



Governor's Award for  
**ENVIRONMENTAL**  
Excellence

2024



# GUIDELINES



**pennsylvania**

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Josh Shapiro, Governor

Department of Environmental Protection  
Jessica Shirley, Interim Acting Secretary



Dear Friend,

On behalf of Governor Josh Shapiro, it brings me great pleasure to invite you and your organization to apply for the 2024 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) works under the Governor's guidance to strive for operational excellence, provide an example of climate leadership, commit to cultural competence, and promote environmental justice in all our work.

As previous award winners have shown, creating a sustainable future for Pennsylvania is best done through partnerships between government agencies, communities, and organizations that exemplify impactful leadership. This year's Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence will recognize those leaders who have taken on the challenge of advancing environmental protection, education, and justice in the Commonwealth. I look forward to receiving applications from groups across Pennsylvania that exemplify this leadership and take on projects that, through collaboration and education, will prepare our Commonwealth to face current and future climate challenges.

This award is open to all Pennsylvania businesses, farms, government agencies, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations who have initiated, or participated in, the development of a project that promotes environmental protection in the state. By nominating your organization or an organization you know, you will help to lift up the amazing work that is going on around Pennsylvania, making our Commonwealth a leader in climate resilience, justice-seeking, and the protection of our shared resources.

Each year, these awards highlight forward-thinking groups that are changing the environmental protection landscape. I know that the 2024 awards will recognize the organizations that are leaders in our Commonwealth's resiliency and determination toward environmental protection and justice. For more information about the Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence, please visit DEP's award website at [www.dep.pa.gov/About/Awards/EnvironmentalExcellence](http://www.dep.pa.gov/About/Awards/EnvironmentalExcellence).

We look forward to reviewing your application.

Sincerely,

Jessica Shirley  
Interim Acting Secretary



## **Project Eligibility**

The Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence is open to any Pennsylvania business, farm, government agency, educational institution, non-profit organization, and individual that has created, or participated in, the development of a project that promotes environmental stewardship and economic development in Pennsylvania. To be eligible for consideration, projects must have been completed between **October 11, 2022 and October 31, 2023**.

### **Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:**

- **Innovative Advances**  
Companies, individuals, or projects that contribute to environmental protection through technological advances in pollution prevention, water treatment, renewable energy development, and energy efficiency.
- **Sustainable Practices**  
Companies, individuals, or projects that employ sustainable practices for the purpose of conserving resources, reducing waste, and promoting environmental resiliency.
- **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation**  
Companies, individuals, or projects that actively seek to limit, reduce, or adjust to long-term climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation of impacts.
- **Energy Solutions**  
Companies, individuals, or projects that offer the best service/best price options for renewable energy strategies, meet demands in the restructured electricity market and promote economic development and investment in renewable and alternative energy.
- **Environmental Education**  
Companies, individuals, or projects that create communication pathways, break down barriers, foster environmental education, address environmental concerns and challenges, and create awareness for responsible environmental practices.
- **Watershed Restoration**  
Companies, individuals, or projects that display practicable engineering based on science, ensure future growth and yield maximum environmental benefits for Pennsylvania's waterways.
- **Natural Areas**  
Companies, individuals, or projects that protect our natural areas such as parks, forests, and open spaces by cleaning up pollution, planting trees, restoring habitat, or increasing our understanding of the treasures we already possess.
- **Environmental Justice**  
Companies, individuals, or projects that increase the environmental education of people in designated Environmental Justice communities, protect or improve their natural environment, or increase their access to resources for environmental protection.



## Evaluation and Selection

**Projects will be selected for awards based on the eight criteria listed below:**

**Protection** – Projects must demonstrate, above all, a commitment to protecting the environment. DEP evaluates and awards points to projects that have implemented an environmental project in the most effective manner possible with measurable and demonstrable results.

1. **Partnership** – Projects should demonstrate the involvement of employees, government officials, and/or community members.
2. **Environmental Education and Outreach** – Projects should teach others about environmentally responsible practices.
3. **Economic Impact** – Projects should be cost-effective, either minimizing costs or demonstrating a payback on investments or creating or retaining jobs.
4. **Innovation** – Projects effectively using innovative technology or approaches will receive additional consideration.
5. **Climate Change** – Projects should consider the potential impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions or implementing strategies to adapt to climate change.
6. **Sustainability** – Projects should be implemented using sustainable practices or should enhance sustainability regarding consumption of food or energy, waste management, or other environmental influences.
7. **Environmental Justice** – Projects should directly or indirectly benefit those who are or historically have been exposed to greater environmental health risks, particularly those living in Environmental Justice areas. \*

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\* – to learn more about environmental justice factors, the Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Justice Policy, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Justice Mapping and Screening Tool (PennEnviroScreen), please visit the DEP Website (<https://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Policy-Revision.aspx>)



## Application and Project Summary Guidelines

### **Application Guidelines**

Applicants may submit one application per project. If an organization completed multiple projects, they may submit one application for each project. Projects that have previously received a Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence are not eligible for this award. Past winners may submit new projects for consideration. Projects that are required by a regulation, order, or permit condition are not eligible unless they demonstrate an additional benefit beyond what is mandated by the required activity.

To be considered, all applications must be submitted using DEP's online application form by Monday, January 15, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Information must be typed in the online application form. The online application can be found by visiting [www.dep.pa.gov/About/Awards/EnvironmentalExcellence](http://www.dep.pa.gov/About/Awards/EnvironmentalExcellence).

### **Project Application Guidelines**

Please complete the online application form to describe your project. The project application form should be **no more than four (4) pages**. Applicants may submit additional supporting documents (i.e., photos, graphs, charts) but limit them to no more than three (3) additional pages. The summary must be clear and concise. The description should include the following:

1. Name of organization
2. A brief paragraph about your organization
3. Title of project
4. A description of the project including the characteristics, objectives, goals, benefits, and outstanding attributes
5. The environmental results achieved (waste eliminated, recycled, etc.)
6. An overview of the project's commitment to the public's best interest
7. An explanation of employee, government official, and community member involvement
8. An overview of any innovative technologies and approaches used to achieve results
9. An explanation of how the project provides community education on environmentally responsible practices
10. The economic impact (total project costs, potential job creation, etc.)
11. An explanation of how the project addresses sustainability, climate change, pollution prevention, and/or environmental justice.



If you have any questions regarding your application, please contact the Policy Office at the Department of Environmental Protection.

The Policy Office  
Department of Environmental Protection  
P.O. Box 2063  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063  
[ra-epgovenviroawards@pa.gov](mailto:ra-epgovenviroawards@pa.gov)

As part of our continuing efforts to go green, we are requesting all application materials be submitted via DEP's online application system. <http://www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/GovernorsAwardsApplication>.

All applications must be submitted by  
Monday, January 15, 2024 at 5:00pm