



Ethics Accountability Workplan & Progress Report

August 2023

The URJ is continuing to take action grounded in recommendations from the [2022 Debevoise & Plimpton Ethics Report](#).
 More information is available on the [URJ Ethics Accountability webpage](#).

Outcome	Commitment	Progress	Dates	Next Steps
Establish leadership	Form a task force to lead the URJ's ethics accountability work and direct work teams in critical areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The URJ formed an Ethics Accountability Task Force comprised of lay leaders, professional staff, community partners, and survivors/victims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feb 2022-present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued work
Establish Leadership	Work teams will implement recommendations in the areas of accountability practices, congregations, volunteer/lay leader training & education, restorative processes, and other areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The URJ formed working teams comprised of lay leaders, staff leaders, and victims/survivors. These teams focused on strategies to support a culture of accountability for safety and protection for all. Team members' names were posted to the ethics accountability webpage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2022- present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued work

<p>Center victims/survivors in the URJ's work to continuously improve the culture</p>	<p>Strengthen the culture of accountability for safety and protection by centering voices of victims and survivors in conversations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ invited survivors/victims to join Ethics Accountability Task Force and work teams. • We invited survivors/victims to participate in focus groups to share harms and needs for restorative justice. • We included anonymously provided feedback in decision making. • We publicly shared survivor-centered Roadmap to Accountability, describing harms and needs expressed by survivors/victims and plans for restorative justice. • The URJ invited survivors/victims to participate in monthly listening circles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2022-present • March 2022-present • Aug 2022 • Feb 2023 • June 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote continued monthly listening circles to encourage participation from victims/survivors • Expand conversations to include URJ leadership who have undergone restorative justice education
<p>Create and promote reporting mechanisms that are well-known and easy to access. Respond to reports in a timely manner</p>	<p>Expand reporting protocols by creating an independent ombuds position to respond to questions, provide reporting guidance, and serve as an additional confidential reporting channel for complaints of abuse and misconduct.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caroline Cuneo was retained as an external, neutral, independent, and supportive ombuds. Her retention was promoted in emails and on the URJ Ethics webpage for reporting incidents of abuse or misconduct. Caroline can be reached at ombudsurj@gmail.com. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2022-ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the ombuds role to include confidential camp-related reporting and investigations

<p>Create and promote reporting mechanisms that are well-known and easy to access. Respond to reports in a timely manner</p>	<p>Establish an additional independent resource to investigate allegations by individuals who have experienced or witnessed any harassment, abuse, or misconduct at a URJ worksite, camp, or program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We established an outside reporting channel for people who have experienced or witnessed harassment, abuse, or misconduct at a URJ worksite, camp, or program (attorney Jill Cohen). • This reporting channel was removed in December 2022 due to lack of reporting and this resource no longer being available due to a change in firms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2022-December 2022 	
<p>Create and promote reporting mechanisms that are well-known and easy to access. Respond to reports in a timely manner</p>	<p>Establish an additional independent resource to investigate allegations of violations of the URJ Code of Ethics by URJ lay leaders or volunteers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We established an additional independent resource to investigate allegations of URJ Code of Ethics violations by URJ lay leaders or volunteers (Attorney Karen Elliott, Esq., kelliott@fordharrison.com). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2022 	
<p>Communicate consistent and clear expectations to all stakeholders, fostering safe and respectful environments</p>	<p>Ensure that staff, volunteers, parents, participants, partners, and the community are easily able to access and stay updated on URJ ethics accountability, safety, and protection plans, policies, and protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We created our Ethics Accountability webpage to provide information and updates. The webpage includes our values statement, reporting channels, youth program protection protocols, restorative justice opportunities, resources, links, work plans, and more. • We introduced comprehensive progress reports and will provide regular updates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2022 • August 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued enhancements to workplan and progress reporting to increase clarity, care, and consistency

<p>Communicate consistent and clear expectations to all stakeholders, fostering safe and respectful environments</p>	<p>Implement new required training protocols for ALL youth programs and non-youth staff (permanent, seasonal, faculty) related to safety, abuse prevention, and reporting protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every member of the URJ staff undergoes required training in preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting abuse. • Every staff member is required to participate in annual REDI, anti-harassment, and discrimination trainings. • The URJ added enhanced training modules for anti-bullying, anti-racism, consent, and other subjects. • The URJ consults and contracts seasoned experts to support these efforts, including CampSafe, Center for Hope (fka Baltimore Child Abuse Center), Traliant, Rahel Bayar Group, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2022 • Annual trainings occur at different points in the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and updated annually to continuously improve our training and response protocols
<p>Communicate consistent and clear expectations to all stakeholders, fostering safe and respectful environments</p>	<p>Implement formalized background check protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ has implemented protocols requiring <i>annual</i> background checks on every youth program staff member and background checks every three years for every non-youth staff member. • The URJ has implemented protocols for required background checks for new employees, volunteers, lay leaders, vendors, guests, and visitors accessing youth sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and updated annually or tri-annually
<p>Communicate consistent and clear expectations to all stakeholders, fostering safe and respectful environments</p>	<p>Create and share <i>Brit</i> (Code of Conduct) for program participants and visitors to camp/youth programs to set expectations around a safe and respectful environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ created, updated, and publicized a youth manual and <i>Brits</i> with a focus on youth protection, workplace protocols, anti-bullying policies/procedures, and consensual relationships of minors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2022 	

