

The *Makom* Fellowship Program

Information for Prospective Participating Organizations



CENTER FOR
SMALL TOWN
JEWISH LIFE

Our theory of change: By providing outstanding training, mentorship, and peer support to emerging professionals who serve small Jewish communities, we can attract and empower 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.

We partner with organizations located outside of major Jewish population centers that:

- Serve Jewish communities 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.

We train leaders of small Jewish communities 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.

We provide fellows:

- Approximately 120 Zoom-based sessions and 21 days of in-person workshops designed to develop proficiency in skills and techniques needed to achieve the success described above.
- 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 from other emerging leaders of small Jewish communities.
- Access to a professional network of leaders who serve small Jewish communities.

We provide organizational lay leaders:

- Assistance recruiting and selecting new professional leaders.
- Approximately 12 Zoom-based sessions and 12 days of in-person workshops.
- Ongoing support from Center for Small Town Jewish Life staff.

Total value of the services we provide: \$30,000/community over three years

We expect from participating organizations:Support for fellow's activities

- Enable fellow to participate fully in weekly Zoom-based sessions and biannual in-person workshops, adjusting other workload expectations accordingly.
- Encourage fellow's work not only with dues-paying members but all community members.

Involvement of lay leaders

- Partner collaboratively with their professional leader toward achievement of fellowship goals.
- Participate in Zoom-based training sessions and attend annual workshops at the Maine Conference for Jewish Life. At least two lay leaders should participate in each session or workshop, but they need not be the same individuals consistently.
- Respond to communication from Center for Small Town Jewish Life staff in a timely fashion.
- Complete program evaluations and speak with external evaluators as necessary.

Financial obligations

- Pay the full cost of the fellow's compensation package as an employee of the organization.
- Pay for travel, registration, and accommodations associated with in-person workshops.
- Contribute toward fellowship program costs in a manner consistent with the organization's resources. **We understand that some organizations can only make modest contributions.**

Our selection process: Center for Small Town Jewish Life staff, guided by our national partners, will build the *Makom* Fellowship Program's inaugural cohort on the basis of conversations with local leaders to determine the fit of their community and the readiness of their organizations to benefit from the program. For more information: Rabbi Dr. David Freidenreich, dfreiden@colby.edu.

We know that very small Jewish organizations sometimes need extra support. Center for Small Town Jewish Life staff are especially eager to help teams of organizations that serve a single geographic region develop a mutually beneficial partnership led by a jointly hired full-time professional.