

2023 Certification Webinar

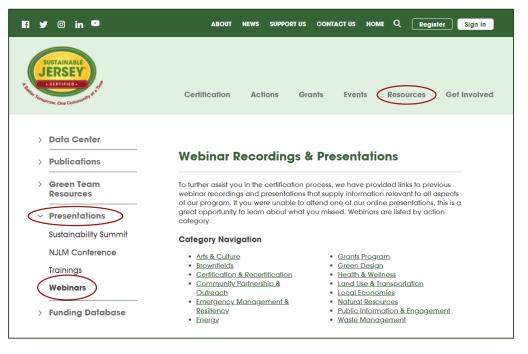
December 13, 2022

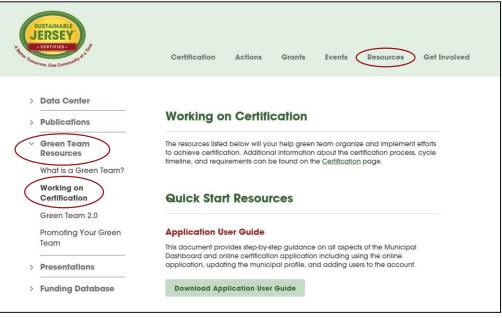
Samantha McGraw | Senior Program Manager



Housekeeping

- 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 <u>Webinars page</u> & <u>Green</u> <u>Team Resources – Working on</u> <u>Certification</u> by the end of the week.





Agenda

- 1. Program Overview
- 2. Certification Overview, 2023 Cycle & Program Updates
- 3. Applying for Certification & Recertification
- 4. Working On & Submitting Your Application
- 5. Resources



Program Overview



What is Sustainable Jersey?

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

\$7.2 million in grants to municipalities and schools through the Sustainable Jersey Grants Program for sustainability initiatives. Learn more:

sustainablejersey.com/grants

Actions

Tools, resources, guidance

Funding



Statistics

2009 Program Started

82% Participating 91% Population



15,606
Actions
Implemented





Certification Overview, 2023 Cycle & Program Updates





Certification Benefits



Save money. Get money.



Get recognized. Promote your town.



Gain access to tools, training and expert guidance.



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

2023 Certification Cycle (*)







	FIRST ROUND	SECOND ROUND	THIRD ROUND
Submission Deadline	Feb. 26	May 12	July 27
Return Date	Early-April	Mid-June	Mid-Sep.

- Municipalities can submit for the first time in any round, but it is recommended to submit in the **first two rounds** to receive feedback to help achieve certification.
- All municipalities certified as part of the 2023 cycle will be recognized at the Sustainable Jersey Annual Luncheon in November. Annual Awards including the Sustainability Champions will be based on point totals achieved following the third and final round of review.

2023 Certification Cycle (*)







	FIRST ROUND	SECOND ROUND	THIRD ROUND
Submission Deadline	Feb. 26	May 12	July 27
Return Date	Early-April	Mid-June	Mid-Sep.

Expiring Municipalities: Municipalities certified as part of the 2020 certification cycle that feel this change would impact their 2023 recertification efforts, can request a oneyear extension on their certification through the Google Form on the 2023 Certification Cycle page on our website.



2022 New Actions Implemented

Category	Action	
Diversity & Equity	Community Equity & Diversity Profile (Priority Action)	
Energy	Energy Assistance OutreachElectric Vehicle Community Outreach	
Food	Promoting Safe Food Donation for Food Security	
Land Use & Transportation	Community Design for All Ages	

Stay up to date on new and updated actions by visiting the Program Updates page: <u>sustainablejersey.com/actions/program-updates/</u>

Category	Action
Energy	 Energy Efficiency for Municipal Facilities Municipal Onsite Solar System Renewable Government Energy Aggregation Fleet Inventory Make Your Town Electric Vehicle Friendly
Natural Resources	Water Conservation Ordinance
Waste Reduction	Reusable Bag Education Program

Want to learn more?

View the 2022 Program
Updates Webinar on the
Program Updates page

Look back and approval period adjustments – more time to complete actions!

