



2021 Certification Webinar

April 29, 2021

Samantha A. McGraw, Program Manager

Housekeeping: All attendees are muted. Questions? Enter them into the Questions box or “raise your hand” and we will answer them at the end of the presentation. **The presentation and recording will be posted on the [Webinars page](#) by the end of the week.**

Agenda

1. Program Overview
2. Actions
3. Program Updates
4. Certification
5. Applying for Certification & Recertification
6. Resources



Tri-County Hub Meeting

Program Overview



Our Staff

What is Sustainable Jersey?

A nonprofit organization that provides **tools, trainings** and **financial incentives** to support communities as they pursue sustainability programs.

\$6.3 million in grants to municipalities and schools through the Sustainable Jersey Grants Program for sustainability initiatives.
Learn more: <https://www.sustainablejersey.com/grants/>



Washington Township (Gloucester) receives a \$2,000 grant for green team support



THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE

Actions

Tools,
resources,
guidance

Funding

Sustainable Jersey Stats

2009
Program
Started

81%
Participating

89%
Population



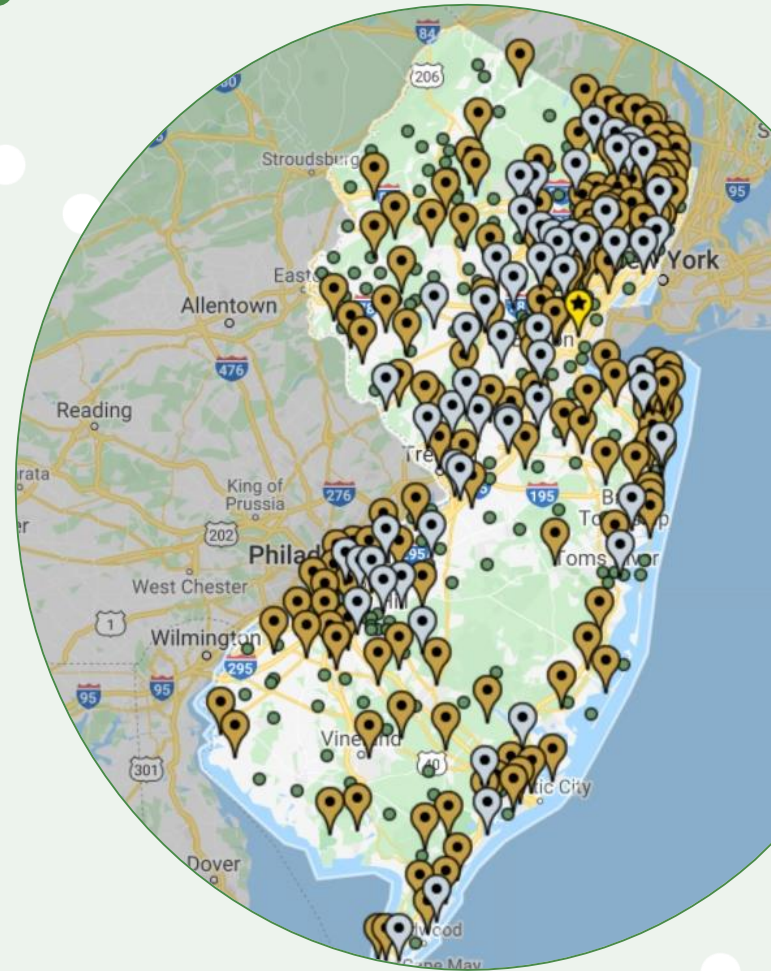
155
Certified



64
Certified



1
Star



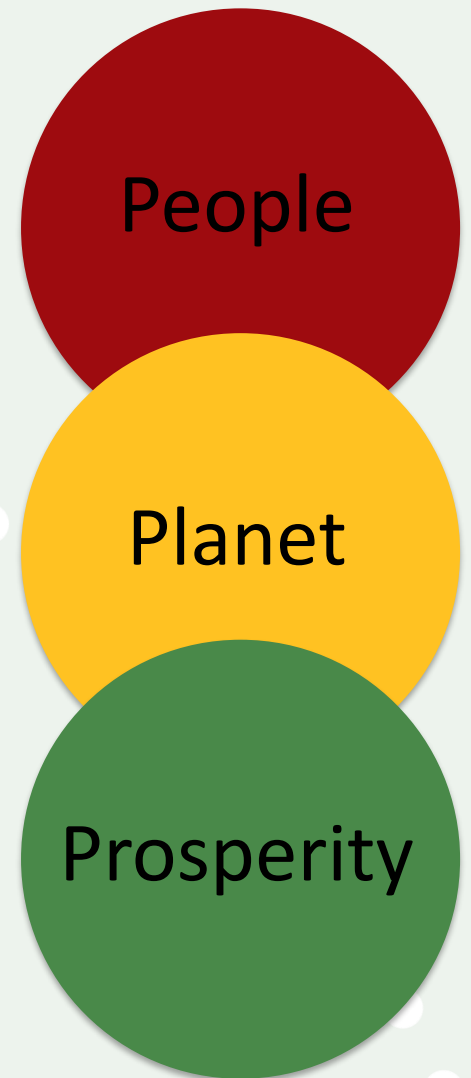
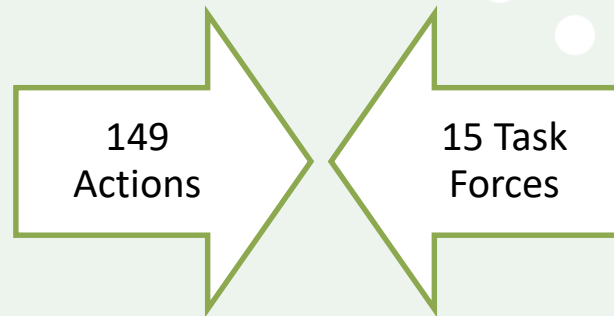


Actions

Components of Sustainability

Action Sections

- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- Who should be involved?
- How long will it take and what will it cost?
- What to do and how to do it
- What to submit
- Spotlights
- Resources



Action Categories

- Animals in the Community
- Arts & Culture
- Brownfields
- Community Partnership & Outreach
- Diversity & Equity
- Emergency Management & Resiliency
- Energy
- Food
- Green Design
- Health & Wellness
