



# 2020 Sustainable Jersey Annual Report

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

GUIDING ACTION • EMPOWERING CHANGE • SHAPING OUR FUTURE

# A Message from THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**What a year it has been. The COVID crisis changed everything in 2020. Thankfully, Sustainable Jersey had a productive year due to our strong connection with partners; a talented staff and dedicated board of trustees; a commitment to sustainability and a program that connects with and inspires people.**

The global pandemic reminded us that preparing today to ensure our future wellbeing, is time well spent. So much of what we do at Sustainable Jersey is working today to invest in the future. COVID is just the latest reminder that the world constantly changes. Human nature is to assume that things will be as they have always been in our short personal time horizons. However, COVID helps us understand that the impacts of an unsustainable trajectory should be treated with immediacy and not as vague future abstractions.

With nearly ninety percent of the New Jersey population living in a registered or certified Sustainable Jersey community, we learned that supporting our communities in their sustainability journeys has never been more important. From climate change to water, waste and equity issues; so many of the big sustainability concerns are reaching a crisis point. In the face of these issues, we are working to create a new era of sustainability in New Jersey—one that secures economic, environmental and societal well-being. As part of our mission, Sustainable Jersey is striving 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. We are developing, implementing, and promoting actions that advance equity and combat racism in the municipal and school certification programs.

As a result of strong partnerships, Sustainable Jersey remains resilient. Overall support continues to grow. Sustainable Jersey is about building a movement of people who are living today as if the future matters. We are about supporting the dedicated green team members and local leaders to solve the great sustainability challenges of our time. I want to express the gratitude of the Sustainable Jersey Board of Trustees and staff to our partners and in particular, to the community members who are doing the hard work every day to make a sustainable future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.S." followed by a stylized surname.

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.



## Guiding Action

### SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Collaborating with state agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations, academia and the business community, Sustainable Jersey researches best practices for what communities could and should do to contribute to a sustainable future. The program culminates in a prestigious certification award to municipalities and schools that have documented meeting a set of rigorous standards.

#### Sustainability Actions

Since the launch of the **Sustainable Jersey municipal program** in 2009 and the **Sustainable Jersey for Schools program** in 2013, participants have successfully implemented and documented over 18,700 discrete actions from the list of best practices.

In 2020, Sustainable Jersey developed five new actions and updated seven existing actions. The Sustainable Jersey for Schools program added 12 new actions and updated actions in two categories: Culture and Climate; and Student Learning. Municipalities choose from over 146 actions, such as meeting targets for green fleets, implementing energy efficiency measures, conducting a waste audit for municipal buildings or completing a natural resources inventory to earn points for certification. Schools choose from 105 actions, such as performing energy audits, creating a plan to provide equitable access to digital learning, conducting an indoor air quality review and boosting recycling efforts to earn points for certification.

**81%** OF NJ MUNICIPALITIES PARTICIPATING

**219** NJ MUNICIPALITIES CERTIFIED



**60%** OF NJ PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS REGISTERED

**321** NJ SCHOOLS CERTIFIED

 “Sustainable Jersey presents a blueprint and benchmarking to help New Jersey municipalities succeed. Any town that is not participating is missing an important opportunity.”

- ROBERT BECKER

Readington Township  
Environmental Commission

## SUSTAINABLE JERSEY COLLECTIVE IMPACT

**89%**

of NJ Population Lives  
in a Registered or  
Certified Community

**18.7K**

Sustainability  
Actions Completed  
by Both Municipalities  
and Schools

# Empowering Change



## GRANTS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

Sustainable Jersey connects participating communities with financial and technical resources to successfully 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 help participants move forward.

### Sustainable Jersey Grants Program

Through our grants program, over \$5.9 million dollars in grants have been awarded to New Jersey municipalities, schools and school districts since 2009.

