



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**

**MS-831: Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980–2008.**

Series C: Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE). 1988–2003.

Subseries 3: Lead Communities, 1988–1997.

---

Box  
30

Folder  
5

"Document #3: Selection Criteria", undated.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the  
American Jewish Archives website.

---

[DRAFT #1]

## LEAD COMMUNITIES

A Project of the

*For*  
Council on Initiatives in Jewish Education  
ARCHIVES

Document #3:

SELECTION CRITERIA

The aim of the Lead Community selection process is to identify the applicants that have the greatest chance of succeeding at the goal of significantly increasing the effectiveness of Jewish education in their community. These criteria provide measures for the selection process to proceed fairly and impartially. They attempt to identify the structures, capabilities, and other enabling elements necessary for a community to succeed, while providing ample opportunity and flexibility for locally tailored approaches and community inventions.

Each lead community applicant and its proposal will be reviewed in four areas:

- leadership and the depth of community commitment;
- programs;
- financial resources; and
- planning.

These criteria support the two-stage process for selecting lead communities -- that is, 1) using short preliminary proposals to determine whether a community is eligible and as a screening device to identify finalists, and 2) selecting the lead communities based upon the evidence put forward in their full proposals and from site visits to each of the finalist communities.

## **Preliminary Proposal**

Preliminary proposals will be assessed based upon four criteria:

- Eligibility as measured by the size of the Jewish community;
- Community preparedness and leadership;
- Commitment; and
- Vision and "Promise".

### Eligibility

The applicant must be the Jewish community for a Jewish population center of 15,000 to 300,000 people. "Jewish community" is defined as residing within an area defined and recognized by the Council of Jewish Federations. Although many kinds of communities exist apart from geographic ones, identifying specialized and unique communities would defeat the replicability objective of the Lead Communities project.

### Community Preparedness and Leadership

Is the community positioned to move forward by virtue of its leadership, involvement of key institutions and constituencies, previous planning and improvement efforts in Jewish education? These questions will be evaluated in the following ways:

- Representative Committee: A committee composed of lay leaders, rabbis, educators, and other professionals must guide the project. The representativeness, the demonstrated commitment and accomplishment on behalf of Jewish



continuity, and the vision and leadership qualities of the people serving on that committee are more important than sheer numbers of members.

The committee, to be fully identified by the final proposal, may still be in formation when the preliminary proposal is submitted. In this case, an outline of the structure of the committee (e.g. what constituents will be included), and the cover letter to the proposal will be reviewed for credibility about claims of broad community support.

*must* \_\_\_\_\_  
□ Communal Leader: A distinguished local communal leader ~~needs to~~ be identified in the preliminary proposal as prospective chair of the lead communities committee.

*should present evidence of*  
*attesting to* Evidence in the cover letter to the preliminary proposal ~~attesting to~~ the willingness of the prospective chair to serve. ~~could substantiate that the claims of the proposal are real.~~  
*Supply* The credentials of the proposed chair will be reviewed.

□ Central Address: One or more central communal organizations should be designated as the recipient and contact for lead community transactions. The Federation, the central Jewish educational agency, a congregational council, an ad hoc community-wide entity for Jewish education, are examples of agencies that singly or in combination can be designated as the coordinator of the project.

Proposals will be reviewed for evidence of multi-agency collaboration, in addition to designating the central address.

□ Planning Capability: Planning is at the heart of the Lead Communities project. Applicants should indicate both past activities and the on-going professional capacity of the community to engage in planning for Jewish education. Past and current activities could include blue ribbon commissions, broad-based studies by boards or committees of community-wide agencies, or professional planning staff. How the applicant intends to strengthen its planning process through the Lead Community project will shed light on its understanding of and commitment to ongoing planning as

an element in taking action.

