



Touro Synagogue (New Orleans, LA)

Climate Action Plan 2025

Contact Information:

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2025 Climate Action Plan Submitted by:

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Organization Stats:

How many people total does your organization engage over the course of a year?	2200
Are you planning to renovate or engage in new construction in the next 3 years?	<i>No</i>
How many buildings does your organization rent or own?	<i>1</i>

Source Clean Electricity

What actions have you taken, and/or are you going to take, to source clean electricity?

We installed a photovoltaic (PV) solar array.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We installed another form of onsite renewable energy production.	<i>Not currently planning</i>
We installed onsite backup battery for electrical storage.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We purchased clean electricity through the grid or another program, such as community solar.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We rent and the building sourced clean electricity.	<i>Not applicable</i>
We rent and advocated for the landlord to source clean electricity	<i>Not applicable</i>
We educated our remote workforce about purchasing clean electricity for their home.	<i>Want to learn more</i>

Additional Information:

Go Electric/Fuel Switching

What actions have you taken, and/or are you going to take, to switch your building's appliances, equipment, and/or vehicles to electric?

We took an inventory of our appliances, equipment, and/or vehicles, noting which use fossil fuels, the year they'll reach end of functional use, and made a timeline to replace with electric versions.	<i>Planning to next year</i>
We electrified all our appliances, equipment, and/or vehicles.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We assessed our electrical capacity and know if/where we need upgrades.	<i>Completed</i>
We upgraded the capacity of our electric panel(s).	<i>Completed</i>
New construction/renovation was all electric.	<i>Not currently planning</i>
We rent, and the building is all electric.	<i>Not applicable</i>
We rent and advocated with our landlord to fuel switch.	<i>Not applicable</i>
We educated our remote workforce about going electric/fuel switching.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We planned to switch to all electric but were derailed and purchased fossil fuel equipment this year.	<i>n/a</i>

Additional Information:

Energy Efficiency

What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce energy use at your facilities?

We switched to LED bulbs.	<i>Completed</i>
We installed motion detectors for lighting (if religious observance allows).	<i>Completed</i>
We installed and used programmable thermostats to optimize settings for energy use and comfort.	<i>Completed</i>
We increased the useable power coming in through the electrical panel (known as power factor), reducing overall energy use.	<i>Completed</i>
We installed energy-efficient appliances.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We installed a geothermal heating and cooling system. Note: this pertains to Source Clean Electric and Fuel Switching, as well.	<i>Not applicable</i>
We installed solar water heaters.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We improved the building envelope with insulation and/or energy efficient windows.	<i>Completed</i>
We installed a white roof.	<i>Not currently planning</i>
We installed a green roof.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We conducted an energy audit.	<i>Planning to next year</i>

Additional Information:

Transportation

What actions have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce GHG emissions associated with transportation?

We installed bike racks.	<i>Continuous</i>
We offered electric vehicle charging in our parking lot.	<i>Not applicable</i>
We installed signage to support cleaner modes of transportation.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We gave priority parking priority for electric cars, carpools, and/or bikes.	<i>Not applicable</i>
We provided public transit and biking instructions, along with EV charging and carpool resources, when available, on our website and communications for how to get to our site.	<i>Continuous</i>
We implemented programs and incentives that encourage staff and members to commute via public transit, carpool, biking, or walking.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We limited staff or participant air travel to programs, events, and conferences; and/or we did virtual engagement; and/or bundled objectives when travel was needed.	<i>Continuous</i>

Additional Information:

Food We Serve

What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce GHG emissions associated with the food you serve?

We exclusively served vegan (plant-based) food.	<i>Not currently planning</i>
We exclusively served vegetarian (no meat or fish, but did serve dairy and/or eggs).	<i>Not currently planning</i>
We had vegan options at all meals.	<i>Continuous</i>
We had vegetarian options at all meals	<i>Continuous</i>
We replaced industrial meat, dairy, and eggs with higher welfare, more regeneratively farmed versions.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We have a food policy that addresses climate impacts.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We advocated for more plant-based options with local caterers, our food distributor, and/or other outside food providers.	<i>Continuous</i>

Additional Information:

Minimize Food Waste

What actions have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce the amount of food waste that is generated?