In 2020, a total of \$710,308 in grants was awarded. These grants supported 130 municipal and school projects around the state that ranged from \$2,000 capacity-building grants to high-impact sustainability projects with funding levels as high as \$30,000. Projects addressed a wide range of sustainability issues such as food waste recycling, community and school gardens, energy efficiency and resiliency, green infrastructure, creative assets assessments and outdoor classrooms. The grants program is an impactful benefit and incentive that drives municipalities and schools to participate in the certification programs while helping to jump start sustainable efforts with seed funding.

### Sustainable Jersey Technical Assistance

We offer technical assistance to New Jersey municipalities and school districts. In 2020, our staff responded to 2,300 technical assistance phone and email requests. In-depth technical assistance opportunities are also funded by program underwriters and partner organizations each year. In 2020, we assisted municipalities advance complete streets, sustainable energy, public engagement initiatives and more.

Our re-useable water bottle filling station in the Recreation Center will be used by residents and visitors of all ages as they enjoy the many activities and events held there. The reduction in single use plastic and the education that this initiative provides is a way to look forward in sustainability after the COVID-19 crisis is behind us."

- **JONATHAN L. HORNIK**  
*Mayor, Marlboro Township*

## 2020 SUSTAINABLE JERSEY TRAININGS, WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS

**90**  
EVENTS      **4,618**  
PARTICIPANTS

## 2020 SUSTAINABLE JERSEY GRANTS

**236**  
GRANT APPLICATIONS

**130**  
GRANTS AWARDED

**\$710,308**  
VALUE OF GRANTS AWARDED

# 2020 IN REVIEW

## HIGHLIGHTS

**New Jersey Sustainability Summit:** We host the annual New Jersey Sustainability Summit to strengthen and inspire sustainability initiatives in New Jersey. Sustainable Jersey's Sustainability Summit went virtual in 2020 drawing over 1,000 participants. A total of 21 sustainability sessions over four-weeks included educational webinars, short talks and online happy hours with topics ranging from creative communities, health equity, climate change, tracking greenhouse gas emissions and more.

### Strengthening Green Teams Through Regional Hubs:

We are committed to helping green teams build capacity through training, best practice resources and networking. In keeping towns connected to each other, green teams gain the opportunity to learn what has been successful elsewhere in the state and partner on projects with neighboring towns to boost limited resources. Working through collective action between municipalities, county agencies and nonprofit partners, the regional hubs are making significant progress on important issues. In 2020, regional hub county-wide projects included: a county creative team, a series of energy efficiency testimonial videos, a heat pump webinar, a sustainability mentoring program and a joint purchasing energy initiative to increase renewable energy content.

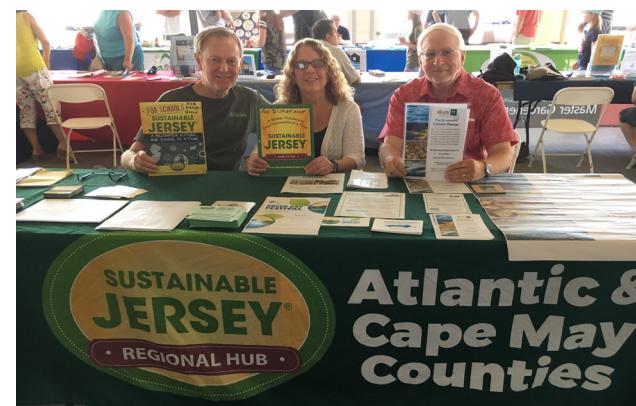
### Sustainable Jersey Makes Energy Efficiency Outreach Easier:

**Easier:** Sustainable Jersey worked with New Jersey's Clean Energy Program to create a Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach Toolkit and a Commercial Energy Efficiency Outreach Toolkit. Sustainable Jersey also created a New Jersey Comfort Partners Outreach Toolkit and an Alternative Fuel Vehicle Procurement Guide.

“ So many green teams are working to address similar challenges. The Sustainable Jersey Hubs offer a way to share resources, to connect and support each other’s work and to amplify our impact.”

