



## Environmental Justice Audit- Congregational Questionnaire

Welcome to the Environmental Justice (EJ) Section of the Audit process. “Environmental Justice” refers to the fact that communities of color and poor communities suffer from an unjustly high level of harm from pollution and environmental degradation, and are rarely given influence over the environmental decisions that impact their communities. Research studies over the past two decades have consistently verified these findings. The questions in this section of the audit refer to activities, education and advocacy that support this definition of environmental justice.

This section provides you with the opportunity to learn about what you are already doing – and what opportunities exist – in the following areas:

- Environmental Justice Education
- Building Relationships with EJ Leaders
- EJ Advocacy

As you respond to these questions, try to identify the 2-3 most important priorities or opportunities that appear in relation to each section, and write these priorities down. This will help you develop your Action Plan at the end of the Audit process. We encourage you to involve additional members of your religious education and social outreach committees in this conversation. **This audit will take approximately 1 hour to complete.**

### Area 1 - Education

*Most people of faith are not aware that communities of color and poor communities are often exposed to serious environmental health threats. Education about these realities is an important first step in equipping religious groups to advocate effectively for environmental justice. These questions are designed to help you think about opportunities you may have in this area.*

	Yes	No
<b>Familiarity of House of worship to Social and Environmental Justice issues</b>		
Is social justice an existing area of concern and activity within your house of worship?		Not to the extent that it should be. While it is on the radar of many individuals in the community, it is not yet a driving force behind the work that we do together. The goal is to make it a major focal point of our efforts going forward.
<i>If yes, are there social justice education efforts or</i>	<i>Coming off of a recent weekend of study with American</i>	

<p>activities that can be used as a foundation for your EJ education efforts? Please describe</p>	<p><i>Jewish World Service President, Ruth Messinger, there is a real yearning for doing this kind of work in our community. We hope to pursue educational opportunities around food justice in the coming year to better explore hunger, poverty, and eating both locally and globally.</i></p>	
<p>Is your green team comfortable and aware of environmental justice issues ?</p>	<p>Yes. The challenge is to help that level of comfort rise to the forefront of the congregation.</p>	
<p><i>If this topic is completely unfamiliar, are there ways that the team can be educated about this issue prior to educating the wider congregation? It's important that the team have a firm foundation from which to build the congregation's efforts.</i></p>	<p>We as a team need to spend more time not only learning about the environmental justice issues that are pressing in today's world, we need to do so through the lens of Jewish tradition and partnership with our non-Jewish brothers and sisters. There is tremendous work to be done, much of which ought to be done in collaboration with the broader faith community.</p>	
<p><b>Has your house of worship:</b></p>		
<p>Ever conducted an education program of any kind focused specifically on environmental justice (as defined above)?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p><i>If yes, please describe</i></p>	<p>As mentioned above, we welcomed Ruth Messinger from American Jewish World Service to talk about food aid and poverty. We have also hosted Global Hunger Shabbat, an opportunity to study Jewish sources about our responsibility as Jews to the broader world in the areas of poverty and hunger. In the past, our congregation has participated in working at the soup kitchen and helping as a support congregation in the local "home and hope" homeless shelter, a project we hope to reconnect with in the coming year.</p>	
<p>Studied or educated about EJ concerns facing your community or region, such as nearby contaminated sites, mountaintop removal sites, mining, polluting factories or incinerators in low-income communities or communities of color?</p>		<p>Not during my time her as rabbi. It's possible that something was done before I came to the community.</p>
<p><i>If yes, please describe</i></p>		
<p>Studied or educated about EJ concerns facing developing countries?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p><i>If yes, please describe</i></p>	<p>Rabbi Helfand attended a trip in the developing world and has spoken about it on numerous occasions connected to the environmental hardships of that part of Ghana, specifically food and water. Our rabbi emeritus will be traveling to India this summer and will report back on his experiences as well.</p>	
<p>Visited environmentally degraded sites in your region that are located in low-income communities or communities of color, to see environmental justice concerns firsthand?</p>	<p>No</p>	
<p><i>If yes, please describe</i></p>		
<p>Held a screening of an EJ film, such as Erin Brokovich, In the Light of Reverence, or others?</p>	<p>No</p>	
<p><i>If yes, please describe</i></p>		

<b>Environmental Leaders in your area</b>		
Are there individuals or organizations in your area that you can contact to learn about EJ issues? Since many environmental groups do not yet tackle the topic of environmental justice, you may want to consider social service, health, or justice organizations in your area. To help in answering this question, we recommend reviewing the list of EJ organizations that is available in the password-protected Certification website.	Yes	
<i>Please list some of those contacts</i>	<i>Jonathan Axlerod—JREC, Jewish Response to Energy Challenge; Josh Sonnenfeld—The Future of the San Mateo County Shoreline and “Save the Bay”</i>	

