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INTRODUCTION

This workbook has been produced through the good efforts of Ann Hartman Luban, past co-chair of JCSA Local Groups; Jeana Rivkin, intern; Sandi Goldstein and Michael Hirschfeld, current co-chairs of JCSA Local Groups; and Brenda Gevertz and Sara Reif of the JCSA Office. It is intended as a starting point and reference. It will be most valuable as each local group adds its own history and materials, as well as sharing these resources with counterparts.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. "

- Margaret Mead

"Do not separate yourself from the community."

- Pirke Avot

Welcome to the JCSA Local Groups Best Practice Manual.

The goal of JCSA is to promote and enhance the roles of Jewish communal professionals by providing these professionals with resources of best practice, professional development, and networking opportunities. By doing so, JCSA is helping these professionals work more effectively and efficiently in building and strengthening the Jewish community and the services that the Jewish community provides. Networking opportunities foster collaboration, build support and increase retention.

While JCSA works on the global level providing resources, research, connections, and career enhancement in a broad spectrum, the vision of the Local Groups is to provide individuals from specific areas the opportunity to come together in a more personal and intimate capacity with a focus on Jewish communal professional development specifically targeted for their community. Local Group associations foster networking, skill-building, career enhancement, collaboration and an appreciation of the magnitude of career opportunities in Jewish communal service. Research demonstrates that these factors contribute to job satisfaction and performance.

In communities and regions across North America, thousands of participants gain an understanding of how their skills and knowledge can be transferable from one organization to another to enhance their careers and advance the Jewish community. Local Groups help recruit and retain quality professionals, expanding an awareness of the totality of practice and new developments. Talent and leadership are recognized and rewarded, providing gratification and personal meaning to career choices and collegial relationships.

Local Groups were created out of a communal need for greater professional development and networking opportunities for Jewish communal professionals at the local level. The history of the development of various Local Groups began in the early 1970s with the formation of the New Jersey, Southern California, and Cleveland Local Groups.

Below is a brief history of the formation of two of these groups:

- New Jersey Association of Jewish Communal Service: The New Jersey Association of Jewish Communal Service was founded in 1970. It originally began as the New Jersey Chapter of the Conference of Jewish Communal Service (the name by which both organizations were known until 1992). Its stated original purpose was to "serve as a forum for the discussion of programs of Jewish communal service on a professional level, and of the application of general professional techniques to service in Jewish communities." The organization also proclaimed as its purpose "the upgrading of personnel standards and practices." To that end, it has, through the years stimulated the interest and enriched the knowledge of a great number of workers in the full spectrum of Jewish communal service in this state. The means has been the presentation, year after year, of programs whose focus has been on issues and concerns that span the various disciplines while emphasizing Judaic content. Since 1985, sponsorship of the organization's institutes and seminars has been through the generosity of the late Horace Bier of Metro West as a memorial to his mother, Pearl S. Bier. Recognition and encouragement to both young practitioners and those with lifetime accomplishments also distinguish NJAJCS. In 1981, Arthur Brody of Metro West established an award in memory of his father, Leo Brody, who had served the Jewish community as a volunteer, both nationally and locally. In 1984, the organization established an annual award "to recognize an outstanding member who has demonstrated, through his or her career in Jewish communal service, a consistent history of professional and personal commitment to the field and to the quality of Jewish life." The first recipient

was the late Saul Schwarz, a founder of the organization, and the award continues in his name.

- Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California: The Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California (JCPSC) organization was formed in 1975. Its goal was to create an interdisciplinary professional community within Jewish communal service in Los Angeles. At the founding, the name was "Southern California Conference of Jewish Communal Service." This was changed to JCPSC several years later to better reflect the work of members as professionals in the Jewish community. JCPSC's mission today, as in the past, includes continuing education, professional development, mentoring, and networking.