— AMY MENZEL

Co-Chair, Atlantic-Cape May Hub



### 10 SUSTAINABLE JERSEY REGIONAL HUBS

- Atlantic-Cape May Counties Hub
- Sustainable Bergen County Hub
- Sustainable Essex Alliance
- Hunterdon Sustainability Team
- 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

## MAKING AN IMPACT ONLINE: 2020 SNAPSHOT



**229,272**  
FACEBOOK IMPRESSIONS

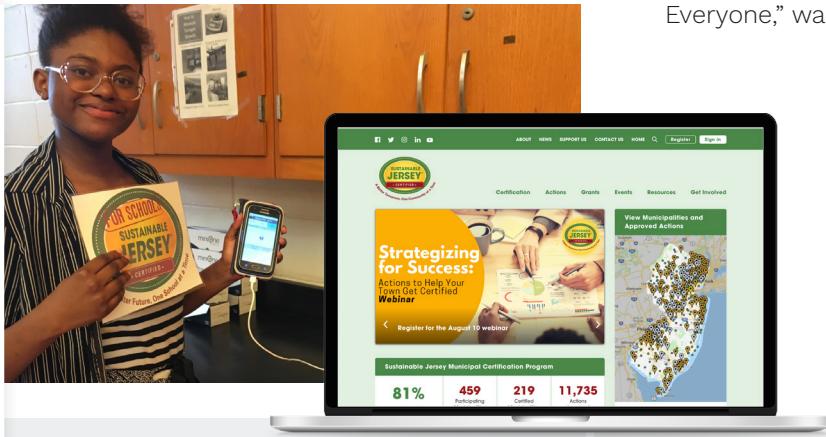


**398,211**  
TWITTER IMPRESSIONS\*



**560,404**  
WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS\*

\*From both Sustainable Jersey and Sustainable Jersey for Schools



## 2020 GRANT UNDERWRITERS

PSEG Foundation  
New Jersey Education Association  
Gardinier Environmental Fund  
Atlantic City Electric  
The Nature Conservancy

## EDF Climate Corps Fellows Paired with Distressed

**Municipalities:** We paired five Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) Climate Corps Fellows with municipalities and school districts to provide expertise and support for evaluation, planning and implementation of projects that will help improve the energy performance of their facilities. New in 2020, EDF and Sustainable Jersey directly supported two Fellows to work with distressed municipalities participating in our program. The New Jersey Municipal Revitalization Index was used to identify community distress levels when considering applications.

## Local Public Information and Engagement (PIE)

**Planning Initiative Assists Municipalities:** In 2020, we worked with Freehold Borough, Gloucester City, Hope Township and Runnemede Borough; technical assistance was provided to each town to meet their public information goals.

## Complete Streets Outreach and Technical Assistance:

Funded by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, we worked with the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University to advanced complete streets projects in eight municipalities. A video, "Streets for Everyone," was also created and promoted.

## Website Upgrades for Sustainable Jersey and Sustainable Jersey for Schools:

In 2020, we upgraded our municipal and school websites with a new look, enhanced navigation and increased mobile accessibility.

## 2020 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PARTNERS/FUNDERS

Gardinier Environmental Fund  
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority  
New Jersey Natural Gas  
Community Foundation of NJ  
The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation  
Environmental Defense Fund

# Shaping Our Future

Sustainable Jersey is a network and movement of municipalities, school districts and schools working collectively to bring about a sustainable New Jersey.

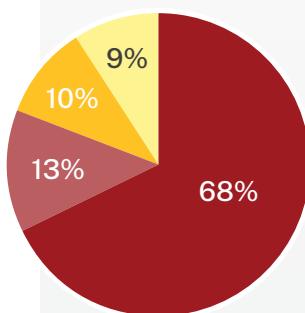
Sustainable Jersey strives to connect its participants with resources that can help them identify strategies, implement initiatives and share their successes with others.



## Advancing Equity

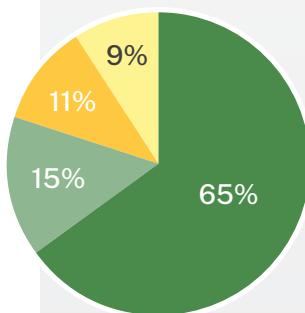
In 2020, we published the report: *Advancing Social Equity through the Sustainable Jersey Program: Analysis and Potential*. We are developing actions that advance equity and combat racism in the municipal and school certification programs. The program will strengthen ongoing efforts to offer targeted outreach and support to low- and moderate-income and distressed communities on registration, certification and grant competitions in our program and increase diversity and representation on the Board, Certification Standards Committees and task forces and promote the same on municipal and school green teams.

