Quick Start Guide

The NJ Student Climate Challenge provides opportunities for students to design and implement an action project to address climate change in their school or community. Students document their efforts on the action project and create a short digital story to share their accomplishments. Teams entering the Climate Challenge have the chance to win grants for their school to support climate change education and related projects.

Why get involved:

- Make a difference in your school or local community related to climate change causes and/or impacts
- Be empowered to take action on a project of your choice with other students
- Share with others about why climate change is an important issue and what you are doing to address it through a short video
- Win grant funding to support future environmental action projects

How to get involved:

- Teachers register for the Climate Challenge and have access to additional resources and support to bring the challenge into classroom instruction or afterschool club's activities.
- Teams of 2-12 students choose a school or community-based climate action project, with teachers acting only as facilitators to keep the Climate Challenge student-led.
- Review the scoring rubric and the Climate Challenge Official Rules to learn more about putting together a winning application.
- Participate in the Climate Challenge Information and Submission Sessions for more assistance.
- Plan your action project, then do it!
- Remember to document your steps through photos and video clips to be used in your video submission.
- Create a 2-3 minute digital story to share your project, its connection to climate change solutions, and the outcomes of your project.
- Submit your Google Submission form, Team Roster Template, Student Consent Forms and digital story by the deadline of April 9, 2025, 11:59pm.

What is a Climate Action Project?

All student projects must lead to a specific outcome that directly addresses either reducing the causes of climate change or lessening its negative impacts. Examples of what IS a Climate Action Project:

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- **A physical change to the environment** (such as tree planting project, rain garden)
- **A reduction in a factor that contributes to climate change** (for example, any effort to reduce greenhouse gases such as anti-idling)
- **Increased awareness of the climate crisis among a target audience** (education campaign to decrease food waste)
- **Civic engagement in local or state policymaking related to climate change** (such as visiting an elected official to advocate for a policy that would help address climate change)
- **Presentation of research findings on a local climate-related issue that informs decision-makers** (identifying steps the school district should take and presenting recommendations at a public meeting)
- **Develop a proposal and apply for a grant to complete a community or school project** (for example, finding and submitting research grants for electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure or to complete a Sustainable Jersey action)

Examples of what is **NOT** a Climate Action Project:

- Picking up litter along a local stream (*no direct connection* to climate change)
- Creating a campaign to eliminate microplastics in the ocean (*no direct connection* to climate change)
- Researching climate change facts to create a video for submission (*no action project* completed)
- Creating a model or possible plan for a rain garden, but not actually moving that plan forward by proposing it to decision makers nor implementing the plan (*no action project* completed)

Teacher and Student Resources

Access the Climate Challenge Resources Google Drive to support participation in the Climate Challenge. The resources are organized as follows:

- Project Brainstorming, Planning and Implementation – This folder contains brainstorming sheets, graphic organizers and links to lessons and resources for integrating Climate Change instruction into the classroom.
- Digital Story Video Creation and Production – This folder contains links to videos that can be presented to students to help with creating a digital story, along with a list of free editing software that can be used for the digital story submission. Additionally, you'll find examples of past winners of the NJ Student Climate Challenge.
- Submission Requirements and Forms – This folder has all the information needed to participate and submit for the NJ Student Climate Challenge.

Request a virtual presentation that will cover an overview of the cause and impacts of climate change in New Jersey, ways in which students can contribute to solutions, and tips for successful participation in the challenge.

Questions? Email njstudentclimatechallenge@sustainablejersey.com or call JoAnna Contarino at 609-771-3427.

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