<b><i>In completing the Environmental Justice - Education Audit, please record the 2 -3 top ideas or priorities for action which you identified:</i></b>	
1	Food Stamp Challenge around Thanksgiving of 2013 along with watching the film “Food Stamped” to better understand hunger and food issues in our backyard
2	EZ Market—An opportunity for congregants and locals to do a food share with produce collected from their home gardens. The idea is to ask each congregant who has a fruit tree or vegetable garden to donate excess produce for congregants to enjoy at the cost of giving a donation to tzedakah (charity) that will then be donated to a Green organization (Mazon, Hazon, AJWS, etc). Leftover food will be donated to a food bank. The goals are to teach about local growing, food sustainability, community organizing and beyond.
3	The Story of Noah and The Flood: A communal study in living a greener life. What can the flood narrative of the Torah teach us about the choices, opportunities, and challenges we face at home, at shul, and in the broader community. This will be a weekend long study about being Green centered around Noah and the Flood.



## Environmental Justice Audit- Congregational Questionnaire

### Area 2 - Relationships with Environmental Justice Leaders

*In growing numbers of communities of color and low-income communities, leaders are working for a healthy environment for themselves and their neighbors. Participants in the Certification Program learn to collaborate with and support these leaders, working on the issues the leaders have identified as important. These questions are designed to help you think about opportunities you may have in these areas.*

	Yes	No
<b>Familiarity of House of worship to Social and Environmental Justice issues</b>		
Has your house of worship identified EJ leaders in your region – whether through traditional EJ groups, or social services or public health/welfare agencies?	Yes	
<i>If yes, please list the names of these organizations/leaders.</i>	<i>Jewish Community Federation, Rabbi Marv Goodman            Congregation Beth Jacob, Rabbi Nat Ezray            Peninsula Clergy Network, Rabbi Jay Miller            Erica Hymen, American Jewish World Service            Jewish Community Relations Council, Karen Stiller            San Francisco Organizing Project, Erika Katske            Peninsula Interfaith Action—Jennifer Martinez            San Mateo County Health Department—Lydia Guzman</i>	
<i>If not, what are some organizations in your region that work on environmental justice issues, where you may be able to connect with EJ leaders? If exclusive EJ groups do not exist in your region, consider social service or public health/welfare groups that advocate for a healthy environment for low income or minority groups. To help in answering this question, we recommend reviewing the list of EJ organizations that is available in the password-protected Certification website.</i>		
Has your religious community ever conducted a meeting, either by phone, over the internet, or in person, with an environmental justice advocate or activist in your region?		No
<i>If yes, please describe</i>		
<i>Please list some of those contacts</i>		

<b><i>In completing the Environmental Justice – Relationships with Environmental Justice Leaders Audit, please record the 2 -3 top ideas or priorities for action which you identified:</i></b>	
1	Working with American Jewish World Service connected to food, food aid, and global hunger
2	Partnering with San Mateo County Health Department in their new initiative on healthy living/eating for faith based institutions

3	Working and partnering with the local JCC to volunteer at their new social justice garden and using it as a framework for starting our own as described above
---	---



## Environmental Justice Audit- Congregational Questionnaire

### Area 3 - Advocacy

*Environmental justice issues get solved through the creation and enforcement of more effective laws and regulations. To earn Certification, houses of worship need to get involved with some form of environmental justice advocacy for the benefit of EJ communities in the US. Congregations must also support efforts to help create healthy environments for vulnerable communities in the developing world. These questions are designed to help you think about opportunities you may have in these areas.*

		Yes	No
Has your house of worship ever conducted advocacy focused on environmental justice, such as letter-writing campaigns, meeting with public officials, or working with advocates to educate EJ community members about the effects of pollution?		No	
<i>If yes, please describe</i>	<i>We have plans to do one with American Jewish World Service over the holiday of Sukkot, a festival dedicated to nature, the environment, and food, to do advocacy work connected to the Food Aid bill in Congress.</i>		
Are there EJ issues that you believe are of significance in your region? These may include contaminated sites, mountaintop removal sites, mining, polluting factories or incinerators located in low-income communities or communities of color.		Yes	
<i>If so, please list, and describe any ways that your institution may be able to advocate around these issues.</i>	<i>This will require more research on our end to explore what options are available and what speaks to our community</i>		
Has your house of worship participated in an internationally-focused environmental justice activity or initiative?			<b>No</b>
<i>If so, please describe</i>			
Are there any barriers to promoting EJ advocacy within your institution? These may include a low level of knowledge about EJ, political concerns, etc.		Yes	
<i>If so, please describe</i>	<b><i>Mostly a lack of awareness and knowledge, although I think that once we educate those in our community, getting buy-in will not be a problem. Volunteers, on the other hand, may be a challenge.</i></b>		
<i>If so, what might be some strategies for making EJ advocacy more accepted and/or effective within your institution?</i>			

***In completing the Environmental Justice - Advocacy Audit, please record the 2 -3 top ideas or priorities for***

<b><i>action which you identified:</i></b>	
1	Working with American Jewish World Service on Food Aid Advocacy
2	
3	