Retreat types & Duration

1. Short-Term, Long-Term, Day-Long & Community Gatherings.

Day-long gatherings are single-day offerings—community-led circles, workshops, ceremonies, or cultural programs—that resonate with our shared vision of liberation, healing, and collective care.

Short-term
Short-term stays may range from a single day to 30 days. These may include themed retreats or self-directed periods of rest, reflection, and spiritual practice.

Long-term stays range from 1 to 6 months and are available for those seeking a deeper connection to the Sangha and the daily rhythms of practice. These stays are co-created through mutual agreement.

Cultivating Collective Awakening

At Sangha House NOLA, true transformation is not for the self alone but for the awakening of all. With boundless love as our foundation, we dissolve the barriers that uphold suffering. Through deep looking, we commit to uprooting the seeds of greed, hatred, and delusion knowing that true freedom and collective liberation are only possible when all are free.

Rooted in the Dharma, each offering—whether a silent retreat, contemplative immersion, or a self-directed stay—is grounded in ancestral wisdom and liberatory practices. Here, we remember that our healing is not solitary; it is interwoven with the Earth, our ancestors, and one another.

Anchored in the sacred teachings of mindfulness and interbeing. You are invited to cultivate fearless sincerity, brave honesty, and deep looking into differing viewpoints. We engage in insightful dialogue without blame, listen with full presence, nurture personal integrity, and communal trust.

2. The Ground We Stand On

Sangha House NOLA is neither defined by a single lineage nor confined to one sect or form of practice. We honor the richness of multi-lineage wisdom and embrace a path that moves beyond secular rationalization toward true liberation. Our teachings draw from diverse wisdom traditions and ancestral knowledge, creating space for healing that

is spacious, culturally rooted, and grounded in Buddhist insight. Rather than being bound to a single tradition, we honor many lineages, voices, and ways of knowing.

Our practice is grounded on the sacred land known as Bulbancha “the place of many tongues” long before it was called New Orleans. We honor the deep, layered legacies that live here while also bearing witness to the grief and harm still held in its soil and waters. With humility, we are committed to being a part of its healing. We listen to the land, follow its lead, and honor and learn from its peoples, past and presence.

We offer, welcome, and invite practices that reflect the many ways through which we awaken, as part of a living invitation to all who seek liberation.

Living and Practicing Together

In this intentional way of living, we lean into simplicity, fewness of wishes, and being in harmony with one another. Living in close proximity invites us into the daily rhythm of deep looking, receiving guidance, and moving into transformation through the practice of effacement. We follow the precepts and mindfulness training as a living commitment, observing and uprooting patterns that no longer serve us or the benefit of all beings.

Our actions, how we walk, speak, listen, and care for shared spaces shape the energy of the space and the well-being of the community. We move quietly and with awareness, attuned to what we carry and how it touches others. We practice simplicity and moderation, in reverence for all that has been given, tended to, and made possible through the hands and hearts of many. We invite those staying here to reflect on whether this way of being feels aligned, and to enter with care for what has already been cultivated.

Clothing as Practice

We invite you to consider your clothing choices as part of your mindfulness practice—wearing what allows you to move comfortably, sit with ease, and honor the sacredness of the space. Simple, comfortable, and non-distracting attire supports the collective field of practice, helping all feel at ease. In shared spaces, particularly the Dharma Hall, clothing that reflects care for the community and the teachings is encouraged.

Commitment to Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the root of our daily life. We commit to practices that cultivate transformation & healing including daily meditation, mindful meals, and embodied awareness in how we move, listen, speak, and care for our sacred space.

Each person offers two hours of Sangha Service each day as part of this practice, in addition to the daily care and upkeep of shared spaces. This may include setting up the Dharma Hall, cooking, kitchen cleaning, gardening, supporting programs and special projects, or tending to other needs as they arise.

Retreatants are invited to be fully present with the weekly offerings, engaging with the sangha and moving in the rhythmic flow of communal life.