- Innovation & Demonstration Projects
- Land Use & Transportation
- Local Economies
- Natural Resources
- Operations & Maintenance
- Public Information & Engagement
- Sustainability & Climate Planning
- Waste Management

Priority Actions

- Climate Adaptation: Flooding Risk
- Diversity on Boards & Commissions
- Energy Tracking & Management
- **Energy Efficiency for Municipal Facilities**
- Fleet Inventory
- **Green Business Recognition Program**
- Municipal Carbon Footprint
- Municipal Water Story *NEW 2021*
- **Natural Resource Inventory**
- **Prescription Drug Safety and Disposal**
- Recycling and Waste Reduction Education & Compliance
- **Sustainable Land Use Pledge**
- Water Conservation Ordinance



2019 Priority Actions Webinar Recording & Presentation

View the webinar recording
and presentation [here](#)

Most Popular Actions

- Arts & Culture
- Community Partnership & Outreach
- Energy
- Food
- Health & Wellness
- Public Information & Engagement
- Waste Management

Just getting started? View Start Up Actions [here](#)



Variable Point Actions

Building Healthier Communities

20 Points

• THIS ACTION HAS VARIABLE POINTS: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 •

! Test Muni Application for Certification

Action Submission: [Building Healthier Communities](#)

Directions

Please complete this form to submit this action as part of your application by following these steps:

- Mark the status as **planned**.
- Indicate the **requested points** for variable point actions.
- Enter **description of implementation**, no more than 300 words.
- Upload supporting documentation.
- Click **save action submission** button.
- Once updates are finished, mark the action **completed** so points are calculated in your point totals to submit certification.
- **Save** the submission.

