

**Organizing a Jewish Genealogical Society –
A Handbook for Founders and Leaders**

By the International Association of Jewish
Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)

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The IAJGS Board is very grateful to Susan Weinberg for leading the successful effort to revise this handbook. In conjunction with this revision, we have linked the handbook to a related project which enhances the scope of this document. In 2015 Deborah Long expanded on this handbook to create a series of articles for the IAJGS website focused on *Starting a JGS*. In 2022, Deborah updated the earlier articles and, together with Susan, created additional material to address the next steps in the life of a society: growing and sustaining a JGS. The result of their collaboration, a series of essays on *Starting, Growing and Sustaining a JGS*, found on the IAJGS website and incorporated into this handbook, is greatly appreciated.

We also want to acknowledge the previous updates to this document led by Mark Nicholls, Janette Silverman, Daniel Dratwa, Anne Feder Lee and Michael Brenner. Carol Davidson Baird deserves recognition and gratitude for creating the original handbook.

In 1998, when the handbook was first published, IAJGS leadership anticipated that it would be a very useful tool for those founding new Jewish Genealogical Societies. Their expectations proved to be correct, and we trust that this guidebook in its expanded form will continue to be of value not only for those who want to start new JGSs, but for leaders of existing societies who are looking for ideas to help their societies grow and flourish.

Jane Rosen Berenbeim, President

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Introduction

Congratulations! You have decided to create a Jewish Genealogical Society.

With this handbook, the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies is delighted to support you as you create a Jewish genealogical society. Everyone always says that something should be done, and somebody should be doing it, but they usually want and wait for someone else to do it. This handbook is designed to aid you in becoming that someone, a person who desires to associate with other Jewish genealogists for mutually sharing research techniques, stories and discoveries.

Jewish Genealogical Societies exist worldwide, covering geographical areas ranging from whole countries to small towns. Those starting a society in smaller communities may not be able to do all things suggested in this handbook and those considering societies covering a whole country may have more issues to consider. Therefore, we hope you will always keep the following in mind: each group does what it can, given available resources. Your group can be highly successful, and your efforts well rewarded, regardless of location or membership size.

The nature of Jewish genealogy is different from that of most other people. It is much more about connecting with family, no matter how distant the relationship and far away the family.

The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies welcomes your new organization, the world of Jewish genealogical societies welcomes you to their family, and we all wish you success and continued enthusiasm.

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1 Who Should You Target for Membership?

A Jewish genealogical society in your geographical area will attract many types of people.

You should look to target a wide variety of potential members, including but not exclusively: Beginners; Intermediates; Experts; Non-Jew with Jewish Ancestors or Relatives; Young People; Academics; and Students.

Some who join will be beginners who want to pass on their family history to their children and grandchildren but need to know how to accomplish such a task. Others will be hobbyists who want to learn how to synthesize their memorabilia into collections for posterity, and still others will be family historians who want to contribute their research to the larger Jewish genealogical family.

Some members attracted to a Jewish genealogical society will be Jews looking for lost or forgotten relatives, university historians looking for information about your Jewish community and communities around the world, Holocaust survivors and their families still searching for loved ones lost during the Shoah, non-Jews looking for their Jewish heritage, adoptees looking for their biological parents, grandparents looking for ways to relate their life stories to their families, school-age children learning about the immigration of Jews who want to place their family in the context of world history, rabbis and Hebrew school teachers who want to learn how to teach their congregants and students how to get in touch with their Jewish heritage, and, of course, community members who just want to be a social part of a new Jewish organization.

You will want to welcome all these individuals into your society to create a membership that is a diverse mix of interests and expertise.

[Growing a JGS: Attracting Members](#)

2 Creating Your New Society

2.1 Planning Your First Meeting

Planning for the first meeting is very important and you should undertake most if not all of the following:

- Obtain information about the legal and statutory requirements for setting up a non-profit organization in your location. These can vary greatly from place to place so talk to other similar organizations or umbrella organizations such as IAJGS about the legal requirements to see what you need to do.

