

ABOUT CLEAN COMMUNITIES



NJ Clean Communities Overview

New Jersey Clean Communities is a statewide, comprehensive, litter-abatement program created by the passage of the Clean Communities Act in 1986. The mission is to reduce litter in public places, promote the volunteer cleanup of public lands and sustain a reduction in litter through education. The Act provides a funding source for the program by placing a tax on fifteen categories of businesses that may produce litter-generating products. The program focuses on three areas: cleanup, education and enforcement. For more information on the state program visit njclean.org.

Tackling the Litter Problem

What is litter? Litter is solid waste that is out of place. It's the kind of trash found on highways, lakefronts, parks and school grounds. Litter takes many forms: paper, plastics, metal cans, cigarette butts, glass, food packaging, tires and graffiti.

Where does litter come from? There are at least seven sources of litter: pedestrians, motorists, overflowing household garbage, overflowing commercial containers, loading docks, construction sites and uncovered trucks. Litter is often blown by the wind until it is trapped somewhere or goes down a storm drain.

Why do people litter? People tend to litter when they think someone else will clean up, when an area is already littered, and when they do not feel a sense of ownership or community pride.

Why is litter a problem? Even small amounts of litter are unsightly, unhealthy and dangerous. Litter causes blighted landscapes resulting in an increase in taxes and a decrease in tourism and industry; loss of civic pride and morale; and a negative public image. Litter can also cause accidents, especially on roadways, fires and disease in people and animals.

How are we solving the problem? In addition to the efforts of local governments, residents, schools, civic associations and non-profit organizations are enlisted as volunteers to help with cleanup events. At these cleanup events we offer education to volunteers while they pick up litter so they become environmental stewards. With education, acts of littering can be changed!

CLEAN COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Clean Communities program is part of a statewide strategy to clean and prevent litter on streets, beaches, waterways, parks, recreation sites and vacant lots. Clean Communities Grant funding is used for educational programs, supporting clean up events and implementing adopt-a-road and mini-grant programs.