Starting a JGS: JOINING IAJGS

Deborah Long, Triangle Jewish Genealogical Society (2015) Revised 2022

The **International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)** is an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) umbrella organization with membership spanning more than 90 Jewish genealogical societies in the US and around the world. IAJGS provides information on starting a JGS and guidance to organizations as they mature. Among its benefits is the opportunity to participate under its umbrella in securing federal tax-exempt status. Each year IAJGS puts on an international conference on Jewish genealogy with several programs designed to support the leadership of a JGS. By bringing similar groups together through a variety of vehicles it allows each group to benefit from the shared knowledge and experiences of the larger group.

Joining IAJGS is easy:

Any non-profit organization whose principal purpose is to promote Jewish genealogy shall be eligible for regular membership in IAJGS if it meets the following criteria:

- It has at least 10 dues-paying members.
- Holds regular meetings at least quarterly or conducts meaningful ongoing activities relating to Jewish genealogy at least 4 (four) times a year, or publishes a newsletter, journal or any electronic form of publication at least 2 (two) times a year, or convenes an electronic discussion group, or undertakes other significant Jewish genealogical research projects.
- Has elected officers
- Adheres to the objectives of IAJGS bylaws.

The membership also allows for Special Interest Groups (SIG) as members if they are associated with a fiscal sponsor or nonprofit whose purpose is to promote genealogy.

- They must meet the same criteria noted above regarding dues-paying members and meetings, activities or publications requirements.
- Elected officers must be either of the SIG or the fiscal sponsor of the organization with which it is associated.

Additional membership categories include the following categories of nonvoting members:

Virtual Members are organized for purposes other than profit with the principal purpose of promoting Jewish genealogy.

- They may hold meetings only online
- Do not have dues-paying members or elected officers.

Associate members are other organizations (whether or not organized for profit) that do not qualify for any of the other classes of membership. Such organizations may include (but are not limited to) genealogical societies, family associations, historical societies, libraries or archives, educational institutions, or genealogical vendors.

The application form and more information can be found here:
https://www.iajgs.org/membership/membership-application/