



Is your community ready for a Gold Star in Water?

Enhance your Bronze or Silver Certification

Gold Star Standard in Water

The Gold Star Standard in Water identifies specific actions and levels of performance for municipalities to achieve improvements in water quality, quantity and use. The award of a Gold Star indicates a municipality is making significant progress towards meeting Sustainable Jersey's water goal.

Municipalities can play a significant role in creating a holistic approach to the management of water. Each municipality in New Jersey has its own water profile, shaped by its geography, infrastructure and local concerns. The Gold Star Standard in Water is designed to provide flexibility for municipalities as they develop their own unique path toward sustainability.

Municipalities face a myriad of water issues and the Gold Star Standard in Water was established to tackle them. Flooding from severe or even everyday weather events; aging water infrastructure for drinking, wastewater and stormwater; as well as degraded water bodies unsafe for fishing and swimming are all realities New Jersey municipalities are confronted with on a daily basis. The added threat of climate change to already stressed systems, serves as a strong reminder that preparations today to ensure future wellbeing is time well spent. The Gold Star Standard in Water is based on a suite of new, existing and updated certification actions across the Sustainable Jersey categories that are designed to:

- Engage local municipal officials, staff, green teams and volunteers to take stock of the role of water in their community; understand the key issues.
- Frame a holistic approach to water to address the issues, in all its forms – drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, as well as water as a natural amenity to use and enjoy.
- Outline an iterative approach that continues to engage a municipality in a cycle of action; assessment and calibration towards continued improvement in local water sustainability.

The framework for the Gold Star Standard in Water will continue to evolve over time. New actions and updated guidance are anticipated. Changes in the laws or water governance at the federal, state and local level as well as updated information and revised water data will necessitate future revisions to the framework and the actions that support it.

Gold Star Standard in Water Requirements

Bronze or Silver certified municipalities can earn a Gold Star in Water if they are approved for implementing a specific combination of four certification program actions – two required and two flexible that relate to your specific municipal issues. The actions that can contribute to meeting the requirements are spread across several action categories including: Health & Wellness, Natural Resources, and Land Use & Transportation.

Specifically, a municipality will need to be approved for:

1. Two required actions: Natural Resource Inventory and Municipal Water Story including a Navigational Path (both actions are found in Natural Resource category).
2. A third action selected by the municipality from a list of high impact actions (the high impact water actions can be found in Health & Wellness and Land Use & Transportation categories). These actions often have different point values, and to count for Gold must be completed at the required tier.

Sustainable Jersey's Water Goal: *New Jersey's water system provides an adequate and affordable supply of clean and safe drinking water for everyone, while also safeguarding water sources to ensure sufficient quality and supply to support healthy ecosystems and biodiversity.*

Source: The New Jersey Sustainable State of the State Report, 2015, Sustainable Jersey

3. A fourth action can be selected by the municipality from a larger list of actions that advance water sustainability (these water actions can be found in Health & Wellness, Innovative Projects; Natural Resources and Land Use & Transportation categories).

Sustainable Jersey Actions - Gold Star Standard in Water

Action Name	Action Category	Required Tier - To meet the Gold Star Standard in Water
Required Core Actions		
Natural Resources Inventory	Natural Resources	
Municipal Water Story	Natural Resources	Navigational Path
High Impact Actions - (at least one required)		
Green Infrastructure Planning	Land Use & Transportation	Tier 3
Green Infrastructure Implementation	Land Use & Transportation	Tier 2
Enhanced Stormwater Management Control Ordinance	Land Use & Transportation	Tier 1
Removing Lead in Drinking Water	Health & Wellness	Tier 2
Private Well Outreach and Testing	Health & Wellness	Tier 2
Additional Actions (at least one required)		
Green Infrastructure Planning	Land Use & Transportation	
Green Infrastructure Implementation	Land Use & Transportation	
Enhanced Stormwater Management Control Ordinance	Land Use & Transportation	
Removing Lead in Drinking Water	Health & Wellness	
Private Well Outreach and Testing	Health & Wellness	
Water Conservation Ordinance	Natural Resources	
Water Conservation Education Program	Natural Resources	
Open Space Plan	Natural Resources	
Community Forestry Management Plan and NJ Urban Forestry Program Accreditation	Natural Resources	
Innovative Community Projects	Innovative Projects	Submission must meet the action requirements and address a water issue identified in Navigational Path

How to Apply for the Gold Star Standard in Water

The application for the Gold Star in Water appears in the format of an “action” in the Gold Star Application section of the Municipal Dashboard. The Gold Star Standard in Water application requires the municipality to identify the certification actions it has successfully completed and that are currently approved to meet the Gold Star requirements.

Municipalities seeking the Gold Star in Water would apply during Sustainable Jersey’s annual certification cycle and submit the required information at the same time they submit their application for Bronze or Silver certification. It is recommended that a municipality wait until the second or final application submission deadline to submit the Gold Star Standard in Water action if meeting the requirements is contingent on actions being approved in their municipal certification application.

Steps to achieving the Gold Star Standard in Water

Achieving the Gold Star in Water requires a municipality to successfully complete and be currently approved for selected actions in the Sustainable Jersey certification program (see the table above).

Step 1: Successfully complete the two required core actions:

- a. Natural Resource Inventory (also known as Environmental Resources Inventory)
- b. Municipal Water Story including a Navigational Path

Step 2: Identify and complete third action selected by the municipality from a list of high impact actions - completed at the required tier. Previously approved actions that have NOT expired when applying for the Gold Star will count towards this requirement.

Step 3: Identify and complete a fourth action from a larger list of actions that advance water sustainability. Previously approved actions that have NOT expired when applying for the Gold Star will count towards this requirement.

Step 4: Complete the Gold Star Standard in Water application action that can be found in the Gold Star Application accessible from the Municipal Dashboard. This action requires the municipality to identify the actions it has successfully completed and is currently approved for that meet Gold Star Standard requirements.