Status

Current action submission status: **Planned**

Planned

Requested Points

Point level requested for this submission

20

5

10

15

20

25

Description of Implementation

In the text box below, please provide a short summary (300 word maximum) of what was accomplished and the impact on the community. Include relevant references to the uploaded materials. **If updating a previous submission, please remove outdated or unnecessary information.**

- The points awarded will vary based on **accomplishments**
- For example, the BHC action allows you to earn points for having a health and wellness initiative for **four different population segments**
- Application view defaults **lowest point value** until changed by user
- User **selects point value** supported by the documentation as part of the submission from the drop down menu
- Reviewer **confirms** point value selected or **changes** based on review of the documentation

Master Action Tracking Spreadsheet

Available on Sustainable Jersey [website](#)

Spreadsheet includes:

- Action name
- Submission requirements
- Look back period
- Approval period
- Resubmission requirements
- Points



Download

Planning
Tool

Submission
Summary

“Actions” in Action





Program Updates 2019 - 2021

All program updates are posted on
the [Program Updates website page](#)

New Actions

Brownfields

- [Brownfields Assessment & Investigation](#) (2019)

Energy

- [Municipally Supported Community Solar](#) (2020)

Health & Wellness

- [Tobacco Free Community](#) (2021)
- [Private Well Outreach Testing](#) (2020)
- [Removing Lead in Drinking Water](#) (2020)

Land Use & Transportation

- [Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Improvement Projects](#) (2021)
- [Complete and Green Streets for All Policy](#) (2021)

Natural Resources

- [Municipal Water Story](#) (2021)

Municipalities currently working on adopting / updating a Complete and Green Streets policy / ordinance are **strongly urged** to reach out to the [New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center](#) at the Voorhees Transportation Center, Rutgers University, for guidance.

Updated Actions

2021

- Hold a Green Fair
- Enhanced Stormwater Management Control Ordinance
- Open Space Plan
- Water Conservation Education Program

2020

- Community Gardens
- Commercial Energy Efficiency Outreach
- Community Education & Outreach
- Purchase Alternative Fuel Vehicles
- Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach

2019

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Audits
- Building Healthier Communities
- Community Forestry Management Plan & NJUCF Accreditation

Action descriptions contain information about the updated content

Questions about energy actions? Contact Energy Program Manager, Nancy Quirk at quirkn@tcnj.edu

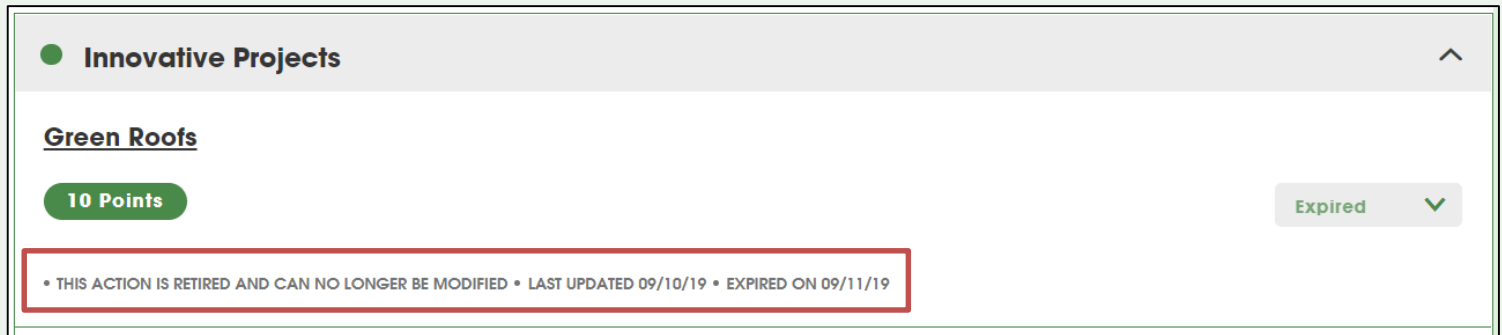
Earn Points for Census Complete Count Initiatives

[Community Education & Outreach](#): Census 2020 outreach efforts performed by municipal elected or appointed officials and/or staff or green team volunteers.

