

The Green Sanctuary Program

The Green Sanctuary Program provides a path for congregational study, reflection, and action in response to environmental challenges. The Green Sanctuary Program, now in its sixth edition, partners with congregations to address climate change and environmental justice. Congregations that complete the program are accredited as Green Sanctuaries in recognition of their service and dedication to the Earth.

This program provides a structure for congregations to examine their current environmental impacts and move towards more sustainable practices in ways grounded in Unitarian Universalism. The program has four focus areas:

1. [Environmental Justice](#) acknowledges that marginalized communities are often hit first and hardest by environmental crisis. In partnering with these communities we are able to address human and environmental needs at the same time. Environmental Justice emphasizes a shift from [providing charity to working in solidarity](#) with the communities most affected by climate change.
2. [Worship and Celebration](#) is the heart of Unitarian Universalism. As we work together towards a cleaner, more just and sustainable world, worship enables us to stay connected to each other and to celebrate the work we have accomplished.
3. [Religious Education](#) shapes more than just minds. It shapes attitudes and practices.
4. [Sustainable Living](#) requires us to treat the world more gently by using fewer resources and being mindful of the choices we make.

Green Sanctuary Re-Accreditation [Recertification]

[Re-certification](#) timing is not specific and not required to maintain Green Sanctuary status. But it helps to re-focus and re-inspire the congregation and/or team (from [Steps in the Green Sanctuary Process](#)).

Congregations that have already earned Green Sanctuary accreditation can be recognized for continuing their work through the Green Sanctuary re-accreditation process. Most choose this route to help refocus and energize their green sanctuary team and congregation. The re-accreditation process may take as little as three months or as long as two years to complete, depending on each congregation's unique situation.

The re-accreditation process has eight steps:

1. **Assess your current Green Sanctuary program.**
Look back on your activities since becoming accredited. How you have continued to meet each of the Green Sanctuary program goals? How has your congregation lived your Green Sanctuary commitment? Take a look at the relevant sections of the re- accreditation application and begin drafting your answers to these questions.
2. **Create a re-accreditation action plan.**
Based on what you found in your assessment, choose projects that build on your successes and/or fill gaps in your current program. Include a minimum of five projects: two in the area of sustainable living, and one each from the other three focus areas (worship and celebration, religious education, and environmental justice).
Action plan items may be new projects, or they may be past projects that have been significantly expanded. The environmental justice project should significantly deepen and expand already existing collaborative relationships or develop newer ones.

3. **Apply for re-accreditation candidacy.**

The [application](#) is available on the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) website. It includes sections for contact information, congregation profile, accomplishment of program goals, an evaluation of the effect that Green Sanctuary accreditation has had on your congregation, and your action plan. Submit your application by email to uua_greensanctuary@uua.org.

4. **Receive feedback** from a Green Sanctuary review team.

These teams meet via conference call to review applications. After the review meeting, if the application is in order, the program manager for Congregational Stewardship Services will draft a letter approving your application and providing feedback on your action plan.

5. **Revise your action plan.**

Based on the feedback you receive, as well as changing circumstances, make appropriate modifications to your action plan. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to email the Green Sanctuary office at uua_greensanctuary@uua.org.

6. **Complete your action plan.**

As you fulfill your plans, you may learn things that suggest your plan needs to shift and change. Feel free to be in touch with the Green Sanctuary Office uua_greensanctuary@uua.org for feedback, but we fully expect your work will evolve as you go along.

7. **Records** are important.

For Re-Accreditation you will need to report progress: where your congregation was when you began your application to be candidates for Re-Accreditation, what you did, what you learned, and impacts of what you did. "Impacts" can be described in story about congregational, community and personal transformation and also with metrics. Feel free to use the [Tracking Tool \(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#) for your environmental justice project.

8. **Celebrate your accomplishments along the way.**

9. **Apply for re-accreditation.**

Update your application, revising the project descriptions to reflect the actions that were actually taken and the specific outcomes of each project.

10. **Submit your application** by email to uua_greensanctuary@uua.org. A Green Sanctuary review team will review your application. After the review meeting, the program manager will send notification of the review team response.

11. **Celebrate.**

Hold a congregation-wide celebration for achieving re-accreditation as a Green Sanctuary.