We come and go as needed, moving with awareness of others, of time, and of what is unfolding around us. We ask that comings and goings be done with communication and consideration, and with reverence for the energy that has been created and cultivated in this space.

We take up the practice of leaving no trace—an embodied expression of mindfulness and awareness. It means moving through every space with reverence and care, leaving nothing behind—no mark or disturbance, whether physical, emotional, or energetic. This practice honors the collective energy and calls us to be fully present in our actions as a way of honoring the intention of the space.

Sangha House is sustained by the generosity and care of those who support and uphold the practice.
In that spirit, retreatants are invited to take up the attitude of “Fewness of Wishes,” using resources with moderation, reverence, and sustainability.

Silence is our Daily Rhythm

Noble Silence

Noble Silence is from 9:00 PM until 8:00 AM ,even outside of these hours, while engaging in mindful speech, we continue to support this practice by speaking only what is necessary.This offers an opportunity to return to ourselves and observe the mind’s impulse to speak, tell, ask, or explain. Phone and video calls should be kept to a minimum, silenced, and taken outside or used with headphones, in respect for the stillness that supports our collective practice.

We encourage you to reflect on whether you’re ready to meet this way of being with sincerity, steadiness, and care.

Entering this rhythm is a powerful opportunity to deepen your practice, to quiet the mind, and to walk in a way that nourishes your own healing and supports the liberation of all beings.

Healthy and Mindful Living

Guided by the Four Kinds of Nutriments—edible food, sense impressions, volition, and consciousness—we live in relationship with what sustains us. We tend to these with care, knowing that the nourishment of the body and mind is sacred. We live free from intoxicants and honor clarity as a form of respect for ourselves, for others, healing and transformation, and for our spiritual and physical well-being. As a community, we value the consumption of life-giving, light-filled foods that nourish the body, heart, and mind. This helps us align with our highest self, our shared consciousness, and the planet, while respecting the energies of the space we inhabit together.

3. Guidance & Community Stewardship

Abbess Venerable Clear Grace Dayananda

Our guiding monastic and spiritual teacher holds the vision and daily rhythm of Sangha House. Venerable is available for practice consultations, spiritual direction, and guidance regarding retreats and stays.

Sangha Core Members

Our heartfelt stewards gather weekly, tending to the care of the temple their practice and community. Their presence is relational, rooted in shared leadership, transparency, and sangha strong..

4. Living Arrangements

Accommodations are dormitory-style and may be shared or private, depending on availability, season, or the needs of the community. Entry to the living quarters is through the French doors of the Dharma Hall on the right side, at the back of a shotgun-style home.

The Dharma Hall is a shared space for practice and should be entered with reverence and care. Please limit entering or exiting when teachings or meditation are in session. Communal spaces include the meditation hall, kitchen, laundry, restroom, Freedom Library, and garden. These areas are to be used with mindfulness and consideration; they are tended to daily by all, beyond the time offered for Sangha Service.

All visits must be arranged in advance with prior approval from the Abbess. Guests are welcome to visit and practice in communal spaces—such as the meditation hall or garden—within the rhythm of daily practice. To maintain the stillness and sanctuary of the space, guests are not permitted in the living quarters at any time, and visits must conclude before quiet hours.

Staying at Sangha House also means living in proximity to our Abbess, Venerable Clear Grace Dayananda, and the monastic rhythms that guide our shared path. As Venerable's study is connected to the kitchen, this space should be used with full mindfulness and quiet attention. Following 7 p.m., we refrain from cooking; the kitchen may be entered quietly for essential needs only. We regularly use incense and natural scents as part of our daily spiritual practice, which means the environment is not scent-free. If you have sensitivities or fragrance-related allergies, please consider your well-being when planning your visit, especially for longer stays. Upekkhā, our temple cat, is a cherished part of this community. In respect for her presence and the shared space, we uphold a no-pet policy. While we maintain a clean and mindful environment, those with cat allergies may wish to reflect carefully before committing to longer stays.