- Actions that typically needed to be completed on an annual basis (such as the community garden action), now have a look back period of the current or previous year. Approved actions will be set to expire December 31 of the year after the certification application is submitted
- Example: Community Garden submitted in 2023 can document activities in 2022 or 2023 and approved action expires December 31, 2024.
- Use Master Action Tracking Spreadsheet to check the look back and approval periods on the Actions page: sustainablejersey.com/actions/

2022 Retiring Actions

Actions will be retired 12/31/22

Category	Action
Animals in the Community	 Companion Animal Management Pledge Companion Animal Management Plan* Enhanced Licensing Compliance Pledge Supporting NJ Wildlife Action Plan
Emergency Management & Resiliency	Climate Adaptation: Flooding Risk (Priority action)Coastal Vulnerability Assessment
Land Use & Transportation	Historic Preservation Element*
Sustainability & Climate Planning	Community Carbon FootprintCommunity Visioning*

For municipalities currently approved for these actions, the points will remain in your application until the action expires

*Municipalities applying for certification in 2023 are eligible to apply for these activities as an Innovative Community Project action, so long as the submission meets the requirements outlined on the Program Updates page.

Additional Note: Animals in the Community Education will retire 12/31/23, and the Wildlife Interaction Plan action will move to the Natural Resources category in 2023.



2023 New Actions

Category	Action
Emergency Management & Resiliency	Heat Island Assessment & Mitigation Plan
Operations & Maintenance	 Green Grounds Maintenance Policy & Implementation Green Purchasing Policy Green Cleaning Products & Motorized Equipment Recycled Copy Paper Recycle Office & Restroom Paper Supplies Recycled Recreation & Transportation Equipment & Materials
Sustainability & Climate Planning	Community Sustainability Plan

Stay up to date on new and updated actions by visiting the Program Updates page: sustainablejersey.com/actions/program-updates/



Applying for Certification & Recertification





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



What is a Green Team?

 Can be part of an existing group, like an Environmental Commission

Learn more about green teams:

<u>sustainablejersey.com/resources/green-team/resources/what-is-a-green-team/</u>





Develop a Plan

Organize green team

Review actions already in progress in your community

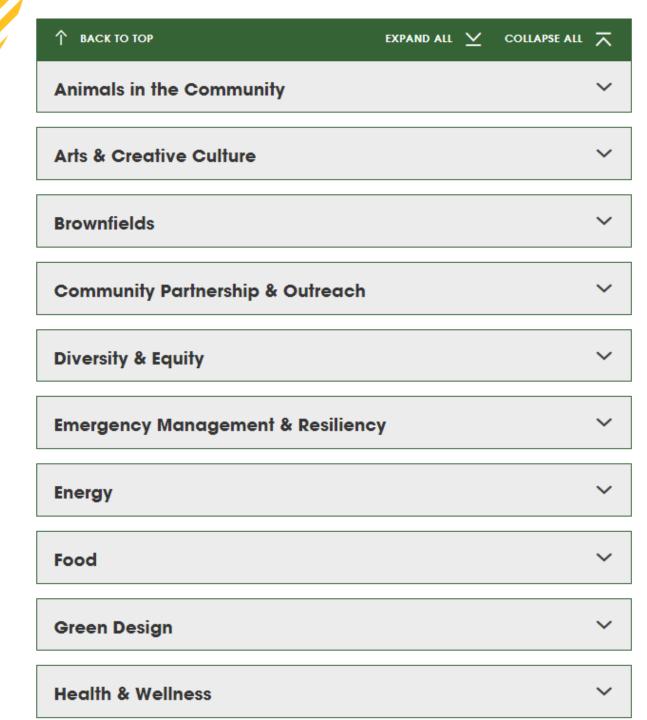
Identify group leader & form small groups to work on specific actions

Develop task list with target completion dates

Track progress & adjust plan as needed

Actions

Choose from over 150 different 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

People

Planet

Prosperity

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



Want to learn more about these "low hanging fruit" priority actions?

