Green Cleaning Training & Education Programs

Green cleaning is cleaning using products and processes that have lower environmental and health impacts than conventional products and methods. Training of staff and education of staff, students and the community about the environmental, health and cost benefits of green cleaning, as well as about green cleaning products, equipment and techniques on school premises are essential components of an effective green cleaning program. This action awards points to either districts or schools that provide training on the use and benefits of green cleaning programs. A **district** can earn points for sending five district level staff, school board members or school staff to two hours of professional training on green cleaning benefits, techniques, equipment and supplies. For a **school** to earn points, it must provide two hours of professional green cleaning training to three school level personnel that could include the principal, custodians, teaching staff, nurse, and dining services staff. Schools also need to provide at least one green cleaning educational program for school staff, students, parents, or the school community.

To qualify for points, the professional training and educational program (for schools) must have been completed in the twenty-four months prior to submission for certification. All personnel are not required to have completed the same training.

Districts and schools can also earn points for adopting a green cleaning policy and plan, purchasing green cleaning supplies and green cleaning equipment under separate Sustainable Jersey for Schools’ actions.

**Why is it important?**

Students, teachers, and staff spend eight to ten hours each weekday in school buildings. Children are vulnerable to and may be severely affected by exposure to hazardous chemicals found in cleaners, waxes, deodorizers and other facility maintenance products. The US Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the concentration of indoor air contaminants can be two to five times greater than the outdoors. Common indoor contaminants include chemical vapors, dirt, dust bacteria and mold. Cleaning products and/or improper cleaning procedures can exacerbate asthma, respiratory illness, headaches, allergies and eye, nose and skin irritation experienced by students and staff.

A well-designed green cleaning program can help reduce harmful chemical exposure for a healthy learning and work environment; preserve natural resources and the health of lakes and streams that capture wastewater discharge; increase the lifespan of facilities and furniture, and save money. Effective green cleaning programs incorporate green cleaning products, equipment (e.g. HEPA-filtered vacuum cleaners to promote healthy indoor air quality), and supplies (e.g. microfiber cloths to reduce the use of cleaning chemicals), as well as training staff and engaging parents, students, and school organizations in the program's implementation.

It is important for all relevant personnel, including those in administration, facilities, teaching, health, and food service, to be trained and kept current on green cleaning techniques, products and equipment to provide the safest and most effective program for all building occupants. Often, green cleaning products are more concentrated than conventional cleaning products. The different mode of use for green products, coupled with the common misperception that green cleaners are not as effective as regular cleaners, may result in their improper use. It is crucial to understand how to properly apply and use new products and equipment for a successful green cleaning program.

By hosting an educational program, the school community will better understand the benefits of green cleaning programs.
Educational opportunities should provide basic information and raise awareness about the benefits of green cleaning products, equipment and techniques to the school community at large. School board members, staff, students, and parents all need to be aware of the benefits and the importance of green cleaning in school buildings and beyond, and may be motivated to implement green cleaning practices at home. Education for these stakeholders is crucial in order to achieve a sense of shared ownership for school buildings and to value the environmental benefits that proper maintenance and green cleaning can provide to occupants.

Who should lead and be involved with this action?

The facilities director of the school or district should lead this initiative with the support of the school board, superintendent, principal, and business administrator, and the involvement of all of the custodial staff, teaching staff, nurses, and dining services staff. The facilities director and head custodians can work together to identify green cleaning training programs offered by professional associations, green cleaning vendors, or external organizations. The school green team, facilities staff, school nurse, parents and health professionals may also play a role in organizing the green cleaning educational program for the school community.

Timeframe

It may take two to three months to identify professional green training program opportunities. Green cleaning training comes in a wide variety of formats and lengths. Training can be as simple as a one-hour webinar or may involve a comprehensive half-day training program. Training may also occur on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.

Educational outreach to the school community may take about one to three months to organize, depending on the target audience. A workshop, staff in-service training or a presentation at a PTA meeting would each be an acceptable educational program.

