



# 2023 Sustainable Jersey Annual Award Recipients

## AWARD DESCRIPTIONS AND QUOTES FROM RECIPIENTS

### 2023 SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION AWARD

The Sustainability Champion award recognizes municipalities that have scored the most points in the Sustainable Jersey certification program in three population categories: large (over 40,000), medium (5,000 to 40,000) and small (under 5,000).

**Woodbridge Township (Middlesex County)** LARGE CATEGORY with 1,165 points. This is the 14th time that Woodbridge Township has achieved this honor since the awards began in 2009; the Township received the award from 2009-2013 and 2015-2023.

*"Woodbridge Township is pleased to once again accept the prestigious Sustainable Jersey silver-level recertification and Sustainability Champion Award for large-size municipalities for the 14th year. Sustainable Jersey serves as a benchmark for our sustainable initiatives, while providing the Township with additional resources as we continue to lead the state in sustainable and green initiatives. In the quest for our 14th Sustainability Champion Award, Woodbridge Township competed against participating municipalities, including Sustainable Jersey certified municipalities and silver-level certified towns in the Sustainable Jersey competition, earning sustainable points with 101 actions in 18 separate categories – scoring 1,165 points. And throughout, Greenable Woodbridge continued to advance many more sustainable initiatives and programs that serve to better manage the ways we use energy and other natural resources at work and home. The Sustainable Jersey program is an important vehicle by which our Township will continue to move into the future as a sustainable and environmentally conscious community."* – **The Honorable John E. McCormac, Mayor, Woodbridge Township**

**Madison Borough (Morris County)** MEDIUM CATEGORY with 915 points. This is the fifth time that Madison Borough has achieved this honor since the awards began in 2009; Madison received the award in 2013 and 2020-2023.

*"I am so proud that Madison is once again being recognized for our achievements for silver certification, as well as a Sustainability Champion. Our commitment to sustainability is not only setting an example for others to follow but also making a positive difference in the lives of our residents. I would like to recognize the hard work of our Sustainability Madison Advisory Committee, as well as our Climate Action Committee, who continue to work diligently to find ways that we can achieve a greener, more sustainable Madison. Madison is also proud to be recognized once again as a silver."* – **The Honorable Robert H. Conley, Mayor, Madison Borough**

**Borough of Atlantic Highlands (Monmouth County)** SMALL CATEGORY with 355 points. This is the first time Atlantic Highlands has achieved this honor.

*"The Borough of Atlantic Highlands continues to assist and applaud the Borough's Green Team in their ongoing efforts to improve the sustainability of the town for its residents, visitors, and businesses alike. This year is of particular importance as we take pride in achieving silver status as well as receiving the Sustainability Champion Award."* – **The Honorable Loretta Gluckstein, Mayor, Atlantic Highlands Borough**

### 2023 MAYOR ONDISH LEADERSHIP AWARD

This award is given annually in memory of Mayor Art Ondish of Mount Arlington to recognize a leader who provides the green team with ideas, policy support and the necessary resources to achieve significant success towards sustainability.

**The Honorable Ravinder Bhalla of Hoboken, Hudson County**

*"I am deeply honored and grateful to receive the Mayor Art Ondish Leadership Award from Sustainable Jersey on behalf of the City of Hoboken. This recognition is a testament to the tireless efforts of our community, City staff, and the dedication of our Green Team. Together, we have harnessed ideas, provided crucial policy support, and allocated necessary resources to drive significant progress in our sustainability initiatives to ensure an environmentally responsible future for our City."* – **The Honorable Ravinder Bhalla, Mayor, City of Hoboken, Hudson County**

### 2023 CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION AWARD

This award recognizes forward-thinking municipalities that support a culture of creativity and innovation as they implement new approaches to solving problems.

## **Bogota Borough, Fair Lawn Borough, Glen Rock Borough, City of Hackensack, Oakland Borough, Oradell Borough, Village of Ridgefield Park (Bergen County)**

These seven towns are active in the Bergen County Sustainability Hub and members of Creative Bergen. They work together using creative placemaking to enhance the quality of life within their own communities and across the county by hosting multi-town/multi-day events to celebrate the arts and local artists and performers. Most recently, they hosted the first Busking Festival in Bergen County in which several towns sent their top street performers to perform in a free, day-long event. Members of this collaborative initiated a mentor program for any green teams interested in implementing Sustainable Jersey's suite of Arts & Creative Community actions, with the message that if you're not submitting for arts actions, you're leaving meaningful points on the table.

*"This award is a powerful achievement for the arts, and we believe it will provide Creative Bergen greater placemaking opportunities with local supporters and give us greater access to planning future events and activities in our local towns and neighborhoods along with helping municipalities interested in pursuing Arts and Creative Culture actions for their Sustainable Jersey program."* – **Leslie Olson, Chair, Sustainable Ridgefield Park, Bergen County**

## **2023 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD**

This award recognizes a newly certified municipality that effectively leveraged a wide range of resources to achieve success.

### **Borough of Tinton Falls (Monmouth County)**

The Borough of Tinton Falls achieved certification for the first time this year and effectively leveraged a wide range of resources to achieve success.

*"In alignment with the vision of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the New Jersey League of Municipalities, the Borough of Tinton Falls recognizes the importance of reducing waste, cutting greenhouse emissions, and enhancing relevant education. All with the pivotal long-term objective of increasing resiliency and sustainability. Having implemented three pillars of guidance; Collaboration, Innovation, and Education, I am elated and honored to announce that our volunteers and professionals, working together, have achieved the bronze level certification from Sustainable Jersey and Rookie of the Year Award!"* -- **Charles W. Terefenko MPA, CPM, Borough Administrator, Director of Public Safety, Borough of Tinton Falls**

## **2023 COLLABORATION AWARD**

This award recognizes green teams that have advanced sustainability by building strong partnerships.

### **North Bergen Township (Hudson County)**

North Bergen Township, its Green Team Advisory Board, and the Board of Education partnered on a hydroponic gardening project to educate students on alternatives to soil-based gardening. To share the success of the project, the hydroponic gardens have been featured in the local newspaper, municipal calendar and on the school website.

*"On behalf of the Township of North Bergen, the Environmental Advisory Board and the Board of Education, I am proud to accept this amazing collaboration award. Without the teamwork of all involved, this accomplishment could not have been achieved. We are always looking for new ways to educate the community to improve the quality of life in North Bergen Township. I would like to personally thank Sustainable Jersey and their entire staff for this award."* – **Tom Stampe, Certified Recycling Professional, North Bergen Municipal Utilities Authority**

## **2023 GOLD STAR RECIPIENT**

Municipalities receive Gold Star recognition for reaching high levels of achievement in key dimensions of sustainability. Currently, Sustainable Jersey awards Gold Stars in [Energy](#), [Water](#) and [Health](#).

### **Maplewood Township (Essex County): Gold Star in Health**

Maplewood Township completed a comprehensive review of local health data and conducted a community engagement process that uncovered needs surrounding pedestrian safety and mobility which has already led to several road and transportation improvement projects, mental health to which a crisis intervention social worker has been hired to work with police, flooding and heat island effect which has resulted in improved stormwater drainage and tree planting projects, to name a few.

*"We're honored by and very grateful for this highest recognition. Government plays a critical role in promoting and sustaining public health. We look forward to continuing to develop our health and health equity needs with Sustainable Jersey's support."* – **The Honorable Dean Dafis, Mayor, Township of Maplewood, Essex Township**