View the Strategizing for Success webinar recording and presentation on the Webinars page

- Community Equity & Diversity Profile *NEW 2022*
- Diversity on Boards & Commissions
- **Energy Efficiency for Municipal Facilities**
- **Energy Tracking &** Management
- Fleet Inventory
- **Green Business Recognition Program**
- Municipal Carbon Footprint

- Municipal Water Story
- Natural Resource Inventory
- Prescription Drug Safety and **Disposal**
- Recycling and Waste Reduction **Education & Compliance**
- Sustainable Land Use Pledge
- Water Conservation Ordinance

Actions to Consider

- Community Education & Outreach
- Community Food Pantry/Bank & Soup Kitchen;
 Community Garden, Farmers Market
- Building Healthier Communities; Safe Routes to School; Tobacco Free Community
- Environmental Commission & Site Plan Review;
 Community Forestry Management Plan & NJUCF Accreditation
- Municipal Communications Strategy; Digitizing Public Information
- Shredding Day; Household Hazardous Waste, Non-Mandated Materials Recycling, Recycling Depot



Just getting started?

View the **Strategizing for Success** webinar recording and presentation on the <u>Webinars page</u>

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 subm certification Save the submission. Planned Current action submission status: Planned **Requested Points** Point level requested for this submission Description of Implementation In the text box below, please provide a short summary (300 word maximum) of what was accomplished outdated or unnecessary information.

- The points awarded will vary based on accomplishments
- For example, the Building Healthier Communities action allows you to earn points for having a health and wellness initiative for four different population segments
- Application view defaults to 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 the <u>Actions Page</u>

Spreadsheet includes:

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



Planning Tool

Submission Summary

Look Back Period Resubmission Requirements































Gold Star Standards

All certified municipalities are eligible to earn Gold Star recognition for reaching high levels of achievement in key dimensions of sustainability.

All standards require the completion of base certification actions, AND the Gold Star action(s)

Learn more:

<u>sustainablejersey.com/actions/gold-star-</u> standards/









Working On & Submitting Your Application

Refer to the Application User Guide on the Green Team Resources – Working on Certification page for guidance navigating the Municipal Dashboard and online application

Application User Guide



🔷 www.sustainablejersey.com 🔸

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

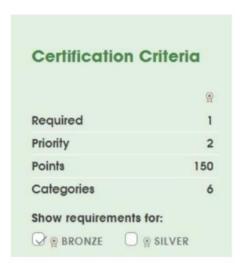
Submitting the Application

Make sure enough actions are marked as completed and approved to meet the minimum requirements for bronze certification so that the submit button turns yellow and you can submit the 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.







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:
 - 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.







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. Wildlife Interaction Plan or Outreach Materials)

Why Actions Are Not Approved

Pitfall	How to Overcome
Action too old/expired	 Review look-back period; update action as necessary. If you add new documentation, make sure to remove the old if not needed for approval.
Proper documentation not submitted	 Review action submission requirements and documentation uploaded. If resubmitting for an action, check for an "updated" date at top of action and read the "What to Submit" section to see if submission requirements have changed since last submission.
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.





A new Resources website page houses our Data Center, Publications, Green Team Resources, Presentations, and Funding Database



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SUPPORT US

ONTACT US

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Register



Certification

Actions

Grants

Events

Resources

> Data Center

> Publications

> Green Team Resources

> Presentations

> Funding Database

Tour the Sustainable Jersey Website

Resources

Sustainable Jersey strives to connect elected and appointed officials, municipal staff, and green team volunteers with resources that can help them identify strategies, implement initiatives, and share their successes with others.

Data Center

View and download sustainability-related data and maps, useful for municipalities and Green Teams to better understand their communities, complete actions, and track progress.

View All

Publications

Sustainable Jersey has released reports which take an in-depth look into important sustainability issues. Learn best practices, review research and discover the current state of sustainability in New Jersey.

View All

Green Team Resources

No need to reinvent the wheel! Learn how to create, recruit, train, change leadership, grow and promote a municipal green team. Use these resources to build a highfunctioning green team.