We hope that the *JCSA Local Groups Best Practice Manual* will be an effective tool and resource for building and strengthening the Local Group network. It is designed to be a working document, with new materials and ideas added by the leadership of our Local Groups and shared with each other. It is our hope that the materials found herein will guide new Groups in forming and existing Groups in strengthening and further developing their Group. As communities across North America vary in size and scope, so do Local Groups. There is no one right answer that will serve every community, but our goal for this *Manual* is to provide ideas and examples of what has worked in the past, encouraging others to build on those experiences for their own Group.

A great overview of Local Groups, and a good place for nascent Groups to start, is the article "[In the Beginning: Creating a Local Jewish Communal Professional Association](#)" by Goldstein, C., Levenston, R.S., Rothstein, C.B., Weinberg, D.S. (2004).

Local Groups as of October 2009

California: Los Angeles - [Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California](#)

Florida: Miami - [J-Pro Miami](#)

Maryland: Baltimore - [DFI](#)

Massachusetts, Boston JC Pro

Michigan - [Ann Arbor](#)

Missouri - JProStl [St. Louis](#)

New Jersey - [New Jersey Association of Jewish Communal Service](#)

New York - [Advancing Jewish Professionals \(AJP\)](#)

Oregon: Portland J-Pro Portland

Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh Pittsburgh Jewish Communal Network (PJCN)

Texas: Austin J Pro Austin

Washington DC- [J Pro DC](#)

Delaware, Greater Philadelphia, & Southern New Jersey [Tri-State JCPA](#)

Groups in Formation

California: Orange County | *Canada, Ontario:* Toronto

OUTREACH AND BUILDING A GROUP

Outreach. Marketing. Recruitment.

The nuances are different, but the goal is the same – to bring new Jewish Communal Professionals into the Group. There are many different strategies, from a top-down approach that reaches out to Senior Executives to create buy-in for the Group and enlist their support for staff participation, to more grass-roots approaches that reach out directly to line staff. Some Groups are finding success with social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn for providing both general information about their Group and specific information about upcoming events. Email is a critical tool to share information about events, either through a straight text or an html newsletter via Constant Contact or a similar service. Some Groups have an Outreach or Marketing Sub-Committee and assign different people to reach out to different agencies across the community. While time-consuming, a personal relationship always trumps the impersonal. The most challenging aspect of outreach is that professionals change jobs and email addresses, making it important to try to obtain personal as well as work emails so that contact can continue over time.

Generating Executive Buy-In:

Through a formalized letter to agency executives, Local Groups can introduce their Group, inform about their purpose, and seek support in order to grow their membership base. Below is an example of such a letter created by the Cleveland Local Group in 2005.

- [Cleveland Group executive by-in letter](#)

Creating a Brochure:

Creating a brochure for your Local Group network is another effective means of outreach and marketing in order to grow membership as well as possible financial support. Below are examples of brochures created by various Local Groups.

- [JPRO Miami brochure](#)
- [Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California brochure](#)

Other Means:

In order to reach a greater number of Jewish communal professionals within one's geographical area, creating a fan page, such as on Facebook, can be an effective way to generate support, market the group, and constantly bring in new members while providing updated information to existing members. Moreover, using HR executives can be a valuable means to reach Jewish communal professionals from specific organizations or agencies and to promote knowledge about the group. Creating an e-newsletter can also be a useful tool in reaching out to one's local community, keep members updated and involved about Local Group events and programs, as well as disseminate important knowledge to the field.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

As new Local Groups form a group of interested, committed Jewish communal professionals, it is important to make some decisions regarding the structure of the Group's leadership. There is no one single structure shared across all existing Groups. Some Groups have a single President; others have Co-Presidents. Some have a small Board or Committee with very defined roles, while others have larger Steering Committees that are more diffuse with responsibilities divided up for each program or event. The specifics are less critical than the process by which the Group decides how it will operate. Some Groups have annual membership dues in addition to fees for programs (sometimes with program discounts for members), while other Groups do not have formal membership but have lists of local professionals to invite to programs and events, charging fees to cover their costs. Some Groups have formal by-laws, while others have developed Operating Principles or some such similar document. Groups that choose to file for 501c3 tax-exempt status must develop by-laws. Alternatively, Groups can ask a local agency to be their fiscal agent and can thus operate without formal by-laws if they so choose. JCSA has assisted Local Groups as they formalize.

