



## FREE Technical Assistance for Advancing Equity in Your Municipality

**Announcement Date:** Friday, September 30, 2022

**Application Due Date:** Friday, November 11, 2022

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**For questions, contact:** Melanie McDermott, Senior Researcher, at [mcdermom@tcnj.edu](mailto:mcdermom@tcnj.edu) or (609) 771-2836.

### A. Background

Thanks to the support of the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation, this opportunity is open to all municipalities participating in the Sustainable Jersey program who are interested in working with Sustainable Jersey to implement a pilot project that supports diversity, social inclusion and equity in the community, while establishing a model for other municipalities. It provides a golden opportunity to avail of free professional assistance in responding to local priorities for improving equity and reducing bias, barriers or communication gaps within the municipality related to race, ethnicity, English proficiency, age, [dis]ability, gender identity or other forms of social difference.

#### **Project Outcomes:**

- Equity and anti-bias training for your municipal team
- Technical assistance and coaching to:
  - Complete the **Community Equity Profile** action
  - Pilot new action: **Advancing Equity through Municipal Action**

To succeed in our shared mission to “build a more sustainable world one community at a time,” we need to engage the effort, skills and buy-in of all community members, and ensure that everyone shares in the benefits. Towards this end, Sustainable Jersey is offering no-cost technical assistance to

one registered or certified municipality interested in undertaking the newly released [Community Equity and Diversity Profile](#) action and also in helping Sustainable Jersey develop and pilot a complementary action slated to be released next year, entitled *Advancing Equity through Municipal Action*. Free equity and anti-bias training and coaching for your municipal team also comes with the package.

The *Equity Profile* action assists municipalities in painting a full picture of diversity in their community by creating a simple demographic and spatial profile, identifying residents who are socially vulnerable or who have special communication needs, and understanding their communication barriers and how to address them. Completing this action would assist your municipality in multiple ways, such as in doing other Sustainable actions (e.g., [Diversity on Boards and Commissions](#), [Local Health Assessment and Action Plan](#)), applying for grant opportunities, and designing effective outreach campaigns.

Building on the previous step, the municipality will then work on a specific initiative that addresses local issues and objectives to understand its equity implications and advance solutions. The process spelled out in the *Advancing Equity* action guides the team through a series of steps and questions that are designed to ensure that the target municipal initiative – policy, plan or project – provides a meaningful role in decision-making and results in equitable outcomes for all residents, inclusive of marginalized, under-represented and underserved members of the community. The process can then be applied again in the future to a wide range of local issues and initiatives.

**Examples of potential target initiatives for this opportunity:**

- [Municipal Communications Strategy](#)
- Equity impact assessment of existing/proposed municipal policy or procedure
- Process for adoption of affordable housing or re-zoning plan
- Equitable public safety procedures, e.g., emergency management or policing
- [Energy Assistance Outreach Action](#)
- [Bicycle and or Pedestrian Plan](#)
- Equity audit of open space, parks and community tree inventory

A professional equity coach (consultant) and Sustainable Jersey staff will provide an initial orientation, training workshop and technical assistance to the selected municipality for up to one year. The assistance will be tailored to the specific needs of the selected municipality. The equity coach will guide your team of local green team volunteers, elected and appointed officials, and municipal staff through each step of the action, and will help problem-solve issues that may come up in the process or in the municipality. Sustainable Jersey staff will be available to answer questions, provide resources, and advise and assist the municipality. The primary goal of this effort is to assist a municipality in completing the *Community Equity Profile* and *Advancing Equity* actions and at the same time to produce models to be featured in the “Spotlight: What NJ municipalities are doing” sections of the action guidance found on the Sustainable Jersey website.

The technical assistance will start in December 2022 and continue for up to one year.

The selected municipality will be expected to:

- Identify a minimum of two municipal contacts to undertake the work outlined in the actions: at least one must be a municipal staff member and the other(s) can also be staff or volunteers from the green team, environmental commission or other municipal group.
- Convene a stakeholder team to lead this process. This team must include a member of the governing body or administration and representation from marginalized or underrepresented social groups.
- Undertake an inclusive consultative process to gain broad input from diverse members of the community (as identified via the *Equity Profile*) on the selection or scoping of the Sustainable Jersey action or other target initiative that will be implemented following the process described in the *Advancing Equity* action.
- Coordinate with Sustainable Jersey staff and the equity coach to get assistance in implementing the actions. Some independent work between meetings will be necessary. Implementation steps will include research of existing data, community engagement, and completion of the necessary documentation for: (1) the *Equity Profile* action, (2) the *Advancing Equity* action, and (3) the other action or target initiative selected.
- Present the Equity Profile report (1) and the report with recommendations from the target initiative (2 & 3) for endorsement by the municipal governing body; and
- As part of its next Sustainable Jersey municipal certification application, submit (1) the *Equity Profile* action, (2) the newly piloted *Advancing Equity* action, and if relevant, (3) the action selected as the target initiative.

**Applications are due Friday, November 11, 2022.** Please contact Melanie McDermott at [mcdermom@tcnj.edu](mailto:mcdermom@tcnj.edu) or (609) 771-2836 if you have any questions regarding this opportunity.

## **B. Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible to apply for the **Free Technical Assistance for Advancing Equity in Your Municipality** program, an applicant must be a New Jersey municipality registered or certified in the Sustainable Jersey program. (Use this [link](#) for information on how to register your municipality in Sustainable Jersey.)

## **C. Selection Process**

A committee of Sustainable Jersey staff will review the applications. During the selection process, an interview with municipal personnel may be requested. Interviews would take place in November. Applicants must be responsive to this interview request to be considered for the program.

Applications will be screened based on the Eligibility Requirements outlined in Section B and evaluated based on the criteria outlined below:

- Responsiveness to selection committee interview, if requested
- Demonstrated commitment to respond to Sustainable Jersey staff requests for data and other information needed to assist the municipality in the completion of the *Equity Profile* action, the *Advancing Equity* action, and the other action or target initiative selected.
- Assessment of municipal commitment and the feasibility of the target initiative proposed for implementation through the *Advancing Equity* process, as explained in the application and interview. If the municipality does not already have a target initiative in mind and wishes instead to use this process to select one, then more weight will be given to the question “how does this opportunity meet municipal goals?”

#### **D. Application Form**

Please **complete the application form using this [link](#)**. Please contact Melanie McDermott at [mcdermom@tcnj.edu](mailto:mcdermom@tcnj.edu) or 609-771-2836 if you have any questions regarding this opportunity.

A completed Google form application must be **submitted by Friday, November 11, 2022**. Applicants will receive an email acknowledging receipt of the application and setting up an interview the following week.

#### **E. Resolution**

**Applicants must submit a resolution from the governing body authorizing the Free Technical Assistance for Advancing Equity in Your Municipality application. This resolution is not the same as the resolution passed to register for Sustainable Jersey. See the sample resolution [here](#).**

**NOTE:** *If submitting a resolution, it would be best to start the process of obtaining this resolution **as early as possible** to allow enough time to have the resolution adopted. The approved resolution should be submitted with the application by the November 11, 2022 deadline. Applications will also be accepted with a proposed resolution and the date it will be presented to the governing body. Please contact [mcdermom@tcnj.edu](mailto:mcdermom@tcnj.edu) if you are unable to submit the signed and dated resolution with your application.*