



# SUSTAINABLE JERSEY SOLAR CHALLENGE

**Announcement Date:** July 12, 2016  
**Informational Webinar:** July 20, 2016 at 1 pm  
**Application Deadline:** August 26, 2016

**Questions:** Questions regarding this opportunity should be directed to Nancy Quirk, Program Coordinator Advanced Infrastructure, at [quirkn@tcnj.edu](mailto:quirkn@tcnj.edu), or 609-771-2902. We are available to help with all phases of the application process.

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## A. BACKGROUND

Sustainable Jersey is partnering with EnergySage to invite municipalities to participate in a new program to promote adoption of solar energy in their communities. The Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge is designed to provide a simple, cost effective way for municipalities to engage homeowners and small businesses in adopting solar. The eight-month community-led program takes advantage of an online marketplace and a suite of locally-branded social media marketing tools to spread the word in the community about solar.

The Solar Challenge takes advantage of Sustainable Jersey's partnership with EnergySage, an online solar marketplace developed with the support of the U.S. Department of Energy. The EnergySage web-based interface offers consumers online comparison-shopping, providing an experience similar to buying an auto online. Because the online solar marketplace is open to all solar vendors who meet the EnergySage vetting criteria, consumers have access to multiple high quality contractors. More information about EnergySage is available at: [energysage.com](http://energysage.com).

Participating communities will be featured on the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge website, which will track the number of solar installation contracts that have been executed by local homeowners and businesses through the online marketplace. The program will run from October 2016 through May 2017. The community with the highest number of signed contracts for solar installations by the conclusion of the program (based proportionally on number of households and businesses in each community) will win a \$10,000 award that can be used for an energy-related project in their community.

Up to 10 municipalities will be accepted in the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge. Communities selected to participate will be announced September 2, 2016. Local Solar Challenge Campaigns will launch in October 2016.

**Applications are due by midnight on August 26, 2016.**

## **B. BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATION**

Participating communities in the Solar Challenge receive:

- A \$3,000 grant and technical support to set up a local Solar Challenge
- A custom online solar marketplace dedicated to each community and its local program
- Pre-designed customizable marketing materials (email templates, brochures)
- Opportunity to earn Sustainable Jersey points toward certification
- Eligibility to win a \$10,000 award for the local Solar Challenge campaign that achieves the highest number of solar contracts (additional awards of \$5,000 may be available to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place campaigns; please see award details below)
- The satisfaction of knowing the community did something to combat climate change while making it easier for members of the community to get solar power

## **C. PROGRAM ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Communities selected for the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge will receive support from Sustainable Jersey and our partner EnergySage in developing and promoting their outreach campaign. All participating municipalities will be featured on the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge homepage, which will track the progress of each local campaign.

Each community will be responsible for:

- Establishing a Local Campaign Team that will make the Solar Challenge a priority for the duration of the eight-month program
- Customizing the website landing page and promotional materials (with support from Sustainable Jersey and EnergySage)
- Producing promotional materials such as mailings, banners, and signage
- Identifying at least three community events at which the Solar Challenge can be promoted
- Creating email and mail distribution lists for the outreach campaign, including at least one mailing to local residents and businesses about the community’s Solar Challenge [Note: Because not every property is a good fit for solar, it is important to strategically target direct mail communications to get the greatest impact.]

### **Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge Program Roles**

<b>Sustainable Jersey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordinate overall statewide Solar Challenge program</li> <li>▪ Provide web-based and in-person training and support for Local Campaign Teams</li> <li>▪ Track program metrics and identify communities for Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge Award</li> </ul>
<b>EnergySage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide customizable web landing page and promotional materials (brochures, etc.) for each community</li> <li>▪ Screen and onboard installers based on established criteria; local communities can invite solar installers for inclusion in the program</li> <li>▪ Offer customer assistance through EnergySage Solar Advisors who can answer technical questions for individual customers</li> </ul>
<b>Municipality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a resolution of support to participate in the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge and to establish a Local Campaign Team that will make the Solar Challenge a priority for the duration of the campaign</li> <li>▪ Provide at least one mailing to residents and businesses in the community about the Solar Challenge</li> <li>▪ Appoint a municipal staff person to serve as liaison for the duration of the local campaign</li> </ul>
<b>Local Campaign Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Customize the website landing page and promotional materials</li> <li>▪ Create email and mail distribution lists for outreach campaign</li> <li>▪ Identify at least three community events at which the Solar Challenge can be promoted</li> </ul>

