



Engage with the URJ

**The Union for Reform
Judaism (URJ) leads the
largest and most diverse
Jewish movement in North
America. We strengthen
communities that connect
people to Jewish life.**

Fall 2017



Leadership Development Opportunities

The URJ helps Reform leaders face today's challenges, nurture innovation, and be responsive to changing needs.

For Lay Leaders:

Jew V'Nation is a year-long fellowship to incubate outreach initiatives that create community around interfaith and intersectional identities within the Jewish community. The JewV'Nation Fellowship is celebrating a successful first year and gearing up for the **2018 JewV'Nation Fellowship: Jews of Color Leadership Cohort**, which is seeking to bring together up to 16 Jewish emerging leaders of Color for a 9-month intensive leadership development program in which participants will identify and create one or more cohort projects. These projects will provide a foundation on which other Jewish leaders of Color can build and engage far past the program's conclusion in late Fall 2018. URJ.org/jewvnation

The annual URJ **Scheidt Seminar for Presidents and Presidents-Elect** convenes temple presidents to learn, network, build relationships, and enhance leadership skills, serving as a springboard for learning throughout their terms. URJ.org/scheidt

Congregational Board Workshops are onsite, 5- to 6-hour workshops designed and facilitated by URJ representatives in consultation with your congregation. Available topics include orienting new board members, reimagining volunteer engagement, and setting goals. URJ.org/boardworkshops

The **URJ Emerging Leaders Resource** allows congregations to construct a customized leadership development program from pre-packaged materials. URJ.org/emerging-leaders-initiative

The Shallat Rabbinic Transition Program and Retreat (for lay leaders and new rabbis) guides presidents and new senior/solo rabbis in building strong, effective working relationships in their first winter of working together. Through shared learning about transition management, presidents and rabbis plan and implement their rabbi's successful integration into the congregational community. URJ.org/shallat

For Clergy and Professionals:

The Balfour Brickner Clergy Seminar and Fellowship Program is a professional development opportunity to teach rabbis and cantors how to bring social justice to the center of congregational life. The fellowship includes community organizing training, distance learning, and in-person opportunities to connect and learn together. RAC.org/brickner

The Youth Professionals 101 Training Fellowship is a cohort-based program for youth professionals in their first or second year that includes one-on-one mentoring, an in-person conference, and monthly learning with experts.



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Youth Summit at NFTY Convention provides networking, leadership development, and professional training to congregational youth professionals and lay leaders. nftyconvention.org/youth-summit

The URJ offers **ongoing professional development for youth engagement professionals** in-person and online, and in partnership with NFTY and URJ Camps at the local, regional, and North American levels, to deepen your congregation's youth engagement work. URJ.org/youthpd

For Teen Leaders:

URJ Kutz Camp, the flagship summer experience for Reform Jewish teens worldwide who are seeking deeper learning, purposeful skill-building, and leadership development. kutzcamp.org

NFTY Nashir Songleading Institute offers skills development and hands-on training to teen musicians so they can play a role in songleading for their communities. NFTY.org/nashir

More leadership development opportunities are available through immersive programming (see page 6).

For Everyone

The **URJ Biennial** brings North America's Reform community together to learn, worship, network, celebrate, and guide the direction of the movement.

URJ Biennial 2017 will be held in Boston, Massachusetts, December 6-10. URJ.org/Biennial



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Helping Your Congregation and Community Stay Strong, Relevant, and Innovative

The **Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC)** mobilizes the Reform Jewish Movement on public policy and legislative issues through education and training, youth and leadership development, and broad-based organizing across North America. RAC.org

The Religious Action Center's **Urgency of Now Initiative** aims to mobilize Reform Jews across North America to organize their congregations and communities to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable members of our society. Current campaigns focus on criminal justice reform, immigrant justice, and transgender inclusion. RAC.org/now

The **Brit Olam** helps congregations develop focused, actionable social justice initiatives grounded in enduring Jewish values. Become a Brit Olam congregation and work in concert with similarly-intentioned Reform Jewish congregational teams organizing and building momentum across North America. RAC.org/britolam

Reform CA, a program of the Religious Action Center, engages and organizes clergy and lay leaders across California to act powerfully across lines of race, class, and faith for a more just and compassionate California. RAC.org/reformCA

Reform OH, also a project of the Religious Action Center, is a newly-launched state-based organizing initiative bringing together clergy and lay leaders to work towards a safer and more whole Ohio. To get involved, contact Rabbi Lindsey Danziger at ldanziger@rac.org.

