



AMERICAN CLIMATE
LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Unitarian Universalist Association: Climate Justice programming

[UUA.org/GreenSanctuary](https://uua.org/GreenSanctuary)

This guide offers a successful stepwise model for you to replicate in your community. It is part of a series featuring the finalists of ecoAmerica's 2023 American Climate Leadership Awards.

OVERVIEW

Side With Love's Climate Justice Campaign organizes Unitarian Universalists (UUs) to cultivate thriving communities that advance a just and equitable transition to a clean energy future. Through spiritual grounding & nourishment, political education, skill building, leadership development, and mobilization, we facilitate shared learning, mutual support, and collective action. Working with external partners like the People vs. Fossil Fuels Coalition and our Green Sanctuary 2030 process, we support UUs to take spiritually grounded, optimistic climate action.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

1. **Lay the foundation:** Start by working with a councilmember sympathetic to climate legislation to ensure that building electrification is possible in your city or county. In some states, the law preempts local action. Collaborate with the local official to craft the text and develop a legislative strategy, including recruiting other councilmembers to co-sponsor the bill.
2. **Build a broad and diverse coalition:** Engage with traditional environmental allies and nontraditional allies (frontline communities, health groups, consumer groups, religious groups, justice groups, and business and labor groups), as well as other local community groups to develop and carry out the strategy. Continue to add to the coalition as the campaign progresses.
3. **Understand councilmembers' pressure points:** Develop a power map of who or what each council member is most likely to respond positively to. Use this information to develop and record a framework campaign investment plan. Create a working campaign budget to guide investments in a ground game. Agree on increasing activity benchmarks peaking just before the final vote.

- 4. Secure funding for your work:** Approach interested funders to see if they will put resources into your campaign based on your framework plan. Individual contributions have more flexibility for direct and indirect lobbying activities but foundation resources can be carefully used as well. Increase the investment budget accordingly.
- 5. Make your case:** Develop strong substantive arguments, counter arguments, and other pertinent information about the legislation. Despite its importance, building electrification has not gotten the same attention level as other areas, such as solar and EVs.
- 6. Create a drumbeat:** Encourage and help coalition members and other citizens to publicly testify in favor of building electrification and then meet with undecided councilmembers. Ask willing citizens to take multiple actions throughout the campaign.
- 7. Spread your message:** Implement a robust messaging ground game to the greatest degree that your resources permit – tabling, flyering, yard signs, social media, rallies, events, and turnout at council meetings.
- 8. Use the media:** Reach out to traditional media to help create public attention and campaign momentum. If the budget allows, consider buying strategically targeted advertising – especially geo-targeted social media ads aimed at key councilmembers.
- 9. Escalate your campaign:** Flood councilmembers with communications from coalition members and the public – petitions, letters, emails, texts, calls – as the vote gets closer. Plan to reach a communications peak two or three days before the vote.
- 10. Implement an inside game:** Provide accurate information to council members and staff, answer questions, recruit trusted messengers according to the power map, and negotiate any possible amendments needed to pass the legislation.

Unitarian Universalist Association: Climate Justice programming is an ACLA 2023 Finalist. For more information and replication guides, go to ecoAmerica.org.

ecoAmerica's American Climate Leadership Awards (ACLA) recognizes, rewards, and shares best practices on climate change advocacy and action nationwide. ACLA provides \$175,000 annually in recognition of real climate leadership. Individuals and organizations selected as finalists have achieved demonstrated success in engaging a broader diversity of Americans for climate action at local, regional, and national levels, in ways that are replicable, while prioritizing diversity, inclusion, and justice.