[Innovative Community Project](#): Implemented a comprehensive Census 2020 education and outreach effort that includes multiple communications strategies and shows there were plans to establish a site, referred to as Census Kiosk, where people can complete the census. OR show a number of different outreach strategies listed on the US Census Bureau's [Census Response Strategies During COVID-19 document](#).

What is a Retired Action?

- Capability implemented in 2016
 - Needed to keep actions current with best practices while being sensitive to the embedded base of approved actions.
- Protocol
 - A retired action means that applicants are no longer able to apply for points for that action.
 - A previously approved submission for a retired action will remain in a municipality's certification application until it expires in a "read only" mode



The screenshot displays a user interface for 'Innovative Projects'. Under the 'Green Roofs' category, there is a '10 Points' badge and an 'Expired' dropdown menu. A red-bordered box highlights a message at the bottom: 'THIS ACTION IS RETIRED AND CAN NO LONGER BE MODIFIED • LAST UPDATED 09/10/19 • EXPIRED ON 09/11/19'.

Retired Actions

<u>Action & Year Retired</u>	<u>Eligible for Points Elsewhere?</u>
Driver Training (2020)	No
i-Tree Assessment of Municipal Trees (2019)	Innovative Community Project
Institute Complete Streets (2021)	Complete and Green Streets for All Policy
Energy Education & Outreach (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential/Commercial Energy Efficiency Outreach• Community Education & Outreach
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green Roofs (2020)• Raingardens (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green Infrastructure Planning• Green Infrastructure Implementation
Lead-Safe Training Program (2019)	Innovative Community Project
Site Plan Green Design Standards (2020)	No
Vehicle Conversions (2019)	Purchase Alternative Fuel Vehicles



Certification

2021 Certification Cycle Timeline

June 6	<p>Initial Application Deadline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate actions you plan to earn credit for by marking “Completed”• 2021 expiring municipalities requesting a certification extension must submit request by this date
Early-July	First round review comments provided
September 10**	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revision deadline to be eligible for recognition at the 2021 Sustainable Jersey Luncheon during the NJLM Conference• Sustainable Jersey Annual Awards including the Sustainability Champions will be based on the point totals achieved following the second round of review.
Mid-October	Second round review comments provided
November 21	FINAL application deadline
Mid-December	Final decision on pending applications

NOTE: If the majority of your actions do not have documentation, only mark enough actions completed to meet the minimum requirements for bronze certification. Additional actions can be added throughout the cycle.

Municipalities with Certifications Expiring in 2021

Sustainable Jersey understands that municipal operations were impacted by the COVID pandemic, and that initiatives such as Sustainable Jersey certification, may need to be put on hold to manage the needs of the community. Municipalities with certifications expiring in December 2021 that are still facing challenges because of the pandemic may request an extension of its Sustainable Jersey certification to December 2022. Extension requests must be received **no later than the certification deadline of June 6, 2021**. To submit an extension request, **email a letter signed by a municipal official or the green team leader** requesting the extension due to COVID pandemic related issues/priorities to info@sustainablejersey.com.

If you have been working on certification, still encouraged to submit!

2021 Certification Cycle Actions with Adjusted Look Back Period

- Due to COVID-19 crisis, Sustainable Jersey understands some activities and initiatives may not have been able to take place.
- For most actions intended to take place on an annual basis, documentation from 2019-2021 will be accepted.
- Other actions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What does this mean?

- Ordinarily these actions would require documentation from 2020 – 2021, but for this year, documentation from 2019 – 2021 will be accepted.
- Municipalities seeking certification may have these actions marked “Expired” and can resubmit for these actions by changing the status from Expired to **Completed**. No additional work is necessary so long as the submission meets the current action requirements and submission standards.

View list of adjusted look back period actions [here](#)

Certification Benefits



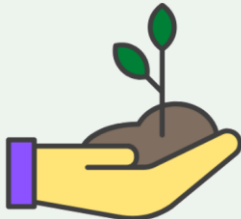
**Save money.
Get money.**



**Gain access to tools, training and
expert guidance.**



**Get recognized.
Promote your town.**



**Conserve valuable resources.
Protect the environment.**

Certification Requirements



- Total of at least 150 points
- Mandatory Green Team
- Implement 2 of 13 priority actions
- Actions completed in 6 of 18 categories



- Total of at least 350 points
- Mandatory Green Team
- Implement 3 of 13 priority actions
- Actions completed in 8 of 18 categories

What Does Certification Mean?



