Sustainable Jersey
Previous Program Updates

Updated January 28, 2026

Sustainable Jersey provides updates and introduces new actions in January and June of each year. Action updates are divided into two categories:

Major Updates: Significantly change the submission standards for an action that either make it harder or easier to obtain points after the revision. It can also occur when an action is being proposed for withdrawal from the action list or being removed as a priority action in the program.

Minor Updates: Changes to action spotlights, resources, or clarifications to improve performance and do not change the standards.

2025 Program Updates

- **New Actions**
  - Energy
    - Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy
    - Municipally Supported Shared Mobility Projects
  - Natural Resources
    - Tree Protection & Replacement Ordinance
  - Waste Management
    - Litter Prevention Education & Compliance
- **Action Updates**
  - Emergency Management
    - Emergency Temperature Event Plan
  - Energy
    - Energy Tracking and Management
    - Municipally Supported Community Solar
    - Purchase Alternative Fuel Vehicles
- **Retired Actions**
  - Reusable Bag Education Program
  - Tree Protection Ordinance

2024 Program Updates

- **New Actions**
  - Health & Wellness
    - Town-Wide Gas Leaf Blower Restrictions
  - Land Use & Transportation
    - Comprehensive Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment

- **Action Updates**
  - Community Partnership & Outreach
    - Green Team

  - Energy
    - Commercial Energy Efficiency Outreach
    - Energy Assistance Outreach
    - Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach
    - Make Your Town Solar Friendly
  - Land Use & Transportation
    - Enhanced Stormwater Management Control Ordinance
  - Sustainability & Climate Planning
    - Community Energy Plan or Climate Action Plan

- **Retired Actions**
  - Build-Out Analysis
  - Green Building & Environmental Sustainability Element

- **Category Changes**
  - Emergency Management & Resiliency renamed to Emergency Management
  - Heat Island Assessment & Mitigation Plan moved to Land Use & Transportation category

2023 Program Updates

- **New Actions**
  - Natural Resources
    - Winter Best Practices to Reduce Road Salt Impacts
  - Operations & Maintenance
    - Green Purchasing Policy
  - Sustainability & Climate Planning
    - Community Sustainability Plan

- **Action Updates**
  - Community Partnership & Outreach
    - Green Fair
  - Emergency Management & Resiliency
    - Heat Island Assessment & Mitigation Plan
  - Energy
    - Municipally Support Community Solar
    - Electric Vehicle Community Outreach
  - Natural Resources
    - Municipal Water Story
  - Operations & Maintenance
    - Green Cleaning Products & Motorized Cleaning Equipment
    - Recycled Copy Paper

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- **Retired Actions**
  - Animals in the Community Education
  - Adopt a Green Purchasing Policy by Ordinance and Resolution
  - "Green" Your Green Fair
  - Efficient Landscape Design
  - Integrated Pest Management
  - Minimize Water Consumption
  - Vision Statement & Goals, Indicators & Targets, and Action Plans
  - EPA WasteWise Program

2022 Program Updates

- **New Actions**
  - Diversity & Equity
    - Community Equity & Diversity Profile (Priority)
  - Energy
    - Energy Assistance Outreach
    - Electric Vehicle Community Outreach
  - Food
    - Promoting Safe Food Donation for Food Security
  - Land Use & Transportation
    - Community Design for All Ages

- **Action Updates**
  - Energy
    - Energy Efficiency for Municipal Facilities
    - Municipal Onsite Solar System
    - Renewable Government Energy Aggregation
    - Municipally Supported Community Solar
    - Solar Outreach
    - Fleet Inventory
    - Make Your Town Electric Vehicle Friendly
  - Land Use & Transportation
    - Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Improvement Projects
  - Natural Resources
    - Water Conservation Ordinance
  - Waste Management
    - Reusable Bag Education Program

- **Retired Actions**

- Companion Animal Management Pledge
- Companion Animal Management Plan
- Enhanced Licensing Compliance
- Pledge Supporting NJ Wildlife Action Plan
- Climate Adaptation: Flooding Risk
- Coastal Vulnerability Assessment
- Historic Preservation Element
- Community Carbon Footprint
- Community Visioning

2021 Program Updates

The Gold Star Standard in Health and the Gold Star Standard in Water were launched. As part of the launch of the Gold Star Standard in Health, nine new actions were introduced and the Lead Education & Outreach action was updated. The Food Production sub-category was renamed to Food Security. A new Lead & Healthy Homes sub-category was created under the Health & Wellness category.