View All

Presentations

Sustainable Jersey offers a wide variety of training and educational opportunities each year. View presentations from Sustainable Jersey events, conference sessions, in-person trainings, and webinars.

View All



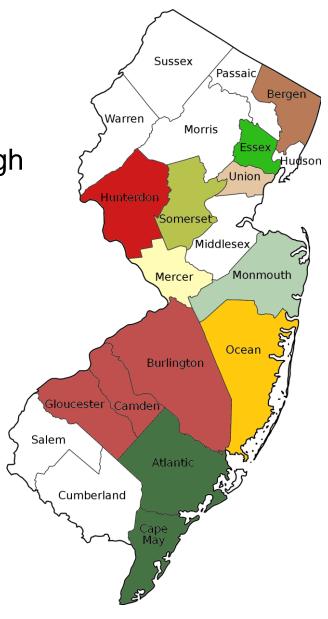
Regional Hubs

Ten hubs around the state to help green teams build capacity through training, best practices resources and networking. Learn more

sustainablejersey.com/get-involved/

Benefits

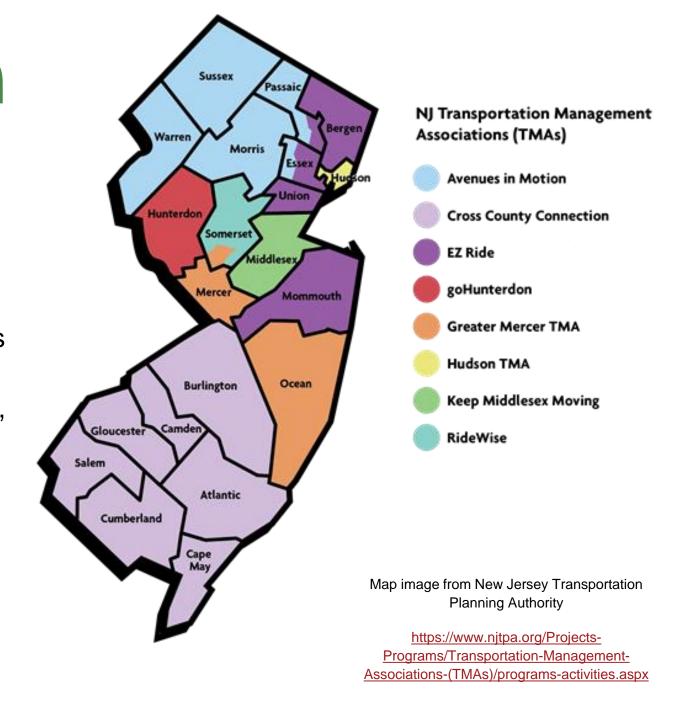
- Peer mentoring
- Project collaboration
- Online communication platform
- Network of Leaders
- Quarterly Events
- Help Peers Get Certified
- Technical assistance & administrative support from SJ



Transportation Management Associations

Eight Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) that can assist with the Safe Routes to School, Anti-Idling Education and Enforcement, Smart Workplaces, bike/ped actions and other transportation-related actions.

Learn more and get contact information for each TMA on the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's <u>website</u>.



Other Organizations

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

Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions

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

New Jersey Bicycle & Pedestrian Resource Center

- Complete Streets
- Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Plan

New Jersey Institute of Technology & NJEDA

 Brownfields through the Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities Program

New Jersey Prevention Network

Tobacco Free Community

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

- Community Gardens
- Green Infrastructure
- Water Conservation Education

Watershed Associations

- Water-related actions
- Private Well Outreach and Testing



Participants Map Search

Use the <u>Participating Municipalities & Approved Actions</u> (sustainablejersey.com/certification/search-participating-municipalities-approved-actions) page to find examples of documentation from certified towns and connect with municipal green teams