One critical element of a Group's structure is the plan for leadership succession. Groups cannot survive without strong leadership, and leaders cannot remain in place indefinitely. Leadership development and succession planning should be ongoing activities, whether the term of office for the President is one, two or three years. Strategies such as naming a President-Elect or having Co-Presidents with staggered terms help to build for the future while serving the needs of the present.

Group Structure, By-Laws and Operating Procedures

[By-laws of Kehillah](#)

[Operating Procedures of JPROSTL](#)

Samples of Membership Forms

[JCPSC Membership Form](#)

[NJAJCS Membership Form](#)

[Tri-State JCPA Membership Information](#)

LOCAL GROUP GENERAL PROGRAMMING

The main function of the Local Groups is to provide professional development and networking opportunities for Jewish communal professionals on the local level. Professional development programs from various Local Groups take place providing Jewish communal professionals around the country with a chance to network with colleagues, learn new skill-building techniques, and become informed on prevalent and crucial topics facing the Jewish communal profession today. Programs expand across a spectrum of topics including a focus on current economic situations, understanding the Jewish meaning and values underpinning Jewish communal work, technology related programs, specific skill-building sessions, as well as networking get-togethers.

Below are some examples of programs from various Local Groups in 2008-2009.

Examples of past Local Group events

1) Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California (JCPSC): Los Angeles, California.

- a) JCPSC kick-off event. "Who's Really Building the Jewish Community?" Featuring key note speaker Rob Eshman
- b) **JCPSC**: Sustaining Members Channukah Event.
- c) Planning for your Financial Future (for the under 40 crowd)
- d) Thoughts on Jewish Communal Service as a Calling.
- e) Webinar #1 in Webinar series. Web 2.0 "101" Introduction to Social Media and the New Internet. With Lisa Colton
- f) First of a three-part workshop series. Nuts and bolts of becoming a consultant. Hearing from a panel of experts.
- g) The Changing Landscape of Jewish Professional Leadership:
- h) Mentorship event. By invitation only.
- i) Salon #3: Jewish Iron Chef.
- j) Fundraiser's Forum: Panel Presentation.
- k) Welcome to a World of Calm: Finding a Sense of Well-Being in an Anxious World.
- l) Kosher Wine Tasting, Hors D'Ouvres, and Passover Songs.
- m) Webinar #2: Social Networking Tools for Non-Profits.
- n) Shabbat Dinners. Networking opportunity.
- o) Keeping the Jewish in Jewish Communal Professional: Finding Inspiration Even in the Grind

2) J-Pro Miami: Miami, Florida.

- a) Uncertain Times, Tough Decisions, Growing Needs.
- b) Laugh Your Tuchus Off: Speed Networking

3) DFI: Baltimore, Maryland.

- a) The current economy and Jewish communal work.
- b) Kehillah Young Professionals. How to Keep Volunteers Energized and Engaged
- c) Inspiration During Tough Times.
- d) How to Keep Volunteers Energized and Engaged
- e) Kehillah Tikun Program: Are You the Next Jewish Star?

4) JPROSTL: St. Louis, Missouri.

- a) J-PROSTL: "It's a New Year! An overview of the Jewish calendar"
- b) J-PROSTL: Collaborations in an Evolving Community.
- c) St. Louis J-PROSTL Peer Networking: Older Adult Services.

- d) Development Professionals.
- e) Collaborations that Work.
- f) Peer Networking HR issues.
- g) Jewish Non-Profit and Technology. Featuring Lisa Colton
- h) Stepping Forward to Care - A Professional Response.
- i) Peer Networking: Facility Managers.
- j) Maximizing Your Committees & Boards.
- k) Peer Networking: Young Adult Professionals: Career Success through a Jewish lens.
- l) Peer Networking: Senior Services.
- m) Beyond Our Job Descriptions.
- n) Passover Literacy: A Hands-On Workshop.
- o) Strategic Thinking.

