



SEAL Program Description:

Clean Ocean Action's **Student Environmental Advocates and Leaders (SEAL)** program aims to empower students to become mindful and resourceful leaders, with a focus on current, local environmental issues. While collaborating with peers all over Monmouth County, SEAL students will identify and implement environmental projects in their own communities. Students will serve as ambassadors to their high schools, as they engage their school community in the issues and solutions. They will also become role models in their school communities by presenting their campaigns and results to district middle schools. Clean Ocean Action (COA) uses a point-based system to award for leadership, collaboration, and cohesiveness, and also community outreach to classmates, younger students, and town councils. SEAL impacts will be tracked by staff notes, surveys, reports from SEALs, and media.

SEAL Eligibility:

The program is open to any high school student from Monmouth County or surrounding school districts, with priority given to sophomores and juniors. If many applications come from the same schools, the number of students accepted from each may be limited to allow space for others. The program is limited to 40 students total. Participation is free, though students are responsible for their own transportation. Small travel stipends may be available based on need.

SEAL Requirements:

- To be considered for the program, interested students must first fill out the [Student Interest Form](#) (linked here and on posted on COA's website). They will then be emailed additional required application steps.
- If accepted, students must submit completed paperwork signed by themselves, their parent/guardian, and a school advisor. This will include a student participation agreement outlining program expectations.
- Accepted students must attend in-person SEAL meetings twice per month from October 2025 to May 2026, facilitated by COA staff. New students will meet on Tuesdays, and returning multi-year students will meet on Thursdays, from 6:30–8:00 pm at COA's office (49 Avenel Blvd, Long Branch, NJ).
- To deepen their understanding of environmental issues, SEAL students will participate in field trips to key locations (e.g., NJ state capital, recycling facility, landfill) led by COA staff and chaperones. Parental/guardian approval will be required for participation in these trips.
- Students must also track their project impacts, actions, and successes, sharing updates during SEAL meetings and in brief reports to COA.

SEAL Actions:

- ✓ Learn about how change is made from the local to state level.
- ✓ Identify an environmental problem in their individual communities to be the focus of their advocacy.
- ✓ Determine specific actions to help improve the environmental problem, engaging their school community and local groups in their efforts.
- ✓ Keep COA and fellow SEAL students updated their projects' progress, sharing highs and lows as a group and collaborating on ways to improve or enhance their impact.
- ✓ Present their project to younger students in their community, inspiring waves of change; and
- ✓ Inform and potentially engage local municipality, whether an Environmental Committee or Commission, or the Town Council.

SEAL Impacts & Benefits:

SEAL students grow as thoughtful leaders by working together to explore real-world environmental issues and take meaningful action. Through the program, they will:

- Develop and implement a project from start to finish;
- Research factual information and solutions;
- Participate in discussions of complex issues;
- Collaborate with peers from various towns;
- Plan and conduct outreach;
- Make powerful motivational presentations; and
- Monitor and track progress.

SEAL students will impact younger students in the following ways:

- Inform them about important issues;
- Serve as role models within their community;
- Offer solutions to inspire them to take action;
- Engage and empower by becoming a part of the solution;
- Motivate future participation in SEAL and in continuing efforts and actions; and
- Inspire to share what they have learned with family and friends.



2025 SEAL Graduation at West Long Branch Community Center, May 15 and 16.

For more information about the SEAL program, or to discuss your school's participation, contact Kristen Grazioso, Clean Ocean Action's Education & Volunteer Manager at KGrazioso@cleanoceanaction.org or 732-872-0111.

Prepared by Clean Ocean Action

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