[Starting a JGS: Organizing Structure](#)

- Contact other people in your geographical area with an interest in starting a JGS to see if there is support for one.
- Contact people through various lists who live in the locality or have an interest in research in the locality – use JewishGen, Special Interest Groups, social media, etc. to find these people.
- Try to ensure that at least one of the attendees has legal knowledge to deal with questions about statutory requirements.
- email or phone personal contacts and encourage those people to contact people they know who might be interested.
- Select a venue for the meeting: meeting in a house is fine and may help people feel relaxed; and
- Send out a short agenda with main issues to be discussed.

[Starting a JGS: Organizing the First Meeting](#)

2.2 Publicizing Your First Meeting

Publicity may be necessary for your first meeting, especially if direct approaches have not generated many attendees:

- Publicize the meeting through genealogy lists, social media, use local media, Jewish community newsletters, relevant archives, library local studies sections.
- Write a publicity article for inclusion in relevant newspapers, newsletters, specialist family history publications, and blogs.
- Create a flyer about the new society to distribute to relevant community and public locations; and
- Do not create a website yet.

2.3 Conduct Your First Meeting

Again, planning is the key to ensuring that the meeting is a success. Make sure everyone knows everyone else at the meeting, if there are a lot of people use name badges. The meeting should address a number of issues in principle first:

- Discuss what the nature of the JGS will be and think about different models for the setup of the JGS before committing to one idea:
 - Stand-alone
 - Part of a general Genealogical Society or Family History Society

- Part of a Historical Society
- Part of a community organization/museum

Being a stand-alone organization gives you a great deal of freedom in how you can operate, especially in relation to finance and organizational planning. However, you need to ensure you have the right people to set them up and then run things. Being part of an existing organization means that you would not need to sort out most of the legal and financial issues and would be supported by the organization's administration. The downside might be a loss of independence in making choices about what the society does.

- Consider the geographic area to be covered by the Society: will it be very local? Based on a town or city; or on a state/province/region-wide basis; or even country-wide.
- If there are other JGSes in the geographic area, think about possible clashes and duplication of coverage.
- Consider the basic organization of the JGS. What will the Positions on the Board be? Membership arrangements (cost and payment methods), website, publications (newsletter and/or journal), schedule and location of meetings, library location.
- Financial, legal and statutory requirements need to be discussed. Consider issues such as insurance requirements. Look to other organizations for advice on obtaining low-cost insurance or buying insurance through policies.
- Think about the name of your new JGS and its logo.

To get the most out of the meeting allow everyone to participate and put forward ideas. Make notes of key decisions and actions, and who will undertake actions. Circulate the notes afterwards to all attendees.

Above all don't set initial goals that are too broad and likely to cause problems at the outset.

[Starting a JGS: Holding the First Meeting](#)
[Starting a JGS: First Meeting Follow-up](#)

2.4 Second Organizational Meeting

This meeting should be the one where things start to crystallize, and it will be clear that your JGS is going to be viable. Firstly, re-invite all people contacted first time round and anyone else who has expressed an interest in helping. The meeting should:

- Discuss progress with actions from the first meeting and sign off completed actions.

- Start to look at programming for public meetings.
- Start to draw up constitution and by-laws, draw up duties for officers, set up a sub-committee to draw up the documents (see sample documents in this handbook). If a Secretary has been selected, that should be the person taking the lead on these matters – Sample By-laws can be found at [Appendix 6](#).

[Starting a JGS: Developing Bylaws](#)

- Set a basic budget.
- Agree on the banking arrangements and set up an account.

[Starting a JGS: Obtaining a Bank Account](#)

- Start design of publicity material for the JGS, such as [brochures](#), posters, and flyers.
- Consider setting out branding guidelines to ensure consistency in all communications; and
- Agree on website layout and consider if you want to create members' only offerings, such as internal discussion lists, databases, newsletters etc.

2.5 Third Organizational Meeting

This meeting should be used to finalize organizational matters, including:

Confirmation of Board officers (depending on statutory requirements in the location, this may require an Annual Meeting of all members or a set quorum to be legal);

Adoption of the Constitution and By-Laws (again depending on statutory requirements in the location, this may require an Annual Meeting of all members or a set quorum to be legal).

