

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a list of allowable expenses?

The NJ Clean Communities Council, in conjunction with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, publishes Clean Communities Grant Guidelines that list allowable and unallowable expenses. Guidelines can be found at www.njclean.org. The Best Practices Guide also provides guidance and information on allowable program expenses.

Whom should I contact to request an extension for Clean Communities grant money?

To request an extension for Clean Communities grants, send a letter to JoAnn Gemenden, Executive Director, NJ Clean Communities Council, 222 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608. Letters can be mailed or emailed to njccc@njclean.org. Extensions are granted on a 6-month basis; additional extensions should be requested every six months.

Can I save grant funding from multiple years for a large equipment purchase? How do I document that?

Twenty-five percent of the grant may be saved for up to three (3) years to use for a large equipment purchase. The statistical report must be filed each year by the June 30th deadline and should indicate the amount of funds being reserved for a future purchase. Additionally, a formal request for a grant extension must be filed for each year's funds that are being reserved for the purchase.

Is there a cap on salaries?

Salaries and fringe benefits may be paid for litter pickup and removal, Clean Communities-related education and outreach, litter enforcement, graffiti removal and Clean Communities program administration. Only 5% of the grant can be used for administration costs. Administration is defined as personnel for time documented as spent on the Clean Communities program administration. Only 5% of the grant can be used for indirect costs such as accounting, auditing, budgeting, travel, telephone, stationary, postage and insurance. There is no cap on salaries in other categories.

What is the procedure to name a new coordinator?

Clean Communities grant guidelines require towns to appoint coordinators; however, there is no formal procedure for appointing or hiring new coordinators. You must include the name of the coordinator and contact information on statistical reports. Notification of new coordinators should be sent to njccc@njclean.org.

May Clean Communities funds be used to remove graffiti?

Yes. The Clean Communities Act states that funding can be used to pay for graffiti removal.

May Clean Communities funds be used to paint murals?

Clean Communities funds may be used for labor and supplies to paint murals in order to

discourage the painting of graffiti on walls and other public places. There is no cap on spending in the category.

How can we use Clean Communities money for storm water management?

Allowable costs for storm water management activities include curbside leaf and grass collection, street sweeping, storm water catch basin cleanouts, and single items of equipment such as street sweepers or leaf vacuums. Allowable costs may also include cost of tipping fees for street sweeping within the 25% cap, signage related to street sweeping, and/or educational activities related to storm water management, such as storm drain labeling.

An unallowable cost is the physical inventory of storm drains, catch basins and inlets.

May Clean Communities funds be used for beautification?

No.

What percentage of the grant can be used to purchase a street sweeper?

No more than 25 % of the grant can be used to purchase a street sweeper.

Would a program to replace faded “No Parking” signs for the days or hours a street sweeper will be passing be an allowable expense for Clean Communities?

You may use Clean Communities funds to replace faded “No Parking “signs, related to street sweeping. This would fall under the 25 percent cap on storm drain management costs.

Why are we only permitted to use 25% of the grant for leaf disposal?

Leaf disposal related to storm water management is an allowable cost up to 25% of annual funding. However, leaves are not considered to be litter and should be recycled or composted as part of municipal or county recycling programs.

Are dog waste stations and bags an allowable expense?

Yes, up to 25% of your annual Clean Communities grant may be used to purchase dog waste stations and bags (this would be considered equipment and is limited to 25% of your annual Clean Communities grant).

Can outdoor bottle-filling stations be purchased with Clean Communities funds?

Yes, to curb littering of plastic water bottles on public lands, water bottle filling stations can be purchased with Clean Communities funds (this would be considered equipment and is limited to 25% of your annual Clean Communities grant). Grant funds should not be used for indoor filling stations.

May bear proof containers be purchased with Clean Communities funds?

Bear proof litter containers can be purchased with Clean Communities funds for public property. Bear proof litter containers may not be purchased for use on private property.