## D. PROGRAM TIMELINE

### Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge Program Timeline

<b>Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge Webinar</b> <i>Register for the webinar on the Sustainable Jersey events page, or at:</i> <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7846281377228865028">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7846281377228865028</a>	<b>July 20, 2016</b> <b>at 1 pm</b>
<b>Applications due</b>	<b>August 26, 2016</b>
<b>Application submission</b> <i>Complete fillable pdf application below.</i> <i>Email application form with subject line:</i> <b>'[town name] 2016 Solar Challenge Application'</b>	Email application to Nancy Quirk at: <a href="mailto:quirkn@tcnj.edu">quirkn@tcnj.edu</a>
<b>Selection of participating communities announced</b>	September 2, 2016
<b>Onboarding of Local Campaign Team</b> <i>Onboarding will include web-based and in-person trainings with Sustainable Jersey and EnergySage.</i>	September 2016
<b>Local Solar Challenge Program Launch</b>	October 2016
<b>Program Completion Date</b>	May 31, 2017

## E. SELECTION PROCESS

The Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge is open to 10 participating municipalities and will run from October 2016 through May 2017. Only communities currently registered in the Sustainable Jersey program are eligible to participate in the Solar Challenge.

Selection of municipalities will be based on assessment of the commitment and capacity of applicant communities to conduct a strong outreach campaign, and a desire to achieve diversity in the types of communities participating: large, medium, and small; urban, suburban, and rural.

## **F. AWARD RULES**

A cash award of \$10,000 will be made to the community that achieves the highest number of signed contracts (based proportionally on the number of households and businesses in the community) for solar installations by the end of the program on May 31, 2017. If fewer than 10 communities apply to participate in the Solar Challenge by August 26, 2016, Sustainable Jersey reserves the right to modify the award rules.

The cash award **MUST** be used for an energy-related project that benefits the wider community. Examples include a solar-powered public cellphone charging station; solar-powered lighting for public bus stop shelters; public electric vehicle charging station; a solar installation for an affordable housing unit or for a nonprofit organization of the community's choice.

The municipality receiving the award will have six months after the date of the award announcement to finalize their plans for the award. The municipality will have up to an additional 18 months to implement the project. The award project decided upon by the municipality must be completed no later than June 30, 2019.

EnergySage collects a small fee from solar installers for each solar system contract finalized. These cash proceeds will be used to offer additional awards to municipalities. The final number of awards and the dollar amount awarded will be determined at the conclusion of the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge in May 2017. It is anticipated that at least two additional awards of \$5,000 each will be available to the second and third place municipalities, based on the criteria stated above. Additional awards may be possible based on the overall success of the program. Sustainable Jersey makes no guarantee that these additional awards will be available.

## G. APPLICATION FORM

**Please type your answers into the boxes provided. Each box will accommodate the amount of text entered. Brief and concise answers are encouraged!**

<p><b>1. Attach a Municipal Resolution* regarding the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resolution (signed and dated) of support to participate in the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge and to establish a Local Campaign Team that will make the Solar Challenge a priority for the duration of the local campaign</li> <li>• Agreement to provide one mailing to residents regarding the solar outreach campaign</li> <li>• Appointment of a municipal staff person to serve as liaison for the duration of the local campaign</li> <li>• Identifying the Local Campaign Team members</li> </ul> <p><b>If a Resolution cannot be obtained by the application review date, a letter from the Mayor or chief executive administrator will be accepted on an interim basis. A Resolution will be required prior to the launch of the local Solar Challenge campaign in October 2016.</b></p> <p><b>* A sample Resolution is included in this application packet.</b></p>	
<p><b>2. Municipality:</b></p>	
<p><b>Primary Contact for Municipality</b></p> <p><b>Name:</b></p> <p><b>Title:</b></p>	<p><b>Mailing Address:</b></p>
<p><b>Telephone:</b></p>	<p><b>Email:</b></p>
<p><b>3. <u>Local Campaign Team</u></b></p> <p><i>The Local Campaign Team should include a Lead Organization (local government department, Green Team, commission, or nonprofit organization) that will make the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge a priority for the duration of the 8-month campaign. Identify 2 to 4 committed individuals who will be able to participate throughout the campaign (Campaign Member A, B, C, etc.).</i></p>	
<p><b>Lead Organization:</b></p>	<p><b>Mailing Address:</b></p>
<p><b>4. <u>Local Campaign Team Project Leader</u> (if different from Municipal contact)</b></p>	
<p><b>Name:</b></p>	<p><b>Telephone:</b></p>
<p><b>Organization:</b></p>	<p><b>Email:</b></p>

