



CENTER FOR
SMALL TOWN
JEWISH LIFE



The Jewish Federations®
OF NORTH AMERICA

THE MAKOM FELLOWSHIP

Information for Prospective Participating Organizations

Our theory of change

By providing outstanding training, mentorship, and peer support to emerging professionals who lead Jewish organizations that serve communities outside of major Jewish population centers, 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

In the first year of each four-year cohort, Center for Small Town Jewish Life staff help organizational lay leaders recruit 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 of participating organizations attend periodic Zoom-based training sessions during the search and fellowship periods and receive direct mentorship; they also have opportunities to gather in person.

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

- Serve Jewish communities with potential for long-term vibrancy.
- Are eager to serve all members of the local Jewish community, not just those who pay dues.
- Seek to hire a rabbi, cantor, or other Jewish communal professional for a full-time (or nearly full-time) executive leadership position to start in Summer 2023.
- Are sufficiently sound, both in terms of finances and volunteer engagement, to support their new professional. This includes paying salary and benefits for the entirety of the professional's contract as well as providing appropriate lay leadership in partnership with that professional.
- Have lay leaders who understand their organization's strengths and weaknesses and are eager to learn from past and present challenges.
- Have lay leaders who are committed to the program's objectives, supportive of their new professional'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.

We provide fellows (over three years)

- About 120 Zoom-based sessions and 18 days of in-person workshops designed to develop proficiency in skills and techniques needed to achieve the goals described above.
- A mentor with deep experience serving small communities who provides approximately 24 Zoom-based mentorship sessions and visits the fellow's community at least once.
- Peer support from other emerging leaders of small Jewish communities.
- Access to a network of professionals who serve small Jewish communities.

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 care deeply about the vitality of Jewish life outside major population centers and 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. Members will develop stronger relationships with their organizations, with one another, and with their own sense of Jewishness.

We provide organizational lay leaders

- Assistance recruiting new professional leaders.
- About 16 Zoom-based sessions and up to 12 days of in-person workshops.
- Ongoing support from Center for Small Town Jewish Life staff.

Total value of the services we provide: approximately \$40,000/community over 4 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

- Participate in Zoom-based training sessions (at least two lay leaders per session, but not necessarily the same individuals consistently). We also encourage lay leaders to attend the Maine Conference for Jewish Life, held annually in June, alongside the fellows.
- Partner collaboratively with their professional toward achievement of fellowship goals.
- 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.
- Cover the travel expenses associated with in-person workshops.
- Contribute toward program costs in a manner consistent with the organization's resources. We understand that some organizations can only make modest financial contributions.

To apply as a prospective participating organization

1. The board should review the organizational criteria and program expectations listed above.
2. Two or three representatives of the board should complete the online application form (one form per organization), available at <https://jewishlife.colby.edu/makom/>.
3. A committee of Center for Small Town Jewish Life staff and advisory board members will review each application and conduct a Zoom interview with its authors.
4. If invited to join the program, the board must formally commit to the above expectations.

About the Makom Fellowship

This initiative of the Center for Small Town Jewish Life at Colby College, in partnership with the Jewish Federations of North America, advances our shared vision of a diverse Jewish landscape that affirms the value of every individual and the power of mutually beneficial collaboration.