- **New Actions**
  - Food
    - Community Food Pantry/Bank & Soup Kitchen
    - Expanded Supplemental Food Programs
  - Health & Wellness
    - Best Practices for Local Boards of Health
    - Integrating Health into Municipal Decision Making
    - Local Health Assessment and Action Plan
    - Tobacco Free Community
    - Comprehensive Lead Strategy
    - Health Homes Inspection & Training
    - Lead Blood Screening Campaign
    - Lead and Housing Hazard Data-Sharing
  - Land Use & Transportation
    - Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Improvement Projects
    - Complete and Green Streets for All Policy
  - Natural Resources
    - Municipal Water Story (Priority)

- **Action Updates**
  - Community Partnership & Outreach
    - Hold a Green Fair
  - Land Use & Transportation
    - Enhanced Stormwater Management Control Ordinance
  - Natural Resources

  - Open Space Plan
  - Water Conservation Education Program

- **Retired Actions**
  - Institute Complete Streets

2020 Program Updates

- **New Actions**
  - Energy
    - Municipally Supported Community Solar
  - Health & Wellness
    - Private Well Outreach Testing
    - Removing Lead in Drinking Water

- **Action Updates**
  - Community Partnership & Outreach
    - Community Education & Outreach
  - Energy
    - Energy Tracking and Management
    - Community-Led Solar Initiatives
    - Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach
    - Fleet Inventory
    - Purchase Alternative Fuel Vehicles
  - Energy Gold Star
    - Municipal Operations
  - Food
    - Community Gardens
  - Innovative Community Projects
    - Innovative Community Projects #1-3

- **Retired Actions**
  - Adopt Behavioral Policies
  - Driver Training
  - Green Roofs
  - Raingardens
  - Site Plan Green Design Standards

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2019 Program Updates

- **New Actions**
  - Brownfields
    - Brownfields Assessment & Investigation

- **Action Updates**
  - Community Partnership & Outreach
    - Community Education & Outreach
  - Emergency Management & Resiliency
    - Climate Adaptation: Flooding Risk
  - Energy
    - Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach
  - Health & Wellness
    - Building Healthier Communities
  - Land Use & Transportation
    - Bicycle & Pedestrian Audits
    - Transit-Oriented Development Supportive Zoning
  - Natural Resources
    - Community Forestry Management Plan & NJUCF Accreditation

- **Retired Actions**
  - Energy Education and Outreach
  - I-Tree Assessment of Municipal Trees
  - Lead-Safe Training Program
  - Vehicle Conversions

2018 Program Updates

ALL energy actions previously under Innovation & Demonstration and Operations & Maintenance were moved to Energy.

- **New Actions**
  - Emergency Management & Resiliency
    - Coastal Vulnerability Assessment
    - Heat Island Assessment
  - Land Use & Transportation
    - Green Infrastructure Planning
    - Green Infrastructure Implementation

    - Enhanced Stormwater Management Control Ordinance

- **Action Updates**
    - Brownfields
        - Brownfields Inventory & Prioritization
        - Brownfields Reuse Planning
        - Brownfields Marketing
    - Energy (all energy actions previously under other categories are now here)
        - Make Your Town Electric Vehicle Friendly
    - Emergency Management & Resiliency
        - Climate Adaptation Flooding Risk
    - Food
        - Community Gardens

- **Non-Expiring Actions with New Expiration Dates**
    - Animals in the Community
        - Companion Animal Management Pledge
        - Pledge Supporting NJ Wildlife Action Plan
    - Energy
        - Municipal Geothermal Energy System
        - Purchas Alternative Fuel Vehicles
        - Vehicle Conversions
    - Green Design
        - Green Building Policy/Resolution
        - New Construction
        - Upgrade/Retrofit Light Pollution
    - Natural Resources
        - Easement Inventory and Outreach
        - Easement Inspections and Evaluations
    - Operations & Maintenance
        - Adopt a Green Purchasing Policy by Resolution
        - Green Grounds & Maintenance Policy
        - Efficient Landscape Design
        - Integrated Pest Management