<p>Communicate consistent, clear expectations to all stakeholders, fostering safe and respectful environments</p>	<p>Volunteers working with youth receive training in abuse and misconduct prevention and reporting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ trained summer staff and volunteers who interact with minors and lay leaders associated with youth programs on updated policies and procedures, reporting systems, and anti-bullying expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 	
<p>Communicate consistent, clear expectations to all stakeholders, fostering safe and respectful environments</p>	<p>Strengthen policies addressing consent between adults at camp.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ conducted camp leadership and ethics team member discussions to develop policies about adult consensual relationships among seasonal and year-round staff for Summer 2023. • Staff receive annual trainings on updated policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual post-camp briefings and policy updates • Add training for older campers
<p>Reporting mechanisms are well-known, easy to access, and responded to in a timely way across programs</p>	<p>Establish new human resources policies and procedures for timely and proper response to staff complaints and concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ revised and publicized staff policies on abuse, harassment, discrimination, reporting, grievances, and retaliation. • We implemented internal protocols for responding to and elevating complaints, confidentiality, and documentation. • We have implemented ongoing training for orienting and updating staff. • Policies and reporting protocols have been posted and updated on the employee Service Center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2021 • Fall 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and updated annually or as laws and best practices dictate

<p>A culture of accountability for belonging, safety, and respect that is sustainable</p>	<p>Establish formalized documentation plans and records retention policies for past, present, and future human resources personnel concerning reporting, incident, and investigation data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We created a records retention policy for legal, human resources, finance, and corporate documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and updated annually or as laws and best practices dictate
<p>Reporting mechanisms are well-known, easy to access, and responded to in a timely way across programs</p>	<p>Use virtual reporting tools to increase record retention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ established and trained staff on online incident reporting system and protocols for escalating and documenting issues, reports, complaints, concerns, injuries, and responsive actions and outcomes. • We used data analysis from summer program incident reporting to identify key areas of focus for next season's training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2021 • Updated and enhanced Summer 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and updated annually • The URJ Business Systems team is investigating a higher-level incident reporting platform.
<p>Victims and survivors are centered in conversations to continuously improve the culture</p>	<p>Enhance employee separation protections and reporting protocols, including exit interview protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions have been added to the Staff Exit Interview Form and live interview queries, requesting information on experiences of abuse or misconduct and knowledge of the existence of policies and reporting protocols. • The URJ implemented protocols for sharing and investigating reported information on abuse/misconduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2022 	
<p>Victims and survivors are centered in conversations to continuously improve the culture</p>	<p>Revise severance agreement templates to protect former employees when reporting misconduct or participating in restorative processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation agreement templates and letters have been revised to affirmatively remove prohibitions on reporting through designated reporting channels or participating in restorative justice processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2022 	

<p>Victims and survivors are centered in conversations to continuously improve the culture</p>	<p>Clarify that survivors and victims who signed restrictive agreements may share their stories as part of restorative processes and future severance agreements will reflect this policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former URJ employees were notified via current private email on record of release from prohibition provisions of prior agreements. • Public notice was provided in community communications and on webpage clarified that victims/survivors are not prohibited in any way from sharing their stories or reporting misconduct and abuse through designated reporting channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer/Fall 2022 	
<p>Reform Movement standards and practices for safe and respectful environments are consistent and aligned</p>	<p>Mobilize Congregations work team mobilized to recommend requirements for URJ membership, promoted and supported the creation and adoption of congregational ethics codes by all URJ congregations, and fostered access to resources for congregations to train and hold their leaders accountable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ Published updated congregational Code of Ethics Resources. • Phase I: URJ mobilized board members to contact 800+ congregations regarding ethics codes. • 332 URJ congregations have created, are creating, or are preparing to create a code. • Two (2) URJ Ethics Committee coaches were trained and are being assigned to congregations to provide coaching for developing congregational ethics codes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter 2022 – Spring 2023 • Led by Steve Weitz, PhD ECChair@urj.org • April 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase II: 272 calls in progress
<p>Reform Movement standards and practices for safe and respectful environments are consistent and aligned</p>	<p>Publish list of URJ congregations that have implemented ethics codes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congregations have been provided with URJ Ethics seals to post on their websites indicating that the URJ has reviewed their ethics codes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2023 • Spring 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A publicly available list will be posted on the URJ Ethics webpage and in the Inside Leadership newsletter.

