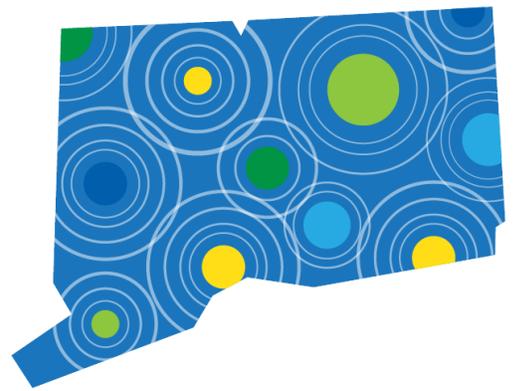

Sustainable CT

Local Actions. Statewide Impact.



2021 Guide

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Sustainable CT Overview

Thank you for your interest in Sustainable CT! With a shared vision across Connecticut, practical tools, and a collaborative spirit, your municipality is helping to build a thriving state for all residents—today and tomorrow.

What is Sustainable CT?

Sustainable CT is a voluntary certification program to recognize thriving and resilient Connecticut municipalities. An independently funded, grassroots, municipal effort, Sustainable CT provides a wide-ranging, flexible menu of best practices.

Municipalities choose Sustainable CT actions, implement them, and earn points toward certification. Sustainable CT provides opportunities for funding and technical support to help communities implement actions that promote economic well-being and enhance equity, all while respecting the finite capacity of the natural environment. The program is designed to support all Connecticut municipalities, regardless of size, geography or resources. Sustainable CT empowers municipalities to create high collective impact for current and future residents.

Why Participate?

- **Recognition.** Put your municipality on the map for its existing sustainability successes.
- **Inspiration.** Inspire other municipalities with your stories and accomplishments.
- **Peer Learning.** Be part of a vibrant, locally-driven network to accelerate the exchange of information, materials and best practices.
- **Innovation.** Be part of a learning laboratory that drives innovation.
- **Funding and Other Resources.** Leverage existing funding, access opportunities for new funding, participate in Sustainable CT's Community Match Fund program, and connect with our Sustainable CT Fellowship Program to support local sustainability action.

- **Economic Benefit.** Demonstrate your municipality's commitment to sustainability. Businesses and potential residents may be more likely to locate in your community, growing the local tax base.
 - **Partnerships.** Connect with partners—like other municipalities, regional entities, business and nonprofits—to create synergies and alignment with existing, data-driven efforts.
 - **Community Building.** Through our uniform platform across municipalities, engage community stakeholders, increasing ownership, legitimacy and support for sustainability action.
 - **Track Data.** Utilize our framework to track your municipality's progress on specific sustainability indicators.
 - **The Future.** Current and future residents depend on forward-looking, local action now to ensure vibrant economies and healthy, resilient communities in the future.
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How to Participate

Sustainable CT is open to all cities and towns in Connecticut. The program is voluntary and participation is free. There is no time limit to certification; you may work through the program at your own pace. Below are the steps to certification.

- [Pass a resolution](#). The resolution outlines your city or town's intent to seek certification through Sustainable CT and establishes a [Sustainability Team](#) that will implement program actions. You may use or edit a template, or you can write your own.
- Designate a municipal contact person. This person must be an elected official or a municipal employee and will [register your community](#) on the Sustainable CT website.
- [Optimize for Equity](#). Work on your equity action submission(s) by completing at least one equity toolkit for Bronze certification and at least three for Silver.
- [Complete actions](#) and track them on your Municipal Dashboard.



- Once you have completed actions to meet the requirements for either Bronze or Silver certification, [submit for certification](#) through your Municipal Dashboard. Contact certify@sustainablect.org for assistance with completing actions and applying for certification.