Bronze

- Made a commitment to Sustainability
- Created internal organization (green team)
- Succeeded in implementing first significant actions



Silver

- Beyond getting started
- Making significant progress in a number of categories toward sustainability
- Statewide leader

Thinking about applying for Silver certification? Watch the *Moving Up to Silver* webinar recording and presentation on the [Webinars page](#)

Certification Steps

#1

Pass resolution
& register
municipality

#2

Form ***mandatory***
green team

#3

Meet criteria for
bronze or silver
certification

#4

Submit
documentation
for each action

***Certification awarded after review and verification*

What is a Green Team?

- Leads and coordinates the sustainability activities of the community
- Develops plans, implements programs, and assists with educational opportunities that support the creation of a sustainable community
- Diverse group of members encouraged
- Aspire to create a team representing the demographics of the town
- Can be part of an existing group, like an Environmental Commission



Learn more about green teams [here](#)

Develop a Plan

1

- Organize green team

2

- Review actions already in progress in your community

3

- Identify group leader & form small groups to work on specific actions

4

- Develop task list with target completion dates

5

- Track progress & adjust plan as needed



Applying for Certification & Recertification

Detailed guidance on navigating the Municipal Dashboard and certification application is in the [Application User Guide](#)

Your Application

Manage Municipal Users – Keep Contacts Updated!

- Update the Municipal Profile for current primary/secondary contacts.
- Add additional users to contribute toward your application.
- Both owners & contributors can access, edit, and submit the application.
- Owners can add/remove other owners & contributors; contributors can only add other contributors

If town officials such as the business administrator, clerk, mayor, etc., wish to receive notifications about the status of your application, please add them as a user to the account.

Sign up or
login

Municipal
Dashboard

Manage
Profile &
Users

Submitting Your Application

To submit the application, click the yellow submit button found on the right hand side of the main application page. NOTE: Depending on the size of your computer screen, you may need to scroll down a little bit to see the submit button.

Steps to Submit

- When finished working on an action mark it as "Completed."
 - **Remember:** Follow this procedure even if an action is not fully finished and you do not have all the documentation uploaded because the submit button only turns yellow when all completed and approved actions total to the minimum requirements for bronze certification.
 - **Tip:** Check to make sure the completed and approved totals meet the minimum requirements for bronze. Requirements are listed in the **Certification Criteria** section above Action Totals.
- Press the yellow submit button, confirm submission, and you will receive a notification in green at the top of the page that the application has been submitted.
- All users on the account will receive an automatic email that the application has been submitted for review. If the business administrator, clerk, mayor or other municipal official wishes to receive these notifications but is not on the account, please add them as an owner or contributor. Guidance is available on page 6.

Certification Criteria

Required	1
Priority	2
Points	150
Categories	6

Show requirements for:

BRONZE SILVER

Action Totals

(Completed, Approved)

Required	1/1
Priority	5/12
Total Points	255/1940
Categories	10/18
Total Actions	16/145

If all completed action submissions are approved, this application will qualify for BRONZE certification.

To achieve SILVER certification, see certification criteria above.

**Submit Application
for Review**

Reviewer Feedback

Automatic
Email

Approved or
Must Revise

Archived
Comments

After submitting the application, project area specialists review the submissions to see if they meet the requirements for each action. During the review process, the status of the actions submitted will change, but comments are not viewable until the review is complete. At that time updates can be made to actions based on the reviewer feedback.

Reviewer Feedback

- All users associated with an account will receive an automatic email notifying them when the application has been turned to "Awaiting Updates".
 - The email will list the actions marked "Must Revise" that need attention in the application.
- Reviewer feedback may be available for any action status, and can be found in one of two places:
 1. By clicking "**Published Comments**" in the Reviewer Feedback area at the top of the application. It will return a list of the actions with comments associated with them in the order they appear in the application.
 2. By clicking on the **action name** and scrolling to the bottom of the page to the "Reviewer Feedback" area.
- Reviewer feedback will provide information on the updates needed for action approval.
- Once all of your updates have been made, mark those actions updated as "Completed" and resubmit the application for review.
- At the end of the review cycle, all comments will be archived and accessible either at the top of the application, or at the bottom of each action's submission page.

