



## RECOGNIZING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO KEY CLIMATE AND ENERGY ISSUES IN METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON

### PURPOSE

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) Climate and Energy Leadership Awards recognize organizations that develop climate stewardship projects and programs that engage and serve the region's underserved communities. The awards program highlights a broad range of climate solutions for their unique engagement practices as well as their results, creativity, and replicability.

### RECOGNITION

Climate and Energy Leadership awardees will be recognized in front of local, regional, and national officials. COG will showcase awardees to bring recognition to their successes and to serve as a role model for metropolitan Washington. This type of public acknowledgment can encourage continued and enhanced efforts of communities and organizations. Awardees will also be presented with a unique, environmentally-friendly award that is hand-crafted by a local artist.

### ELIGIBILITY

Four applicants from metropolitan Washington will be recognized with a Climate and Energy Leadership Award for leading practices in climate mitigation and/or resiliency including greenhouse gas reduction, built environment and infrastructure, renewable energy, transportation, land use, or sustainability programs. Scoring places an emphasis on creative, impactful projects that engage and support underserved communities. COG will provide awards to one organization (or partnership) in each of the following categories:

- **Government Agency (2)** (local, state, regional, quasi-govt, utilities, or authorities)
  - 1 small government (<90k population) ◦ 1 large government (>90k population)
- **Non-Governmental Organization (1)** (non-profit, citizen, or community-based groups)
- **Businesses and For-profits (1)**
- **Educational Institution (1)** (K-12, public, private, or higher education)

### HOW TO APPLY

Applications can be submitted at [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards) or emailed to [lboggs@mwcog.org](mailto:lboggs@mwcog.org) between **April 22 - June 30, 2026**. Applications must include a 1-3 page project summary file that gives clear description on how it meets the four judging criteria listed below. Engagement will be weighed more heavily and account for 45% of the total score. Full criteria measurements below:

- **Engagement** (engage underserved communities) - 40%
- **Creativity** (innovative, resourceful or unique aspects) - 20%
- **Model** (replicability to other communities/organizations) - 20%
- **Results** (results, achievements, measured outcomes like cost-effectiveness) - 20%

Full application details are available under [Procedures and Guidelines](#) on the [awards website](#).



# CLIMATE AND ENERGY LEADERSHIP AWARDS

## JUDGING RUBRIC

SCORE	ENGAGEMENT (Weight 40%)	CREATIVITY (Weight 20%)	MODEL (Weight 20%)	RESULTS (Weight 20%)
5 = Excellent	Applicant actively engaged vulnerable populations and under-served communities to play an integral role, and they were extremely involved, supportive, and positive throughout the process. Statements, testimonials, or feedback from impacted person(s) or communities were provided.	Overall the initiative is extremely innovative and unique. This presents a new practice/new way of thinking.	The initiative is easily transferable to another jurisdiction/organization.	The intended results, achievements, and measured outcomes, including cost-effectiveness have gone beyond expectations.
4 = Good	Applicant effectively engaged vulnerable populations and underserved communities, and they were generally supportive and positive throughout the process. Applicant addressed issues that will have a positive impact on these populations.	The initiative is innovative and interesting. It is beyond standard practice and creative.	The initiative is transferable to another jurisdiction/organization.	The initiative has achieved the intended results and measurable goals/outcomes in a cost-effective manner.
3 = Adequate	Applicant engaged vulnerable populations and under-served communities, but there were missed opportunities to gain their support and involvement. This resulted in limited focus on issues that affect these populations. A more general demographic census was highly responsive.	The initiative shows some creative thought and has unique aspects.	It is possible to replicate the initiative in another jurisdiction/organization; however, there are some unique conditions that may limit its replication.	The initiative has had some successful results and measurable achievements, but thus far has not reached the main intended outcomes in a cost-effective manner.
2 = Fair	Applicant attempted to focus on the needs of vulnerable populations and under-served communities but did not actively engage these populations in the process. A more broad range of partners, stakeholders and/or public were subjects of the program.	The initiative is straight-forward with some unique aspects.	The initiative would be somewhat difficult to replicate in another jurisdiction/organization.	The initiative showed some promise but has not yet delivered many of the intended results, achievements and other measured outcomes in a cost-effective manner.
1 = Poor	Applicant did not engage vulnerable populations and under-served communities and did not address issues that affect these populations. A minimal array of partners, stakeholders and/or public were subjects of the program.	The initiative seems to be very standard practice with very little or no creativity.	The initiative would be extremely difficult to replicate in another jurisdiction/organization.	The initiative lacks results, achievements and other measurable outcomes in a cost-effective manner.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Program  
**2026 OUTREACH PARTNER KIT**

**SAMPLE EMAIL LANGUAGE** (Please send with awards flyer and promotional graphic.)

[Greeting],

Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions across the metropolitan Washington region are invited to apply or nominate candidates for the 2026 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards offered by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). Winners serve as role models for the region, and are recognized in front of local, regional, and national officials for their innovative climate stewardship projects and programs that engage and serve the region's underserved communities. Visit [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards) for more information. The application period is open from April 22 to June 30, 2026.

**SAMPLE NEWSLETTER LANGUAGE**

Headline: A Call for Climate Action and Recognition

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) seeks nominations and candidates for the 2026 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards. Is your government agency, non-governmental organization, or school taking an innovative approach to engaging the community around sustainability initiatives? Visit [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards) for more information. Winners are recognized in front of local, regional, and national officials at COG, an excellent opportunity for showcasing their innovative achievements and best practices.

Include graphic in social media posts and newsletters when possible:  
(See 2 versions of graphics attached.)



## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

**FACEBOOK** <https://www.facebook.com/MWCOG/>

**INSTAGRAM:** <https://www.instagram.com/mwcoginsta/>

(mention/tag COG where possible)

- Equity and #EnvironmentalJustice initiatives are encouraged to apply for the 2026 #ClimateAwards offered by the [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments: www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)
- #EarthDay reminds us to protect the environment year-round. Apply or nominate a candidate for the 2026 COG #ClimateAwards celebrating Metro DC climate champs. Find out more details and the full application at [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)
- Do you know of climate mitigation or resiliency solutions supporting our underserved communities? Apply or nominate a program or organization for the COG Climate Awards by June 30. [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)
- Leading the charge on #CleanEnergy and engagement in metropolitan Washington? Apply or nominate a candidate for the #ClimateAwards. Find the full details and see previous winners at [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)
- Have you implemented an innovative solution to climate and energy challenges in metropolitan Washington? APPLY NOW for the 2026 COG Climate Awards! [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)
- Are you helping #metropolitanWashington meet its climate and equity goals? Apply for a COG Climate and Energy Leadership Award by June 30! [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)

**X:** <https://twitter.com/MWCOG>

- CALLING ALL #DMV govts, NGOs and schools! Apply now for the @MWCOG #ClimateAwards! [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)
- Implementing a climate mitigation or resiliency strategy in underserved communities? Apply or nominate a #ClimateLeader! @MWCOG #ClimateAwards [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)
- What are you doing for #EarthDay? @MWCOG launched the 2026 #ClimateAwards! Nominate or apply today! Find out more and apply at [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)

**LINKEDIN:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/mwcog>

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- Leading the charge on clean energy and engagement in the metropolitan Washington region? Apply or nominate a candidate for the Climate Awards. [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)
- Have you implemented an innovative solution to climate and energy challenges in the metropolitan Washington region? APPLY NOW for the 2026 COG Climate Awards! [www.mwcog.org/climateawards](http://www.mwcog.org/climateawards)
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