2021 Certification Requirements

The Sustainable CT certification process promotes friendly competition and cooperation among towns, while also incentivizing regional actions that can take impact to scale. Application for certification is rolling, and early submission is encouraged. **Certification lasts for 3 years.**¹

There are two levels of certification offered: Bronze & Silver. You must complete one action from each of the 11 required [action categories](#) to receive either **Bronze** or **Silver** certification (actions categories described in the next section). Beginning in 2021, categories 1-11 are required, category 12 will be required beginning in 2022, and category 13 is optional. Many Sustainable CT actions have variable points, which means there are several ways to complete the action. All you need to do is achieve



➤ 2021 *Bronze* Certification Requirements

- Complete at least **1 action** in each of the 11 required categories.
- Complete 1 Equity Toolkit in action [Optimize for Equity](#).
- Successfully complete actions totaling **200 or more points**.



➤ 2021 *Silver* Certification Requirements

- Complete at least **1 action** in each of the 11 required categories.
- Complete 3 Equity Toolkits in action [Optimize for Equity](#).
- Successfully complete actions totaling **400 or more points**.

¹ Actions, points, and certification point thresholds are for **2021** and may change for future certification cycles.

one of the designated point levels listed for that action to consider it complete. Of course, the more you do, the more points you earn. In addition to completing one action in each of the 11 required Sustainable CT categories, you must achieve at least 200 points for Bronze certification and 400 points for Silver. You must also complete 1 Equity Toolkit in action [Optimize for Equity](#) to achieve Bronze certification, or 3 Equity Toolkits in action [Optimize for Equity](#) to achieve Silver.

Sustainable CT: Action Categories

This year's update includes the addition of new action categories and the reordering of existing action categories. Sustainable CT is expanding its actions and action categories for 2021. Accordingly, the current numbering of actions has changed. We've created a [2020-21 Program Translation Guide](#) to help you translate between the new and prior numbering schemes.

In order to achieve either Bronze or Silver certification, you must complete one action from each of the 11 required categories below:

- 1. Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts:** Deeply embedding equity considerations into municipal operations, building inclusiveness, community cohesion, and shared decision-making.
- 2. Thriving Local Economies:** Supporting local businesses, increasing local jobs and revenues, and fostering energy-efficient and renewable energy-powered commercial and industrial buildings.
- 3. Well-stewarded Land and Natural Resources:** Establishing policies and practices that recognize our finite resources and that strive to achieve a balance of many users while preserving and increasing ecosystem health and resilience.
- 4. Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems:** Distinctive, engaged and livable communities that shape people-centered places, provide robust artistic and cultural opportunities, and consider environmental impacts.

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- 5. Dynamic and Resilient Planning:** Balancing human development and resource use with a wide range of factors, including livability, economic opportunity, biodiversity and natural systems.
 - 6. Clean and Diverse Transportation Systems and Choices:** Allowing enhanced health, safety and access for all roadway users—including motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users—regardless of age, ability, income or ethnicity.
 - 7. Renewable and Efficient Energy Infrastructure and Operations:** Including accessible municipal buildings with efficient operations, maintenance, and energy systems.
 - 8. Inclusive Engagement, Communication and Education:** Encompassing transparency, inclusivity, effective communication, appropriate events and training, civic engagement, and regional collaboration.
 - 9. Strategic Materials Management:** Encouraging thoughtful waste management and reduction that goes beyond plastics recycling to include additional materials and food waste.
 - 10. Optimal Health and Wellness Opportunities:** Prioritizing the physical and mental health of all community members through air quality improvement, shared gardens and growing spaces, and stable food systems.
 - 11. Healthy, Efficient and Diverse Housing:** Diverse in both type and affordability and located in thriving, livable, connected neighborhoods.
 - 12. Effective, Compassionate Homelessness Prevention (Required beginning 2022):** Helping to build homelessness awareness and supports through compassionate outreach and thoughtful service coordination.
 - 13. Implement Your Own Sustainability Action (Optional):** Innovate and implement meaningful sustainability actions not yet listed on the Sustainable CT action list. Become a model for others!

2021 Updates to Timeframe for Credit

Effective 2021, Sustainable CT is simplifying its “credit for past action” framework. Actions can either be “New” or considered for “Rolling Credit.” If applying for certification, please complete the “Timeframe for Credit” box in your submission for



every action, in accordance with the instructions and guidance hyperlinked in the current Sustainable CT action write-ups on the website.