Mindful Nourishment

Meals may be shared communally, prepared individually, or offered as service. All food is plant-based, and the kitchen is a sacred space held in mutual care. Please:

• Finish meal preparation by 6:00 PM

• Leave the kitchen clean, replenishing what is used when possible

• Move mindfully in the kitchen after 7:00 PM

Mindful Use of Resources

Mindful Use of Resources Sangha House is sustained by the generosity, merit, and care of those who support and uphold the practice. Practitioners are invited to embody the attitude of "Fewness of Wishes," using resources such as food, supplies, utilities, and laundry with moderation, reverence, and gratitude. These essentials are generously provided by supporters and should be replenished or contributions made toward their ongoing costs, maintaining our mindful relationship with the planet.

Kitchen Practice & Meals

As a community, we value the consumption of life-giving, light-filled foods that nourish the body, heart, and mind. This helps us align with our highest self, our shared consciousness, and our precious Mother Earth, while respecting the energies of the space we inhabit together.

How meals unfold at Sangha House depends on the season, the nature of your stay, and what's arising in the flow of community life. You may be invited to prepare your own meals, share in community meals, or offer a meal to the Sangha as part of your stay. We welcome these varying

rhythms with care and spaciousness. We all take responsibility for maintaining clean and respectful spaces.

We recognize that nourishment is deeply personal and may reflect cultural, ancestral, or spiritual roots. Bringing food that aligns with your own rhythms of care is always welcome, so long as it moves in harmony with the shared flow of the space.

Shared spaces, especially the kitchen, are held with collective responsibility. We leave them as we would wish to find them: clean, considered, and in alignment with the spirit of the space. When inspired, offering a meal to the Sangha is a meaningful way to nourish the community and deepen your presence in shared practice.

We also invite you to explore the vibrant cultural flavors of New Orleans as part of your practice—a way of remembering and honoring the spirit of this land, its people, and the ancestral celebrations that continue to nourish our collective memory and belonging.

To maintain the evening quietude, we ask that all meals be prepared by 6 p.m., allowing the kitchen to settle into stillness by 7.

All that is available in the kitchen is offered through the generosity of those who support this practice. We approach these shared resources with moderation, reverence, and care. Take only what is needed, use mindfully, and whenever possible, replenish what has been used. This is how we honor the flow of generosity and sustain the sacredness of our shared space.

We trust that you will feel at home preparing meals in this space, moving with the energy that has been lovingly cultivated here. May your time in the kitchen be both grounding and nourishing—a quiet extension of your practice, and a chance to deepen your connection to the rhythms of the Sangha.

Service Meditation & Stewardship

Each person also offers two hours of Sangha Service daily. These offerings are guided by Venerable Dayananda and shaped by the emerging needs of the temple. Service may include meal preparation, Dharma Hall care, gardening, cleaning, or other forms of support. It is our mindful practice and the overall well-being of the Sangha and all who visit—a necessary expression of respect for the space, its energy, and the unseen support that sustains it.

Retreatants are expected to tend to their personal and shared spaces with care, keeping rooms, bathrooms, and all common areas clean and held in the spirit of leaving no trace.

5. Self-Directed Retreats

Our self-directed retreats offer spaciousness to shape a rhythm that meets your individual needs while moving alongside the daily life of the Sangha. Whether you are drawn to an intensive period of silence and meditation, or a gentler experience of reading, writing, yoga, creative expression, or rest—this retreat unfolds in relationship with what brings ease, clarity, and spiritual nourishment—allowing you to soften, to settle, and to remember what truly sustains you. You are welcome to observe silence or to gently engage with others during scheduled offerings. While here, we encourage your presence in community practice, and you will have the opportunity to receive guidance from Venerable Dayananda should you wish.

Amid the stillness and daily Sangha life, may your retreat become a gentle homecoming to your breath, your practice, and your belonging.

