

Instructions for Completing the Green Sanctuary Candidacy Application

This user guide will help your congregation apply for Green Sanctuary (GS) candidacy - the first step of the full accreditation process. Please use the companion MS Word template to fill out your application.

Part One: Congregation Information and Profile

This is a fill-in-the-blank section requesting basic contact information. You will be asked to designate one person as the Green Sanctuary contact.

Congregational Profile: Write a one page profile of your congregation. Start with the size of your congregation: the number of members and adult friends, average Sunday attendance, number of children and youth enrolled in the religious education (RE) program, and the number and roles of staff members. Also provide demographic information about your congregation and community.

You will also provide a brief congregational history. Your history is more than names and dates - it's an opportunity to tell your story. What's historically significant? What challenges have you faced, and how have you met them? What have you done especially well? Answers to the appreciative inquiry questions asked during your assessment may offer stories to include here.

Green Sanctuary Team: Provide information about your Green Sanctuary team. Include your charter or another statement of purpose. Also list your team members, describing their congregational roles and environmental interests.

Assessments: Completing your congregational and environmental justice assessments provided you with a wealth of information. Although you'll want to retain the full details for your files, the candidacy application requires a summary (2-5 pages) of your key findings. The length of your summary will depend on the size of your congregation and the complexity of your situation.

Congregational Summary Guidelines

- Include sections for the professional energy audit and the congregational assessment. If individuals completed personal assessments, summarize those as well.
- Be sure the congregational assessment summary addresses the four focus areas: worship and celebration, religious education, environmental justice, and sustainable living.
- Graphs, charts and measurements clarify and provide grounding for future work. Stories can be a powerful way to share your congregation's growth.
- Include positive findings and opportunities for improvement.



- Provide a list of recommendations. While some may be reflected in your action plan, some might require a longer timeframe than the one to two years of your candidacy.
- Feel free to include any other relevant information.

Part Two: Action Plan

Provide a brief description of all eleven projects in your action plan. List each project under the appropriate focus area, including the following:

- **Project Title** (2-10 words)
- **Project Description:** One to three paragraphs describing what will take place during the project. Include enough information so reviewers can easily understand your intentions. Be sure to explain terminology and acronyms that might be unfamiliar to anyone outside your area or congregation.
- **Timeline for Completion:** Estimate how long it will take to complete the project. You may list a projected completion date for the entire project and/or target dates for completing specific phases.
- **Lead:** Name the person in your congregation who is responsible for the project.

Part Three: Communications Plan

Communication is one of your most powerful tools: you will need to share information, recruit participation, and gather resources to carry out your action plan within your congregation and in the wider community. The final section of your candidacy application will outline a communications plan detailing how you intend to:

- Share practical information about environmental issues and sustainable living strategies with the congregation.
- Invite participation in your program activities. Design communications that are likely to invite and include groups who typically have not participated in environmental leadership or events.
- Collaborate with other groups, organizations, or communities within and beyond your congregation.

The communications plan is typically one to two pages long. It will largely reflect current practices in your congregation, but may also be an opportunity to develop new tools and expertise that will serve the congregation in other ways. Here are some of the elements you may want to include in your communications plan:

- Create a “green” column in your congregational newsletter to educate congregants on environmental issues and encourage them to take part in Green Sanctuary projects.
- Consider adding a Green Sanctuary page to the congregation’s website that also links to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth (UUMFE), UU United Nations Office (UU-UNO), Multicultural Growth and Witness, and the UU Service Committee (UUSC), and important, non-UU organizations like Interfaith Power and Light.
- A congregational e-mail discussion list or chat group.



- Social and online media: blogs, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter...
- A bulletin board dedicated to environmental news and your Green Sanctuary projects.
- An information table at Sunday fellowship hour.
- Communication with community-wide networks: interfaith organizations, secular environmental networks, local community groups. These are a good way to share information, success stories, and facilitate collaboration.
- Local media outlets (newspaper, radio, cable TV) are always looking for content that highlights local issues and events. Your material could be in high demand! Possibilities include: announcements of specific events, feature stories about your congregation's environmental programs, and articles that raise awareness of local environmental causes and activism. Consider using UUA-developed resources to help you connect to local media.

Remember: your communications strategies are tools to make your program more effective. Using a blend of proven and emerging communications tools will go a long way towards helping you build the kind of dynamic community that will support and motivate congregants to stay the course. Continually rethinking your communications strategy will allow you to adapt and make use of new technologies as they become available.



Submitting Your Application

Some teams ask their congregation to vote to apply for Green Sanctuary candidacy. This is not required, but it can be a way of gauging commitment and solidifying support.

At this stage, there is some risk in asking the congregation to vote. A negative or very weak positive vote can reflect hesitancy about the program or resistance to making a strong commitment, which could preclude moving forward. Anticipate the likely outcome and strategize accordingly. (Note: a vote **is** required before applying for final accreditation, **after** completion of the action plan.

If you choose to ask for a vote before applying for candidacy, it's a good idea to use general wording in the motion. Less restrictive language leaves your options open in case you need to adjust your plans as you move through the program,.

The application form includes instructions for submitting your completed application by e-mail. If you cannot submit the form electronically, please contact the Green Sanctuary Manager for alternate mailing instructions.

Application Fees

Each congregation is asked to pay a one-time application fee of \$100. There is a one-time \$100.00 application fee, which should be submitted by check. Mail your check attention Finance Department to 24 Farnsworth,

Boston, MA payable to the UUA. IMPORTANT: clearly indicate it is your Green Sanctuary application fee and include your congregation's name and City, State.

For more information, please visit our www.uua.org/greensanctuary