We conducted a food waste audit.	<i>Planning to next year</i>
We have a food waste policy.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We took steps to reduce food waste created on the catering/kitchen side.	<i>Continuous</i>
We took steps to reduce food waste in the dining area.	<i>Continuous</i>

Additional Information:

Food Waste Emissions

What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce GHG emissions associated with food waste going to the landfill?

We gave surplus food to people.	<i>Continuous</i>
We gave surplus food to animals.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We composted surplus food (onsite or off-site).	<i>Want to learn more</i>

Additional Information:

Nature-based Solutions

What actions have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce the GHG emissions released from, and maximize the carbon sequestered by, natural spaces and resources you manage (e.g., lawns, woodlots, forests, waterways)?

We assessed our facility's grounds to understand current land use.	<i>In process</i>
We planted additional trees on our property.	<i>Planning to next year</i>
We reduced lawn by converting lawn to native plantings, rain gardens, and/or sustainable food gardens/farms.	<i>Planning to next year</i>
We managed our landscape, including lawns, without fossil-fuel powered equipment.	<i>Planning to next year</i>
We managed our landscape, including lawns, without using chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We converted impermeable surfaces to green infrastructure, such as bioswales.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We restored degraded ecosystems on our property such as waterways, wetlands, and/or woodlots.	<i>Not applicable</i>
We sequestered carbon through other nature-based technologies, e.g. biochar production, composting toilets.	<i>Not currently planning</i>
How many additional trees did you plant on your grounds since 2000?	
How many acres of lawn have you eliminated since 2000?	0

Additional Information:

Offset Emissions You Can't Reduce

What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to offset the GHG emissions produced from your operations, such as flying, use of fossil fuels in buildings, and programs?

We categorized our GHG emissions.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We measured our GHG emissions by category.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We offset our GHG emissions.	<i>Want to learn more</i>

Additional Information:

Education and Nature Connection

What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to incorporate climate education and nature connection into your organizational work?

Produced programming for our staff and/or constituents about implementing climate action solutions in their homes and communities.	<i>Planning to next year</i>
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Produced programming or other opportunities for our staff and/or constituents about nature connection.	<i>Planning to next year</i>
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Developed staff or community capacity through training/professional development to incorporate nature connection and/or climate action.	<i>Continuous</i>
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Publicized our climate action work to our networks and community, e.g. through newsletters, social media, press.	<i>Continuous</i>
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Encouraged organizations within our network to join the Coalition.	<i>Planning to next year</i>
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Additional Information:

Advocacy

What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to engage in climate advocacy or direct action?

We partnered with others to bring climate advocacy opportunities to our community, e.g. Jewish Youth Climate Movement, Adamah on Campus, Dayenu Circle, or Jewish Earth Alliance.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We participated in climate change-related demonstrations, e.g., rallies, marches, climate strikes, direct actions.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We engaged climate-concerned voters, e.g., through postcard campaigns, hosting candidate forums, participating in “Get Out the Vote” work.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We published op-eds, letters to the editor, or other articles on climate change.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We lobbied elected officials and/or regulatory agencies on climate policy.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We communicated with our community about climate advocacy opportunities.	<i>Planning to next year</i>

Additional Information:

Finance

What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to shift your institutional dollars from fossil fuel to climate-smart banking and investments?

We created an organizational process of learning and dialogue about socially responsible investing and climate-smart banking.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We moved our banking to an institution that aligns with our values around climate action.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We moved our investments out of fossil fuels.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We moved our investments to climate-smart funds.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We had a climate-smart investing fund available in our 401k/retirement plan.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We set a climate-smart investing fund as the default for our 401k/retirement plan.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We funded other Jewish organizations to invest in GHG emissions reductions and cost-saving climate action, through grants, loans, or financing.	<i>Want to learn more</i>

Additional Information:

Optional Questions to Support Electrification

Adamah is working with a leading electrification nonprofit that is focused on electrifying our homes, businesses, and communities. They develop accessible, actionable data and tools to make going electric easier, with a mission to help us save money, tackle climate goals, improve health, and build the next generation of the clean energy workforce. They are working to understand the broader emissions-mitigation and cost-saving potential of electrification. Our partnership will bring insight into the nonprofit sectors of America and, we believe, invaluable opportunities for our community.

