



PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done

New York City, New York



**Coalition for Climate
Education Policy**

Advancing climate literacy for a just and sustainable future



naaee
North American Association
for Environmental Education



WOKA
foundation



The Jamaica Bay Wetlands Fellowship is a paid 6-month job training program for young adults focused on skills related to wetlands maintenance, monitoring, Space to test and scale transformative climate technologies and restoration. Source: Jamaica Bay Parks Conservancy



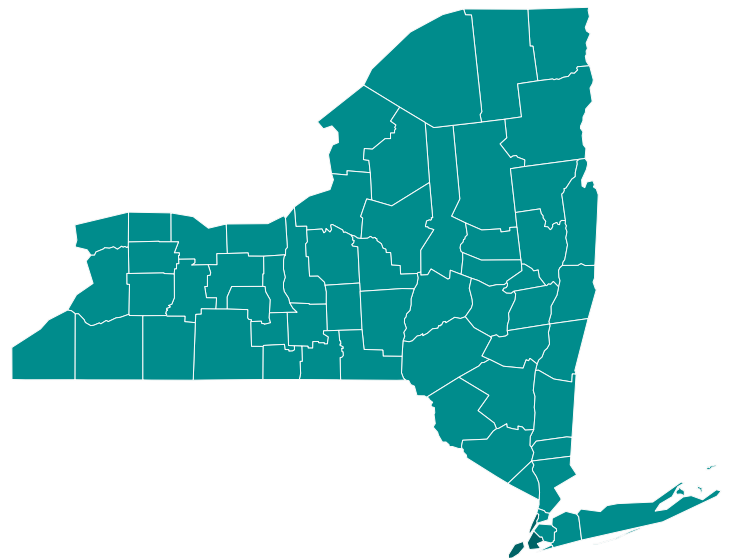
NYC schools expose our youth to sustainable practices through hands-on learning in community gardens. Source: Department of Environmental Protection

Executive Summary

This case study celebrates informal climate education policy in New York City by taking an in-depth look at PlaNYC (Plan New York City): Getting Sustainability Done. It provides an overview and background of the plan, and dives into the specific sections that address climate education and green workforce development. Finally, it covers some specific challenges, lessons learned, and next steps for New York City on their climate education and sustainability journey.

Overview

PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done is the fifth action plan in a series of plans released by New York City in accordance with Local Law 84. This ambitious plan is driven by the goal of creating a cleaner, greener, and more equitable city that safeguards New Yorkers from climate threats, enhances their quality of life, and fosters greater access to green jobs. The plan takes into account various aspects of New York's economy, such as carbon emissions from transportation and buildings, waterfront infrastructure, and air pollution. PlaNYC also places significant emphasis on climate education, youth engagement, and environmental justice, outlining comprehensive strategies and goals to achieve its objectives.



Background

Local Law 84, formulated with the input of the New York City Climate Cabinet and Sustainability Advisory Board, mandates the release of a climate action plan by the city. The initial plan was introduced in 2007 during the Bloomberg Administration, and subsequent plans have been published every four years. The development and implementation of these plans entail extensive interagency coordination, leadership from the Mayor's office, and guidance from the City's Sustainability Advisory Board.

The 2023 PlaNYC represents a notable expansion compared to the previous climate action plan. It transcends the scope of sustainability to encompass resilience, equity, and environmental justice. Moreover, PlaNYC adopts a comprehensive and strategic approach by providing recommendations that encompass the entire City government.

Approach

PlaNYC has three overarching objectives:

1. Protecting Us From Climate Threats: Extreme Heat, Flooding, Buildings, Clean and Reliable Energy
2. Improving Our Quality of Life: Green Space, Waterways, Transportation, Food
3. Building the Green Economic Engine: Green Economy, Waste and Circular Economy

This case study focuses specifically on the approach taken to accomplish Objective 3: Building the Green Economic Engine, as it pertains to climate education and workforce development. Objective 3 encompasses various sub-goals and corresponding initiatives, several of which are highlighted in the table provided below.

Building the Green Economic Engine

Launch new climate education and training programs for public schools

Integrate climate education in public school classrooms across all subjects and grade levels.

Launch a school certification program for climate education; certify up to 25 schools per year.

Train up to 1,000 teachers to deliver climate education content by 2026.

