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1. What do I need to do to get certified?

You must complete actions totaling a certain number of points, complete one or more equity toolkits, and complete at least one action in Sustainable CT categories 1 - 12. Bronze, Silver, and Gold level certification all have specific requirements. [More details on certification](#) are available. [\(Return to top\)](#)

2. What are the deadlines for the 2026 certification cycle?

The final submission deadline is **April 14, 2026** for the spring certification cycle and **August 18, 2026** for the fall certification cycle. If certification is not achieved in one cycle, simply make revisions based on feedback received and apply in the next cycle. [\(Return to top\)](#)

3. Are there any required actions?

Yes

Category 1 "Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts" includes one mandatory action, Action 1.1 "[Optimize for Equity](#)," for any town seeking certification. It is important to note that the Equity Toolkit, which is the submission document for Optimize for Equity, must be applied to a new Sustainable CT action (one initiated in the past three years). For *frequently asked questions* on our equity requirement [click here](#).

Not only is Optimize for Equity a required action, but you should preview this action as a starting point to decide which new action(s) you will apply it to. The Equity Toolkit must applied to new actions upon recertification. Successfully complete at least 1 equity toolkit to be considered for Bronze certification, at least 3 equity toolkits to be considered for Silver certification, and at least 4 equity toolkits to be considered for Gold certification.

In addition, municipalities seeking Bronze, Silver, and Gold certification must complete one action of their choosing from each category in Categories 1 - 12. Municipalities seeking Gold certification must complete all actions in Category 1 and Action 8.6 "[Collaborate with Other Municipalities on Sustainability Actions](#)." Category 13 "Innovative Strategies and Practices" is optional for all certification levels. ([Return to top](#))

4. Do I have to submit an innovation action?

No

You have the option of submitting up to 2 Innovation actions. If you submit a sustainability action under the innovation category, to successfully earn points, your submission must be, well, innovative! In addition, it will be evaluated against these [areas](#). If your proposed action(s) fits better within an existing Sustainable CT action it will not be awarded points as an innovation act. Be sure to look closely at the Sustainable CT list of actions to determine the best place to submit your work. Submission of innovation actions are encouraged by May for early reviewing. ([Return to top](#))

5. Do I need to do every part of the action?

It depends

Some actions require you to do every piece listed. Other actions are like a menu, where you earn points for the pieces of the action you choose to complete. Read the action carefully. If you still have questions, contact info@sustainablect.org. ([Return to top](#))

6. Can I get credit for a past action?

It depends

Some actions must have been completed within a particular timeframe (typically within the last three years) to earn credit. For other actions, your municipality can get credit for initiatives beyond the last three years with some documentation that it is still relevant to your municipality. Each action has its specific timeframe criteria explicitly laid out in the description and/or submission requirements. If you have questions about a specific action, please contact info@sustainablect.org. ([Return to top](#)).

7. Can I get points for the same activity under different actions?

No

There is no double-counting. For example, if you held a roundtable for sustainable businesses in your community, it cannot count toward both “Provide Resources and Support to Local Businesses” and “Hold a Sustainability Event.” ([Return to top](#)).

8. I’ve already submitted documentation to other groups in Connecticut for some of these actions. Do I need to submit again?

Yes

One of the remarkable features of Sustainable CT is its transparent platform and capacity to support peer learning. By submitting your documentation to Sustainable CT, if you get certified, your documents will be available online for anyone wishing to learn from them, searchable both by action and by municipality. Where possible, we are happy to assist you in obtaining documents from other programs for your Sustainable CT application. ([Return to top](#)).

9. Do the actions stay the same?

Mostly

Actions are updated every year, usually near the end of the calendar year. We update the [Action Overview Spreadsheet](#) once edits are made and announce the posting of program updates in our Sustainable CT e-news. ([Return to top](#))

10. Can I collaborate with other municipalities?

You bet!

Wherever possible, regional collaboration is highly encouraged. Each municipality in a collaborative to implement a specific Sustainable CT action is eligible to receive full points for implementing that action. Applicants may complete Action 8.5 [Engage in a Sustainable CT Mentorship with Other Municipalities](#) to receive points for mentoring or being mentored by other municipalities, and applications may complete Action 8.6 [Collaborate with Other Municipalities on Sustainability Actions](#) to receive points for regional sustainability efforts. Beginning in 2023, Action 8.6 [Collaborate with Other Municipalities on Sustainability Actions](#) will be required for municipalities applying for Gold level certification. For both of these actions, each municipality must submit the appropriate documentation for that action when submitting for certification. ([Return to top](#))

11. Can I collaborate with other non-municipal stakeholders (e.g, schools, councils of governments, nonprofits, etc.)?

Also an emphatic yes!

If your municipality requests points for an action completed with a non-municipal stakeholder, you must articulate the role of the municipality in action implementation. To receive points, your municipality must

demonstrate some meaningful role in action implementation; it is insufficient to rely solely on the work of a partner. For more information, see the Partners Guidance document in the "Engaging Partners" section of each action write-up. ([Return to top](#)).

