



CENTER FOR  
SMALL TOWN  
JEWISH LIFE



**Jewish  
Federations**  
of North America

# Makom

*“Mah nora ha'makom ha'zeh!”* — How awesome is this place! (Genesis 28:17)

The importance of “place” is core to our work at the Center for Small Town Jewish Life. We strive to cultivate thriving, socially equitable communities outside of major metropolitan areas, communities that are rooted in their own sense of place, nourished by transformational learning, and intertwined with the broader Jewish world. We pursue this goal by nurturing relationships, setting high expectations, and putting our values into action. The Center’s success in Maine rests on the kind of leadership that we practice and the mutually beneficial ecosystem that we foster. Makom empowers leaders across the country to employ the same techniques in their own local contexts as they strengthen their Jewish organizations and communities.

## **What is Makom?**

Makom supports organizations in small, rural, and remote Jewish communities that have recently experienced a leadership transition or similarly significant institutional change by preparing their new professional leaders to understand the needs and dynamics of their communities and to create sustainable, transformational change. Makom empowers these professionals (typically rabbis, cantors, or executive directors) to work in partnership with their lay leaders as they root themselves in a new organization, craft intentional and inspirational stories of their communities, build relationship-driven leadership structures, and pilot new initiatives that deepen and expand their communities.

## **What’s involved?**

Fellows are professional leaders of Makom organizations. As a fellow, you will benefit from:

- A three-year cohort-based learning experience with twice-yearly leadership retreats.
- One-on-one mentorship from a seasoned professional with experience in a similar role.
- A network of leaders building innovative Jewish life in small, rural, and remote communities.
- Support as you build a core team of organizational leaders who will be your partners in designing and implementing strategic change within your community.

Core Team members, rising organizational leaders selected by each fellow and their organization's current president during the first year of the program, learn and work with the fellow on a regular basis over a two-year period. As a Core Team member, you will benefit from:

- A leadership retreat hosted at the Maine Conference for Jewish Life.
- The opportunity to work together with your organization's Makom fellow to create values-based strategic change.

All leaders within Makom organizations also benefit from access to training programs that focus on the fundamentals of running a small nonprofit organization.

All costs associated with travel to Makom programs by professional and lay leaders are fully subsidized by the Center for Small Town Jewish Life. We estimate that the annualized value of the services we provide to each participating organization over the duration of this program will exceed \$20,000/year. We expect participating organizations to make a yearly financial contribution toward program costs in a manner consistent with the organization's resources, and we understand that some organizations can make only modest contributions.

## **What will we learn?**

As a result of your participation in Makom, you will learn how to:

- Foster collective pride by crafting uplifting narratives about your local Jewish community rooted in a strong sense of place.
- Pursue community-minded collaboration through organizational partnerships that create a whole greater than the sum of its parts.
- Leverage opportunities for serious learning as a means of building a tight-knit community.
- Design programs based on the principle of mutual benefit for all participants.
- Prioritize relationships among community members in all programs and interactions, drawing strength from your organization's internal diversity.
- Reduce barriers to accessing programs, particularly for low-income community members.

## **What's next?**

Please visit <https://jewishlife.colby.edu/makom/> to apply. We are currently accepting applications for Cohort 3, which will begin in August 2024. An organization's professional leader (rabbi, executive director, etc.) begins the process by submitting the application for professionals. The board president and 1-2 additional lay leaders then fill out the application for lay leaders. Interviews will take place on a rolling basis. If you have any questions or would like to speak to a member of our team prior to submitting your application, please reach out to [makom@colby.edu](mailto:makom@colby.edu) and we would be happy to schedule a conversation.