Launch an annual Climate Action Day.

Launch new Career Connected Learning Programs for public school students dedicated to green job training and placement.

Connect 1,000 public school students to career exploration and work-based learning opportunities in the green economy.

Grow NYCs green workforce

Position New Yorkers for fulfilling green economy careers.

Launch and expand talent development programs in the green economy sector.

Cultivate the offshore wind sector to provide opportunities for economic mobility.

Upgrade the South Brooklyn Marine terminal for offshore wind and enable workforce opportunities.

Activate New York City's climate resource hubs and natural areas for workforce development.

Select an anchor education and research institution for the Center for Climate Solution on Governors Island in 2023.

In addition to the goals and initiatives highlighted above, PlaNYC places a strong emphasis on empowering all New Yorkers to actively participate in democracy. A notable strategy employed to achieve this is the establishment of Youth Leadership Councils, providing young individuals with valuable opportunities for leadership development and community service within the realm of climate and sustainability. A crucial objective within PlaNYC is to significantly expand youth civic engagement by increasing the number of Youth Leadership Councils to 300. This goal holds significant importance within the overall framework of PlaNYC.

Evaluation

PlaNYC incorporates the use of key performance indicators to effectively monitor and evaluate the progress of the plan. These indicators provide measurable benchmarks, consisting of the most recent measurement or figure, as well as future targets to strive for (refer to the table below for selected examples). While the majority of indicators pertain to emissions and infrastructure aspects of the plan, it is worth noting that quantifying progress in climate education and workforce development initiatives presents unique challenges.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Recent Measurement or Figure</i>	<i>Target</i>
New Yorkers completing green economy workforce development programs	New Indicator - Data N/A	Increase
Air Quality Asthma-related emergency department visits among children	150.6 (2020)	Decrease
Transportation Electric vehicles in the citywide fleet	3,477 (2022)	Increase
Climate Change Citywide greenhouse gas emissions reductions relative to 2005	17.6% (2023)	Increase



Outcomes

PlaNYC has yielded significant outcomes, with substantial programming focused on climate education initiated in 2022. The Department of Education, as part of the NYC Solar School Program, implemented ten solar photovoltaic installations across schools in the city. These installations collectively generate approximately 2.6 megawatts of clean energy, showcasing the city's commitment to renewable energy adoption. Furthermore, a partnership with the nonprofit organization Solar One now enables public school teachers to access free professional learning opportunities. Career Technical Education (CTE) programs have also embraced solar energy, with a solar program introduced in 14 CTE high schools in New York City, thereby equipping the next generation with the skills necessary for future green jobs.

New York City has consistently demonstrated leadership in promoting climate action and decarbonizing its economy over the past 16 years. While it is challenging to predict the exact outcomes of PlaNYC since its recent passage, the plan has laid a strong foundation for the city to proactively address the challenges posed by climate change. This interagency effort fosters collaboration between public, private, and nonprofit partners, leveraging funding to maximize the impact of climate action initiatives. PlaNYC not only prioritizes supporting local communities in all five boroughs but also holds the potential for global influence, considering New York City's status as one of the world's largest economies.

Lessons Learned & Next Steps

New York City is committed to advancing its climate agenda and will continue to drive progress through the established priorities and initiatives outlined in PlaNYC. The city remains dedicated to regular reporting of progress and remains vigilant in identifying new opportunities to take further action. In pursuit of a sustainable future, upcoming efforts will include a comprehensive year-long study that will assess the challenges, opportunities, and necessary steps for transitioning to an electrified and decarbonized grid. This study will provide valuable insights to guide the city's strategic decision-making.

Furthermore, New York City is assembling an Environmental Justice report, which will provide a detailed overview of the current state of environmental justice within the city. This report will not only highlight existing injustices but also offer recommendations and strategies to address them effectively. The city is committed to centering environmental justice, climate resilience, and public health considerations in its governance and budgeting processes, ensuring that these crucial aspects are given due priority and integrated into decision-making at all levels. By intentionally emphasizing these core principles, New York City aims to create a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient future for all its residents.



Resources

- PlaNYC
- *Mapping the Landscape of K-12 Climate Change Education Policy in the United States Report*

Contact

- Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice: <https://climate.cityofnewyork.us/contact-us/>