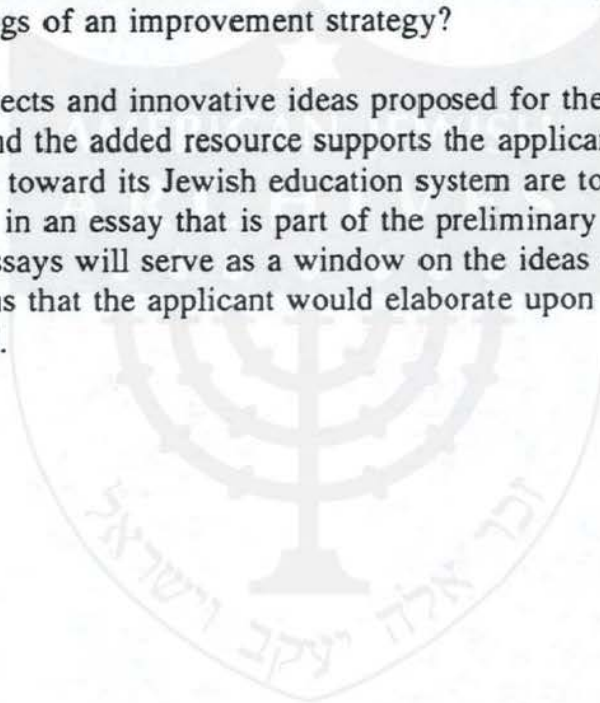
### Commitment

How clearly and convincingly has the community expressed its commitment to the improvement of Jewish education?

### Vision and "Promise"

How well has the community articulated its view of the content of Jewish education? Does the community have the beginnings of an improvement strategy?

The projects and innovative ideas proposed for the first two years, and the added resource supports the applicant expects to direct toward its Jewish education system are to be outlined in an essay that is part of the preliminary proposal. These essays will serve as a window on the ideas and intentions that the applicant would elaborate upon in a full proposal.





## **Final Proposal**

A limited number of applicants will be asked to prepare full proposals that elaborate on the preliminary proposal, lay out details of their first year plans as a lead community, and give evidence of their capacity to carry out their ambitions.

Full proposals will be evaluated in the same terms as preliminary proposals, but with greater depth on the basis of more substantiation. One additional criterion will be employed: the capacity of the community to carry out its commitment and vision. In order to determine the finalist's strength in each of the four areas (leadership, program, financial resources, and planning) the review will consider:

- previous record in Jewish education;
- the depth and breadth of community commitment to improving Jewish education;
- vision and imaginativeness with respect to program and system improvement; and
- promise, that is, evidence of capacity to carry out improvement plans, as expressed by the methods and resources it puts forward.

### Leadership and Community Commitment

In the final proposal, the composition of the local lead communities committee should be fairly well identified. Any unresolved issues regarding the communal leader or the central address should be clarified.

How the applicant proposes to manage the project will also be examined. Will there be a professional director, a staff, and if so, who are the persons proposed to fill these roles?

The final proposal may also elaborate upon the community's past record of collaborative ventures. Advocacy partnerships, volunteer contributions and other demonstrations of cooperation in Jewish education will help reveal the depth and breadth of community involvement and its ability to work collectively.

#### Program: Content of Change

There are several content criteria an applicant must satisfy and/or address.

Record of Innovation. The community's record of risk-taking and innovation in Jewish education, including its demonstrated willingness to question conventional approaches and assumptions, will be examined as a measure of its propensity to conceive and carry out creative projects in the future.

Progress with Intransigent Problems. Jewish communities throughout the nation are struggling to find answers to a host of issues such as: sporadic participation, ~~ways of~~ upgrading the profession of Jewish educator, ~~defining~~ minimum standards of performance, ~~attracting~~ new talent to the field, ~~designing~~ programs for children with exceptional needs. The applicant's past successes in tackling tough problems are a measure of its resolve.

Multi-levels of Program Improvement. The lead community project is a ~~holistic~~ holistic approach to infusing new energy and enthusiasm into Jewish education. Well-conceived programs addressed to specific purposes are the building blocks for improving the system. But just as the vibrancy of Judaism inextricably links the individual and the community, individual programs in isolation in the long run will not succeed. A coherent and comprehensive set of program offerings is the task to be accomplished through this project.



With this in mind, proposals should describe how the applicant plans to address in the first two years of the project at least:

- 3 out of 5 consumer age groups (pre-school; pre-bar/bat mitzvah; post bar/bat mitzvah; college age and young adults; adults and seniors)
- 2 out of 3 education settings (supplementary, day school, college/university degree programs)
- formal and informal programs

Community-wide Governance and Delivery Systems: It is important that the structure of the community's Jewish education system be reconsidered as it facilitates or impedes the development of programs to address longstanding problems in Jewish education.

