

NERC

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Northeast State Electronics Challenge: Bringing the Federal Electronics Challenge to the States through a Pilot Demonstration in the Northeastern U.S.

PROJECT SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The U.S. EPA and the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive created a voluntary program, the Federal Electronics Challenge (FEC) that promotes decisions and actions by federal agencies that minimize the life cycle environmental footprint of electronics.

This project will expand the potential and impact of the FEC by creating a parallel state-level Partnership program: the Northeast State Electronics Challenge (NSEC). The NSEC will promote environmental stewardship of computers by state, regional, and local government by providing information, implementation tools, recognition, technical assistance, and promoting implementation of EPA's electronics programs: the Electronics Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT[®]), Energy Star[®], and Plug into eCycling.

Like the federal government, the scale of state procurement and property management offers the potential to dramatically affect environmental quality as well as to influence private sector action. By expanding the influence and visibility of the FEC beyond the federal government, this potential can be more fully realized.

NORTHEAST STATE ELECTRONICS CHALLENGE

The NSEC, like the FEC, will recruit "Partners"; state, regional, and local agencies that commit to setting goals and implementing activities aimed at improving the life cycle management of electronic assets such as:

- The purchase of environmentally preferable computer products that meet the performance standards of the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT[®]).
- The use of power management features on computer systems to realize the energy savings of Energy Star[®] rated computers.
- Extending the lifespan of computers through strategies such as selective upgrades of equipment and donation.
- The recycling of computers in an environmentally sound manner by using the environmentally sound management (ESM) practices promoted by EPA's Plug-In to e-Cycling Program.

Resources will be made available to NSEC Partners to assist them in achieving their goals and those of the NSEC. As a starting point, the NSEC will utilize the education and outreach mechanisms established by the FEC with modifications as needed for non-federal application. Existing state programs and tools will also be considered for incorporation into the NSEC. Resources available to Partners will include, for example:

- **NSEC Website.** This website will be a centralized resource for outreach and education, data collection, and NSEC Partner opportunities, and will link to tools and resources available on the FEC and other U.S. EPA and state websites.
- **Implementation Tools.** The NSEC will provide Partners with a “tool kit” for the implementation of program goals in areas such as procurement, energy conservation, equipment reuse and donations, and recycling.
- **Measurement Tools.** The NSEC will include tools for assessing progress and environmental benefits of program activities.
- **Case Studies.** The NSEC will promote the sharing of success stories and lessons learned through the development and publication of case studies.
- **Technical Assistance.** The NSEC will provide one-on-one technical assistance to Partners on such issues as program requirements, available resources, mentor organizations, and completion of data collection forms.
- **Teleconferences & Partner Networking Opportunities.** Informational teleconferences will be scheduled periodically to address topics of interest to Partners. In addition, the NSEC will convene a bi-annual Conference of Partners, in conjunction with existing regional events, to promote further information exchange.

Finally, a two-tiered “Challenge” is proposed for the NSEC. First, the NSEC will publicly recognize Partners with awards based on their achievements in reducing the environmental footprint of their electronic assets. Second, the NSEC will establish a friendly competition among states in the Northeast region for attaining results towards program goals. Any agency that becomes a Partner contributes to the results of its home state by filling out an on-line reporting form. The state with the best results will be the winner and be publicly recognized. The goal is to enroll a minimum of 50 Partners in the NSEC during the pilot.

This project will also quantify the environmental benefits of improving the life cycle management of computers by applying the EPA-funded Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator (EEBC). The EEBC will calculate reductions in hazardous materials, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, municipal and hazardous solid waste generation, air and water emissions, and costs as a result of this pilot project.

PROJECT FUNDING AND PARTNERS

This two-year project is funded by a US Environmental Protection Agency, Resource Conservation Challenge Grant to the Northeast Recycling Council, Inc. Project partners include: The Council of State Governments/Eastern Regional Conference; Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection; Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control; Maine State Planning Office; Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Conservation; New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; New York Department of Environmental Conservation; Empire State Development; Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; Rhode Island Resource Recovery Authority; and Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

An Advisory Committee, comprised of project partners, will guide this project, including refinement of the NSEC concept and program structure as outlined in this project summary.

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