Search by action



View certified towns approved for that action



View certification report for example documentation



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. Review the FAQs page:

sustainablejersey.com/about/faqs/



Support



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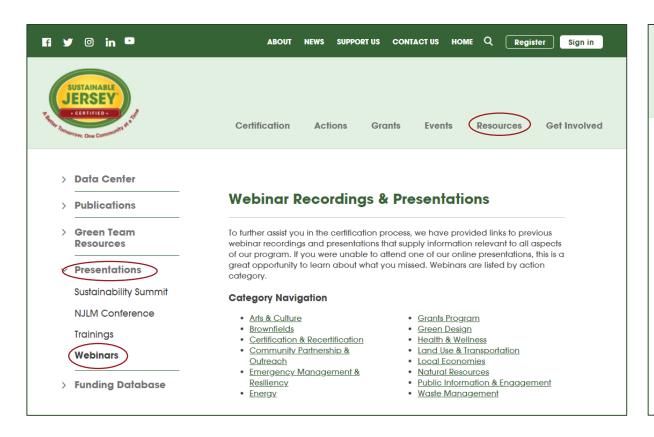
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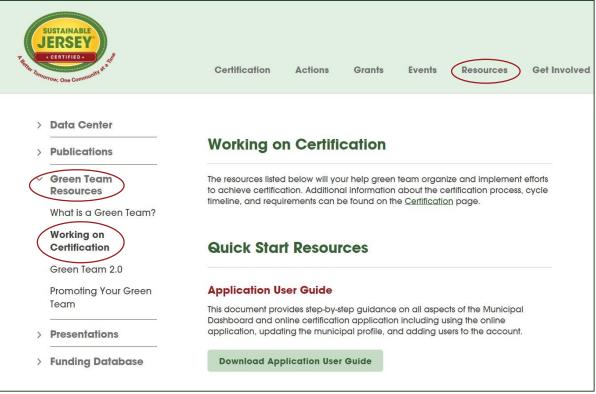


Waste Actions
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Presentation Posting

The presentation and recording will be posted on the <u>Webinars page</u> & <u>Green Team</u> Resources – <u>Working on Certification</u> by the end of the week.







Certification Actions Grants Events Resources Get Involved

Events, Grants & Technical Assistance

Sustainable Jersey Events

Sustainable Jersey and its program partners regularly host trainings and events that support progress toward Sustainable Jersey certification. In general, events posted on the calendar are FREE or of minimal cost.

Post an Event

You can post FREE events that are open to the general public that would be of interest to the Sustainable Jersey community. Sustainable Jersey staff review all event submissions and will follow up if more information is needed.

Post Event

NOTE: You must have a Sustainable Jersey website account and be signed into the website to post an event. Sign-in or sign up $\underline{\text{here}}$.

Filter Events by:			
Location		Range	
All Locations	~	Upcoming Events	~
Category		Туре	
All Categories	~	All Types	~



Sustainable Public Service Initiative

Need help completing Sustainable Jersey actions?

Sustainable Jersey is teaming up with the PSEG Institute for Sustainability Studies (PSEG ISS) at Montclair State University (MSU) to match upper-level students with Sustainable Jersey participating municipalities in need of help to complete specific Sustainable Jersey actions. This is a great opportunity to target **priority actions** or others that require research, data collection/analysis, and marketing skills.

Info Session

Thursday, December 15

12:00pm – 1:00pm

Register:

https://bit.ly/3XNbyc0



Sustainable Jersey-PSE&G Partnership Program

Available to municipalities who have PSE&G as both their gas and electric utility – offers technical assistance to utilize the available incentives to promote the residential/commercial incentives available to your community.

Learn more: https://www.sustainablejersey.com/grants/sj-pseg-partnership-program/



Need Funding? Apply for a Sustainable Jersey Grant!

The PSEG Foundation is contributing \$200,000 to support another cycle of the Sustainable Jersey Grants Program. The funding cycle will award:

- Four (4) \$20,000 project grants
- Eight (8) \$10,000 project grants
- Twenty (20) \$2,000 project or green team support grants

Application Deadline: Friday, February 10, 2023

Learn More: <u>sustainablejersey.com/grants/pseg-cycle/</u>





Save the Date for the 2023 Sustainability Summit!

May 5, 2023

Bell Works, Holmdel NJ

Support & Q&A



General Inquiries

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