2026 NJCC Awards Guidelines

The New Jersey Clean Communities Council will honor local government agencies, businesses, community organizations and volunteers who have helped make New Jersey litter free at the *21st Annual New Jersey Clean Communities Awards Ceremony,* **October 8, 2026, at The Mainland, Manahawkin, NJ.**

The Annual Awards ceremony has been reimagined from a traditional evening event into a luncheon celebration, creating a more convenient and inclusive experience for attendees. By moving the ceremony to midday, the event will allow more participants to gather for recognition and networking.

Do you have an award-winning litter cleanup, education or enforcement program? Complete and submit the application online at www.njclean.org by August 28, 2026. You can nominate your own or another outstanding program. Remember, when completing the nomination form, please choose BOTH the Category and Award Type for which you are submitting.

Nominations must clearly denote both the Category and Award Type to be considered. Nominees may be government agencies, businesses, community organizations or volunteers.

Nominations must include a one-page summary of the program, project or person nominated (please include a detailed description of cleanup, education and/or enforcement efforts and all pertinent data). You may document your nomination with a description, photos, flyers or news clips in no more than five pages. You may be asked to submit additional documentation.

Applications must be submitted online www.njclean.org by August 28, 2026. Award winners will be notified no later than September 18, 2026.

Special consideration will be given to programs or projects that are ongoing, innovative, results-oriented and serve as a model for the entire state.

Awards

Category I: Clean Communities Program Awards

These awards are presented to municipalities, counties or public sector employees/organizations for implementing outstanding Clean Communities programs. Programs should be comprehensive, involving the elements of cleanup, enforcement and education. More than one award may be presented in each category. Municipal awards may be presented according to the amount of grant money received.

There are six (6) categories:

1. Municipal Program Award
2. Municipal Coordinator Award
3. County Program Award
4. County Coordinator Award
5. Clean Watershed Award
6. Clean Communities Champion Award

Municipal Program Award

This award is presented to a municipality that has demonstrated an outstanding litter abatement program as part of their Clean Communities program. Nominated programs can be comprehensive in nature (involving multiple elements of cleanup, education and enforcement) or highlight one exemplary program showcasing a single program element. More than one award may be presented in this category.

Municipal Coordinator Award

A network of municipal coordinators supports New Jersey Clean Communities. This award is presented to an individual who developed and implemented a comprehensive, town-wide litter abatement program and who demonstrates ongoing support of New Jersey Clean Communities.

County Program Award

This award is presented to a county that has demonstrated a comprehensive, outstanding county-wide clean communities program involving the elements of cleanup, enforcement and education. Nominated programs can be comprehensive in nature (involving multiple elements of cleanup, education and enforcement) or highlight one exemplary program showcasing a single program element.

County Coordinator Award

A network of county coordinators supports New Jersey Clean Communities. This award is presented to an individual who has developed and implemented a comprehensive, county-wide litter abatement program and who demonstrates ongoing support of New Jersey Clean Communities.

Clean Watershed Award

NJCCC Grant guidelines allow for 25% of annual grant funds to be expended on stormwater related activities. This award is for a town/county or agency that has implemented an effective litter abatement program that profoundly impacts the local watershed and is replicable by other agencies (i.e. storm drain programs).

Clean Communities Champion Award

This award category is reserved for members of the NJ Urban Mayors Association. Awards will be presented to municipalities that show a true commitment to fighting all facets of litter. Examples include city-wide cleanup initiatives, crackdown on illegal dumping, enhanced social media campaigns and increased enforcement efforts.

Category II: Clean Communities Program Awards

These awards are presented to businesses, community organizations, schools and volunteers who best demonstrate spirit and community pride through contributions to a Litter Free New Jersey.

There are seven (7) categories:

1. Community Cleanup Award
2. Clean Waterways Award
3. Environmental Action Award - Adopt-a-Road Award (park, lot etc.)
4. Clean Communities Volunteer Award
5. Litter Education Award
6. Litter Enforcement Award
7. Innovative Litter Prevention Award

Community Cleanup Award
This award is presented to a business, community organization, school or volunteer who has cleaned and maintained a roadway, park, playground, ball field, or other parcel of land.

Clean Waterways Award
This award is presented to a business, community organization, school or volunteer who has cleaned and maintained a waterway.

Environmental Action Award - Adopt-a (*road, park, waterway or other public place* award)
This award is presented to a business, community organization, school or volunteer who has cleaned and maintained public property for at least two years.

Clean Communities Volunteer Award
Volunteers are the cornerstone of the New Jersey Clean Communities Program. This award is presented to an individual who has donated time or resources to promote clean communities.

Litter Education Award
New Jersey Clean Communities promotes education in order to change the attitudes that cause littering. This award is presented to a business, community organization, school or individual who has achieved measurable results in reducing litter through education.

Litter Enforcement Award
New Jersey Clean Communities uses enforcement as a tool to prevent littering. This award is presented to a community organization or local government who has achieved measurable results in reducing litter through enforcement, adoption & promotion of new or updated litter related ordinances.

Innovative Litter Prevention Award

NJ Clean Communities strives to encourage innovative and creative programs that lead to a litter free NJ. This award is for a new initiative that has led to changing attitudes and behaviors or a reduction in litter.