This application is AWAITING UPDATES	
Application History This applicant has applied 2 times	CERTIFIED DECEMBER 10, 2015 CERTIFIED OCTOBER 15, 2015
Reviewer Feedback	2 PUBLISHED COMMENTS 7 ARCHIVED COMMENTS

Posted: 7/1/2015 3:43 PM Status: ARCHIVED

Subject
Submission Requirements Not Yet Met 1

Body
Thank you for submitting for this action. In order to earn points, your submission must meet the following standards:

2

[show archived comments](#)

Action Submission Tips

#1

Read the action description in order to understand what the action requires

#2

Provide a summary of what was accomplished that aligns with the action

#3

Delete old documents and upload new documents that support the information contained in the summary

#4

Type in descriptive document titles for all uploaded files (i.e. Green Purchasing Policy or Outreach Materials)

Why Actions are Not Approved

Pitfall	How to Overcome
Action expired/too old	Review look-back period; Update action as necessary. If you add new documentation, make sure to remove the old.
Proper documentation not submitted	Review action submission requirements and documentation uploaded
Misinterpretation of Action Goals	Be sure to closely read the “What to Do” and “What to Submit” portion of the action to verify that what you plan on submitting is in line with the intent of the action
Seeking credit for same activity under two different actions	One activity may only be given credit under one action; Have someone that oversees entire application
Not conducting outreach/education component required for many actions	Read the submission “What to Do” and “What to Submit” sections closely
Not completing the prerequisite action	Be sure to read the Introduction to each action and the “What to Submit” section to make sure the action does not have a prerequisite or that it has been completed.



Resources

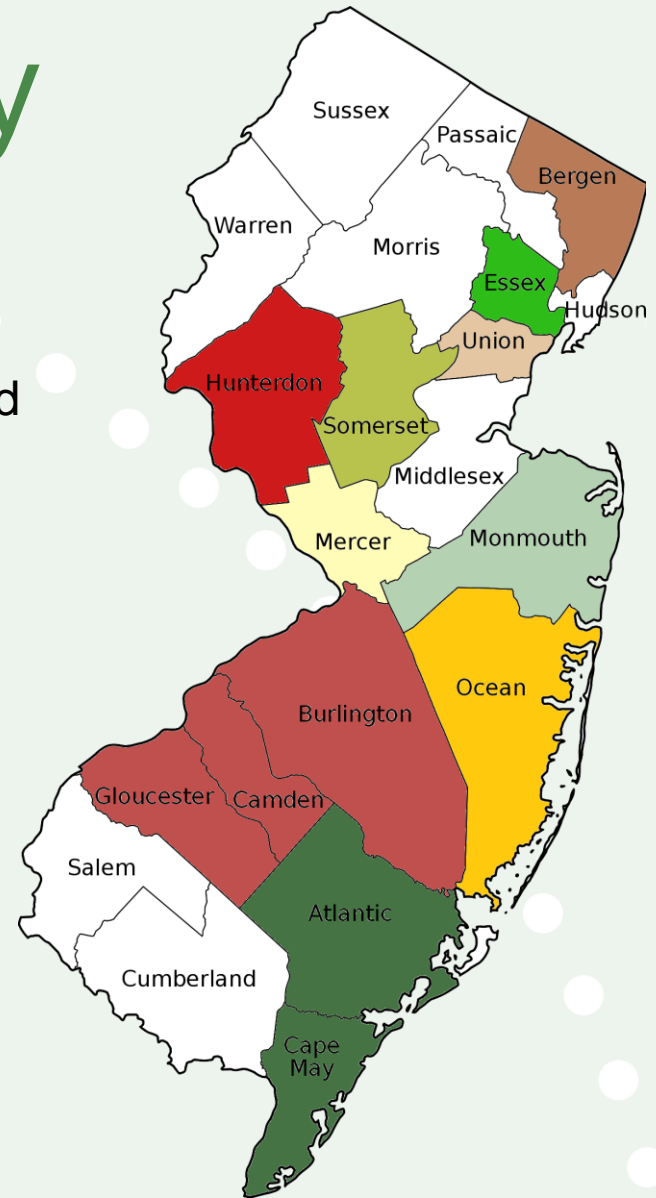
A new [Resources](#) website page houses our Data Center, Publications, Green Team Resources, Presentations, and Funding Database