- **Action Category Name Changes**
    - Energy Efficiency – Energy
    - Sustainability Planning – Sustainability & Climate Planning
        - Sustainability & Climate Planning (sub-category) – Community Sustainability Plan

- **Action Name Changes**

- On-Site Solar System – Municipal On-Site Solar System
- Geothermal Energy System – Municipal Geothermal System
- Wind – Municipal Wind Energy System

2017 Program Updates

- **New Actions**
  - Arts & Creative Culture
    - Municipal Commitments to Support Arts and Creative Culture
  - Energy Efficiency
    - Commercial Energy Efficiency – replaces Direct Install Outreach Campaign to Local Business Community and Achieving Target Increase in Local Business Participation
    - Energy Efficiency for Municipal Facilities – replaces Energy Audits and Implement Energy Efficiency Measures
    - Residential Energy Efficiency – replaces Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Municipal Program and Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Outreach
  - Innovation & Demonstration Projects
    - Make Your Town Solar Friendly
    - Community-Led Solar Initiatives
  - Waste Management
    - Household Hazardous Waste
    - Recycling and Waste Reduction Education and Compliance – replaces Recycling Education and Enforcement

- **Action Updates**
  - Innovation & Demonstration Projects
    - Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
  - Waste Management
    - Construction and Demolition Waste Recycling
    - Non-Mandated Materials Recycling

- **Retired Actions**
  - Bulky Rigid Plastics
  - Carpet & Foam Padding
  - Shrink Wrap
  - Complete Streets Program
  - Construction Waste Recycling
  - Energy Audits
  - Implement Energy Efficiency Measures
  - Recycling Education & Enforcement

- Education for Sustainability Programs
- Energy Efficient Appliances or Equipment
- High Performance Building
- High Performance Building Portfolio
- School-Based Energy Conservation Programs
- Sustainable Energy Transition Plan

2016 Program Updates

- **New Actions**
  - Emergency Management and Resiliency (New Category)
    - Community Wildfire Protection Plans
    - Emergency Communications Planning
    - Extreme Temperature Event Plan
    - Firewise Community
    - Ready Set GO! Fire Company
    - Vulnerable Populations Identification for Emergencies
  - Health & Wellness
    - Health in All Policies Professional Development
  - Public Information & Engagement
    - Open Data Inventory and Management

- **Action Updates**
  - Energy Education & Outreach
  - Land Use & Transportation Actions
    - Adopt a Complete Streets Policy NEW – replaces Complete Streets Program
    - Institute Complete Streets NEW – replaces Complete Streets Policy

- **Retired Actions**
  - Energy Audits for One Building
  - Inventory & Upgrade All Buildings

2015 Program Updates

- **New Actions**
  - Animals in the Community
    - Enhanced Licensing Compliance
  - Arts & Creative Culture
    - Utilizing Your Creative Assets
  - Innovation & Demonstration Projects

        - Buy Electricity from a Renewable Source
    - Health & Wellness
        - Smoke-Free and Tobacco Free Public Places
    - Land Use & Transportation
        - Build-Out Analysis
        - Effective Parking Management
        - Historic Preservation Element
    - Public Information & Engagement (NEW Category)
        - Municipal Communications Strategy
        - Improve Public Engagement in Municipal Government
        - Improve Public Engagement in Planning and Zoning
        - Online Municipal Public Service Systems
        - Digitizing Public Information

- **New and Updated Energy Related Actions**
    - New Actions
        - Municipal Energy Audits and Upgrades
            - Sustainable Energy Transition Plan
    - Evolution of Existing Actions
        - Energy Audits NEW
        - Implement Energy Efficiency Measures NEW
    - Expanded Existing Actions
        - Energy Efficiency
            - Energy Tracking and Management
        - Innovation & Demonstration Projects
            - On-Site Solar System – replaces Solar
            - Renewable Government Energy Aggregation (R-GEA)
                - Renewable Government Energy Aggregation – consolidates Consultant Engagement for R-GEA, R-GEA Green E-Certified Content, R-GEA 20% Renewable Energy, R-GEA 40% Renewable Energy