5) New Jersey Association of Jewish Communal Service: New Jersey.

- a) Selling Ourselves Without Selling Our Souls: Competing effectively in a secular marketplace.
- b) The Pearl S. Bier Judaic Seminar 2009: Resilience: Building Professional Skills to Endure the Current Economic Climate
- c) The State of the Garden State: A look at the changing demographics in New Jersey.

6) Advancing Jewish Professionals (AJP): New York.

- a) AJP'S kick-off event. Fourth Annual Happy Hour
- b) Economic Woes: How to deal with them as a Jewish communal professional
- c) Cook a Meal for the Homeless.
- d) Deciphering the "J" in Jewish Communal Service.

7) JPRODC: Washington DC.

- a) J PRO DC Wine and Cheese Reception.
- b) Dealing With Difficult People.

8) Tri-State JCPA: Delaware, Greater Philadelphia, & Southern New Jersey.

- a) 21st Century Challenges for Jewish Diplomacy.
- b) Results of the Community Study on Special Needs Survey.
- c) Jewish Population Study.
- d) Staff Supervision and Management.
- e) Service Learning versus Community Service: The Kavannah Approach.
- f) Researching Foundations.
- g) Web 2.0 "101" - Introduction to Social Media and the New Internet.
- h) Dying to Be Thin.
- i) Tri-State JCPA Betty Lowenberg Memorial Program: Issues of Women in Jewish Communal Service.

9) J-PRO Portland:

- a) Networking Hour.

- See also subsection "National Programs" found in section titled "JCSA Affiliation" for more information on Local Group programming as it is connected to the national level

RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

The recognition programs that are currently implemented in various Local Groups become a platform for acknowledging the work of exceptional Jewish communal professionals in one's local community. Recognition programs are an effective and influential means to recognize exemplary service, bring honor to the field, and reinforce best practices. They help to bring groups together, and they not only reward outstanding work and behavior but pay tribute to individual contributions of professional leadership in the Jewish communal field.

Below is an outline of award categories used by various Local Groups, as well as the forms for nominating an individual and the criteria for choosing an award recipient. In most cases, a recognition or award committee is created for this process.

Examples from DFI

DFI presents three awards each year: the Outstanding New Jewish Communal Professional Award, the Twelve Tribes of Israel Award, and the Daniel Thursz award. In the past, the DFI recognition chairs of the committee have selected DFI steering committee members to serve on the selection committee. They are sent the applications for the awards before the selection meeting, and at the meeting use the following criteria along with discussion to make their selections. After the selections are made, the recognition committee chairs contact the recipients who were selected, as well as the people who nominated the nominees that were not selected, and they are encouraged to submit them again the next year.

The criteria were created using the nomination forms as the models. Looking at these criteria helps to extrapolate what was important information to consider.

Outstanding New Jewish Communal Professional Award

Has the nominee demonstrated...:

- The values and mission of DFI?
- Demonstrated a commitment to Jewish Communal Service?
- Demonstrated a commitment to strengthening and enriching Jewish life and identity within a framework of pluralism?
- Approached Jewish communal service in a creative and innovative way?
- Demonstrated ability to work as a team player and work collaboratively in the larger community?
- Demonstrated leadership potential, especially DFI leadership?

Twelve Tribes of Israel Award

Has the nomination demonstrated...:

- Strengthening and enriching Jewish life and Jewish identity in the context of a pluralistic community?
- How has the nomination shown imagination, social vision, creativity, initiative and/or resourcefulness?
- Shown impact for the audience for which it was intended?

Daniel Thursz award

These were ranked 1-5, with 1 being the lowest ranking and 5 being the highest.

Has the nominee...:

- Demonstrated a commitment to strengthening and enriching Jewish life and Jewish identity within a pluralistic framework?
- Served as an agent for social change?