12. What do I need to know about the “Optimize for Equity” action?

A few key things:

(1) The Equity Toolkit must be applied to a new Sustainable CT action (one initiated in the past three years); **(2)** you must complete at least 1 Equity Toolkit to be considered for Bronze certification, at least 3 Equity Toolkits to be considered for Silver certification, and at least 4 Equity Toolkits to be considered for Gold certification; and **(3)** you must include this new action in your application submission materials. For example, if you hold a series of sustainability events in January 2022, apply the Equity Toolkit to planning and implementing them, and then submit documentation for both “Hold a Sustainability Event” and “Optimize for Equity,” you’ve met the requirements. For *frequently asked questions* on our equity requirement [click here](#). ([Return to top](#)).

13. How can I learn more about opportunities for free technical assistance to implement Sustainable CT actions?

Opportunities are available.

For free technical support resources, visit [Sustainable CT Support For Your Town](#). You'll find resources there for your Sustainability Team. ([Return to top](#)).

14. Does my application have to be complete by the submission deadline?

No

Feel free to submit whatever you have for review, even if the work of implementing many actions is still in progress. Our reviewers can then provide feedback to give you a sense of whether you're heading in the right direction, and you can apply again in the next certification cycle. ([Return to top](#)).

15. Do I need to apply for certification in the year that I registered?

No

Work at the pace that feels right for you. Opportunities for certification are offered twice each year. If you're not ready to apply for certification, you may apply in a future certification cycle. ([Return to top](#)).

16. What happens after the submission deadline?

Application submissions will be verified immediately following submission. Expert reviewers will assess submissions by action (e.g., all submissions for "Implement Complete Streets" will have the same reviewer). Sustainable CT staff will check the work of reviewers to ensure quality. The Sustainable CT Board of Directors will review and approve the list of certified communities. Spring and fall certified municipalities will be recognized at a celebration event. ([Return to top](#)).

17. Can anyone else see what I submitted?

Yes and No

If your municipality gets certified, then yes, everything you submitted for actions that were approved will be available on the Sustainable CT website, searchable by action to promote peer learning. If you do not get certified this year, your materials will remain on the website, but they won't be publicly viewable, even if individual actions were approved. ([Return to top](#)).

18. How long does certification last?

3 years

Certification lasts for 3 years, then it's time to reapply. For example, for municipalities certified in spring or fall 2025, certification lasts until December 31, 2028. ([Return to top](#)).

19. What if I apply and don't get certified this year?

That's O.K.!

The opportunity to certify is offered every Spring and Fall. Many municipalities who aren't successful in their first attempt but try again often achieve certification on subsequent tries. In reapplying, you'll need to resubmit everything but will likely re-earn many of the same points you earned in any previous attempt, subject to look-back periods, action revisions, and other potential programmatic revisions. ([Return to top](#)).

20. When should I re-certify?

Any time.

Certification lasts for 3 years, but the opportunity to re-certify is offered every spring and fall. Consider re-certifying early to earn more points, possibly achieve a higher certification level, and refresh your municipality's

accomplishments on the Sustainable CT website. ([Return to top](#)).

21. Will I need to change anything in my application after the final submission deadline?

Maybe

Following review of your application after the final submission deadlines, you may be contacted and asked: (1) for additional documentation, and/or (2) to make edits to your submission for posting on the public-facing portal.

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22. Is my town eligible to apply for the Climate Leader Designation?

All Sustainable CT cities and towns that are currently certified OR that are successful in applying or reapplying for certification in the year the Designation is sought are eligible to apply for the Climate Leader Designation.

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23. Where do I submit materials for the Climate Leader Designation?

If you're applying for the Climate Leader Designation your community will complete high impact actions that have been identified by Sustainable CT. Your community will select actions listed on the [Climate Leader Designation Worksheet](#) and submit materials on each action's submission page (just like applying for normal Bronze, Silver, or Gold certification). Make sure these actions are marked "complete." If your town is currently certified you can include actions already approved, in addition to, or

instead of, completing new actions. Actions already approved need no further updates. Note the year and requested points for actions you are including on your [Climate Leader Designation Worksheet](#). You will submit this worksheet on Climate Leader Designation application that is located on your [Municipal Dashboard](#). ([Return to top](#)).

24. How long does my Climate Leader Designation last?

Your town's Climate Leader Designation will expire when your town's Sustainable CT Bronze, Silver, or Gold certification expires. ([Return to top](#))

25. How many points do different activities earn toward certification?

Typically, actions are awarded points according to the following guidelines: one-time events, posting outreach and educational information online, and forming committees earn 5 points; long-term education campaigns, inventories, plan, reports and similar items earn 10 points; implementation projects earn 15 points; and the creation of new policies (through the passage of a municipal ordinance or regulation) earn 20 points. ([Return to top](#)).



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