<p>Reform Movement standards and practices for safe and respectful environments are consistent and aligned</p>	<p>Partner with Movement entities to raise awareness and demand for congregational ethics codes by all professionals in the field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ is collaborating with the CCAR and ACC to include a check box on their congregational placement applications indicating whether or not a congregation has an ethics code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2023 	
<p>A culture of accountability for belonging, safety, and respect that is sustainable</p>	<p>Our Volunteer/Lay Leader Training & Education Work Team identified cohorts and recommended education and training strategies for the URJ's many volunteers and lay leaders to enable them to fulfill their roles while fostering a culture of accountability for safety and protection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ developed and implemented required ethics training for all URJ lay leaders and volunteers, including safety, respect, inclusion, anti-discrimination/harassment, abuse prevention, and reporting. The following groups are completing required training and submitting required ethics affirmations: URJ North American Board, Committee on Social Action, all Camp Council and Committee members. • Onsite entry at camp is not permitted while camp is in session unless an individual has completed training or is escorted by a staff member. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2023 • Led by Blair Marks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated training for <i>L'Taken</i> youth chaperones - Winter 2023-24 • URJ Tech Team developing digital tracking system to record annual training data – Fall 2023 • Develop common core training

<p>Cultivate a culture of accountability, including fostering a communal sense of safety, compassion, and justice.</p>	<p>Restorative Justice work team to cultivate a culture of accountability, including restoration of a communal sense of safety, compassion, and justice.</p>	<p>Restorative Processes Work Team - including staff, lay leaders, and victim/survivors - created with objectives to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies for restorative justice to help our people and communities restore trust and connection. • Implement a varied array of restorative opportunities to allow victims/survivors/community members the ability to experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Genuine <i>t'shuva</i> from URJ institutions ○ Healing ○ Reintegration into the community ○ Renewed connection • Facilitate movement-wide collaboration with community partners (e.g., CCAR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2022 • Led by Robin Kosberg 	
<p>Cultivate a culture of accountability, including fostering a communal sense of safety, compassion, and justice.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmdoer names removed from camp signage, scholarships, and other honoraria. • Retained Guila Benchimol and Alissa Ackerman as restorative justice consultants to assist URJ's learning and develop restorative and healing opportunities with and for victims/survivors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Roadmap to Accountability released publicly. ○ Rj101 presentation to North American Board ○ Phase I Cohort listening circles ○ Phase II SOW Completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2022 • Spring 2022 • February 2023 • March 2023 • Spring 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued RJ and institutional harms learning for URJ staff and lay leadership, task force and work teams. • Facilitated conversations between URJ and victims/survivors. • Creation of healing experience(s) for victims/survivors. • Individual responses to victims/survivors.

<p>Cultivate a culture of accountability, including a communal sense of safety, compassion, and justice.</p>	<p>Partner with Reform partners to develop communal <i>T'shuvah</i> program for High Holidays.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On Repentance and Repair: A Reform Movement Program for the High Holy Days and Beyond” featuring Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, author of the book <i>On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World</i>, and Rabbi Jill Maderer, senior rabbi of Congregation Rodeph Shalom in Philadelphia, was produced and made available for download on the URJ Ethics Accountability page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 1, 2022 	
<p>A culture of accountability for belonging, safety, and respect that is sustainable</p>	<p>Accountability Practices Work Team to partner on URJ strategy to ensure policies and protocols are effective, up-to-date, and aligned with cultivating a culture of accountability while providing subject matter expertise and serving as ambassadors for the URJ's culture of accountability, safety, and protection for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URJ conducted annual audits of HR policies and protocols. • Updated URJ document retention policy created and distributed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Spring 2023 • Led by Hank Rouda, Esq. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a central repository for all reports, investigations, incident reports, and outcomes as well as complaints, adjudication outcomes, and correspondence that are forwarded to authorities and/or Movement partners (e.g., inquiries are forwarded to law enforcement, child protective services, CCAR Ethics Committee, etc.)

<p>Reform Movement standards and practices for safe and respectful environments are consistent and aligned.</p>	<p>Lead development of Movement partnerships and collaboration with the goal of ensuring a web of safe and respectful Movement institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The URJ is facilitating the URJ Leadership Council, a collaborative of Movement-affiliated leaders that meet to advance ethics priorities.• Various URJ leaders are participating in and leading CCAR, HUC, and other ethics committees, task forces, and work teams.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore where we can partner within the Movement to enhance strengths• Movement-wide protocols and processes will be developed and shared publicly.• Invite Reform leaders to participate in ongoing URJ ethics work
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