May containers for the disposal of fishing line/nets be purchased with Clean Communities funds?

Fishing line/nets are considered to be litter and are hazardous to wildlife. Containers for the disposal of line/nets may be purchased with Clean Communities funds.

May Clean Communities funds be used to pay for containers/dumpsters during litter cleanup days?

Clean Communities funds may be used to buy or rent dumpsters used in conjunction with litter cleanup activities and events.

May Clean Communities funds be used to pay for the disposal of household garbage?

No. Clean Communities funds may not be used to pay for dumpsters or curbside collection of household garbage or bulky waste except if items are illegally dumped on public lands.

May Clean Communities funds be used to pay for paper shredders or paper shredding programs?

No. Clean Communities funds may not be used to pay for paper shredding events or programs; paper shredding is considered a recycling program.

May Clean Communities money be used to remove trash from households?

No. Clean Communities funds can only be used to remove litter/trash from public property.

May Clean Communities funds be used to remove trash or high grass from foreclosure properties?

No. Clean Communities funds can only be used to remove litter/trash from public property.

May Clean Communities funds be used to pay for storage trailers for Clean Communities supplies?

Clean Communities funds can be used to pay for trailers to store Clean Communities supplies but is limited to 25% of the annual Clean Communities grant (equipment),

May Clean Communities funds be used to pay for gift certificates for volunteers who participate in cleanups?

Grant guidelines do not address this issue. Decisions on the distribution of gift certificates rest with the municipal or county administrations.

Is there a cap on funding for performers or education?

There is no cap on funding for entertainers or educators who perform in schools or for community groups.

How does the cap on funding for volunteer groups who clean work?

Clean Communities Grant Guidelines state that contributions to volunteer groups for

community cleanup days or other authorized cleanups are limited to \$500 per volunteer group per event, per location or roadway mile. Volunteer groups are defined as cub/girl scouts, church, school or civic groups and other similar organized groups. Discretion is allowed if volunteer group is large.

What is considered to be a roadway mile, one side or both sides of the street?

A roadway mile is one side of the street. Both sides of the street constitute a 2-mile stretch of roadway.

Are volunteer groups required to hold insurance certificates?

Policies regarding insurance and insurance certificates rest with the municipality or county administrations.

Clean Communities Grant Guidelines state that in aggregate no more than 25% of the annual grant can be used for the purchase of various pieces of equipment for litter cleanup, graffiti abatement and enforcement. Does this mean that the total cost of the purchase or rental of all vehicles, leaf vacuums, and other equipment cannot exceed 25% of the grant?

Yes. The total cost of the purchase or rental of all equipment can be no more than 25% of the grant.

Are litter and recycling containers considered to be equipment?

No. Litter and recycling containers are considered to be materials and supplies. Likewise, gloves, bags, safety vests and safety kits are considered to be materials and supplies.

How are funds allocated to municipalities? Additional funds should be allocated to beach communities during tourist season.

According to the Clean Communities Act, Clean Communities Funds are allocated to municipalities according to a ratio of housing units to road mileages. Funds are allocated to counties according to road mileage. Data used to determine housing units and road mileage is based on the most recent census. The NJ Department of Transportation conducts the census. The Clean Communities Act does not provide for increased funding for beach communities during beach season.

Will the Clean Communities Council conduct audits to determine who is mispending Clean Communities funds?

All grant expenditures are subject to Single Audit Act guidelines. The Clean Communities Council is not authorized to conduct audits.

What should a municipality or county do with unexpended funds from previous years?

Agencies with unexpended funds should send letters to the NJ Clean Communities Council requesting an extension of time to use the remaining funds for the purposes outlined in the grant guidelines. In order for the extension to be approved, the statistical report must have been submitted for the previous year.

Send inquiries to:
JoAnn Gemenden
Executive Director
NJ Clean Communities Council
222 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08608
609-989-5900
njccc@njclean.org