Project costs and resource needs

Resource requirements for training on green cleaning topics vary, depending on the type and extent of the training. An in-house presentation or webinar may have few or no costs aside from staff time to organize the course. Other training could be more resource-intensive and require program fees. Some professional associations and educational organizations offer and support green cleaning training with speakers, workshops, webinars and web-based resources requiring a registration fee. Many green cleaning product and equipment suppliers provide training free of charge. Thus, the district or school should assess the financial resources available for green cleaning training before committing to a plan. For a selection of training, certification and educational opportunities, refer to the “Resources” section under Training and Education Resources.

What to do, and how to do it (“How to”)

This section provides guidance and recommendations for implementing the action. A school does not need to follow this guidance exactly as long as it meets the requirements for earning points for this action.

This action can be completed at the District or School level. For a District to earn points, at least five individuals, including school board members, district administration, facilities directors, custodians, school nurses, teachers, and food service staff, must participate in a minimum of two hours of green cleaning professional training. Those receiving training should represent a mix of personnel from the district's participating schools.

For a School to earn points for this action, three school staff, that could include the school principal, custodial staff, school nurse, teachers, food service staff and professional support staff, must attend 2 hours of professional development on green cleaning. ADDITIONALLY, schools need to provide at least one green cleaning educational program for school staff, students and parents, or the school community.

1. The facilities director and the school green team should work together to identify board and staff members who would benefit from green cleaning training. School board members who regularly interact with the school facilities director may benefit from expanding their knowledge of green cleaning practices by attending the training. The facilities director and head custodians may work together to identify green cleaning training programs offered by professional associations, green cleaning vendors, or external organizations.

2. The school or district may choose to train multiple personnel on a particular topic at once, either by hosting the
training or by sending personnel to an external training event, such as a professional association’s training meeting. If hosting its own training event, the school or district may bring in outside experts to run the training, or may use its own staff or board members with expertise in the subject matter.

3. The school or district may also fulfill the requirements for this action by facilitating training for personnel on an individual basis through participation in webinars, meetings, workshops and other training events. Individual staff or board members may be trained in different green cleaning topics, which are relevant to their official role(s) in the district.

4. Prepare green cleaning training documentation that identifies the names and positions of the individuals (5 individuals for districts or 3 individuals for schools) receiving training, along with the following course information: date, instructor or course provider, course description or syllabus, and course length. When estimating course training time, exclude time for breaks and meals from the two-hour training requirement. Please note that the requirement for two hours of training does not have to be completed at a single event. For example, two one-hour training sessions or three forty-five-minute sessions would meet the time requirement. Maintaining a list of the individuals who have completed the training from year to year may be helpful as the district and schools build their training programs over time. Only training that has occurred in the 24 months prior to submission for certification may be included.

5. Suggestions on professional training organizations may be found in the “Resources” section below. Statewide professional associations such as New Jersey School Buildings & Grounds Association; New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA); New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO); New Jersey Education Association (NJEA); New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association; New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA), and the International Facility Managers Association may offer green cleaning training opportunities. State and federal agencies, including the NJ Department(s) of Health and Environmental Protection and the US Environmental Protection Agency, may also offer training programs on green cleaning.

6. Educational program: Schools implementing this action must be must also provide at least one green cleaning educational opportunity for either school staff, students, parents, or school community members. Examples include workshops, presentations at PTA meetings, in-service staff trainings, or green cleaning fairs. Incorporating a demonstration of green cleaning equipment, products or techniques into the educational program is one strategy to better engage audiences.

7. Please note that points will not be awarded in this action for training activities that earn points in separate Sustainable Jersey for Schools’ actions.

**What to submit to earn points for this action**

In order to earn points for this action, the following documentation must be submitted as part of the online certification application in order to verify that the action requirements have been met.

Description of Implementation – In the text box provided on the submission page for this action provide a short narrative (about 300 words or less) describing what has been accomplished with the green cleaning training program and the impact it has or will have on the school community.