- Served as a role model for less experienced Jewish communal workers?
- Length of service in the field
- Demonstrated excellence with ethical leadership
- Demonstrated excellence in social vision
- Demonstrated excellence with professional skills
- Demonstrated excellence with creativity
- Demonstrated excellence with resourceful
- Demonstrated a commitment to strengthening and enriching Jewish life and Jewish identity within a pluralistic framework

The recipient of the Daniel Thursz award is asked to deliver the D'var Torah at the spring DFI event, and the other award recipients are called up for recognition and respond with brief thank yous. There is a cash award of \$1250 for the Outstanding New Jewish Communal Professional Award to be used for professional development. This has been funded by an anonymous donor.

Examples from JProStl

JProStl award program consist of seven awards in different categories that are presented at one of the JProStl events during the year. Award recipients from each category receive a plaque in recognition of their achievement. The seven categories, with their award descriptions, are as follows:

- Visionary: An *established* professional who has had a *significant* impact on the organization and community through *innovation* in program development, outreach and/or collaborations.
- Emerging Leader: A *young adult* staff person in the field for less than 5 years who demonstrates exceptional initiative, dedication and effectiveness within his/her organization.
- Career Achievement: An *experienced* professional (active or retired in 2008) with over 20 years in the St. Louis Jewish community who has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication and effectiveness throughout his/her career.
- Educator: A *teacher* who nurtures Jewish identity, develops innovative curriculum, is seen as a role model and has a recognized impact at his or her school or agency.
- Mentor: A *manager/supervisor* who is seen as a role model and provides valued leadership, guidance, and support to supervisees and colleagues.
- Chesed/Kindness: A *direct service provider* who provides exceptional care and kindness to clients in residential care, clinical settings or through one-on-one service delivery.
- Dedication: An *administrative support staff*, executive assistant, facilities staff or other support staff member who consistently demonstrates assistance, dedication and effectiveness to colleagues and organization.

Examples from JCPSC

[Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California Six Award Categories](#) with detailed information and nomination form

JCSA PROGRAMMING

National Programs

Through JCSA national programs, the Local Groups have the opportunity to participate together as a group in national conference calls as well as the JCSA Annual Program, which is a one-day conference for Jewish communal professionals. Coming together with one's local community and participating in a conference call offered through JCSA provides a forum for all the Local Groups, and hundreds of other Jewish communal professionals, to unite, learn, and discuss important topics facing and affecting the Jewish communal professional world. During these conference calls, Local Groups have the opportunity to create an event where members not only join to listen to the conference call but can continue with utilizing a local expert to expand upon the topics discussed and connect the topic on a local level. JCSA has also offered Local Group Retreats for all Local Group leaders to come together to learn how to enhance their Local Groups, grow as professionals, and network with colleagues.

March as Professional Development Month

In 2007, JCSA began the initiative "March is Professional Development Month." While focusing on professional development throughout the year, March was designated as a time for increased collaboration and amplified professional development opportunities as a way to promote awareness of the skills and knowledge utilized in the Jewish communal sector. JCSA has designated March for enhanced professional development opportunities as well as the opportunity to promote the celebration and recognition of the professional development programs and initiatives taking place in the Local Groups and Jewish communal sector at large. This becomes a time of enhanced programming, new innovations, and the opportunity for Local Groups to create and partner with JCSA to promote and augment professional development and networking programs. JCSA looks forward to continuing and expanding this initiative of "March as Professional Development Month" as a way to acknowledge dedicated Jewish communal professionals and to enhance professional development for the field.

One initiative by JProStl for March was to create a poster with pictures of local Jewish communal professionals and captions of the values and work that the sector upholds. This poster, titled "Jewish Professional Work: More than Just a Way to Make a Living" was to be distributed in local synagogues and in the community to recognize and highlight the work of the Jewish communal professional sector. ([Click Here](#) to view the poster). This poster has begun to be circulated among Local Groups and adopted and adjusted for other local communities.

