8.7 Engage with Youth on Community Sustainability

5 Points | 10 Points | 15 Points

Action Updates

This action was last updated in 2025. The previous version of this action is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow.

Objective

Support youth-led sustainability initiatives and projects in your community.

What to Do

1. Support youth-led sustainability projects in your community. Each project supported under this Action is eligible for **5 points, up to 15 points.** Critical elements of this action include:

    - Projects must align with objective ***and/or*** action steps of a Sustainable CT action. For each Sustainable CT action completed as a result of a youth-led project, your town is eligible for points under this Action in addition to points for the action implemented.
    - To earn points under this action, the youth leading the project must be 21 years old or younger.
    - Project ideas must originate with youth; projects and programs developed by adults and carried out by younger residents are not eligible for points under this action.
    - Projects may begin in a classroom setting or as part of a school assignment, but they must have an implementation element (i.e. should not just be a research report).
    - Projects must be publicly accessible. Projects on school property, even if accessible to the wider community, are not eligible for points under this action.
    - Youth leaders and projects do not need to be affiliated with a school or community organization.
    - Municipal support must be current, and your municipality must have provided support to the youth-led sustainability project(s) in the last three years.

    Your municipality must actively support projects. Examples of ways your municipality can support these projects are listed below:

    - Municipal staff work with youth to share their knowledge, expertise, or other relevant information that support the completion of a project.
    - Physical space for the project, such as municipal open space for the creation of a community garden.
    - Funding to support all or a portion of the project.

Submit: A completed worksheet 1.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other

municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the Board of education or District schools; the public works department: the parks and recreation department; the town manager, selectman, or mayor's office; and representatives from local arts groups; local youth-oriented community groups; and community organizations, nonprofits or ad-hoc groups interested in sustainability could be helpful in implementing this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Sustainable CT Community Match Fund
- State Funding Readiness Project

Resources

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Environmental Education Centers
- Connecticut Outdoor and Environmental Education Association
- Solar Youth
- Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, Youth Empowerment Programs
- Project Learning Tree
- No Child Left Inside

Why This Matters

Municipal support of a youth-designed, youth-led sustainability initiative can empower the young people involved. They may feel their ideas are valid and important, their work gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility over municipal sustainability, and they have the chance for a valuable, real-world, hands-on educational opportunity. Instilling in young residents early on that their contributions matter can set them up for a lifetime of civic and community engagement. In a state where aging populations are a concern for many municipalities, instilling community stewardship and engagement in youth may also help encourage young people to live in Connecticut long-term.

Benefits

In addition to the many benefits young people receive from having their ideas supported and nurtured, the municipality will enjoy the sustainability benefits of the finished product. These connections offer the chance to build deeper relationships between municipal leaders and schools or youth-focused organizations.

CT Success Stories

- Montville - Jun 2023 Certification
- Middletown - Sep 2023 Certification
- Bristol - Sep 2023 Certification
- Ellington - May 2024 Certification
- Milford - Oct 2024 Certification
- West Hartford - Oct 2024 Certification