

The *Makom* Fellowship Program

Creating Transformative Change in Small Jewish Communities



CENTER FOR
SMALL TOWN
JEWISH LIFE

The *Makom* Fellowship Program provides outstanding **training, mentorship, and peer support** to emerging professionals who serve select small Jewish communities. We seek talented leaders to cultivate vibrant, inclusive Jewish life rooted in their community's sense of place (*makom*).

Our program, in a nutshell: Center for Small Town Jewish Life staff help lay leaders of organizations outside of major population centers recruit and select professionals to serve in Jewish leadership positions. The leaders they hire, if qualified and eager to benefit from the program, become *Makom* Fellows and receive three years of cohort-based training coupled with one-on-one mentoring. Fellows meet via Zoom on a weekly basis (excepting vacation periods) and gather in person twice a year. Lay leaders participate in Zoom-based training roughly three times a year during the fellowship period and attend the Maine Conference for Jewish Life each June alongside their professionals.

Communities accepted for participation in our inaugural cohort (2022–2024):

- Bangor, Maine: Congregation Beth El (Reform)
- Bennington, Vermont: Congregation Beth El (Reconstructionist)
- Bristol, Tennessee: B'nai Sholom Congregation (Reform)
- Greenville, South Carolina: Congregation Beth Israel (Conservative)
- Honolulu, Hawaii: Temple Emanu-El (Reform)

Additional communities may join this cohort in the coming weeks.

The profile of an ideal *Makom* fellow:

- A rabbi, cantor, or executive director who completed professional training at an accredited institution within the past 5 years (exceptions granted on a case-by-case basis)
- Eager to serve as the transformational leader of a participating community
- Excited to benefit from and contribute to a 3-year cohort-based learning experience
- Innovative and entrepreneurial

We provide fellows:

- Approximately 120 Zoom-based sessions and 21 days of in-person workshops covering topics such as cultivating place-based Jewish identity; diversity, equity, and inclusion; entrepreneurial Jewish leadership; fundraising and financial management; professional/lay leader collaboration; relationship-based engagement; and strategic planning
- A mentor with deep experience serving small communities who provides approximately 24 Zoom-based mentorship sessions and visits the fellow's community during the initial year.
- Peer support within a cohort of emerging leaders facing similar challenges and opportunities.
- Access to a professional network of leaders who serve small Jewish communities.

We train fellows to:

1. Create engaging, financially sustainable Jewish communal activities and learn from their experiences to improve the quality and impact of subsequent activities.
2. Foster inclusiveness by providing dignified access to Jewish communal activities regardless of socioeconomic status, racial identity, family composition, or other factors.
3. Cultivate meaningful relationships with and among community members through communal activities and one-on-one engagement.
4. Empower community members to deepen and express their Jewishness by rooting it in their strong sense of place.

Fellows will gain confidence in program design as well as fundraising and fiscal management, empathy for marginalized members of the Jewish community, appreciation for the value of relationship-based engagement, and passion for place-based expressions of Jewishness. They will feel proud of their work cultivating Jewish life in small communities and supported by others who do the same. Fellows will come to care deeply about the vitality of Jewish life outside major population centers and will develop a strong sense of collective identity as small-community professionals.

Thanks to the efforts of their fellows, participating organizations will experience high-quality Jewish communal activities, deeper engagement in Jewish life from a greater number of community members, and improved financial sustainability. Community members will develop stronger relationships with the organizations, with one another, and with their own sense of Jewishness.

Participating organizations:

- Serve communities outside of major population centers with potential for long-term vibrancy.
- Seek to hire an emerging rabbi, cantor, or other Jewish communal professional for a full-time (or nearly full-time) executive leadership position to start in Summer 2022.
- Are eager to serve all members of the local Jewish community, not just those who pay dues.
- Have lay leaders who are committed to the program's objectives, supportive of their new hire's active participation, and eager to participate themselves in a more limited capacity.
- Commit to paying for travel-related expenses associated with in-person workshops and to contributing toward fellowship program costs in a manner consistent with their resources.

How to apply: Only leaders hired by *Makom* Fellowship Program communities are eligible to become fellows. Candidates may apply to as many or as few *Makom* congregations as they wish and, in many cases, are welcome to apply outside as well as within their own movement. (Candidates should use their own movement's placement process when applying to a congregation within that movement).

For more information about the *Makom* Fellowship Program and the participating communities:

- <http://jewishlife.colby.edu/makom>
- makom@colby.edu

The Center for Small Town Jewish Life at Colby College cultivates vibrant, socially equitable communities rooted in their own sense of place, nourished by transformational learning, and intertwined with the broader Jewish world. We envision a diverse Jewish landscape that affirms the value of every individual and the power of mutually beneficial collaboration. The Center for Small Town Jewish Life brings this vision to life in Maine and empowers professional and lay leaders to realize it throughout the United States, especially in communities outside of major population centers.