**5. Local Campaign Team Members**

*Please identify at least one additional campaign team member. If there are more than three team members, you may attach a list of local campaign team members with contact information as below.*

**Local Campaign Team Member A**

**Name:**

**Telephone:**

**Organization:**

**Email:**

**Local Campaign Team Member B**

**Name:**

**Telephone:**

**Organization:**

**Email:**

**Local Campaign Team Member C**

**Name:**

**Telephone:**

**Organization:**

**Email:**

**6. Community Description**

*Briefly describe your community's participation in local sustainability initiatives, or solar initiatives in particular, that indicate a foundation for a successful solar outreach program. Include in your description particular community characteristics such as extent of tree cover, tree protection ordinances, or historic preservation districts that may impact the ability of homeowners and businesses to install solar.*

**7. Marketing and Outreach**

*Sustainable Jersey will provide a set of strategies for marketing the Solar Challenge in your community. Has your team or community ever run a similar outreach campaign (note, this is not required to be accepted into the program)? Please provide specific ideas for how you would promote the campaign.*

*For example: provide a description of marketing ideas that the Local Campaign Team may have such as email outreach (local distribution lists); exhibiting or promoting the program at local events such as farmers markets or fairs; opportunities for local media outreach and social media communication; ability to include flyers in community tax bills, utility bills, or other mailings.*

**8. Permitting for Solar Installations**

*As a result of the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge the number of permit applications is likely to increase. Please check with your local permit/code office regarding the current permit and inspection process. Find out from the staff if the process is efficient enough to handle two to three times the current number of solar system permits in a relatively short period of time. Also ask the staff to assess approximately how much time it takes to get a permit for a solar PV installation.*

Name of code/permit official contacted:

Is the current process efficient enough to handle increased numbers of permit applications?

How much time does it take (on average) to get a permit for a typical residential solar installation?

Other comments on the local permitting process:



**SAMPLE MUNICIPAL RESOLUTION**  
**PARTICIPATION IN SUSTAINABLE JERSEY SOLAR CHALLENGE**

*NOTE: Please make sure that the resolution is signed and dated*

**WHEREAS**, [municipality] strives to build a community that is sustainable economically, environmentally and socially; a community which would thrive well into the new century; and

**WHEREAS**, [municipality] wishes to support green community initiatives which are easy to replicate and affordable to implement; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of New Jersey has been a national leader in recognizing and encouraging the use of solar energy; and

**WHEREAS**, sunlight is a 100% clean and renewable source of energy and is one of the fastest-growing renewable energy alternatives in the country; and

**WHEREAS**, solar energy is one of the most impactful strategies available for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and making the energy supply more sustainable; and

**WHEREAS**, beyond environmental value, solar energy brings numerous economic, social, and health benefits, as well as the creation of local jobs; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Initiative supported the development and deployment of online solar marketplaces, including EnergySage; and

**WHEREAS**, the EnergySage interactive web-based marketing platform can bring residents and businesses in [municipality] together with multiple solar installers providing an opportunity for comparison shopping for solar installations; and

**WHEREAS**, Sustainable Jersey will provide support to participating communities in developing and promoting an outreach campaign in [municipality];

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY [municipality] THAT:**

1. [municipality] does hereby agree to participate in the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge program if selected; and
2. [municipality] will provide one mailing to residents and businesses in [municipality] about the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge if selected to participate in the program; and
3. [municipality] authorizes [municipal staff name or title] to serve as the staff liaison for the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge for the duration of the local campaign; and
4. [municipality] recognizes [names of Local Campaign Team] as the Local Campaign Team for the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT** [municipality] approves the attached application to participate in the Sustainable Jersey Solar Challenge program.