You are not required to answer the following questions; however, if you are able to provide us with this information, it will help us better understand our Jewish communal landscape, which will help inform our collaborative work with this nonprofit and ultimately provide greater resources to Coalition members. The information requested below will be available on energy bills. Once you have these on hand, we ask that you save these documents for potential future engagement. If you are not able to provide this information at this time, there will be future opportunities to share your data.

Please share below the total money you spent and total energy consumed over the past 12 months of each of the energy types below.

Utility	Dollars Spent	Amount Consumed
Electricity	\$58,533.04 (USD)	404880 kWh
Methane/natural gas (from a utility)	\$2,051.57 (USD)	1,494.72 Therms
Heating Oil Delivered	(USD)	
Propane Delivered	\$192 (USD)	300.24 Pounds
Other -	(USD)	

Would you consider surveying your community about household energy use to support this project, if provided with the resources?

Yes

Strategic Planning and Governance

Incorporating climate action into the everyday systems that guide your organization can ensure that climate considerations outlive any one action, policy, administrator. It can be woven into strategic planning, governance documents, and capital campaigns. Please use this space to address how you have, and how you will, weave climate action into your organization in these ways.

Our decision to join the Jewish Climate Leadership Coalition was approved unanimously by our Board of Trustees, as was the adoption of this Climate Action Plan. Our climate action task force includes our synagogue's Tikkun Olam chairs (who are members of the Board) as well as other Board members and active members. Our involvement comes not only from a current commitment, but in response to a discussion of Tikkun olam/social justice priorities that was held in February 2020. At that discussion, which included participation from high-school-age synagogue youth, climate action was noted as a priority of our social action/social justice work. In the aftermath of the COVID-pandemic, we are putting those priorities into action

From our first discussions, we have agreed that we want climate action and impact to be part of all discussions and aspects of our operations -- as part of our religious practice, child and adult education, practical decisions on synagogue operations, direct-action efforts, advocacy campaigns, and engagement in both the Touro community (both inside and outside the building) and the greater community.

As we move forward with our first year of implementation of this CAP, we will elaborate how we will weave climate action into our action and governance plans, but this has been undertaken with broad support from clergy, staff, and lay leadership, and will

Those in our society with less power and fewer resources, already more vulnerable, are hit hardest by the impact of climate change. Climate action planning is an opportunity to address such harms and inequities through the pursuit of a just transition to a fossil fuel-free future, and ensure they are not recreated in the future. Like everything else in your climate action plan, incorporating climate justice is a process of learning and growth that develops year-over-year. Please use this space to share the principles, processes, and practices that your organization uses, or will use, to promote just outcomes through climate action. (Learn more about a just transition at [What is 'climate justice'? » Yale Climate Connections.](#))

We will continue to participate in efforts to contribute to building community equity, including work with interfaith organizations, and organizations addressing both climate change and economic and racial inequity.

We are members of Together New Orleans and Together Louisiana, and are exploring how to engage in their Community Lighthouse program (discussed in our CAP above.)

As we move forward, we will engage with Together New Orleans, the Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Coalition, as well as other community partners to ensure that our actions not only address climate change, but do so in ways that promote racial and economic equity.

Past work with organizations such as SOUL NOLA, which plants trees in to improve the city's tree canopy (which is less robust in lower-income neighborhoods) and Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana and Glass Half Full, which spearhead recycling efforts to rebuild the coast, in partnership with indigenous communities.

Conferences and Retreats

Gatherings are high-profile opportunities to reduce your climate impact and inspire your community by modeling climate action. Please use this space to share the ways you have reduced, or hope to reduce, the climate impact of retreats or conferences you host.

Travel by clergy and staff were not specifically addressed in this year's discussions. Clergy try to have multi-purpose trips. We think this travel is at a relatively low level. However, we will make climate impact a discussion point as we plan events and travel.