Signing off on publicity material and branding guidelines.

Agree on the first public meeting date and location, and the topic for presentation; and

Finalize the design and content of your Newsletter and/or Journal.

3 Administrative Details for Organization

3.1 Board Officers

Below are suggested Officer Posts for the Board and sample duties for the Officers. These are for guidance only and some duties can be undertaken by different Officers. Small organizations will not need to fill every post, with Officers undertaking more than one role.

[Starting a JGS: Leadership Job Descriptions](#)

President: conduct future meetings until the society's first election, sign official documents (i.e., incorporation papers and bank account documents), and be a resource person to the other members of the organizing committee.

Vice-President: Take charge of programming (develop ideas, acquire speakers, and create fliers), and conduct meetings in the absence of the president, as well as help the president find a permanent meeting place.

Treasurer: Draw up a preliminary budget, open a bank account, and work with the secretary to apply for non-profit status and incorporation (as applicable in your country or state).

Secretary: Take minutes of the board meetings and annual meeting; create the organizational documents (constitution, articles of incorporation, and by-laws), and acquire the papers necessary for non-profit status and incorporation.

Membership chair: Create the society's membership brochure; oversee collecting membership fees and sending them to the treasurer, as well as keeping an up-to-date mailing list of the members and others receiving your mailings, providing labels for mass mailings or an email list for sending information by e-mail.

Program chair: (The vice-president could hold this position): Develop ideas for programming and acquire speakers, relate the specifics to the publicity chair, and arrange for the correct room configuration at each meeting.

Publicity chair: Create meeting notices, fliers, and publicity articles for distribution to the community. Ensure branding guidance is adhered to.

Library chair: Assemble a priority list of the necessary resources to acquire for the society, make arrangements to purchase materials, arrange for a place to keep library collection, and supervise use of it.

Newsletter chair or Newsletter Editor: Create and edit your society's newsletter. If newsletters are physically mailed, rather than emailed, a committee may be necessary to take care of the mailing.

Hospitality chair: Organize refreshments for meetings and special events; greet prospective members at meetings, make sure they have nametags and feel welcomed to your society.

If appointed early on, the secretary and treasurer should form a committee to create a mission statement for the society and draft a constitution and/or by-laws. As laws in different localities may differ, they should be reviewed to make certain your documents comply. If your membership already includes them, it will be very helpful if the committee includes a lawyer or tax expert.

This committee should also review the requirements for laws of incorporation in your country, state, province or country. Those groups forming in the United States should request information from the IAJGS to determine if they qualify for U.S. IRS 501(c)(3) tax exemption, and if they do qualify, should consider taking advantage of IAJGS's IRS 501(c)(3) tax exemption group membership. Check to see if there are comparable tax provisions in your country.

[Starting a JGS: Getting IRS Status](#)

3.2 Preliminary Budget

You will need to consider what upfront costs need to be met and how to fund them. Consider approaching organizations and individuals that provide seed funding, charitable trusts both Jewish and non-Jewish, businesses, individual philanthropists, and so on.

You should plan for a modest budget to start with to cover your main costs and provide enough to deliver publicity. You should think about how you will build up contingency funds and reserves to meet any unexpected expenditures.

See [Appendix 5](#) for a simple example budget.

3.3 Insurance

Insurance requirements will vary in different countries and the relevant requirements should be checked out before going too far. There may be public liability insurance, trustee insurance and other form of insurance that are required by law.

3.4 Considerations When Creating Your Budget

Income

The key things to consider about generating income are:

- Be realistic about potential membership levels when setting expected income levels from dues.
- Seek donations but don't rely on them to fund core activities.

- Look at possible commercial activities and opportunities from the work the Society does to generate income, again do not rely on them to fund core activities.
- Consider the charging system that you want to operate for non-members attending events.
- Develop links with commercial organizations such as Ancestry, FindmyPast, Amazon, Family Tree DNA, etc. to receive income for any click-through to their sites from your website.

