



## **New Jersey Clean Communities Report to the Governor and Legislature March 1, 2022**

*The Report to the Governor and Legislature highlights the activities of the NJ Clean Communities Council with special attention to the 2020 and 2021 contracts, as required by law. The budget report for FY'2020 is included in this report.*

### **Background**

New Jersey Clean Communities is a statewide, comprehensive litter abatement program that incorporates a network of 558 municipalities and 21 counties. Created by the passage of the Clean Communities Act in 1986, the program spans three decades-- from the writing and passage of the Act in the 1980s; to the struggle to maintain the program in spite of severe statewide budget cuts in the 1990s, and the sunset of the program in the year 2000; to the resolution of the struggle on December 20, 2002 with the passage of the Clean Communities Act. The 2002 Clean Communities Act provided funding for a nonprofit solely dedicated to litter abatement education to administer the educational and administrative elements of the program lost in the 1990s. Funding for the program increased in the fall of 2020 with the passage of legislation that bans paper and plastic bags, and appropriates money from the Clean Communities Program Fund to be used for a "Choose to Reuse" re-use educational campaign.

Since 2002, the nonprofit designated to administer the program has been the NJ Clean Communities Council, Inc. Clean Communities Council also administers New Jersey's Adopt-a-Beach and Adopt-a-Highway programs. While the administration of New Jersey's Adopt-a-Highway program is not part of the council's contract with NJDEP, it must be noted that in the eight years of the program, 6,593 volunteers cleaned up 1,508 miles of state highways, picking up 6,904 bags of trash and 2,084 bags of recycling. The dedication of groups committed to keeping New Jersey clean grew exponentially in 2021. The number of groups that have adopted a stretch of NJ highway grew by almost 40%.

In 2020, the Governor and NJ Legislature tapped the NJCCC with the task of creating a statewide public education and outreach campaign relative to the NJ's single-use plastics law.

## Accomplishments



### Single Use Plastics Campaign

#### BagUpNJ:

NJ's statewide public outreach campaign relative to the state's single use plastics ban has been an all-encompassing mission of the NJ Clean Communities Council in 2021. A new campaign message and logo, *BagUpNJ*, were developed along with a corresponding website and robust toolkit with free downloadable artwork, flyers, videos, signs, billboards, and radio and video PSA's to name a few. Outreach materials are provided in seven (7) different languages. A BagUpNJ month resolution was developed along with a Model Website and share with all 21 counties and 558 municipalities.

The NJCCC Executive Director worked in conjunction with NJ Business Action Center and NJ Department of Environmental Protection staff to educate business associations, local governments, chambers, downtown organizations, special improvement districts, economic development agencies and other key stakeholders; more than 50 educational presentations were conducted in 2021 alone.

#### Skip the Straw:

NJ's single use plastics law also provides a "by request only" mandate for plastic straws. In response, NJ's bi-lingual *Skip the Straw* campaign was developed to educate the public about the new requirement and encourage residents to *Skip the Straw* all together!





## **Clean Communities Coordinator Certification**

The Clean Communities Council partnered with the Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education in the spring of 2015 to launch the inaugural certification training program for Clean Communities coordinators. The purpose of coordinator training is to provide coordinators with the tools to effectively manage grassroots, community-driven Clean Communities program. The Certified Clean Communities Coordinator (CCCC) program involves a three-day course and a final assignment, along with two additional hours earned by attending a Clean Communities Council state-sponsored event. Rutgers reports that, since the start of the certification program in 2015, 773 people have attended one or more sessions of the initial (three-day) certification training, 610 people have completed the certification series and approximately 50% of those have maintained their certification over time. Individuals who completed the program in 2020 will need to recertify by December 31, 2022 in order to maintain their certification. In light of the current pandemic, extensions have been put in place and exceptions made to ensure individuals have ample opportunity to maintain their certification. The NJCCC continues to expand opportunities for NJCCC certification credits.

### **Best Practices**

The most significant contribution to the state program since its inception in 1986 may be the Best Practices Guide which is available online at [njclean.org](http://njclean.org). The manual was initially created and released in 2006 by a team of county coordinators. The guide offers a clearinghouse of information on New Jersey Clean Communities, including vendor lists, summary of litter-related educators and books, model programs and creative ideas. It has been revised, edited and “added to” in each of 15 consecutive years and was recently modified to add Covid-19 model language, waivers and graphics.

The Best Practices Committee expanded its scope of work in the fall of 2019 when committee members organized the first annual Best Practices Seminar. The seminar was held in conjunction with Rutgers OCPE. While in-person seminars are still on pause, the Best Practices Committee continues to meet and develop new initiatives. The biggest change in 2021 was the overhaul of the website and the incorporation of Best Practices into the NJCCC’s main menu bar with drop down menus. This has increased navigation of all the tools available via the Best Practices Guide.

