



2025

NOMINATION PACKET

NJDEP

RECYCLING AWARDS

Recognizing Excellence in Recycling
Throughout New Jersey



The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in conjunction with the Association of New Jersey Recyclers, annually recognizes excellence in recycling. Our goal is to highlight the success of agencies, businesses, individuals and others who go beyond the norm to advance recycling and to make these examples available to others who may emulate them.

The deadline for nomination submittals is July 25, 2025

ELIGIBILITY

You may nominate yourself, your business/organization, or any other business, individual or organization worthy of recognition. Applicants or projects must:

- be located in New Jersey
- agree to share their project or program with others
- provide supporting documentation for a one-year period (2024)
- Award winners from the previous three years are not eligible to participate again this year
- Second party nominations must be accompanied by a written authorization from the nominated party agreeing to be considered for the award

AWARD CATEGORIES

The categories for these awards are outlined below. You must identify only one category for each nomination on the application form on page 7. The nomination will be judged against other entries in that category.

Institution

Any pre-school, elementary, intermediate or high school, hospital, long-term care facility, nursing home, college, university, or other institution that has implemented a recycling program or expanded an existing program.

Business

Any large or small business that has implemented a recycling program, expanded an existing program, and/or developed and implemented a sustainability plan.

Government

A county, municipality, or state agency/instrumentality that has expanded its recycling program.

Leadership

County, municipal, business, school or other recycling coordinators/leaders who have implemented new recycling programs, expanded existing programs or otherwise fostered the advancement of recycling through years of dedicated service.

Volunteer Citizen

Any New Jersey resident who has, in a voluntary capacity, assisted in the promotion and implementation of recycling in New Jersey.

Retail Merchant

Any large or small retail merchant who has implemented a recycling program or expanded an existing program.

Rising Star

Individuals or programs that have achieved exemplary recycling results in previously unsuccessful situations through innovation and persistence.

Outstanding Educator/Educational Program

Any teacher, administrator, community or student group, environmental educator or individual student whose actions have resulted in increased participation in recycling.

Recycling Industry

Any processing facility (Class A, B, C and D), manufacturer, equipment manufacturer, or collector who has contributed to the expansion of recycling in New Jersey.

Waste Reduction/Resource Management/Sustainability

Any program that has reduced waste at its source and managed its resources in a more efficient and sustainable manner.

Recycled Products Procurement Star

Any business, institution, government agency or other organization that has implemented a post-consumer recycled products procurement program or expanded an existing post-consumer recycled products procurement program. (Note - Post-consumer recycled products are products that are made with a percentage of recycled content material that was derived from goods that were used by consumers, collected and then recycled.)

JUDGING CRITERIA

Please document performance for 2024 using the following five criteria. The program narrative may not exceed 4 pages and the supporting documentation may not exceed 15 pages.

1. MEASURABLE OUTCOMES AND DOCUMENTATION

Show us, through data or documents, the following where applicable:

- the nominee's recycling rate and materials recycled;
- any improvement over time;
- all post-consumer recycled products purchased, and any written policy to do so; the percentage of your total purchase of a specific product(s) that is for a post-consumer recycled product (for example, 100% of copy paper purchased is post-consumer recycled content copy paper);
- any reduction in resources used, or any change from toxic products to non-toxic alternatives;
- how the nominee funded and budgeted their project or program;
- any enforcement activities performed.

Samples may include weigh slips, bills of lading, bid specifications, budget sheets, buy recycled policies, etc.

2. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

How did the nominee educate both members of their institution/organization, and visitors or clients? What costs were incurred to implement the educational program, and how was this program funded? What rewards or sanctions were used? How many people were reached? Was the nominee able to change behavior, and if so, to what extent? How was that measured?

Samples may include promotional materials, signage, published articles, etc.

3. COVERAGE AND REPLICABILITY

Were innovations introduced across all branches of the organization? Can others learn from and adapt the nominee's program in their own organizations?

4. LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

How does this program, project or individual show leadership and take steps beyond "traditional" recycling? How does this project or individual build alliances or share information to approach problems? Describe such issues as originality, effectiveness in improving existing methods and any risks that were overcome.

5. EXCEEDING REGULATORY STANDARDS

How has the nominee exceeded regulatory expectations? Did the nominee collect materials not required, or serve clients that they did not need to serve?

Application Requirements

Submit the following:

- Completed Application Form** (see page 7)
- Written Program Narrative** (no longer than 4 pages)
- Supporting Documentation** (no longer than 15 pages)

Dates to Remember

Application Due Date
July 25, 2025

Award Winners Notified
September 2025

Awards Ceremony and Luncheon
October 2025

SUBMITTALS AND DEADLINES

Award applications should include all of the following 3 components: **your completed application form (see page 7), a program narrative (no more than 4 pages) and supporting documentation (no more than 15 pages)**. Electronic submissions of the entire nomination package can be sent to njrecycles@dep.nj.gov. All applications must be received by close of business on July 25, 2025.

Award winners will be notified in September 2025. Awards will be presented during an awards ceremony and luncheon in October of 2025. For further information, contact Steven Rinaldi, Bureau of Sustainability, at Steven.Rinaldi@dep.nj.gov. All entries are public information.