Long Term Retreats

Long-term stays at Sangha House—ranging from one to six months—are for those called to deepen in practice, live in harmony with monastic rhythms, and walk alongside the Sangha in daily life. These stays are co-created in mutual agreement, allowing space for sincere commitment, relational growth, and transformative spiritual unfolding. Living in this way invites a steady presence, humility, and devotion to the path of liberation—not only for oneself, but for the well-being of all beings. It is a rare and precious opportunity to root into practice, receive ongoing guidance from Venerable Dayananda, and contribute meaningfully to the life and care of the temple.

6. Suggested Dana Contribution

Suggested Donation
Your offering supports the heart of our temple life—sustaining the land, our temple space, our monastic teacher, and the shared rhythms of daily practice. We invite retreatants to give in the spirit of reciprocity and reverence, guided by the suggested range of **$65–$150 per day**.

To help you discern where you might fall within the range, you may reflect on your annual income and household size. Those with higher incomes and fewer dependents might offer toward the upper end of the range, while those with lower incomes or more dependents might offer toward the lower end.

Stay Length	**Community Rate** ***(Middle Way)***	**Sustainer Rate** ***(Your Discounted Sliding Scale)***	**Sponsor Rate** ***(Covers your stay + supports another)***

1 Night	$50 / $70 / $110	$65 / $90 / $150	$130 / $180 / $300
5 Nights	$230 / $320 / $515	$310 / $425 / $715	$620 / $850 / $1,430
7 Nights (Week)	$300 / $410 / $690	$410 / $565 / $945	$820 / $1,130 / $1,890
30 Nights (Month)	$1,000 / $1,450 / $2,175	$1,365 / $1,890 / $3,150	$2,730 / $3,780 / $6,300

We are committed to accessibility and trust in the unfolding of shared generosity. If the suggested amount is not possible at this time, please email abbess@sanghahousenola.org to explore other ways to contribute—generosity flows in many forms, and all are honored.

Dana: An Economy of Generosity

Sangha House lives through the sacred practice of generosity—Dana. Our community thrives solely by the heartfelt offerings of guests, friends, and supporters whose generosity allows us to nurture this sacred space, cultivate our collective growth, and freely share the Dharma. Your giving is an embodiment of your practice—an act of deep gratitude, an affirmation of interconnectedness, and an intentional cultivation of joy through mindful offering. Together, through the practice of Dana, we honor the reciprocity that sustains our community.

7. Short Term Stay Details and Suggested Donation

Sangha House is sustained through the practice of dana—offerings of generosity that uphold the space and its teachings. In order for us to offer retreat space, the suggested dana is

essential to support the care of the land, our monastic teacher, and the daily life of the Sangha. While your retreat contribution supports core expenses, we warmly welcome additional dana for the teachings and spiritual guidance offered. Your generosity nourishes the continuance of this refuge and sustains its offerings for the benefit of all beings.

Held Within Your Stay

The rhythm of your stay follows a general flow, gently shaped by the season, the needs of the Sangha, and what is arising in the life of the community. In this spirit, the following are typically offered:

– Two hours of daily Sangha Service: mindful, collaborative offerings that nourish the space and support one another – Three weekly community gatherings:

• Tuesday Dharma Night (6:30–8:00 PM)

• Thursday Evening Practice (6:30–8:00 PM)

• Saturday Morning Meditation (8:00–9:00 AM)

– A weekly tea and check-in with Venerable Dayananda

– Two personal practice days each week (for stays of 5 days or more—typically Sunday & Monday)

Cancellation Policy

As a dāna-based, volunteer-supported center, we are unable to provide refunds. If an unexpected emergency arises, we invite you to share a brief written explanation with us at abbess@sanghahousenola.org. With care and compassion, we will review your situation, and you may be offered a credit toward future Sangha House offerings.

8. In the Spirit of Mutual Respect

Sangha House NOLA reserves the right to conclude a guest's stay, participation in a retreat, or engagement in our offerings if their health, safety, or well-being—or that of others in the community—is at risk, or if the needs of the guest extend beyond what we are able to responsibly hold and support within our capacity and scope of care.