Sustainable Jersey Regional Hubs

Ten hubs around the state to help green teams build capacity through training, best practices resources and networking. Learn more [here](#).

Benefits

- Peer mentoring
- Project collaboration
- Online communication platform
- Network of Leaders
- Quarterly Events
- Help Peers Get Certified
- Technical assistance & administrative support from SJ



Transportation Management Associations



Other Organizations

These are some of MANY organizations that can help with actions.
View the **Resources** section of all actions for more information

NJ Prevention Network

- Prescription Drug
- Anti-Idling

ANJEC

- Sustainable Land Use Pledge
- Natural Resources Inventory
- Environmental Commission & Site Plan Review
- Single-Use Plastics

NJ Bicycle & Pedestrian Resource Center

- Complete Streets
- Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Plan

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

- Food
- Green Infrastructure
- Water Conservation Education

Watershed Ambassadors

- Water-related actions
- Tree planting

Quick Guide to Certification

Sign In/Sign up
for Website
Account



Pass a Resolution
to Register with
the Program



Assemble
mandatory
green team

Select actions to
pursue & collect
documentation



Upload
Documentation &
Mark Actions
Completed



Submit Application
on or before
June 6

Reach out with questions early and often!!

Final Thoughts

- **Add users to your account** to assist with uploading documentation to speed up the certification process.
- Use the **Master Action Tracking Spreadsheet** to develop your plan.
- Certification: It is **doable!**
- Go for **Silver!**
- **Questions?** Call us if you do not know how to complete an action and we will connect you with the reviewer.
- Reach out **early and often** to ensure a successful submission.

Collaborate!

Use the [Participating Municipalities & Approved Actions](#) page to find examples of documentation from certified towns

Search by
action



View certified towns approved for
that action



View certification report for example
documentation

By Certified Action

Animals in the Community

- Animals in the Community Education
- Companion Animal Management Pledge
- Companion Animal Management Plan
- Enhanced Licensing Compliance
- Pledge Supporting NJ Wildlife Action Plan
- Wildlife Interaction Plan

MUNICIPALITY	COUNTY	CERTIFICATION
Bernardsville Boro	Somerset	BRONZE
Cape May City	Cape May	SILVER
Chesterfield Twp	Burlington	BRONZE
East Brunswick Twp	Middlesex	SILVER
Hillsborough Twp	Somerset	SILVER
Montgomery Twp	Somerset	BRONZE
Oradell Boro	Bergen	SILVER
Princeton	Mercer	SILVER
Readington Twp	Hunterdon	SILVER
Sea Bright Boro	Monmouth	BRONZE



Certification Application Deadline

**Sunday, June 6
at 11:59pm**

Sustainable Jersey Support

- Technical Support
 - **Maureen Jones:** 609-771-2938;
info@sustainablejersey.com
- Regional Hubs
 - **Lauren Skowronski,**
skowronl@tcnj.edu or 609-771-3129



Sustainable
Jersey



SJ_Program
SJ_Schools



Sustainable-
Jersey



Sustainable_Jersey



Events & Grant Opportunities

2021 New Jersey Sustainability Summit

This year's Summit, May 17 – 21, will include one full week of virtual educational sessions, social “happy hours”, short expert talks, coaching sessions, and fun activities for municipalities and schools. Participants will have an opportunity to connect with energy and green product vendors, and municipal professional service providers (e.g. planners, attorneys, engineers) during our new Green Biz sessions.

[Register Today!](#)



This grant opportunity will support municipal environmental stewardship and resiliency projects. Learn more [here](#).

Applications are due by June 30, 2021