1. Upload green cleaning training documentation that identifies the names and positions of the individuals who have received two hours of training, along with the following course information: date, instructor or course provider, course description or syllabus, and course length. Documentation may include a certificate of completion from the course. When estimating course training time, please exclude time for breaks and meals from the two-hour training requirement. The two-hours of training does not have to be completed at a single event. For example two one-hour training sessions or three forty-five-minute sessions would meet the time requirement. The training hours must have occurred in the twenty-four months prior to submission for certification.

   a. **DISTRICT TRAINEES’ REQUIREMENT:** At least five individuals representing a mix of staff from the district’s participating schools that could include school board members, district administration, facility directors, custodians, school nurses, teachers and food service staff must receive training.

   b. **SCHOOL TRAINEES’ REQUIREMENT:** At least three school staff that could include the school principal, custodial staff, school nurse, teachers, food service staff and professional support staff must receive training.

2. **Schools only:** Upload documentation of at least one in-person educational opportunity presented to the school community (students, parents, staff and community members). Documentation may include an official event program, an event flyer, or green cleaning educational materials shared at the event. Documentation must show that the event occurred no more than twenty-four months prior to the submission deadline of the certification application.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**
There is a limit of six uploaded documents per action and individual files must not exceed 20 MB. Excerpts of relevant information from large documents are recommended.

All action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submissions should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

**Spotlight: What NJ Schools are doing**

Steve Morlino - Executive Director of Facilities for Newark Public Schools Green Cleaning Program

In 2006, the largest school district in New Jersey, Newark Public Schools District, established a green cleaning program to improve indoor air quality for the sake of student health, development, learning and productivity. The program has since been recognized nationwide, and has earned numerous awards such as the ASBO Facilities Masters Award (2005, 06, 07, 08) the EPA Tools for Schools Excellence Award in 2008 and the EPA National Mentorship Award in January 2010. Comprising an administrative review committee, led by the district’s Executive Director of Facilities, Steve Morlino, green cleaning team members meet regularly to discuss the program’s progress and ensure that all new staff are being trained by experienced personnel. http://asumag.com/green/newark-public-schools-201012

Sustainable Jersey is currently working on identifying schools that have successfully completed this action. If you would like to showcase your school’s accomplishments, please contact us at schools@sustainablejersey.com

**Resources**

The following resources may be helpful in completing this action.

**Training and Education Resources**

- Center for Environmental Research & Children’s Health: Green Cleaning Toolkit
  http://cerch.org/research-programs/child-care/greencleaningtoolkit/

- Cleaning for Healthy Schools http://www.cleaningforhealthyschools.org/

- Eco Schools, Sample School Low Environment Impact Cleaning Policy

- Green Clean Schools provides links to guides, archived and live webinars and other resources for green cleaning in schools. http://greencleanschools.org/resources/webinars/

- Green Schools Initiative, Cleaning for Asthma Safe Schools (CLASS): The Green Cleaning Toolkit contains factsheet, presentations, policies, product and equipment inventory forms and product locator.
  http://www.greenschools.net/article.php?id=245

- Healthy School Campaign, Green Cleaning Standards http://www.greencleanschools.org/gc-standards.html


- Healthy Schools Campaign, Green Clean Schools promotes green cleaning in schools with a quick and easy guide and other information, including articles covering various issues related to green cleaning in schools.
  http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/programs/green-clean-schools/

  http://www.issa.com/?id=cims_green_building

- International Facility Managers Association provides classroom and online courses, on-demand recorded webinars, credential programs, and other resources on multiple sustainability themed topics including green cleaning and indoor air quality. http://www.ifmacredentials.org/sfp
• **Sustainability Facility Professional, credential program**: [http://www.ifma.org/professional-development/credentials/sustainability-facility-professional-sfp](http://www.ifma.org/professional-development/credentials/sustainability-facility-professional-sfp)

**New Jersey Association of School Administrators** provides training for members on diverse topics. [www.njasa.net](http://www.njasa.net)

**New Jersey Association of School Business Officials** provides workshops and seminars for professional development of its members. [www.njasbo.com](http://www.njasbo.com)

**NJ Department of Health: Healthy School Facility Environments** [http://www.state.nj.us/health/healthyschools/hazardous.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/health/healthyschools/hazardous.shtml)