9. Offerings to the Temple

In the Buddhist tradition, offering is a sacred act—an expression of gratitude, devotion, and support for the continuation of the Dharma. At Sangha House NOLA, offerings help sustain the temple, nourish the Sangha, and uphold the presence and path of our monastic teacher, Venerable Clear Grace Dayananda. We receive each gift as an extension of the collective practice—a gesture that honors the land, the teachings, and the community that gathers here. Sangha House lives through the sacred practice of generosity—Dana. Our community thrives solely by the heartfelt offerings of guests, friends, and supporters whose generosity allows us to nurture this sacred space, cultivate our collective growth, and freely share the Dharma. Your giving is an embodiment of your practice—an act of deep gratitude, an affirmation of interconnectedness, and an intentional cultivation of joy through mindful offering. Together, through the practice of Dana, we honor the reciprocity that sustains our community.

Traditional Offerings Include:

For the Monastic Path (The Four Requisites):
– Plant-based meals or groceries
– Herbal or natural medicine
– Robes or essential clothing
– Housing support and temple upkeep

For the Temple and Altar:
– Incense, candles, fresh flowers, fresh fruit
– Sacred or handmade offerings
– Charcoal Discs

For the Sangha Community:
– Refreshments such as tea, nuts, seeds, or wholesome snacks
– Seasonal fruit, plant-based treats, or offerings for fellowship
– Items for shared use in the Dharma Hall or Freedom Library

These offerings create the conditions for practice, care, and spiritual refuge. Please check our *Dana List* for specific items currently needed.

To make an offering or inquire about the needs of the temple, contact:
abbess@sanghahousenola.org

Community Ways of Being

At Sangha House NOLA, our way of life flows from the Dhamma—rooted in the Buddha's path of liberation and illuminated by ancestral memory, earth-based wisdom, and deep spiritual presence. These living principles guide how we walk together—inwardly and outwardly, in relationship with one another, the land, and all beings.

Sīla — Sacred Conduct
Our community is held by the ethical teachings of the Buddha and the sacred discipline of the Vinaya. These form the ground of our spiritual integrity—encouraging restraint, reverence, and right action in daily life. Sīla is how we align body, speech, and mind with compassion.

Compassionate Living
We move from a place of boundless love—for ourselves, for each other, and for all beings. We recognize that our personal liberation is braided into collective liberation.

Mutual Support & Harmony
We nurture community through deep listening, reconciliation, and the practice of right speech. It is the presence of understanding, patience, and relational care.

Dāna — Generosity as Sacred Exchange
All who receive refuge, teachings, or nourishment at Sangha House are invited to offer in return. Dāna reminds us that we are interdependent—that what we sustain, sustains us.

As monastics, we offer our lives: our presence, labor, and practice. In return, we are supported by the offerings of the community. This is not transactional—it is a mutual vow of sacred reciprocity, the heartbeat of the temple.

Embodied Learning
We embody the Dhamma through breath, action, and stillness. Each day is an invitation to live what we've learned, to make the teachings visible through our presence.

Simplicity & Renunciation
We live by "fewness of wishes." Simplicity opens space. Renunciation brings clarity. A practice of contentment.

Dhamma–Vinaya as Living Guide
The teachings (Dhamma) and the disciplines (Vinaya) are companions and mirrors. They guide how we relate, how we practice, and how we care for this sanctuary. Whether one walks with the Five Precepts, the Sixteen Bodhisattva Vows, or the full Monastic Code, all are invited into alignment with the path of liberation.

Our Living Sangha

Sangha House is a multi-generational, multi-lineage refuge. Each person contributes to the collective field of practice in a unique way:

Monastics — Ordained nuns and monks who offer spiritual leadership and live by the Vinaya

Contemplative Practitioners — Lay members dedicated to long-term presence, service, and study

Sangha Core Members (Stewards) — Those who tend to the rhythms of daily life and sacred space

Retreatants & Visitors — Short-term guests walking in shared rhythm with the community

Sangha — Individuals attending ceremonies, programs, or offerings by invitation

Together, we form a beloved community of awakening—walking the path through relationship, reflection, and shared responsibility.

