



N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service N.C. Environmental Stewardship Initiative



The Department of Environmental Quality's Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) is designed to promote and encourage superior environmental performance in North Carolina. ESI is a voluntary program administered by the Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) and is available at no cost. This program seeks to reduce member impacts on the environment beyond measures required by permit or rule, resulting in the conservation of natural resources and creation of long-term economic benefits.

ESI members are required to set and implement performance-based goals. To support members, ESI provides technical assistance and guidance on strategies to reduce water and energy use, and to reduce solid waste generation and disposal.

Networking

ESI program offers opportunities for members to connect about their environmental management programs and efforts. The ESI promotes peer to peer networking through:

Environmental Benchmarking Series: Events hosted by ESI members to highlight a specific environmental topic and provide tours to attendees to show project implementation.

Annual Conference: Updates members on regulatory programs, pollution prevention strategies, recognition for member achievements and program advancement, case studies, and member networking opportunities.

Listserv: A platform to share regulatory and program updates and announcements, and to promote sharing between members on environmental questions and challenges.

One-on-One Member Connections: Facilitation between members based on similar goals and specific requests.

Environmental Training

ESI provides training on environmental management system (EMS) development based on the ISO 14001 standard and internal auditing training. ESI also hosts educational webinars on sustainability topics including energy and greenhouse gas reductions, water conservation, waste prevention or member requested topics.

Coaching

Every ESI member is assigned a coach, who provides technical, regulatory, and program assistance. The coaches facilitate member interactions and connect them with members and others to assist with reaching their environmental goals.

Technical Services

- Technical & Compliance Support
- Waste, Water & Energy Audits
- On-Site EMS Support
- EMS Gap Analysis
- Internal Audit Support
- Waste Sort Studies
- Energy Toolkit Access



Additional Benefits

- Electronic Newsletter
- Recognition Awards
- Senior Leadership Engagement
- Success Story Promotion
- Steward Mentors
- Website Recognition
- Program Logo Usage



Which Level is Right for You?

Members can enter the Environmental Stewardship Initiative program at one of three levels. Most new applicants will join at the Partner level which is considered the entry level.

Partner

The Partner level is designed for a broad range of organizations interested in beginning the process of developing a systematic approach to improving their environmental performance.

Partners must:

- Demonstrate commitment to compliance;
- Establish environmental performance goals; and
- Report annually on goals and compliance.

Rising Steward

The Rising Steward level is designed for organizations that have a mature environmental management system (EMS). Rising Environmental Stewards must meet the Partner level criteria plus:

- Demonstrate a mature EMS;
- Set measurable environmental performance goals; and
- Commitment to go beyond compliance.

Steward

The Steward level is for organizations that already display a commitment to exemplary environmental performance beyond what is required by law.

Environmental Stewards must also demonstrate:

- Set aggressive environmental performance goals;
- Integrate your EMS into the core business functions;
- Communicate with the local community regarding program activities and progress toward performance goals; and
- Agree to mentor other ESI members.

For more information contact:

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ESI Member Achievements

1,961,122

Tons of recycled material collected.

16.28 Billion gallons of water saved.

4.37 Million tons of landfilled waste reduced.

89.7 Million Btus of energy saved.

118.4 Million dollars saved on projects.

6,926 Tons of hazardous waste reduced.

1.12 Million metric tons of GHG reduced.

Based on member reported data from 2004-2023.