Building <sup>The</sup> Profession of Jewish educator: Jewish educators are the primary resource available to educate our young people. "The medium is the message" applies to the Jewish education profession. Who we hire to teach our children and how we treat them explicitly signals the importance we attach to the endeavor. Our vision is nothing less than to transform this into a profession one can be proud of, that carries renewed stature in the Jewish community.

At a minimum, applicants must include plans that, starting in year 1, extend and intensify presently available professional development opportunities and/or on-the-job training programs.

Over the course of the project it is expected that proposals will be developed to deal with the more difficult professional issues, such as:

- expanding the capacities and numbers of graduates from training institutions;
- recruiting increasing numbers of qualified personnel;
- raising salaries and benefits of educational personnel;
- developing new career track opportunities; and
- increasing the empowerment of Jewish educators.

Parents and children: The future of the Jewish community will be determined by our children, not by us. Nevertheless, parents more than teachers or community planners play the essential role in passing on traditions and beliefs.

Just as parents are the path to children, children can be the path to parents. Both sides of this equation should be addressed in the applicant's proposal.

Israel experience: There is considerable evidence that Israel experiences have substantial formative impact on dedication to a Jewish way of life. Study in Israel also intensifies commitment to careers in Jewish education. For these reasons, applicants are required to offer plans to expand opportunities for visits to Israel.



### Financial Resources

The revitalization of Jewish education will require a substantial increase in funding. With rare exceptions, communities have not viewed Jewish education as a <sup>top</sup> priority. New interest by private foundations in Jewish education, which will be tapped by this Lead Community project, is an encouraging development. Realistically, however, the major support for Jewish education will have to come from community sources.

The level of funding is a clear and significant measure of commitment. Whether a community is wealthy or not, its level of effort and its decisions on its allocations of available resources are a statement of its values. Past allocations of resources for Jewish education -- per capita measures of wealth, contributions and percentages of available funds allotted to Jewish education -- are to be stated in the proposal.

Plans to increase the level of local support, and/or to modify the distribution of current funds for better results also must be addressed by the applicant. Measures of future financial resource commitment, to be evaluated with an eye toward the balance between ~~ambitions~~ and realism, could include:

- increased targets in annual fund drives;
- higher allocations of available funds to Jewish education;
- pledges of support to specific programs.



## Planning

Planning is at the heart of the Lead Communities project.

*The* Applicant's past activities and the on-going professional capacity of the community to engage in planning for Jewish education will be examined. Past and current activities could include blue ribbon commissions, *or* broad-based studies by boards or committees of community-wide agencies, *or* professional planning staff. *the depth of* The community's prior planning efforts, and how the applicant intends to strengthen its planning process through the Lead Community project will be reviewed against the following specific tasks:

- Assessment of the state of Jewish education in the community. (Includes compilation, analysis and regular updating of demographic, enrollment, personnel resources *and* other baseline information.)
- Needs and resources: methodical determinations of priority needs in Jewish education and analysis of available resources.
- Goal and priority setting: explicit statements about priorities and the strategy for achieving them.
- Multi-year planning: an integrated implementation plan for improving educational effectiveness.
- Monitoring and evaluation: a structure *together and* with the resources *for* necessary to carry it out for assessing whether plans are meeting targets, *using CITE systems.*

## Application of the Criteria

Panels of experts with broad perspectives, including communal professionals and Jewish educators, will assist CIJE staff and consultants at both phases of the process in screening applicants -- in reviewing proposals and in making finalist site visits.

They will be guided by checklists to determine baseline eligibility, together with rating sheets to evaluate applicants against each criterion.

It is anticipated that proposals initially will be grouped in categories of "YES", "NO", or "MAYBE". Those proposals falling at the margins will be scrutinized more closely using the ratings. Recommendations, strengths, and weaknesses then will be assembled on every proposal for review by the Lead Communities Committee of the CIJE Board.

The Lead Communities Committee of the CIJE Board will select finalists and will prepare a set of recommendations to present for final decision to the full CIJE Board of Directors.