- **Other Action Updates**
    - Green Design
        - All green design actions no longer have the prerequisite requirement of completing the Green Building Policy/Resolution or Sustainable Land Use Pledge in order to earn points.
    - Local Economies
        - Green Business Recognition Program – became a variable point action

2014 Program Updates

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In 2014, there were over 125 actions municipalities could earn points for. There are also now a total of 11 priority actions municipalities could choose from. To learn about 2014 program updates, listen to the "New Actions and Other 2014 Program Enhancements" webinar. A summary of the topics discussed in the webinar is listed below with more detail provided in the "New Actions and Other 2014 Program Enhancements" presentation:

- **New Actions**
  - Arts & Creative Culture
    - Creative Placemaking Plan
  - Brownfields (New Action Category)
    - Brownfields Inventory & Prioritization
    - Brownfields Marketing
    - Brownfields Reuse Planning
  - Climate Adaptation & Mitigation
    - Climate Adaptation Flooding Risk (Priority)
      - The NJ Resiliency Network can help your town complete this action
  - Innovative & Demonstration Projects:
    - Innovative Community Project 3
    - Electric Vehicles
      - Make Your Town Electric Vehicle Friendly
      - Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
    - Renewable Government Energy Aggregation
      - Consultant Engagement for R-GEA
      - R-GEA Green-E Certified Content
      - R-GEA 20% Renewable Energy
      - R-GEA 40% Renewable Energy
  - Land Use & Transportation
    - Bicycle and Pedestrian Audit
    - Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
    - Smart Workplaces (Gold)
    - Smart Workplaces (Platinum)
    - Transit-Oriented Development Supportive Zoning
  - Natural Resources
    - Environmental Commission Site Plan Review
  - Waste Management
    - Prescription Drug and Safety Disposal (Priority)
    - Commercial & Institutional Recycling
    - Non-Mandated Materials Recycling
    - Recycling Education & Enforcement
    - Reusable Bag Education Program

- **Additional Priority Actions**
  - Local Economies: Green Business Recognition Program
  - Diversity & Equity: Diversity on Boards & Commissions

- **Action Name Changes**
  - Innovative & Demonstration Projects

    - Innovative Community Project 1 (formerly "Other")
    - Innovative Community Project 2 (formerly "Other 2")
- Natural Resources
    - Community Forestry Plan and Tree Cover Goal (formerly "Community Forestry Plan and Canopy Goal")
    - I-Tree Assessment of Municipal Trees (formerly "Computerized Assessment of Municipal Trees")
    - Tree Hazard Inventory (formerly "Tree Hazard and Health Assessment Inventory Projects")

2013 Program Updates

To learn about 2013 program updates, listen to the "What's New for 2013" Webinar. A summary of the topics discussed in the webinar is listed below with more detail provided in the "What's New for 2013 Power Point":

- Changes to Certification Cycle
- Grants Portal
- New Website Features
- New Actions
- Updates to Actions

Program Changes Since 2009

In 2010, Sustainable Jersey added an additional level of certification, creating a Bronze Level and a Silver Level. Bronze certification still only requires completion of two (2) Priority Actions, while Silver requires three (3). Additional Priority Actions have been added, while some have been removed. For more information on this please, review the Certification Overview page or visit the Actions page on the website.

Additionally, any new actions have been added and options for receiving points in multiple categories have been expanded. For example, in 2009, if you had five recycling advancements, you could only receive credit for two; however, we now have more options for receiving credit under the Recycling Actions. The point system was also adjusted to keep the level of effort required to achieve certification similar to the first year of the program. Since it is now easier to score points, and there are more points available, the minimum points for the Bronze (or first level of certification) increased to 150 points from 100 points. Finally, a new level of certification was added, Sustainable Jersey Silver, which requires 3 priority actions, 350 points, and actions completed in at least 8 categories.