During the month of March, JCSA asks that each Local Group organize at least one Local Group event. In 2009, there were ten Local Group activities taking place around the country recognizing the importance of professional development and networking for Jewish communal professionals and the sector at large. Additionally, Local Groups are encouraged to gather participants to listen to JCSA's Continental Conference Calls and develop local tie-ins.

Jewish Book Network

JCSA has established a relationship with the Jewish Book Council and has created the opportunity for Local Groups to enlist specific Jewish authors to present at Local Group events without a speaker's fee. The Jewish Book Network is a program run through the Jewish Book Council in helping authors, who otherwise couldn't afford the opportunity, to spread the message of their writing through book tours and lectures. Through JCSA's membership, the Local Groups are offered the use of the Jewish Book Network in bringing authors to speak at your events. Local Groups will not have to pay individual dues to the Book Council and no

speaker fee is required. Local communities are responsible for transportation and housing. Contact JCSA about an interest with a certain topic area in mind. JCSA will help in identifying an author and will try to find an author in your area to help minimize transportation and accommodation costs. Topics include the Holocaust, History, Israel, Religion, Current Affairs, Contemporary Jewish History, Jewish Life, Self Help, Business, Humor, Philosophy, Education, Relationships, Gender, Psychology, among others.

JCSA AFFILIATIONS

Local Group Support

JCSA helps to ensure that the Local Groups function at an optimal level so they may provide professional development and networking opportunities for the Jewish communal professionals in their communities. JCSA works with the Local Group chairs through numerous conference calls, the new Local Group Google Group page, retreats and consultation in order to ascertain the present needs of the various communities, what the Local Group chairs require to better inform their roles and create their programs, and to connect the Local Group chairs among themselves for further collaboration and community building. Through approximately four or five conference calls a year with Local Group chairs, JCSA creates a forum to identify local issues, potential resources, as well as challenges facing the Local Group communities. JCSA also provides individual consultations, as well as an inventory of community assets and resources on their webpage, for Local Group chairs to start new groups, create program ideas, and identify action plans for best practices in offering professional development and networking opportunities. JCSA also assists in identifying and supplying speakers and works to arrange for JCSA board members or staff to speak at Local Group programs. Local Group members also receive the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, published through JCSA, at a significantly discounted price.

Ensuring and Enabling Communication and Collaboration for Local Groups

JCSA works to remove the geographical barriers separating the Local Groups across North America, creating a holistic network of members of the Jewish communal professional field with the mission of enhancing and promoting professional development, collaboration, and networking. JCSA promotes this coordination and collaboration among the Local Group chairs through conference calls, the Local Group Google Group page, retreats and the Annual Program. Through the Local Group Google Group page, which was created for the purpose of fostering inter group communication, the chairs now have a constant means for virtually connecting and acquiring from one another advice and relevant, helpful information for creating more effective professional development programs. Additionally, through retreats and/or the Annual Program of JCSA, which is a one-day intense professional development seminar, Local Group chairs and members have the chance to come together, meet face-to-face and connect and network.

JCSA Expectations

JCSA's many activities for Local Groups empower and support the Local Group leadership and the Local Group structure to become more qualified, professional, and effective. This provides local Jewish communal professionals with the professional development and networking opportunities that are essential to growing and enhancing skills and knowledge. In return for this support JCSA asks Local Groups to carry the JCSA logo on all promotional materials, website, directory and/or communiqués. In this way we are building recognition of a continental connection linking all of the groups and creating an association that is, in every sense, *the profession of Jewish community service*. Additionally, we also ask you to forward the JCSA monthly e-newsletter to all Local Group members or to share the Local Group list serve so we may do this for you (the list is used for no other purposes and is not shared). Local Group members do not need to become individual members of JCSA, though membership is always welcomed. If you wish to receive copies of the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Local Groups may take advantage of the Local Groups' ability to order the Journals in bulk. Several groups do this as a way of promoting the advantages of affiliation. Bulk subscriptions are \$10 each, annual cost, and are sent to one designated person in the group for distribution at meetings. (Regular subscriptions are \$36 annually).

