



Starting a JGS—The First Steps—United States

Before you begin, contact major local Jewish leaders, president(s) of local synagogues, Jewish Federations or other Jewish groups and any historian, librarian, archivist, director of newspaper, scientific (geneticist), genealogist, etc. who may have any link to our purpose to have them involved beginning with the first meeting. The organizing committee should be as diverse as possible, with representatives from all walks of Judaism as well as socio-economic levels.

Agenda Suggestions:

1. 1st Organizational meeting agenda:
 - Determine if there is adequate interest in creating a Jewish Genealogical Society in the XXXX area. If so:
 - o establish purpose of society and membership benefits
 - o decide on a name for the organization
 - o establish by-laws or governing document
 - o check locally for any requirements for formation and/or registration of a non-profit/charitable organization. These regulations vary between countries and, in some cases, between states, counties or other local governments. Another, similar organization such as a mainstream genealogical group or synagogue may provide some guidance.
 - o elect an interim board of directors
 - o establish administrative procedures
 - o establish budget including membership fee structure
 - o determine how to best publicize the organization to interested parties
 - o determine where to hold general meetings, etc.
2. Follow up to 1st organizational meeting:
 - Complete the IAJGS application form and payment (minimum \$18) (requires 10 names of members, and board members with email contact) and governing document that states you are not for profit (can be bylaws)
 - Obtain an EIN from the IRS (1-800-829-4933) **US only**
 - Decide on whether you want to be covered under the IAJGS 501(c)(3). If so, send a note to IAJGS Treasurer (treasurer@iajgs.org) to that effect. If sent by the beginning of September, you will get in for this year's filing otherwise submission to IRS will have to wait to following September. (It remains the organization's responsibility to file each year with IRS) **US only**
 - Set up a (free) checking account unless part of a larger organization (i.e. an historical society or museum) that has an account which is accessible to the genealogy society
3. 2nd organizational & planning meeting
 - Secure program/speaker for first public meeting
 - Create membership kit
 - Do publicity for meeting, contact local press, etc.
 - Set up website/blog/Facebook page
4. Hold 1st public general meeting

Mailing List Suggestions:

Jewish organizations, Jewish newspapers and newsletters, JewishGen mailing by zip code.

Other PR: flyers at Jewish organizations, genealogy and historical societies and libraries, local press.

Program Suggestions:

- How to Do...
- Getting Started on Your Jewish Genealogy (How to fill out a tree, capture what you know, ...)
- Holocaust video
- Judaica or Jewish Studies librarian or professor
- Jewish resources in your area

New Membership Kit Suggestions:

- Welcome letter
- Ancestral chart (4 generation) [obtainable off internet]
- List of key books
- List of family tree software programs
- List of 2-3 Key websites (2 pages)
- List of SIGs
- Getting Started InfoFiles (JewishGen/Family History)
- List of local genealogical resources (libraries, family history centers, etc.)