Consultation on Conscience is the Reform Movement's premiere social justice event, bringing together advocates and allies in a powerful gathering of collective reflection, conversation, and action. Save the date: the next Consultation on Conscience will be May 19-21, 2019. RAC.org/conc

URJ Communities of Practice (CoP) convene cohorts of congregational leaders for 18–24 months around topics of shared interest. Supported by URJ staff, experts, and other members of the cohort, participating congregations develop and launch experiments to advance their work. URJ.org/cop



URJ **Active Learning Networks** engage congregational teams in interactive online learning around a topic of shared interest. Participants build connections through virtual meetings and webinars, and continue the learning, discussion, and collaboration in online groups.

The URJ's **Congregational Benchmarking and Assessment Project** helps congregations evaluate their work in various areas of synagogue life and compare the results to congregations of similar demographics. Trained URJ staff and lay leaders help identify next steps. [URJ.org/benchmarking](https://urj.org/benchmarking)

URJ Communities connect congregational leaders from the same geographic area to share resources, build relationships, collaborate, and support each other in their sacred work. [URJ.org/urj-communities](https://urj.org/urj-communities)

The URJ's **Crisis and Transition Management team**, Rabbi Janet Offel (joffel@urj.org), Rabbi David Fine (dfine@urj.org), and Rabbi Paula Feldstein (pfeldstein@urj.org), provide congregational support for a range of situations, including conflict management, crisis management, lay-clergy relationships, and major clergy transitions. Contact Rabbi Feldstein if your congregation is anticipating or currently in the process of a rabbinic transition. Clergy transition and search support are provided in partnership with the Central Conference of American Rabbis and American Conference of Cantors.

A series of **online Congregational Finance Courses** provide training in synagogue finances for lay leaders with a financial portfolio, staff, or board members who want to gain a better understanding of congregational finances. [URJ.org/financecourses](https://urj.org/financecourses)

The URJ's **Introduction to Judaism** is an 18-session course designed for individuals seeking to learn about Reform Jewish life. Available in 14 geographic communities across North America, it creates opportunities for clergy to collaborate around programming and courses that some congregations might not be able to offer on their own. For congregations not conveniently located in one of the 14 communities, the URJ provides materials and consultation services for Intro courses.

Online Introduction to Judaism classes were initiated in 2017 for individuals and couples who do not reside in areas where in-person Introduction to Judaism classes are offered. ReformJudaism.org/intro

The URJ's three-session **A Taste of Judaism®** serves as a portal to Jewish engagement for a diverse population of individuals and couples interested in learning about Judaism's big ideas. In addition to coordinating classes in Boston and Chicago, the URJ offers resources, webinars, consultations, and marketing grants to congregations that run Taste classes. ReformJudaism.org/taste

The URJ's **Engaging Families with Young Children** team works in partnership with the Early Childhood Educators of Reform Judaism (ECE-RJ) to provide networking and learning opportunities for congregational leaders, which promote the value of Jewish early childhood engagement. [URJ.org/fwyc](https://urj.org/fwyc)

PJ Library® offers free books of Jewish content to families with young children across North America. The PJ Library-URJ-WRJ Partnership provides resources for congregations to use this program as a tool for engaging local families. [URJ.org/pjlibrary](https://urj.org/pjlibrary)

The **Roswell Lech Lecha Fellowship** brings Israeli young adults to congregations to serve as *shlichim* (emissaries) in partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel. They provide dynamic Israel programming, build bridges to Israel, and forge deep personal connections.



Inspiring the Next Generation— Programs for Youth, Teens, and Young Adults

More than 60 programs offer social and educational opportunities for students from Pre-K through college and beyond, all supporting young people to develop essential skills grounded in Jewish values in order to become their best selves. More information and resources to share with your congregants about any of these programs can be found at URJYouth.org or RAC.org

The URJ's residential **summer camps** offer regional and specialty camping for children and teens. Together with NFTY, camps and their affiliated year-round offerings provide leadership and professional development opportunities for older teens and young adults. URJYouth.org

NFTY in Israel offers travel programs in Israel, including specialty Israel experiences such as Mitzvah Corps in Israel and Sci-Tech Israel, to see Israel through a unique lens. NFTYIsrael.org

URJ Heller High (formerly NFTY-EIE) offers a fully accredited, semester-long study abroad experience in Israel for high school students in grades 10-12. Scholarships up to 50% now available! hellerhigh.org