In 2020, we launched **Digital Schools** which is focused on bridging the digital and remote learning divide that is leaving so many low-income and students of color behind.



**POPULATION OF NEW JERSEY BY RACE**

- White
- Black
- Asian, Pacific Islander, and Hawaiian
- Other



**POPULATION IN SUSTAINABLE JERSEY CERTIFIED MUNICIPALITIES BY RACE**

- White
- Black
- Asian, Pacific Islander, and Hawaiian
- Other

“Since 2014, this initiative has been six years in the making, and we’re so glad that we’re able to accomplish such a tremendous feat as certification for 61 schools with Sustainable Jersey for Schools. We love doing programs involving the whole Newark Public Schools community. This isn’t just words or another program, but an opportunity for the schools of Newark to benefit from Sustainable Jersey, which in turn will benefit the city of Newark.”

– ROGER LEÓN, Superintendent, Newark Public Schools

“

Education is a pillar of sustainability. Students must master technology to become productive citizens, educators must master technology to become effective teachers and schools must become adept at using technology to address distance learning and communications with parents and communities. COVID has shown us how disparities in access to technology among students and schools are exacerbating existing social inequality. The Digital Schools Program will provide schools, teachers and parents with a roadmap for how to ensure technology is used appropriately to bring about a sustainable future.”

– **RANDALL SOLOMON**, Executive Director, Sustainable Jersey



## Digital Schools Star Recognition

The importance of digital and remote learning to sustainability and resiliency has never been more evident. To help strengthen support for schools, educators and students in meeting the challenges, the Digital Schools Program was created in 2020 to integrate new content into Sustainable Jersey for Schools to meet the challenges of digital learning. Digital Schools was formed as a partnership with the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey School Boards Association.

The new Digital Schools Star Recognition highlights certified schools that have made significant progress in completing the new slate of Sustainable Jersey Digital Schools actions. Twelve new certification actions were added that span everything from professional development for educators to news and media literacy for students, equitable access, personalized learning, data safety and security and more. The Remote Digital Learning Roadmap was released in 2020. The Roadmap is a primer and a practical guide for New Jersey schools, districts and teachers to help them implement remote learning programs. The Roadmap is the first product from the new Sustainable Jersey Digital Schools Program.

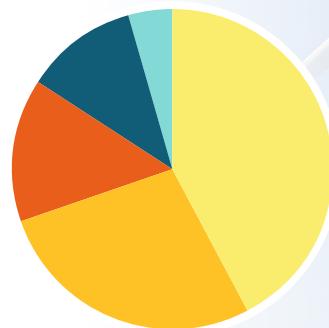
## Looking Ahead

The planet and its inhabitants are reaching a crucial point. Sustainable Jersey can help. This is our mission. Sustainable Jersey will continue to 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. There is opportunity right now, everywhere we look, to do good for people, the planet, and our collective prosperity. We are seizing every chance we can.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

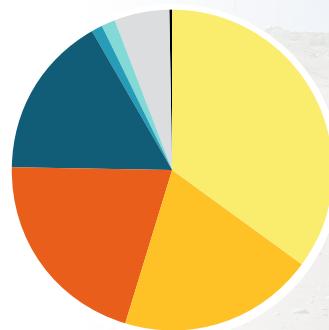
## FY2020 FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Certification Programs	\$1,256,240
Grants Program	\$812,878
Special Initiatives	\$425,328
Management & General	\$343,995
Fundraising	\$125,010