Resiliency

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) it is an established fact that the climate crisis has led to an increased frequency and/or intensity of some weather and climate extremes. From power outages to increased storm intensity to sea level rise to drought, scientists are connecting our experiences of natural disasters to climate change. Please include ways your organization has prepared, or will be preparing, to be resilient in the face of our changing climate. Please also specify climate disasters your organization and/or community has navigated.

In New Orleans, we face multiple hurricanes and tropical storms each year. Responding to climate disasters (such as flooding, extreme heat) is something we face continually. One important example is extended power outages.

In response to widespread electricity loss after Hurricane Ida in 2022, Together New Orleans and Together Louisiana, the local IAF affiliates (of which Touro is a member) developed a plan for a series of "Community Lighthouses" to provide shelter and power when needed after storms or other emergencies. The Community Lighthouse project is a network of institutions -- faith based or community centers -- equipped with solar panels and battery storage sufficient to remain in operation (power/cooling/appliances/internet) and provide shelter and services during widespread power loss. The project has received significant federal funding and is planning to expand throughout New Orleans and across the state of Louisiana.

Participation in the community lighthouse network includes installation of solar panels and storage batteries at no (or minimal) cost to the institution, while the institution reaps the benefit of clean energy, reduced costs of electricity, and battery storage, in exchange for providing services when needed. The ultimate goal of the project is to create a series of microgrids, of institutional and individual homes with solar power generation and battery storage.

Because of security concerns, Touro may be unable to serve as a full-service community shelter, however, we are located close to other community lighthouse signs, so are exploring participation in the program as a support hub.

Sustainability

There may be other important environmental sustainability actions you are taking that don't fit into the Coalition climate action planning framework above. Please use the space below to note other environmentally positive measures that you have undertaken, or plan to take, such as reducing single-use plastics, recycling, or litter clean-ups.

Prior to the COVID shutdown, we had regular "eco-shabbat" dinners, where reusable dishes and utensils were used and cleanup was undertaken by members of our environmental committee (Shomrei Adamah.) We are in the process of discussing how to re-start these dinners and increase the use of washable and re-usable utensils and plates and hope to have a system in place within the next year that increases sustainability without increasing the work of our custodial staff.

The synagogue staff uses a recycling service for paper, cardboard, and aluminum cans. We have a bin for collecting glass that is picked up by Glass Half Full, a nationally-recognized glass-recycling project that reuses glass or processes it into sand for coastal restoration.

Touro Synagogue is also located on New Orleans' uptown Mardi Gras parade route and hosts parade viewing during the carnival season. We cooperate with local efforts to make Mardi Gras more sustainable by recycling parade throws.

Program Feedback

Rating 1-5

Community of Practice Quarterly Meetings	0	Direct Staff Engagement (phone, email, etc.)	4
One-on-one Coaching and Consultation	4	Accountability from being part of the Jewish Climate Leadership Coalition	4
Climate Action Fund	0	Monthly Coalition Newsletter	3
Resource Guides	3	Being part of the larger Jewish climate movement	3
Climate Action Overview (our framework for climate action)	4	Working with an Adamah Community Impact Hub, (NY, Atlanta, Detroit, Baltimore, and SoCal)	
Online Seminars and Workshops	3	Being part of the local Jewish climate movement.	
Climate Action Plan Submission Form	4		

Optional Text Response

What else, if anything, would be useful to help you create and/or implement a climate action plan?

This is a little tangential to the creation of a plan, but it would be very helpful if there was a way to easily print (or save/download as readable pdfs) these plans in progress. As a large synagogue with an involved climate action committee, it is not easy for us to easily share progress on the plan. The challenge of sharing a password-protected form is that someone might inadvertently submit before completion, yet it is helpful (possibly even necessary) to give more people access to the form. Perhaps this can be an improvement for next year.

If you're happy, please let us know. Your written testimonial will help us tell our story, reach out to others, and grow the program.

The form was easy to complete and the resources provided are very helpful.

Thank you and we look forward to working with Adamah and JCLC moving forward.