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Municipalities Certified: 214, Participating: 452 ♦ Schools Certified: 241, Participating: 889 ♦ Districts Participating: 342

SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION: FOUR SUCCESS STORIES

Washington Borough Creates Community through Sustainability Projects (Warren County)

In November 2019, the all-volunteer [Washington Borough Green Team](#) achieved Sustainable Jersey certification.

Although attaining certification can be challenging, Washington Borough enhanced their efforts with the help of three Sustainable Jersey capacity-building grants funded by the PSEG Foundation. Green team projects include a farmers' market, a yearly green festival and park improvements, all of which take place at or near the centrally located Downtown Pocket Park. The Washington Borough Green Team has held six [Green Fests](#) and has been running the [Washington Borough Farmers' Market](#) on a volunteer basis for five years. The green team combines the Green Fest with the opening day of the Farmers'



Market, resulting in more attendees and increased local support. Grant funds used to advance marketing promotions were instrumental in the success of the Farmers' Market, which is coordinated in cooperation with the Washington Borough Business Improvement District. Sustainable Jersey grants also contributed to improvements at Shabbecong Park. The green team worked with the Washington Borough Department of Public Works to create the park on property owned by the Borough near Shabbecong Creek. The green team regularly plants native species and clears invasive species from Shabbecong Park and the Pocket Park, and runs cleanups along the creek. Recently, green team members partnered with volunteers from the Warren Hills Regional High School club, Students Against Vandalizing the Earth (SAVE), and Shoprite employees to clear brush and invasive species from open space by the creek. Read the Sustainable Jersey [Certification Report of Washington Borough](#) for more details on all of their actions.

Tri-CSA Launches Sustainability Mentoring Program

The [Tri-County Sustainability Alliance \(Tri-CSA\)](#) has jumpstarted a

program to mentor towns in Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties that have not achieved Sustainable Jersey certification or have lapsed in their certification. True to their slogan, "great people



implement great ideas." David Steinberg, a member of the Tri-CSA, developed the Tri-CSA Resource Guide that includes a list of what volunteer mentors need to know, common challenges and the local resources available to support sustainability programs. Using the guide, four mentor volunteers from green teams worked with seven municipalities. The pilot was a success as three municipalities (Maple Shade Township, Audubon Borough and Gloucester City) were bronze certified in November 2019. Audubon Borough even received the 2019 Sustainable Jersey Rookie of the Year award recognizing their dedication. Now with 10 volunteers, whose towns are certified, the group is targeting 22 more towns in their efforts to promote sustainability. Steinberg served on Sustainable Haddon Heights and is now working with the Runnemede Green Team. He has a long record of impressive achievements in the sustainability arena; he is a 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Nominee by the International Writers and Artists Association and the recipient of the 2019 Changemaker Award granted by the NJ League of Conservation Voters. Steinberg said, "I reflected on ways that I could make a difference and it was clear that mentoring Sustainable Jersey municipalities was a good place to make an impact. As a group, Tri-SCA decided that we could strengthen sustainability initiatives in our region if we collaborated. When we share resources, we keep costs down and reduce environmental degradation. I look forward to the ripple effect as these new sustainable towns will continue to do innovative work. We can learn from them and partner on future projects." Tri-CSA is one of eight regional [Sustainable Jersey Hubs](#).



Egg Harbor Township High School Focuses on Food Waste Collection and Composting (Atlantic County)

Schools play an important role in reducing waste because they are among the largest waste generators for municipalities. The high school composting program started with the school's Eagle Greenery classes, where students organize floral arrangements that are sold in the student store. The work generates waste from flowers, stems and leaves and the students collected the floral debris for composting. The school also received a Sustainable Jersey for Schools Grant, funded by the PSEG Foundation, to implement a food waste composting program. This grant allowed the school to purchase a variety of composting equipment. For this program, students collect the material that is saved from the kitchen, teacher faculty rooms and several science classrooms. They weigh it and add the right combination of carbon to nitrogen to make a cohesive compost. Over time, collection of material will be rolled out to the entire school as awareness grows. Egg Harbor Township High School is included in [The State of New Jersey School Food Waste Guidelines, K-12 Schools Edition](#) recently released by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in collaboration with other agencies. The Food Waste Guidelines are referenced as a resource in two Sustainable Jersey for Schools actions: [Food Waste](#)



Delran Township School District Reduces Energy Costs by 32 Percent (Burlington County)

Energy



efficiency is one of the best ways for public institutions to save money and tax dollars while also reducing their carbon footprint by cutting down on wasted energy. For schools and municipalities that want to take a comprehensive approach to energy upgrades in their facilities, an Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP) can be an important financing tool. ESIPs allow government agencies to pay for energy-related improvements through the value of the resulting cost savings. In one real-world case study, Delran Township School District in Burlington County used an ESIP to implement a \$4.5 million capital improvement project that reduced the district's energy costs by 32 percent, or nearly \$285,000 per year. To help cover the costs of the energy upgrades, the district secured roughly \$256,000 in incentives through the "[Pay for Performance \(P4P\)](#)" program within [New Jersey's Clean Energy Program™](#). The district's Energy Service Company (ESCO) prepared a Request for Proposal, along with other documentation, to secure power purchase agreements for new rooftop and ground-mounted solar arrays on district property. Now that the panels are installed, the district anticipates meeting 75 percent of its electrical demand using these renewable energy sources. Perhaps best of all, because the district used an ESIP to fund the upgrades, it was able to complete the project without taking on new debt. Instead, the district structured the project budget so that energy savings generated by the upgrades added funds to the district's operating budget each year. The full case study about Delran's energy upgrades is featured in Sustainable Jersey's newly-updated [ESIP How-To Guide](#). To learn how an ESIP can save money and energy within your school or municipal facility, [listen to the recording](#) and [view the PowerPoint presentation](#) from the recent webinar.

More Sustainability Stories

Take a moment to read about the people doing impressive work in their communities. Catch up on the monthly Sustainable Jersey blog for the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

- September Blog: [Sustainable Jersey: Graduate students matched with NJ municipalities and school districts to find high-value energy savings](#)

- September Heroes: [Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Transportation Management Associations](#)
- October Heroes: [New Jersey Education Association](#)
- November Heroes: [Sustainable Jersey Regional Hubs](#)

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