

Applications are due by September 24, 2026*.

Applicants will be notified of their status by October 4, 2026

**rolling admission until filled. space is limited and the program may fill before application deadline.*

JCRC Youth Fellowship for Jewish Identity and Leadership Planning Guide

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Program Overview:

The JCRC Youth Fellowship for Jewish Identity and Leadership is a single school year program designed to empower Jewish high school juniors and seniors to explore and embrace their history, develop leadership skills, and cultivate a deep sense of pride, meaning and joy in their Jewish identity. Through a comprehensive series of interactive learning sessions and engaging field trips, participants will gain a nuanced understanding of Jewish history, culture, and values, while also learning how to articulate their own narratives and advocate for their community. Students will receive a \$1,000 stipend upon successful completion of the fellowship.

Program Goals and Objectives:

- Instill a deep sense of pride, joy, meaning and confidence in fellows regarding their Jewish identity.
- Strengthen fellows' connections to the organizations and resources within the Twin Cities Jewish community.

- Equip fellows with the knowledge and skills to effectively address and combat antisemitism and antizionism they may encounter on college campuses.
- Empower fellows to articulate and share their personal stories and the collective narrative of the Jewish people with clarity and confidence.
- Deepen fellows understanding of Zionism as a movement of Jewish national liberation, “the meeting point between need and longing”.
- Challenge fellows to grapple with the complexity at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict, respecting the role history plays in how we understand the present and think about the future
- Guide fellows in creating a meaningful capstone project that encapsulates and reflects their learning and experiences throughout the fellowship.

Program Staffing:

Sally Abrams, Holly Brod Farber, and selected guest speakers/community leaders

Program Audience:

This program will be open to rising high school juniors and seniors. Students who are selected as fellows will be part of an annual cohort.

Criteria for Choosing Participants:

Students will be required to fill out an application form to be considered for the fellowship. Students will be asked questions pertaining to their Jewish identity, experience with antisemitism, leadership styles, and motivation for joining the fellowship. Upon enrollment, contact information of Youth Fellows will be shared with their fellow participants in order to build a cohesive cohort relationship.

Program Expectations and Stipend Requirements:

To receive the stipend upon completion of the fellowship, fellows will be required to:

- Attend all sessions unless they have an approved absence.
- Complete all assignments.
- Complete a capstone project at the end of the program.
- Attend a capstone projects of peers.
- Complete a pre and post participation survey.

Throughout the fellowship program, students will be expected to complete assignments between each session. These assignments are designed to reinforce learning, encourage critical thinking, and deepen engagement with the material covered. While assignments will be graded

for participation, students will also receive constructive feedback to support their learning and development. In instances where assignments are of low quality or do not meet the specified criteria, they will be returned to the fellow with feedback for correction.

As participants in a prestigious and competitive fellowship, students are expected to maintain a high level of decorum, professionalism, and respectful behavior throughout the program. This includes treating fellow participants, speakers, organizers, and community members with courtesy and respect at all times.

- **Respect:** Show respect for others' opinions, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds. Listen actively and engage in discussions thoughtfully.
- **Professionalism:** Arrive on time to all sessions, dressed appropriately, and prepared to participate fully. Maintain a positive and proactive attitude.
- **Decorum:** Use appropriate language and behavior in all fellowship activities, including online communications and field trips.

Any issues related to student behavior will be promptly addressed by fellowship organizers. Depending on the severity and nature of the issue, the following steps may be taken:

1. **Verbal Warning:** A private discussion with the student to address the behavior and outline expectations for improvement.
2. **Parent Contact:** If the behavior persists or is of serious concern, parents will be contacted to discuss the situation and potential consequences.
3. **Dismissal:** In cases of severe or repeated misconduct, students may be dismissed from the fellowship. This decision will be made at the discretion of the fellowship organizers and will be communicated to both the student and their parents.

Maintaining a respectful and professional environment is crucial for the success of the fellowship and the personal growth of all participants. We trust that each student will uphold these standards and contribute positively to the fellowship community.

JCRC reserves the right to reduce the stipend amount based on participation, attendance, and completion of the requirements.

Absence Policy:

Consistent attendance is essential to succeed in this program. Participants are expected to attend all sessions, notify the coordinator of any absences, and **complete any assigned make-up work by the next session.**

Absence Notifications: Notify the coordinator at least one week in advance for planned

absences. In cases of illness or emergency, notify the coordinator as soon as possible, ideally before the session begins.

Excused Absences: May include weddings, funerals, major academic or extracurricular events, severe illness, medical or family emergencies, and college interviews. All requests are reviewed individually for fairness.

Unexcused Absences: Unexcused absences or failure to submit make-up work will result in a reduction of the program stipend.

By following this policy, participants support a fair, committed, and productive learning environment.

Session Schedule:

- **Sunday, October 11, 2026, 2:30PM – 6:00PM, *Am Yisrael: Roots, Identity, and Connection***
- **Sunday, November 8, 2026, 3:30PM – 6:00PM, *Our Stories, Our Community: The American Jewish Journey***
- **Sunday, December 6, 2026, 3:30PM – 6:00PM, *From Identity to Action: Jewish Diversity and Social Justice***
- **Sunday, January 17, 2027, 3:30PM – 6:00PM, *Rooted: Jewish Peoplehood, Zionism, and the Land of Israel (+ intro to capstone project)***
- **Sunday, February 7, 2027, 3:30PM – 6:00PM, *Stories in Tension: Navigating Complexity Regarding Israel***
- **Sunday March 7, 2027, 3:30PM – 6:00PM, *Antizionism and Israel: Tools for Thoughtful Dialogue***
- **Sunday April 11, 2027, 3:30PM – 6:00PM, *Building Pride & Combatting Hate***
- **Sunday May 16, 2027, afternoon time to be finalized, *Capstone Project Gallery Walk, Reflections, and Closing***

Capstone Project:

The JCRC Youth Fellowship Capstone project serves as the culminating experience of the fellowship program. It has 3 goals:

- Teens will conduct deep research in an area of interest based on any of the topics covered in the Fellowship

- Teens will synthesize their learning into a presentation/program/format that they share with their peers (friends, members of your youth group, JSU, online, synagogue, etc).
- Teens will demonstrate leadership and an ongoing commitment to impacting their community.

Fellows will receive guidance and support to develop their capstone projects from program facilitators. By completing the capstone project and sharing it with peers, students will not only showcase their knowledge and skills, they will contribute meaningfully to the ongoing dialogue surrounding Jewish identity and leadership, creating a ripple effect of learning across the community.

Program Evaluation:

Students in the fellowship must complete surveys before and after the program to receive the stipend. These surveys help measure the program's impact by comparing participants' expectations, knowledge, and attitudes at the start with their experiences, learning, and growth by the end. Results guide improvements for future programs.