



# EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY AWARD PROGRAM

## GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

This award program recognizes organizations, businesses, associations, and individuals who are solving environmental challenges by using innovative and environmentally sustainable practices.

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any organization, business, association, individual, or NEHA member that meets the specific criteria listed below under *Eligibility Criteria* are eligible for this award. Examples of organizations, businesses, and associations may include city, county, state, or federal government agencies; not-for-profits; private companies; and educational institutions.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible projects must

- Have been initiated within the past three years and have been fully operational for one year or completed by June 30, 2010.  
Note: Long-term projects (i.e., those initiated prior to 2004) may be considered if a new measurable environmental benefit has been achieved in the past three years and the project has served as a model for other successful projects.
- Be submitted in the required format.
- Be submitted by an applicant who agrees to submit a summary of their accomplishments to be published in NEHA's *Journal of Environmental Health*.

## APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

Applications will be subject to a thorough screening process that includes an eligibility review, a program/technical review, and compliance review (if applicable). Applications will be evaluated by NEHA's Sustainability Committee. The evaluation process includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of the criteria listed below. Due to the wide variety of projects that can be considered, a project does not need to meet each and every criterion.

### Review Criteria

1. Does the project demonstrate the use of practices that exemplify outstanding creativity or introduce new approaches?
2. Does the project clearly demonstrate the use of practices that go beyond standard techniques or regulatory compliance practices? Does the applicant clearly demonstrate leadership in the field?
3. Is the project environmentally sound and/or economically feasible? Does it result in a significant and measurable environmental benefit?
4. Does the project improve, protect, or make a significant contribution to the sustainable use of natural resources or provide a better quality of life in balance with the natural environment? For example, does a project protect water and/or air quality; reduce greenhouse gases; create high-quality recreational opportunities; protect or enhance scenic, historic, or cultural resources; protect sensitive habitats; or help maintain resource-based businesses?
5. Does the project involve unique or creative partnerships?
6. Does the project increase capacity to develop and deliver educational programs that advance sustainability and innovation? Does that project result in a significant environmental benefit or positively contribute to a trained workforce in these areas?
7. In the case of a long-term project (i.e., initiated prior to 2004), has a new measurable environmental benefit been achieved in the past three years? Has the project served as a model for other successful projects?
8. Does the project clearly demonstrate the applicant's commitment to environmental excellence and leadership in protecting the environment or providing stewardship of natural resources and ecosystems?
9. Does the project lend itself to replication by others performing similar work?

## SCHEDULE

- Applications must be submitted no later than **May 1, 2010**.
- Applicants will be notified of their application's status by the end of May 2010.
- Presentation of the award will take place during the Awards Ceremony at NEHA's Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition, June 6-9, 2010, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The winner will receive a plaque and \$500 honorarium generously sponsored by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL).

## **APPLICATION SUBMITTAL**

In an attempt to make this award program as sustainable as possible, NEHA asks that all applicants submit their application materials in **electronic format**. Please do not submit your application in paper format to NEHA. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

Applicants must:

- Submit an electronic copy of the application and any supporting information. Applicants need to e-mail an electronic copy of their application to NEHA. Supporting information, such as DVDs, videos, photos, etc., larger than 5MB need to be mailed to the NEHA office. See below for e-mail and mailing addresses.
- Include with their application an electronic copy of the Application Cover Sheet and Checklist.
- Adhere to the required format. Please reference the Application Checklist to determine what needs to be submitted. Also, the *Tips for Applicants* section of this document provides guidance on the content of your application.

If an applicant submits multiple projects for consideration, each project must be submitted as a separate application.

### **E-mail completed applications to:**

Denise Devotta

*ddevotta@neha.org*

National Environmental Health Association

Attn: Excellence in Sustainability Award Committee

### **Mail supporting information (DVDs, videos, photos, etc.) larger than 5MB to:**

National Environmental Health Association

Excellence in Sustainability Award Committee

Attn: Denise Devotta

720 S Colorado Blvd, Ste 1000-N

Denver, CO 80246-1926

Applicants will receive an e-mail notification confirming receipt of the application(s).