NFTY, the Reform Jewish youth movement—offers teens in grades 6-12 community-building, worship, leadership training, pursuing social justice, and experiential, youth-led Jewish educational programming. NEW—**NFTY678** for middle school students. NFTY.org

NFTY Convention brings together more than 1,000 Jewish high school students who return to their communities inspired to make lasting impact on the future of their congregations. nftyconvention.org

URJ **Mitzvah Corps** offers social justice trips for teens, providing students the opportunity to travel the world, build meaningful relationships, and understand complex global challenges while taking action to enact change. MitzvahCorps.org

The Bernard and Audre Rapoport L'Taken Social Justice Seminars offer high school students the opportunity to learn and explore what Judaism has to teach us about the issues shaping our lives. At a L'Taken weekend, hundreds of teens from across North America converge on Washington DC for four days of experiential learning, advocacy, and action. Alternate programming is available for Canadian participants. RAC.org/ltaken

Machon Kaplan is a summer program for undergraduate students interested in Reform Judaism and social justice. Based in Washington, D.C., students intern at diverse social justice organizations in the nation's capital and participate in educational programs at the Religious Action Center. RAC.org/MK

Two new specialty
camps opening in 2018
**6 Points Sci-Tech
West**
.....
**6 Points Creative
Arts Academy**

The **Eisendrath Legislative Assistant Program** is a year-long fellowship for recent college graduates at the Religious Action Center in Washington, DC. Legislative Assistants are involved in every aspect of the RAC's work, including policy research, coalition building, programming for youth seminars, and more. RAC.org/LA

Reform Students on Campus encourages college-aged students to find resources, ways to connect with other Reform students, and to get involved with Jewish life on campus. Various leadership roles and events on campus facilitate engagement in Jewish life among college students who are alumni of NFTY or other URJ youth programs alumni.nfty.org/on-campus/

Millennial Communities are for everyone in their 20s and 30s looking to find millennial connections. Powered by URJ congregations, these communities connect young adults with each other through innovative Shabbat experiences, networking opportunities, and other exciting events throughout the year. etraylor@urj.org





On-Demand Resources

Congregations can turn to the URJ for personal assistance and resources from peers, the larger Reform Movement, and expert practitioners.

The RAC's **Legislative Action Center** includes background, programming options and Jewish perspectives on over 70 issues of domestic and international public policy, as well as opportunities to contact elected officials to advocate on important pieces of legislation. RAC.org/advocacy-activism

The URJ **Audacious Hospitality Toolkit** is a compilation of educational resources that support congregations in creating a welcoming, diverse, and supportive experience in Jewish life. URJ.org/audacioushospitality

The Tent, the URJ's online communication and collaboration forum, enables congregational leaders to join conversations about synagogue life and to access learning materials and marketing tools. URJ.org/thetent

The URJ **Knowledge Network team** is the primary URJ contact for congregational leaders and provides personalized answers to questions about congregational life and URJ programs. urj1800@urj.org / 855.URJ.1800

ReformJudaism.org shares content about Reform Jewish life, much of it suitable for bulletins, websites, and education programs. Each congregation's listing connects them with potential members and public listings of community events. ReformJudaism.org

On The Other Hand and **Stories We Tell** are our weekly podcasts. The first offers an opportunity to hear Rabbi Rick Jacobs offer *divrei* Torah (insights into the weekly Torah portion) to help open up Jewish thought and its contemporary influence on your life. The second offers a new story each week to reflect on and discuss with the people in your life. ReformJudaism.org/podcasts

The URJ **Ruderman Disabilities Inclusion Learning Center** offers webinars and other professional resources to help congregations effectively incorporate disability inclusion practices and policies into all areas of communal life. disabilitiesinclusion.org

Moving to the Leading Edge is a URJ resource and discussion guide about current topics in congregational life. It features prompts for reflective conversations written by experts, URJ staff, and congregational leaders who are doing innovative work. URJ.org/sc

The URJ **Scholar Series** resource provides thought pieces, recorded learning sessions, and discussion guides on relevant topics for congregational leaders. URJ.org/scholar-series

The URJ **Rabbinic Transition Roadmap** consists of three modules ("Planning and Discovery," "Good Endings/Saying Goodbye" and "Good Beginnings/Saying Hello") that help congregations through the process of a rabbinic transition. URJ.org/transition

The B'nai Mitzvah Revolution Innovations Guide is an online program bank that features innovative congregational b'nai mitzvah programmatic ideas. Innovations.bnaimitzvahrevolution.org



The **Standards of Excellence Assessment Tool** provides guidelines for exemplary educational practice in Jewish Early Childhood Education. Topics include: family engagement, marketing, enrollment, conversion, customer service, and retention. [URJ.org/fwyc](https://www.urj.org/fwyc)

The URJ **Online Learning Series on Governance** with Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph provides congregational leaders the opportunity to learn about the fundamental principles of good governance, strategies for conducting meetings and developing leaders, and key questions to help determine the proper size and structure of their board. Videos and presentation material are available in The Tent.

