$2,713,388
2019	\$2,985,857	\$2,775,964
2020	\$2,911,287	\$2,963,451
2021	\$2,909,545	\$3,038,512
2022	\$4,244,403	\$3,562,755
2023	\$4,059,541	\$4,226,987

Source: Sustainable Jersey financial statements for fiscal year ending June 2023 audited by CLA.

# THANK YOU, SUPPORTERS

Sustainable Jersey is proud to recognize the many foundations, state agencies, professional associations, corporations, individuals and organizations that support our mission. We are grateful for the following program underwriters, funders and partners supporting our efforts to build a more sustainable New Jersey, one community at a time.

*\*Funders supporting multiple programs*

## PROGRAM UNDERWRITERS



## CORPORATE SPONSORS



### CORPORATIONS

American Recycling Resources  
Atlantic City Electric  
Bryan Electric  
CM3 Building Solutions  
Community Offshore Wind  
Donnelly Energy  
EcoQuip USA  
Electriq Power  
Gabielli Truck Sales of NJ  
Green Wave Technologies  
Guide Strategies  
Laurel Lawn Mower  
Kiely  
Momentum Solar  
NewTech Recycling/Village Office Supply  
Nexamp  
Solstice  
Taurus Advisory Group  
TechTerra Environmental  
Tri-State Light & Energy  
Wintegrity Solutions, Inc

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Atlantic County Utilities Authority  
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission  
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs  
New Jersey Department of Education  
New Jersey Department of Economic Development  
New Jersey Department of Health  
New Jersey Department of Human Services  
New Jersey Department of Transportation  
New Jersey Highlands Council  
New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy  
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

### NONPROFITS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education  
Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (Rutgers University)  
Association of NJ Environmental Commissions  
Clean Ocean Action  
Duke Farms  
EZ Ride  
goHunterdon  
The Land Conservancy of New Jersey  
New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center (Rutgers University)  
New Jersey Future  
New Jersey Healthcare Quality Institute  
New Jersey Healthy Communities Network  
New Jersey League of Conservation Voters  
New Jersey League of Municipalities  
New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association  
New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association  
New Jersey Public Health Association  
New Jersey Tree Foundation  
NJIT Center for Community Systems  
Passive House Network  
Public Works Association of New Jersey  
Raritan Headwaters Association  
Rutgers Cooperative Extension  
Rutgers Environmental Stewards  
The Nature Conservancy  
Tobacco Free for a Healthy New Jersey  
The Watershed Institute

### FOUNDATIONS

Bayer Fund  
The Drumthwacket Foundation  
Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation  
The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation  
Jon Ben Snow Memorial Trust

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Sustainable Jersey is thankful to collaborate with an experienced team of industry leaders and public servants. Our independent, volunteer Board of Trustees' vision and expertise guide and advance our strategic objectives.

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### MIKE CERRA

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# Sustainable Jersey

encompasses the three equal and interrelated components of sustainability



## PEOPLE

Contribute to a strong civil society that provides opportunity for all



## PROSPERITY

Support local economies and use community resources



## PLANET

Practice responsible environmental management and conservation



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