



**Sangha
House**
NOLA

Boundless Love in Action, Liberation in Practice

A Permanent Sanctuary in Bulbancha: Stability as the Foundation for Liberation

Sangha House NOLA is becoming a permanent, community-owned sanctuary in the historic 7th Ward of New Orleans (a city living at the frontlines of the Gulf South's ecological and cultural reckoning). Guided by the vision of "Boundless Love in Action, Liberation in Practice", This refuge is an enduring anchor for spiritual sovereignty and collective transformation.

New Orleans carries extraordinary cultural wealth. More than twenty years after the storm, the city continues to navigate overlapping crises: racial inequity, economic exclusion, and an ecological precarity sharpened by rising seas, coastal erosion, and an insurance market that has largely abandoned Gulf South communities. The 7th Ward, where Sangha House NOLA is rooted, carries a particular history: a community of Black people who built cultural sovereignty, excellence, and resistance on these grounds for generations. Sangha House NOLA is called by that history and rooted in its living memory. We are not a crisis-intervention model; we are a Black-led, Afro-centered meditation refuge that understands land sovereignty as a prerequisite for spiritual sovereignty in a city whose history is written in displacement and the weight of storms, Katrina and Ida among them, in a Gulf that is warming.

Leadership: Visionary Yet Grounded

Our work is led by Venerable Clear Grace Dayananda, a Black queer Buddhist monastic whose leadership carries both contemplative depth and organizational rigor. With 25 years of executive leadership experience and eight years of intensive monastic formation across the Zen, Theravāda, and Mahāyāna traditions, Venerable Dayananda weaves Buddhist dharma with African diasporic wisdom and ancestral earth-based practices. A 2024 Outstanding Women in Buddhism Award recipient and teacher featured in Lion's Roar and Tricycle. She brings the rootedness and quality of presence and accountability that make long, slow transformation possible.

Demonstrated Impact

Since our founding in 2022, Sangha House NOLA has grown steadily in scale and community trust:

- **700%** increase in operating budget since 2022, driven entirely by community demand

- **3,000** community members engaged annually through a diverse ecosystem of healing programs
- **500** participants deepening practice through core contemplative and leadership initiatives
- **50%** of financial support generated directly from the community, ensuring grassroots accountability
- *No one turned away for inability to pay*

Shared Stewardship: Regenerating Soil, Soul, and Community

At Sangha House NOLA, land-based practices are the heartbeat of our spiritual ecology. Every offering we bring, from retreat to mutual aid to dharma teaching, grows from the same root: our living relationship with the soil, water, and ancestral community of New Orleans. We cannot heal ourselves without healing our relationship with the Earth. Through the Silence of the Roots Garden and Community Apothecary, we integrate food sovereignty, herbal medicine, and ecological stewardship with contemplative practice: a living classroom where youth, families, and neighbors tend soil, learn ancestral plant medicine, blend herbal teas and salves, sit in outdoor meditation together, and access handmade herbal remedies on a sliding scale, restoring the deep tradition of plant-based healing carried by Black and Indigenous communities across the Gulf South.

Beloved Community and Integrated Liberation

In New Orleans, environmental precarity, racial injustice, and economic exclusion arrive together and must be met together. Our response is Integrated Liberation: the recognition that healing the inner life and transforming outer conditions are not separate movements but a single, unbroken practice. Through Sangha in da Streets, the Ujamaa Collaborative, mobile mutual aid, cooperative economic development, and crisis accompaniment, we respond to the material and spiritual needs of our neighbors from a foundation of interbeing: rooting practitioners in ancestral and contemplative wisdom to cultivate the inner steadiness that makes sustained outer work possible (ecological restoration, cultural reclamation, and the long labor of social transformation).

Core Programmatic Offerings

From Emancipating Hearts and Minds and Cultivating Seeds of Stillness to Refuge Retreats, Winter Rains, Already Free, and Jhana intensives, our 15+ annual offerings weave Buddhist, African diasporic, and Indigenous wisdom across the full arc of the year.

The Freedom Library: A living archive and sanctuary for Black liberation texts, Indigenous knowledge, and trauma healing resources.

Sangha in Formation: A youth leadership pathway where emerging practitioners co-create curriculum and develop into future contemplative teachers.

Restoring Community Stewardship: A Regenerative Economic Model

Sangha House NOLA is navigating a time-sensitive opportunity to acquire the residential property adjacent to our existing headquarters: an intentional act of restoring community stewardship of land in the 7th Ward. The acquisition transitions Sangha House from a shared duplex to a standalone retreat and community center, securing permanent ground for the garden, the Freedom Library, and the full arc of our programming.

Deepening Roots Projected Outcomes: The acquisition will deepen our capacity for hospitality and healing.

Space	Current Capacity	Expanded Capacity
Dharma Hall	20 participants	50 participants
Overnight Retreat	10 guests	25 guests
Residential Capacity	2 bedrooms	6.5 bedrooms
Kitchen Facilities	1 kitchen	4 kitchens
Bathrooms	2.5 bathrooms	7 bathrooms

Investment Opportunity

A total investment of \$1,355,000 is required to secure and activate this sanctuary. A \$300,000 commitment from the Kataly Foundation has been acquired. We invite additional stakeholders to contribute to the **remaining \$1,155,000**, bridging the funding gap, making this vital anchor in New Orleans permanent, and deepening our living relationship with the Earth and with the generations who call this place home.

Purpose	Total Amount
Acquisitions, Renovations & Expansion Improvements	\$1,205,000
First-Year Staffing Support	\$150,000
Total Project Cost	\$1,355,000