The URJ **Online Learning Series on Creating a Culture of Philanthropy** with Rabbi Lou Feldstein helps congregational leaders shift from a mindset of fundraising to a mindset of philanthropy by delving into best principles in development from across the non-profit world. Videos and presentation material are available in The Tent.

Especially for Small Congregations

(150 or fewer households)

URJ **Small Congregations Director** Merry Lugasy (mlugasy@urj.org) is available to advise small congregations about all facets of synagogue life.

URJ **Small Congregation Grants** provide financial assistance to individuals from congregations of 250 members or fewer who wish to attend URJ programming and events.

The **Had'rachah Seminar for Lay Leadership in Ritual Life** trains lay leaders in congregations with no more than one full-time clergy member to conduct worship services and lifecycle events. [URJ.org/hadrachah](https://www.urj.org/hadrachah)

The **ACC-URJ Worship Music Toolkit for Small Congregations** provides sheet music, recordings, tutorials, and additional resources for congregations without a cantor or full-time music professional.

Many URJ camps offer funding to incentivize and provide **financial support for first-time campers from small congregations** across North America.

The URJ partners with the **Jewish Community Legacy Project** to aid congregations with aging populations, changing demographics, and declining membership to sustain active Jewish life and create a legacy plan.

Especially for Large Congregations

(1,000 or more households)

URJ **Large Congregations Director** Ruth Cohen (rwcohen@urj.org) is available to connect your congregation with similarly-sized communities, help launch projects, and offer guidance on all facets of synagogue life.

Seminars for clergy and lay leadership provide leadership development, peer networking, and customized expertise on issues specific to large congregations.





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Awards for Scalable Innovations

All congregational recipients of these awards are honored at the URJ Biennial.

The URJ honors Reform congregations that run innovative and effective Audacious Hospitality programs with the **Belin Awards**. Belin award winning programs are shared in the Tent and congregations receive a \$1000 honorarium. URJ.org/belin

Every two years the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism recognizes outstanding congregational social justice programming across the Reform Movement with the **Irving J. Fain Social Justice Awards**. Awards are presented at the URJ Biennial. RAC.org/fain

The URJ recognizes congregations working toward excellence in disabilities inclusion through the **Exemplar Congregation Program**. Accepted congregations serve as mentors to other congregations.

Staying Up to Date

Twice a month, **Inside Leadership** provides lay and professional leaders with the latest URJ news, updates, and opportunities. URJ.org/subscribe

Once a month, **Youth Engagement Now** shares ideas, resources, and upcoming events to strengthen youth engagement in congregations. URJ.org/subscribe

The **URJ's online calendar** lists upcoming Reform programs and events. See what's coming up and add your congregation's public events. URJ.org/calendar

The RAC's **Weekly Legislative Update** keeps Reform Jews in-the-know about Jewish perspectives on important pieces of national legislation and provides opportunities to directly lobby local elected officials on these issues. RAC.org/email

Additional Congregational Benefits

RJ Web Builder allows congregational webmasters to easily create cutting-edge, interactive, and dynamic congregational websites. URJ.org/rjweb

URJ member congregations are entitled to **bulk purchasing agreements** on video streaming, employee background checks, payroll services, office supplies, and more. URJ.org/URJbenefits

North American Commission on Rabbinic-Congregational Relations (NCRCR) is available to help URJ congregations and CCAR rabbis in the unfortunate event of the need for conciliation services or mediation. There is no additional cost to a URJ congregation or CCAR rabbi for accessing this benefit of URJ and CCAR membership. URJ.org/transition

Ten Minutes of Torah, delivered each weekday, brings the Reform Jewish world to the inboxes of subscribers worldwide. TMT emails can be co-branded to include a congregation's logo together with the URJ logo. URJ.org/cobrand

Marketing materials are available in The Tent, including print ads, social media banners, and brochures to make it easy to share Jewish holiday and current URJ programing information with congregation members. URJ.org/thetent



2017–2018 OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE URJ

Leadership Development: Year-Round Opportunities for Presidents, Lay Leaders, and Clergy and Professionals