New Action Credit. Any action completed within the past three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification) is eligible for potential certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you may not claim New Action Credit for items that previously received credit.

Rolling Credit. For any action older than three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification), you must demonstrate ongoing, currently relevant, and meaningful impact in your community to be considered for certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you must apply for Rolling Credit for any item that previously received credit, even if it was completed within the past three years.

Please see our [Timeframe for Credit Guidance document](#) or contact info@sustainablect.org for more information.

Key Dates for 2021 Certification

If you choose to apply for certification in 2021, please note the key dates below. For submission dates, materials must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Contact info@sustainablect.org for assistance with completing actions and applying for certification.

- **April 6, 2021:** Final submission deadline for the spring 2021 certification cycle. If certification is not achieved in the spring cycle, feedback on actions completed can be used to make revisions for submission in the fall 2021 certification cycle. Municipalities whose application is not yet complete may still submit partially completed materials to receive feedback.
- **By mid-June 2021:** Final decisions on spring 2021 certification released by Sustainable CT.



- **August 24, 2021:** Final submission deadline for the fall 2021 certification cycle. If certification is not achieved in the fall cycle, feedback on actions can be used to make revisions for submission in the spring 2022 certification cycle. Municipalities whose application is not yet completed may still submit partially completed materials to receive feedback.
- **By early November 2021:** Final decisions on fall certification release by Sustainable CT.
- **Early December 2021:** Recognition event for 2021 spring and fall certified communities

Action Benefits

Sustainable CT is made up of actions, which are essentially sustainability best practices. The actions included in the program were decided upon and designed by representatives from Connecticut cities and towns, nonprofits, academia, businesses, and the general public. Every Sustainable CT action can produce multiple benefits to a community, depicted by the following icons:



Environmental Impacts

Cleaner air and water, and enhanced preservation of land and natural resources.



Greenhouse Gas Reductions

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions.



Health and Wellness

Optimal health and wellness for all residents.



Cost Savings

Cost savings to your municipal budget and operations.



Economic Well-Being

Stability and growth for local businesses, and job retention and creation.



Climate Resilience

Improved ability of your community to anticipate, adapt and flourish in the face of disruption.



Community Building

Enhanced connection of your residents to your local community, engaged partnership to improve your community, and enhanced resident awareness.



Equity

New, improved, and valued relationships between different members of your community. More inclusive decision-making and improved access to services and sharing of benefits with all residents - current and future - regardless of race, income, ability, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

Sustainable CT: Join Us!

While Sustainable CT is a municipal certification program, there are many ways to get involved, regardless of your interests.

- **Individuals:** Volunteer to help your town with Sustainable CT actions as a member of your sustainability team. [View participating communities](#) to see if your municipality has already established a Sustainability Team.

- **Non-Profits:** Does your non-profit support local economies, arts, culture, equity, mobility (including public transit, biking and walking), health, housing, agriculture, forestry, open space, clean energy, natural resources, smart growth, green buildings, environmental protection, community engagement, or other goals aligned with Sustainable CT actions? If so, contact info@sustainablect.org to see how you can help towns implement actions and earn points toward Sustainable CT certification. You can also make a donation to [support](#) Sustainable CT projects in our communities.
- **Businesses:** Show your commitment to your community by becoming a [Sustainable CT sponsor](#). Sustainable CT sponsorship ensures that the communities where you live and work can continue to realize the benefits of the Sustainable CT program. We have a range of options for sponsorship, including our highly popular [Fellowship Program](#), all of which provide high visibility to engaged citizens and decision makers across the State.
- **Philanthropy:** The Sustainable CT program empowers municipalities to create high collective impact for current and future residents across a range of [issue areas](#). We work with philanthropic partners to develop and implement programming that leverages our strong platform and partnerships to enable state-wide progress. Reach out to explore how Sustainable CT can help you realize your philanthropic goals.
- **Colleges & Universities:** Partner with Sustainable CT by helping to recruit and support students to participate in our [Fellowship Program](#). You can also perform research, collaborate with us on campus, or become a Sustainable CT sponsor.

If you have any questions about Sustainable CT, please contact info@sustainablect.org.