## **Clean Communities Environmental Student Exchange (CCESE)**

The Clean Communities Council is proud of the Clean Communities Environmental Student Exchange (CCESE), which last took place year on March 21-22, 2019 in Brigantine. This annual event brings together students from different regions of state. Students work together to solve environmental problems, as they learn about each other and the region in which the event takes place. Unfortunately, CCESE 2020-22 were cancelled due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

## **Clean Communities Spring and Winter Conference**

A signature event of the Clean Communities Council has been a three-day conference that has taken place in each of 16 consecutive years just before the Memorial Day weekend, attracting as many as 3,000 people. The conference aimed to educate coordinators about litter-related topics, showcase the region in which the conference is held, and honor those who have contributed to a cleaner New Jersey. The NJ Clean Communities Council was forced to cancel the Kids Day program in 2021 and pivot the annual conference to a virtual one. The upside to an online platform is that registration is virtually unlimited. The NJCCC sought and received CEU credits for a myriad of stakeholders which allowed greater participation by not only clean communities coordinators but by recycling coordinators, public works personnel, finance directors, purchasing agents and municipal clerks. Due to the success of our initial webinar, the NJCCC held an additional free webinar in the winter which saw even greater participation.

## **Adopt-a-Beach**

Clean Communities Council assumed responsibility for New Jersey's Adopt-a-Beach program in the spring of 2011. This popular program attracts thousands of volunteers every year who clean rivers, lakes, streams, and beaches. Adopt-a-Beach is driven by the 1992 Adopt-a-Beach Act which requires the state (or its designee) to organize two volunteer beach cleanups every year. The Council promotes the Clean Water Challenge from March 1- April 30 each year and supports the International Coastal Cleanup during the fall of every year. The Council provides supplies for waterway cleanups and collects data. The Adopt-a-Beach program was limited in scope during 2021 due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

## **Data Collection**

In accordance with the 2002 Clean Communities Act, the Council collects municipal and county statistical reports and maintains a database of information to be submitted to the Governor and Legislature. The Council's online reporting system provides an accurate tracking system than the previously implemented manual input of data. The online reporting system was developed by the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA). The

ACUA maintains the backup database and provides technical assistance to the Clean Communities Council.

The statistical reporting period for report year 2020 was extended from June 30, 2021 to December 31, 2021 due to the pandemic and limited opportunities to expend funds. As a result, there was a large influx of extension requests in the month of December. The reports for all years continue to come in, and to date, there are currently over 5,500 reports on file for all years. This number reflects both open (incomplete) and submitted (completed) reports for all counties/municipalities. Over 625,000 volunteers participated in over 360,000 cleanups, cleaning close to 1 million miles and over 1.5 million acres of public property. Just under 1.5 million tons of debris have been collected to date, and over 750,000 recycling tons were also collected. Approximately 32,000 citations and violations have been issued. The ongoing safety concerns related to COVID-19 resulted in a significant reduction in cleanup activities throughout the state; however, as Covid protocols lessen, we anticipate an increase in cleanups and volunteers.

### Statistical Report Data (Close of Report Year 2020)

REPORT FIELDS	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	REPORT FIELDS	2016
Reports Collected	526	487	472	380	338	526	487
Cleanups	38,271	40,435	37,131	30,146	22,362	38,271	40,435
Volunteers	73,462	78,221	76,222	47,474	25,557	73,462	78,221
Trash Picked Up Tons	45,111	40,703	46,657	11,160	14,302	45,111	40,703
Trash Recycled Tons	66,192	64,913	24,873	8,541	5,862	66,192	64,913
Road Miles Cleaned	107,967	101,478	99,226	78,488	67,666	107,967	101,478
Acres Cleaned	124,948	153,299	42,823	45,829	45,145	124,948	153,299
Citations	12,627	22,528	7,007	3,363	1,167	12,627	22,528
Violations	23,457	19,604	11,838	10,946	6,599	23,457	19,604
Programs	3,606	2,958	2,190	1,537	734	3,606	2,958
People Reached	785,050	622,123	600,017	494,195	240,080	785,050	622,123
Reports Collected	526	487	472	380	338	526	487

## Media & Advertising

The passage of the 2008 Recycling Enhancement Act amended the Clean Communities Act, providing funding for a media campaign that would promote the reduction of litter and, in the long-term, sustain a reduction in litter.

Through the work of the Council's public relations firm, Jaffe Communications of Cranford, 2021 was a robust year for media relations, despite the restrictions of COVID 19 that cancelled all NJCCC sponsored in-person events, urban clean-up teams and seminars. With the onset of NJ's single use plastics law and partnership with the NJBAC and NJDEP, there was still an abundance of media opportunities. Between April 1, 2021 and January 31, 2022, there were 143 earned news articles appearing in statewide media about the work of the Council, focusing on both our litter abatement efforts and statewide outreach on the single use plastics ban.

Jaffe Communications continues to work closely with NJCCC to roll-out a statewide education campaign, following the successful passage of the plastic and paper bag ban, signed by the governor in 2020. Jaffe Communication developed and hosted a website, [www.bagupnj.com](http://www.bagupnj.com), which was developed to host and promote our BagUpNJ Campaign. The website highlights bag giveaway events as well as a robust toolkit for government and businesses to use for outreach.

## Budget Report

The Budget Report reflects the close-out of the contract for fiscal year 2020.

### Budget Report (FY2020)

Consultants	95,445.00
Rent	32,000.00
Telephone	3,365.00
Insurance	11,000.00
Postage	440.00
Supplies	2,500.00
Equipment	22,775.00
Printing	2,300.00
Special Events	24,125.00
Meetings/Conferences	7,650.00
Miscellaneous	3,400.00
Salaries & Expenses	170,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>375,000.00</b>

## **New Jersey Clean Communities Council, Inc.**



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