**New Jersey Education Association** provides in person and online training on diverse topics. [http://www.njea.org/issues-and-political-action/health-and-safety](http://www.njea.org/issues-and-political-action/health-and-safety)

**New Jersey School Boards Association** provides in person and online training on diverse topics relevant to school board members. [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org)


**Rutgers Center for Government Services / NJ Educational Facility Management** offers professional development courses for school facilities managers, including one titled “Environmental Stewardship, Code Compliance and Sustainability.” [http://cgs.rutgers.edu/efm](http://cgs.rutgers.edu/efm)

**Rutgers Center for Green Building** provides links to resources for green building professionals [http://rcgb.rutgers.edu/green-building-professionals/](http://rcgb.rutgers.edu/green-building-professionals/)

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, IAQ Tools for Schools**, provides live and archived webinars on various topics related to indoor air quality management [http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/webconferences.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/webconferences.html)

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**


• **Creating Healthy Indoor Environments in Schools** includes links to resources, information and webinars about indoor environmental issues including cleaning and maintenance. [http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/index.html)

**Green Standards and Purchasing**


**EcoLogo** Certified products, services and packaging are certified for reduced environmental impact. ECOLOGO Certifications are voluntary, multi-attribute, lifecycle based environmental certifications that indicate a product has undergone rigorous scientific testing, exhaustive auditing, or both, to prove its compliance with stringent, third-party, environmental performance standards. [http://industries.ul.com/environment/certificationvalidation-marks/ecologo-product-certification/](http://industries.ul.com/environment/certificationvalidation-marks/ecologo-product-certification/)

**EPA’s Design for the Environment** program helps consumers, businesses, and institutional buyers identify cleaning and other products that perform well and are safer for human health and the environment. Look for products with the DfE label and protect your family’s health and the planet. [http://www.epa.gov/dfe/](http://www.epa.gov/dfe/)

**EPA Database of Environmental Information for Products and Services** - tool to facilitate the purchase of products and services with reduced environmental impacts. The database contains information on mandatory purchase programs contained in FAR Part 23 (Energy Star, CPG, and Biopreferred Products) as well as environmental products available
through supply programs such as Ability One and the U.S. General Services Administration.

http://yosemite1.epa.gov/oppt/eppstand2.nsf

**Green Seal Standard** provide sustainability standards for products, services and companies based on life-cycle research. Green Seal standards provide criteria and guidelines for manufacturers, service providers and companies to work toward sustainability. Green Seal has 31 issued standards that cover over 375 product and service categories. Examples of Cleaning Products and Services include: GS-34 Cleaning and Degreasing Agents, CS-37 Green Cleaning Services, GS-40 Floor-Care Products for Industrial and Institutional Use, GS-41 Hand Cleaners for Industrial and Institutional Use. http://www.greenseal.org/GreenBusiness/Standards.aspx?vid=StandardCategory&cid=2

**ISSA, Cleaning Industry Management Standard for Green Buildings** that supports Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

http://www.issa.com/?id=cims_green_building


**NJ Department of Treasury** Green Purchasing http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/green-purchasing.shtml

**NJ State Contracts with Green Products and Services** The following contracts include some or all “green” products/services. However, not all products/services listed in the contract may be considered “green.” It is the using agency's responsibility to read the Notice of Awards in its entirety in order to identify “green” products and services.

http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/greencontracts.shtml

**U.S. Green Building Council**

- **Center for Green Schools** offers the Green Classroom Professional Certificate, a two-hour online course (http://centerforgreenschools.org/main-nav/k-12/how/classroom/Greenclassroom.aspx), and online web trainings (http://centerforgreenschools.org/utility-nav/Resources/webtrainings.aspx) including training on green cleaning and indoor environmental quality.

- **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)** accredited personnel may find courses here for continuing education credits.

http://www.usgbc.org/education

- **NJ Chapter, Speakers' Bureau** for general presentation or for speakers with expertise in many areas, including indoor environmental quality (fees vary).

http://www.usgbcnj.org/speakers_bureau