



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON

Council of Governments

CLIMATE AND ENERGY LEADERSHIP AWARDS

FAQs

1. What is the purpose of the Climate and Energy Leadership Awards?

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors adopted the ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals of 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 (below 2005 levels). COG realizes extraordinary effort is needed by visionary leaders to meet the goals; therefore, COG wants to celebrate achievements in GHG emission reduction and encourage others to take action. The Awards Program also provides an opportunity to foster healthy competition as well as an opportunity to learn from each other.

2. What are COG and its members doing to help the region meet its ambitious GHG emission reduction goals?

COG and its member governments are pioneering efforts to address and prepare for climate change and are recognized national leaders in that regard. In 2008, the COG Board of Directors adopted the National Capital Region Climate Change Report as regional policy. The report includes a baseline regional greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, examines potential climate change impacts, evaluates mitigation and adaptation strategies and establishes regional GHG emission reduction goals of: 10% by 2012 (to spur early action), 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, as compared to a 2005 baseline. These goals are also reaffirmed in COG's overarching vision and mission, [Region Forward](#).

The COG Board established the Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) in 2009 to provide leadership and support area governments as they work together to meet the Climate Change Report goals. To help move the region toward these goals, CEEPC developed a regional [Climate and Energy Action Plan](#), which contains six goals and 59 implementation actions addressing: energy use and GHG inventories, buildings and infrastructure efficiency, renewable energy expansion, transportation and land use integration, sustainability and resiliency, and outreach.

COG annually tracks and reports progress toward Action Plan goals. This year's Climate and Energy Progress Report notes that the region out-performs every other region of similar size in the nation in total number of LEED certified projects (>1500), ENERGY STAR-rated square footage (>203 million ft²) and features the highest number of EPA Green Power Partnerships in the country (>100). The report also highlights the tremendous 10-fold growth in net-metered renewable energy systems since 2009 - from 460 to over 4,600 systems. To comprehensively address GHG emission reduction, more than 75% of COG members have GHG inventories and over 50% have action plans to reduce emissions. COG has supported these efforts through a series of hands-on inventory trainings. In 2012, the District of Columbia reported a 12.5% reduction of community-wide GHG emissions (below 2006 levels) and Arlington County, VA reported an 11.7% reduction (below 2000 levels). More best practices and success stories are available in the [Climate and Energy Progress Reports](#).



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3. Who should apply? Is my organization eligible to apply?

A total of four applicants will be recognized with a Climate and Energy Leadership Award in the fall of 2015. One award will be provided to each of the following types of applicants:

- Small/Medium Community (population under 100,000)
- Large Community (population over 100,000)
- Non-Profit Organization
- For-Profit Company

All of COG's 22 member jurisdictions are eligible to apply for the community award appropriate for their population size (see list below). Any non-profit and for-profit organization located in the region can apply for recognition of initiatives and achievements within the region. The region is defined by COG membership ([see map](#)), which includes northern Virginia, District of Columbia and suburban Maryland.

Small/Medium Communities

Town of Bladensburg
City of Bowie
City of College Park
City of Fairfax
City of Falls Church
City of Frederick
City of Gaithersburg
City of Greenbelt
City of Manassas
City of Manassas Park
City of Rockville
City of Takoma Park

Large Communities

City of Alexandria
Charles County
Frederick County
Arlington County
Loudoun County
Prince William County
District of Columbia
Prince George's County
Montgomery County
Fairfax County

4. How can I apply?

Visit www.mwcog.org/climateawards and submit the application form online or download the PDF and email it to [Maia Davis](#) by Tuesday, June 30, 2015. The application asks you to provide an overview, describe how the initiative meets each of the judging criteria, and (optionally) to provide supporting documentation (such as fact sheets, photos, and letters of support).



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5. How many applications can I submit?

One application will be accepted per applicant.

6. How many initiatives can I include in an application?

The application should be for one program or project.