SCORING/EVALUATING

A panel of judges from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Association of New Jersey Recyclers will evaluate all applications. Each applicant may be awarded up to 100 total points, distributed as per the table below:

	Institution Business Retail Merchant Government Recycling Industry	Leadership Rising Star Outstanding Educator/Program Volunteer Citizen	Waste Reduction/ Resource Management/ Sustainability/Recycled Products Procurement Star
Measurable Outcomes	30%	10%	30%
Education and Outreach	20%	30%	20%
Coverage and Replicability	15%	20%	20%
Leadership and Innovation	20%	30%	30%
Exceeding Standards	15%	10%	0%

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY RECYCLERS

ANJR is a non-profit, non-partisan network representing public and private sectors whose mission is to promote sustainability by promoting sound resource management and recycling strategies through education, advocacy, and the enhancement of professional standards. ANJR firmly believes that New Jersey needs an integrated solid waste management plan, and will facilitate that plan with education and advocacy around the issues of recycling, source reduction, resource management, household hazardous waste management, buy recycled sustainability, composting, and litter prevention and reduction. www.anjr.com/.

ABOUT THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is committed to providing a high quality of life for the residents of New Jersey. It is our mission to assist the residents of New Jersey in preserving, sustaining, protecting and enhancing the environment to ensure the integration of high environmental quality, public health and economic vitality. We will accomplish our mission in partnership with the general public, business, the environmental community and all levels of government. For more information on the Department, please visit www.nj.gov/dep/.

2024 Awardees



Business Award

Public Service Electric & Gas

Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) is dedicated to recycling or reusing nearly all the waste it generates. In 2023, PSE&G reused over 2,500 tons of timber wetland mats, which historically would have been sent to a landfill. In addition, the company has kept tons of reusable items out of the trash through donations and provides recycling buckets to its mobile workforce trucks to assist in sorting recyclables in the field.



Government Award

Old Bridge Township

In addition to curbside recyclables, Old Bridge Township collects many non-traditional recyclable materials such as mattresses, box springs, concrete, appliances, propane tanks, and more. The township also holds two paper shredding events each year and promotes its recycling programs in numerous ways at public events, via Recycle Coach, the township website, a recycling calendar and more.



Leadership Award

Sustainable Maple Shade

Sustainable Maple Shade runs several unique recycling and reuse programs that go beyond traditional recycling and set an example for others to follow. These programs include a Halloween Costume Swap, a Trash to Treasure Halloween Candy wrapper collection, and broken holiday lights collection. Sustainable Maple Shade also participates in the NexTrex Recycling Challenge to recycle plastic film and promotes its recycling and reuse programs at numerous public events.



Leadership Award

Gary Sondermeyer

Gary Sondermeyer has played a prominent role in shaping New Jersey's recycling and sustainability policies, having taken on leadership roles in numerous initiatives and organizations that work to advance recycling in the state. Sondermeyer served the public during a career at DEP that spanned three decades. In addition to serving as DEP's chief of staff for 10 years, he also served as assistant commissioner for the department's core permitting programs and spent most of his time within the Solid Waste and Recycling Program, where he served as director.



Outstanding Educator/Educational Program Award

Riverside Middle School

Riverside Middle School participated in the NexTrex Recycling Challenge to recycle 2,375 pounds of plastic film and, as a result of its comprehensive educational campaign, achieved third place among all challenge participants and first place in the Mid-Atlantic region. In addition, the school expanded its program into the business community and now helps other schools get started with their own programs.



Recycling Industry Award

Helpsy

Helpsy is a textile reuse and recycling company that accepts old clothing, shoes and other materials. In 2023, Helpsy collected over 12.3 million pounds of old clothing and textiles, which represented an 18 percent increase over the previous year. Helpsy is actively involved in educating the public on this issue.



Rising Star Award

Share My Meals

Share My Meals is a non-profit organization that fights food insecurity and the environmental impacts of food waste by recovering and delivering healthy meals in local communities. Surplus, complete meals are recovered from corporate cafeterias and other food service providers and distributed to local families in need. In 2023, Share My Meals recovered 62,000 meals that would otherwise have been disposed as trash.



Source Reduction, Resource Management/Sustainability Award

BookSmiles

BookSmiles is a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping used books out of the waste stream and getting them into the hands of teachers, as well as students in need. BookSmiles now recovers 94 tons of used books per month. The organization provides the recovered books for free to all and even sends books overseas to impoverished countries.



Source Reduction, Resource Management/Sustainability Award

Morris and Sussex Counties' Boat Shrink Wrap Recycling Program

Morris and Sussex Counties' Boat Shrink Wrap Recycling programs diverted many tons of contaminant-free, recyclable plastic material from being landfilled. The program was well received by the local boating community and continues to grow. The Lake Hopatcong Foundation, Roxbury Clean Communities, and the recycler UltraPoly Corporation are other key partners in the program. A dedicated educational campaign was developed to promote the program.



Volunteer Citizen Award

Linda Weih

In 2023, Linda Weih participated in the NexTrex Recycling Challenge to collect plastic bags and film for recycling in her hometown of Delanco. Weih volunteers for multiple community groups in town and registered each of them with *the program*. *Weih collected the plastics from each group and made over 50 trips to deliver more than 2,600 pounds of material to the recycling center.*

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection 2025 Recycling Awards Application

(Please submit this completed application form electronically along with the program narrative and supporting documentation.)

Name of Company/Association/Organization or Individual to be nominated:

Mailing Address: _____

Person Responsible for Preparing Application / Title:

Nominator's Address: _____

Nominator's Phone Number: _____

Nominator's Fax Number: _____

Nominator's Email Address: _____

Is this a second party nomination? Yes No

If Yes, please attach authorization from the nominated party.

Category of the nomination (Select One):

- Institution
- Retail Merchant
- Leadership
- Educator/Educational Program
- Volunteer Citizen
- Business
- Government
- Rising Star
- Recycling Industry
- Waste Reduction/Resource Management/ Sustainability
- Recycled Products Procurement Star

REQUIRED:

Provide a **brief** description of the company, organization or individual nominee, identifying the nominee's contributions to New Jersey's recycling program (no more than 2 paragraphs).