For more information, please contact Denise Devotta at 303.756.9090, ext. 313 or *ddevotta@neha.org*.

## **DEADLINE REMINDER**

Applications in an electronic format must be received no later than **Friday, May 1, 2010**.

# TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

This section provides instructions on how to submit a successful application and identifies examples of innovative and sustainable projects.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

Each applicant must submit the electronic Application Cover Sheet and Checklist form provided. Because applications are evaluated by a wide variety of reviewers, applicants should write in plain language and avoid the use of technical jargon. Applicants must follow the required format and adhere to page limitations. Only applications submitted in the required format will be considered.

The following details should be addressed in the application:

### **In the PROJECT SUMMARY section (maximum ½ page):**

- Summarize the main points and highlights of the project.
- Include specific and concise descriptions of the environmental benefit and overall merit of the project using key concepts from the sections below.

### **In the GENERAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION section (maximum 3 pages):**

- Provide a comprehensive description of the project.
- Include a description of how the project protects the environment or increases site stewardship of natural resources.
- Identify what motivated your organization to undertake the project.
- Describe any outreach efforts used and how those efforts benefited your project.

### **In the INNOVATION SUSTAINABILITY AND/OR PARTNERSHIPS section (maximum 1 page):**

Depending on the nature of your project, address all of the following points that are applicable by describing:

- How the project is innovative.
- How the project is sustainable.
- How the project increased the sustainability of natural resources used.
- How the project improved quality/quantity of natural resources.
- How the project improved the stewardship of natural resources.
- How the project involved or created unique partnerships.
- How partnerships created or strengthened by the project resulted in constructive solutions to environmental challenges.
- Tangible benefits of the project to those involved and to the environment.
- How the project increased capacity to develop and deliver educational programs that advance sustainability and innovation.
- How the project resulted in a significant environmental benefit or positively contributed to a trained workforce advancing innovation and sustainability.

**In the INNOVATION SUSTAINABILITY AND/OR PARTNERSHIPS section (maximum 1 page):** *(cont.)*

Definitions

**Innovation:** Those practices that exemplify outstanding creativity or introduce new approaches in developing technologies, programs, or projects that are environmentally sound, economically feasible, and support future environmental benefits. Practices should serve as a model for similar efforts.

**Sustainability:** Those practices that strive toward resource use that does not exceed the rate of replenishment, waste generation that does not exceed the rate of which it can be reabsorbed by the environment, and practices that have a positive economic impact. The focus is on implementing sustainable practices that provide a better quality of life, maintain a healthy balance with the natural world, and enhance profitability.

**Partnership:** Those practices that demonstrate a relationship between two or more parties working together and making better use of resources to develop innovative and/or sustainable projects to achieve better outcomes and benefits to the partners and the environment.

**In the SUPERIOR PRACTICES section (maximum 1 page):**

- Describe the project's incorporated practices that achieve an environmental benefit beyond what could be achieved using standard techniques.
- If applicable, describe how the project achieved an environmental benefit by exceeding the applicant's regulatory requirements.

**In the COMMITMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN PURSUIT OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT section (maximum 2 pages):**

- Describe how the project demonstrates the applicant's commitment and leadership.
- Describe written policies or management practices that demonstrate continued commitment and leadership in protecting the environment.
- Describe employee education or participation components of the project.
- Describe any technical assistance provided or received, and its effect on the project.
- Describe the organization's financial commitment and the financial commitment of the parent company/organization to the project beyond grant or other outside funding sources. Is the project self-sustaining?

**In the TRANSFERABILITY TO OTHER USERS section (maximum 1 page):**

- Describe how the project demonstrates transferability to others.
- Indicate whether the project lends itself to replication by other organizations or individuals.
- Indicate whether any project activities or results are currently being shared with others.