7. What types of initiatives are appropriate to submit for the awards program?

Any programs/ projects that have resulted in greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions in the National Capital Region. Applications should include estimated CO₂ reductions and/or CO₂ equivalent estimates. A couple examples of an appropriate program and project include:

Loudoun County Public Schools' Energy and Environment Program began in 1993. Over 50 schools have earned the ENERGY STAR rating (representing over 60% of their schools and 5.3 million square feet). Over the last 19 years, energy use reductions represent the elimination of over 290,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions. This is equivalent to removing 52,000 cars from the road for a year or planting 7.5 million tree seedlings and growing them for ten years. During that same time, LCPS has saved over \$54 million on utility costs. The cumulative dollar savings is equivalent to hiring over 1,200 first year teachers, or educating over 4,700 pupils for a year, which is significant to taxpayers in Loudoun County.

In 2012, the City of Alexandria and the Alexandria Library commissioned a 42.3 kilowatt solar photovoltaic system at the Charles E. Beatley Central Library. To date, the solar system has generated 88,139 kWh and has offset about 7% of the library's electricity consumption. This equates to about 42 mt-CO₂e of greenhouse gas emissions mitigated. The solar system was designed to integrate with the buildings unique architecture that recognizes Alexandria's dynamic past and has also provided much opportunity for public awareness and education, including a publically-accessible web-based dashboard to see the system in operation.

8. How can I estimate CO₂ reductions and/or CO₂ equivalents?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator](#) can assist with estimating carbon dioxide emission reductions and translating those estimates into everyday terms.



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9. When are applications due?

Applications are due by June 30, 2015. Applicants are encouraged to prepare the application well in advance of the deadline in order to allow plenty of time to discuss any questions you have with COG staff and for the application to get the appropriate internal review and approval prior to submittal.

10. When will I be notified about if I won award?

Winner will be notified by September 2015.

11. Who will judge the applications?

Members of COG's [Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee](#) (ACPAC) will serve as the judges for the awards. ACPAC is the citizen advisory committee that advises the Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) on climate and energy issues. ACPAC has equal representation on the committee from across the region. ACPAC members also have a diverse set of backgrounds including business/industry, education/scientific, environmental/health and civic organizations.

12. How will my application be judged?

The Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) will judge the awards at their July meeting (meeting will be closed to the public). Applications will be reviewed, discussed, and judged on the following four criteria:

- Results - achievements, outcomes, and/or measured results
- Creativity - innovative, resourceful, and/or unique aspects
- Model - transferable to other jurisdictions or organizations and cost-effectiveness
- Engagement - public/stakeholder/partner engagement and acceptance

Each judge will be provided a Judging Score Sheet. Judges will give a score of 1 to 5 for each of the four judging criteria (1 = poor; 2 = fair; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; and 5 = excellent) and total those scores to have one total score per application. Judges will use a [Judging Rubric](#) to help guide the judging of applications. Judging Score Sheets will be collected and scores will be totaled by COG staff. The highest score for each type of applicant (small/medium community, large community, non-profit, and for-profit) will be recognized with a Climate and Energy Leadership Award.



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13. Will my score be released?

Only winners will be announced; scores will not be disclosed.

14. What do I get if I win?

Awardees will be recognized with a unique award and brief video highlighting their awarded program/project. The award is hand-crafted by a local artist that uses all natural materials. More about the award and the process used by the artist for the 2014 award program is in the [Creation of the Climate and Energy Leadership Awards](#) document. A similar award will be hand crafted for the 2015 award. More information about COG will announce awardees via:

- Press release
- Social media/blog
- E-newsletter
- COG website
- Awards ceremony at a COG Board of Directors meeting in the fall/winter of 2015
- Announcement at Climate, Energy and Environment in the winter of 2015

It can be very meaningful to be recognized in front of local and regional leaders. The main presentation of awards will occur at a COG Board meeting, a body of leading elected officials from across the metropolitan Washington region. Announcements will also be made at a Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee Meeting, a body of local, state and federal officials as well as utilities, higher education, non-profit and private sector leaders from across the region.

Following the awards presentation at the Board meeting, COG will issue a press release, post a blog, and make social media announcements. Local jurisdictions are encouraged to inform their local communities via social media and at community meetings. Awardees and information on their project/program/policy will be posted to the COG website, featured on the COG homepage, and highlighted in the next COG e-newsletter.

After awardees are announced and prior to the end of 2015, a brief video developed by college film students to highlight winning projects. The video link will be posted to COG's website and can also be posted to awardees' websites, featured on the jurisdiction's local cable channel, at community events, etc.