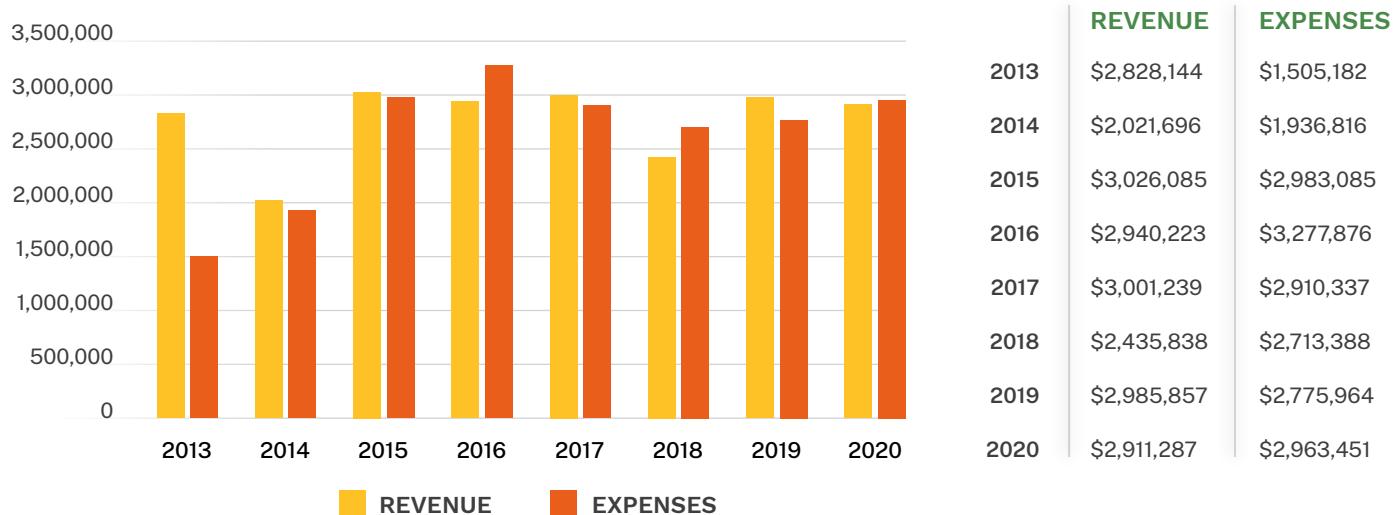
## FY2020 REVENUE

Grants with Donor Restrictions	\$1,026,295
Grants without Donor Restrictions	\$567,000
In-kind Revenue*	\$602,405
Sponsorships	\$473,835
Special Events	\$38,465
Contributions	\$35,024
Program Service Fees	\$160,206
Other	\$8,057



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

## ANNUAL REVENUE VS. EXPENSES



# THANK YOU SPONSORS

Sustainable Jersey is grateful to the corporations, foundations, individuals and other organizations that generously support our mission to build a more sustainable New Jersey – one community at a time. We are proud to acknowledge the following program underwriters and funders.

## PROGRAM UNDERWRITERS



NEW JERSEY  
EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



## CORPORATE SPONSORS



Greener by Design



## CORPORATIONS

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Concord Engineering Group  
Donnelly Energy Services  
Driven Fleet Concepts  
Drop the Beet Farms  
Foam Cycle  
Helpsy  
Jewel Electric Supply  
KS Engineers  
Plugz.io  
Station A  
Taurus Advisory Group  
Willdan

## FOUNDATIONS

Bayer Fund  
The Blackbaud Giving Fund  
Conserve to Preserve Foundation  
The Drumthwacket Foundation  
Great Plains Institute  
The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation  
Roma Bank Foundation

## NONPROFITS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center [Rutgers University]  
New Jersey Future  
New Jersey Healthy Communities Network  
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

New Jersey Board of Public Utilities  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
New Jersey Department of Education  
New Jersey Department of Health  
New Jersey Department of Human Services

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An independent, volunteer Board of Trustees, supported by staff, governs Sustainable Jersey. Sustainable Jersey is grateful to collaborate with such an experienced team of leaders whose vision and expertise guide and advance our strategic objectives.

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**Sustainable Jersey**  
encompasses the three equal, 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



Sustainability Institute at The College of New Jersey  
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