

Jewish Education Funding Landscape

According to data we collect from our grantees, there are over 100 staffed foundations and federations that support initiatives that the Jim Joseph Foundation also supports. Collaborations with these fellow investors has helped us develop a sophisticated understanding of the Jewish education funding landscape. This document provides a summary of some of the important differences and similarities between the Jim Joseph Foundation and these other funders:

What We Fund

The Jim Joseph Foundation is not alone in its interest in supporting powerful Jewish learning experiences for young learners of all backgrounds. **However, we hear from grantees working in settings like day school and camp that our preference for funding more intensive forms of learning experiences makes us unique. Grantees that provide lighter-touch engagement programs tend to have a much easier time attracting other sources of funding.**

Similarly, while we have identified some funders who are willing to join us in investing in professional development for leaders and educators, these partners are much harder to find. This is especially the case when it comes to supporting the training of Jewish educators.

In a world that is highly polarized, the Jim Joseph Foundation has a reputation for being uniquely apolitical, focusing on education as opposed to advocacy. Most of our funding partners have political preferences that influence their grantmaking. Our foundation's more neutral stance has led to us being viewed as an "honest broker", enabling us to partner with a variety of different funders.

Lastly, it is important to note that most of our funding partners have more expansive portfolios that include other forms of Jewish communal support and/or support for secular causes. The Jim Joseph Foundation is the largest foundation exclusively focused on Jewish education.

How and Where We Give

The Jim Joseph Foundation's long-time commitment to following [best practices](#) in effective philanthropy is relatively uncommon in the Jewish philanthropy sector. These practices include our relational approach to working with grantee partners; our bias towards giving larger, unrestricted, multi-year grants; and our willingness to invest in capacity building and evaluation.

While we work with a handful of other national funding partners who have adopted these practices, most prefer to provide smaller, shorter, restricted grants. Some also strictly limit the amount of their funding that grantees can spend on overhead expenses.

While the Jim Joseph Foundation is not the only *national* funder supporting Jewish education, the vast majority of the funders and philanthropic dollars for Jewish education comes from local and regional foundations and federations.

Many of our funding partners also run grantmaking programs to support nonprofits in Israel. Some support other diaspora Jewish communities in Europe, the Former Soviet Union, and South America. We are the only Jewish education funder whose giving is restricted to supporting youth and young adults in the United States.

How We Are Structured

Important aspects of the Jim Joseph Foundation's structure include: the degree to which decision-making responsibility is delegated to its professionals, the presence of an articulated strategy with grant categories, the ability to be flexible to respond to changing needs, the systems we have in place to make grants quickly when needed, and the size of our grantmaking team (8 people).

Most of our funding partners are driven by a living donor and operate with more loosely defined strategies. The ability to be flexible and move quickly is highly variable with some being able and some not. While a handful have teams of program officers, the majority have at most one or two staff people working on grants to Jewish causes. Those with smaller staffs often reach out to Jim Joseph Foundation program officers for expertise when they are conducting due diligence.

It is also important to note that while most of our funding partners are comfortable being named as supporters, a handful choose to give anonymously some or all the time.

Major Funding Partners

Below is a sampling of other Jewish education funders and a short description of how we are similar and different:

- [Crown Family Philanthropies](#) – Overlapping interests and approaches; funds Jewish education at a similar level both national and local (in Chicago); smaller team moves more slowly with all major Jewish grants made at semi-annual board meetings.
- [Schusterman Family Philanthropies](#) – Overlapping interests, approaches, and structure; stronger interest in Jewish engagement, less in Jewish education and Jewish educators; funds nationally and internationally.
- [UJA-Federation of New York](#) - Overlapping interests and approaches. Local focus is on New York City, but increasingly participating in national initiatives and collaborations; most funding is year-to-year.
- [Circle of Service Foundation](#) – Overlapping interests and approaches but with a mostly local focus on Chicago; giving levels are not as high as ours; funding is anonymous; Jewish grantmaking is run by a one-person team.
- [Maimonides Fund](#) – Overlapping interests around Jewish education and educators; mostly provides one-year program-specific restricted grants with activist involvement from program officers; increasingly operating its own programs; some grants are anonymous.
- [Marcus Foundation](#) – Overlapping interests; funds at a larger level both national and local in Atlanta, often with restrictions; one-person Jewish grantmaking team moves much more slowly with a less defined strategy.
- [William Davidson Foundation](#) – Overlapping interests and approaches but with a local focus on Detroit; giving levels are not as high as ours and strategy is less defined; Jewish grantmaking is a two-person team.
- [Mandel Foundation](#) – Overlapping interests in Jewish leaders and educators but most programs it funds are operated by Mandel; the board approves some large external grants but they make those decisions without a formal strategy or professional grantmaking team.

Emerging Jewish Education Funding Partners

Jim Joseph Foundation senior professionals also dedicate time to cultivating relationships with and advising foundation partners with growing interest in Jewish education whose strategies

are still under development. For example, the Koum Family Foundation is increasing its Jewish education grantmaking both nationally and locally (in the Bay Area) and leans on us for ideas and deal flow. Other Foundations who fit this category include the Friedkin Foundation, H & F Baker Foundation, Leon Levine Foundation, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, and the Zalik Foundation.