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Year-Round | Monthly training for youth engagement professionals |
| Year-Round | Board workshops for congregations |
| Year-Round | URJ Community events (happening locally, by geographic area) |
| Year-Round | JewV'Nation Fellowship (North American cohort and new Jews of Color cohort) |
| Year-Round | Transition and Crisis Support |
| Year-Round | Training for facilitators of congregational leadership development programs |
| Launching December 2017 | Audacious Hospitality LGBTQ Inclusion Educational Resource Module |
| December 2017 | Shallat Rabbinic Transition Program and Retreat, Boston, MA |
| December 6–10, 2017 | URJ Biennial, Boston, MA |
| Winter–Spring 2018 | URJ Congregational Finance Courses |
| January & June 2018 | Congregational Benchmarking and Assessment Project cohorts rollout |
| February 8–11, 2018 | URJ Scheidt Seminar for Presidents and Presidents-Elect, San Diego, CA |
| April 19–22, 2018 | URJ Scheidt Seminar for Presidents and Presidents-Elect, Peachtree City, GA |
| Spring 2018 | Spring Training: for lay leaders who serve in roles such as URJ Board Workshop facilitators, URJ Communities leaders, and more |
| July 11–15, 2018 | The URJ <i>Had'rachah</i> Seminar for Lay Leadership in Ritual Life. OSRUI, Oconomowoc, WI |

Next Generation: Youth Groups, Camps, Israel Travel Experiences and Service Opportunities

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Year-Round | NFTY: Regional youth group and peer leadership (grades 6–12) |
| Year-Round | <i>Nashir</i> Songleading Seminars for teens |
| Summer | Kutz Leadership Academy, Warwick, NY URJ Camps in session—18* residential & specialty camps. <i>*Two new specialty camps opening Summer 2018</i> NFTY in Israel—Teen trips to Israel and Europe, including specialty tracks with Mitzvah Corps Israel and Sci-Tech Israel Mitzvah Corps—Social Justice Travel for Teens in North America and around the world |
| Fall 2017–Spring 2018 | URJ Heller High: EIE High School in Israel |
| Summer 2017/Winter 2018 | Birthright Israel (for young adults, ages 18–26) with URJ Keshet |

Social Justice: Leadership Training and Advocacy Opportunities

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|---------------------------|---|
| Year Round | Urgency of Now Initiative: Webinars, Actions, Organizing for Reform Congregations and Individuals |
| Fall 2017 | Applications open for Summer 2018 Machon Kaplan Internship Program for College Students |
| November 2017 | Applications open for 2018-2019 Eisendrath Legislative Assistant Fellowship for College Graduates |
| January–March 2018 | Bernard and Audre Rapoport L'Taken Seminars for Teens |
| February 2018 | Jewish Disability Advocacy and Awareness Day |
| Spring 2018 | Applications open for Machon Kaplan Summer Internship Program for College Students |
| April 2018 | Registration opens for 2018–2019 L'Taken Season |
| Summer | Mitzvah Corps Social Justice Travel for Teens |

ENGAGING WITH THE URJ



I came to the **URJ Scheidt Seminar** thinking I would meet some nice people and have some resources I could integrate into my board leadership. I left feeling inspired to take action.

—Helen Holden, Temple Chai, Phoenix AZ

Thanks to my **URJ Had'rachah Seminar** training, I'm confident as a member of the leadership team, giving a *d'var Torah*, and leading other portions of the service. Knowing that the services we are creating are in line with what is happening in other places in the Reform world is very rewarding.

—Jim Nallick, Congregation Beth Shalom, Bozeman, MT

Thanks to our participation in a **URJ Community of Practice cohort**, not only are we strengthened by the engaged community we're building, but we're empowered to figure out what it means to be a synagogue that nurtures ongoing relationships outside the walls of the building.

—Cantor Mary Thomas, Temple Beth El, Charlotte, NC



My fellow students in **Intro to Judaism** came from various faith traditions and backgrounds. All of our questions were encouraged, and our discussions were robust.

—Jeff S., Miami

I would highly recommend **Intro to Judaism** to anyone seeking more knowledge and understanding of Judaism... I have also been lucky enough to meet some wonderful people that I now consider to be friends.

—Erin B., Los Angeles

As a [congregational] president, **The Tent** has proven to be an invaluable resource. It's been an educational tool, a platform for seeing the creativity and innovation occurring in synagogues, and a sounding board for trying new things.

Barry Deutsch, Temple Menorah, Torrance, CA