**In the FUNDING SOURCES section (maximum ½ page):**

- Describe funding sources for the project, including any creative financing techniques or examples of how additional funds were leveraged.
- Discuss the cost and economic benefits of the project, in dollar amounts if possible.

**In the OTHER DETAILS section (maximum 1 page):**

- Describe any new process, equipment, or procedure developed specifically for this project.
- Discuss operational, maintenance, or other improvements.
- Describe environmental improvements resulting from the project.
- Quantify reductions of contaminant releases to air, land, and water.
- Include information regarding reduction of potential or actual impacts on the environment or risks to human health.
- Indicate whether a low-income, minority, or tribal community benefited from this project.
- Describe how the project reduced the use of non-renewable resources, including energy resources.

**In the SUPPORTING INFORMATION section (if applicable):**

- Include photos, maps, diagrams, videos, press clips, letters, etc. that directly support the project.

## **EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS**

This list is by no means all-inclusive—it is solely intended to be illustrative and not exclusive of the types of projects and programs that would be eligible for the Excellence in Sustainability Award. NEHA hopes this list motivates you to find innovative ways to improve and sustain our country’s environment and natural resources.

- Projects where creativity and innovation are used to promote collaboration among all levels of government, businesses, and not-for-profit entities to improve the quality of life.
- Efforts focusing on improving the environment in under-served communities, specifically minority and low-income communities, and addressing disproportionate adverse environmental impacts that may exist in those communities.
- An organization facilitating stewardship resulting in actions that mutually benefit an environmentally-impacted area and the parties involved.
- Activities that reduce or eliminate the generation of pollutants at the source.  
Note: Facilities subject to state or federal Hazardous Waste Reduction Planning requirements must demonstrate that reductions achieved were not a result of the law. Such facilities must identify hazardous waste generation and evaluate technically feasible and economically practical alternatives for reducing hazardous waste generation.
- Erosion and sediment control, flood mitigation, and stormwater management practices.
- Significant diversion of waste materials from the solid waste stream (that result in their reuse), without harmful effects to the environment.
- A natural resource conservation project that demonstrates sustainable use of fish and wildlife resources.
- Activities that help to achieve a “fish-able and swim-able” designation for bodies of water.

- Programs that use advanced control techniques or reduce air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, or ozone-depleting substances from mobile or stationary sources.
- Land conservation projects that protect water quality, natural resources (e.g., forest land, water supplies, wildlife habitat, air resources, high-quality recreational lands), or protects or enhances scenic, historic, or cultural resources.
- Programs that reduce the environmental and social impacts associated with the transportation of people, products, and resources. Model programs that strive to:
  - promote alternative commuter programs such as ride sharing, telecommuting, and use of public transportation;
  - encourage the expansion of public transportation resources;
  - use optimal facility design and location to enhance proximity to markets, employee residences, and public transportation routes;
  - use communication technologies, telecommuting, and teleconferencing; and
  - use fleet vehicles that run on alternative fuels.
- Projects that promote greenbelts, preserve open space, or protect and restore natural habitats. Model programs that strive to:
  - restore long-term health and balance to local ecosystems,
  - preserve and/or restore natural habitats, and
  - demonstrate creative solutions to the natural/urban interface.
- Programs that conserve natural resources and promote health and well being for the occupants of buildings and other built environments. Model programs that strive to:
  - incorporate green building design elements (energy efficiency, recycled and least toxic materials use, etc.);
  - use design features such as indoor and outdoor plants, natural lighting, and pleasant aesthetics, all of which have been shown to improve health and performance;
  - utilize materials and techniques that reflect sound environmental practices;
  - go beyond compliance with environmental health and safety standards; and
  - reduce sprawl and create livable cities.
- Wind, solar, and biomass projects that promote the sustainable use of domestic energy resources.
- A project promoting environmental stewardship or sustainability that results in a significant environmental benefit or will positively contribute to a trained workforce advancing innovation and sustainability.