Governance & Shared Stewardship

The heart of Sangha House is held by Venerable Clear Grace Dayananda, whose spiritual leadership and vision anchor the temple's direction and depth of practice.

Circles of Care:

The Monastic Sangha offers spiritual guidance and stewardship of the temple's daily rhythms

Wisdom Circles (elders, youth, spiritual leaders, mentors and teachers) offer counsel and discernment rooted in lived experience.

Sangha Core Members hold planning, events, practices, land care, and relational culture.

Care-Taking Councils arise as needed—for retreats, planning, or community needs

Regular Core Member meetings uphold transparency, deep listening, and shared evolution.

Mindfulness Trainings & Precepts

Whether retreatant, guest, or monastic, all are invited to walk the path of precepts as sacred vows for awakening and remembrance.

Refrain from harming living beings

Refrain from taking what is not freely given

Refrain from sexual misconduct (celibacy during your stay)

Refrain from false or harmful speech

Refrain from intoxicants

The Five Mindfulness Trainings may also be practiced—offering a contemporary, compassionate path of ethical living.

For Monastics:

Bhikkhus observe 227 precepts

Bhikkhunīs observe 311 precepts

All monastics practice the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts as a vow of service, compassion, and collective liberation

May these shared ways of being reflect our commitment to awakening, to one another, and to the freedom of all beings.

Gratitude for Your Presence

Your presence here is a sacred gift. May your stay be a refuge and an awakening. May it deepen your connection to the land, to the teachings, and to your true nature.

If you have questions before or during your stay, contact:
abbess@sanghahousenola.org

Conclusion of Stay

Sangha House NOLA reserves the right to conclude a guest's stay if circumstances place the community's well-being at risk. We hold these boundaries with compassion, in alignment with our capacity for care.

Departing

Prior to departure, the room should be made ready for the next arrival. Long-term guests are asked to provide a minimum of 30 days' notice before departing. Please:

- Remove all personal belongings
- Remove used linens and place them in the washer or designated laundry area
- Sweep and mop the floors
- Wipe down all surfaces
- Close all windows securely
- Return all Sangha items to their appropriate places
- Turn off and unplug all electrical items
- Leave the room clean, organized, and energetically clear

This final act of care supports the incoming practitioner and honors the space that has held your journey.

Sangha House NOLA Retreat Handbook

September 2025
Sangha House NOLA
2004 Lapeyrouse St.
New Orleans, LA 70116
828-559-1117
abbess@sanghahousenola.org

Welcoming All Who Enter: Ways of Being

Sangha House NOLA is a sacred refuge rooted in stillness, ancestral memory, and beloved community. All who enter these grounds are invited to embody mindfulness, reverence, and relational care.

Subject: Your Stay at Sangha House NOLA – Next Steps

Dear [Name],

Thank you for completing your registration. We are honored by your interest in joining us at Sangha House NOLA, a sacred project of Traveling Nunk.

Your presence is felt already, and we receive your intention to enter this field of practice with reverence. We will review your submission in the spirit of deep listening. If it feels aligned, we will reach out to schedule a conversation with our Abbess, Venerable Clear Grace Dayananda. This conversation is a time for mutual discernment, clarity, and shared aspiration.

If, after meeting, we choose to walk this path together, your stay will be held within the rhythms of collective practice—rooted in simplicity, interdependence, and the heart of dana.

As a dana-based sanctuary, we ask that your offering of generosity be received in full **prior to the start of your retreat**. This contribution sustains our shared space, the care of the land, the presence of our monastic teacher, and the flow of spiritual offerings for all beings.

We invite you, in the meantime, to revisit the Sangha House Stay Guide as you prepare—allowing its words to settle into your spirit and support your discernment. Reflect gently on the commitments, shared agreements, and daily rhythms that give shape to life here.

Should your plans shift, or your heart speak differently, we simply ask that you let us know.

With gratitude,

Sangha House NOLA

- abbess@sanghahousenola.org
- www.sanghahousenola.org