Expenses

Expenditure needs to be tightly controlled to avoid financial shortfalls. To do this:

- Set out the main expenses, breaking them down into relevant categories including initial set up costs, capital costs, operating costs, publicity, insurance, equipment hire, etc.
- Include all overhead that the organization will be responsible for at meeting locations.
- Consider the timing of expenditure to ensure that there will be sufficient funds available to meet the cost.
- From the start consider ways of reducing costs, such as using free meeting spaces and using members' skills for free. Free on-line resources for meetings and speakers, such as webinars are an effective way of getting good quality lectures.

3.5 Library and Resource Acquisitions

A good library and resource center will help your members in doing their research and be a big draw for non-members. The library should not be a lending library to start with, if at all. Some key things to consider when setting up a library are:

- If possible, get a permanent location for the library.
- If a permanent location isn't available, consider mobile library storage cabinets.
- Get donations of books from members, look on-line for cheap deals on relevant books and check-out second-hand bookstores for useful books.
- Acquire relevant electronic media and records, get library subscriptions to paid for providers such as Ancestry.

- Before and after you set up your own library, advise members about local or national resources on Jewish and general genealogy, including libraries, LDS Family History Centers, other genealogy societies, synagogues and community center libraries.
- Organize volunteers to assist in the library, helping visitors with finding the right material to look at.
- Get members to bring their own resources to share at meetings.
- The primary books that you should try to acquire should be key reference books that cover each of the main geographic areas that Jews have migrated from and also where they have settled now. Local histories covering your locality should also be a priority.

See [Appendix 8](#) for a list of possible books.

[Growing a JGS: Starting a Library](#)

Additional information created by the IAJGS Library Liaison can be found at:

[How to Build a Jewish Genealogy Library from Scratch](#)

[Critical Books for a Jewish Genealogy Library](#)

[Library of Congress Classification System](#)

[Library of Congress Subject Headings](#)

4 Program Planning

4.1 Overview

The program needs to be of interest to a wide audience. So, at the beginning, do not start with anything too specific. You might want to start with workshops rather than talks, allowing members to explore their own family genealogy and have an opportunity to get to know each other. Later consider different program themes to take into account the various ability levels of members, beginners through expert, and different areas of geographic interest. Here are a few general issues to consider:

- Consider using technology to get speakers from further afield through webinars and Zoom calls.
- Hold genealogy workshops where members can share their research work; discuss their personal “brick walls” and help each other.

- Make sure that the meeting location is suitable for the type of event being run, poor ventilation, external noise, overly large or small venues can be off-putting for attendees and speakers alike and turn people off returning.
- Ensure the venue is accessible for those with disabilities.
- Consideration should be given as to whether the location is in a religious building or not.
- IT equipment and internet access should be available in the venue. If possible, have a laptop computer and a projector for speakers.

[*Starting a JGS: Finding Meeting Space*](#)
[*Growing a JGS: Developing Meeting Topics*](#)

4.2 Scheduling

The scheduling of meetings is very important for their success. Check with members about which days and times of day they prefer to attend meetings on. If possible, calendar meetings for twelve months ahead. Avoid Jewish and non-Jewish holidays that would reduce attendance and also consider other non-religious events that would impact attendance levels.

4.3 Speakers

Look for speakers from within and from outside your organization. Find out if any members are good speakers or have an interesting topic to relate. Check out if national or internationally well-known speakers are available to talk in person or on-line. Ask other genealogy groups about whether they can give talks. Ask academics to give talks.

A list of possible program ideas is available at [Appendix 7](#)

[*Growing a JGS: Finding Speakers*](#)

4.4 First Program Meeting

Things to do for the first program meeting include:

- Setting the meeting date and time and booking your meeting room.
- If you elect to go with a speaker rather than a workshop, selecting your preferred guest speaker and book him/her.
- Organizing publicity for the meeting.
- Having genealogical resources available to look at and if possible, to sell.

- Making sure that there is someone at the door or entrance to the meeting room to greet attendees and that there is a sign-in book available to get full contact details of attendees.
- Charging non-members for attendance if it has been decided to do so.
- Making sure that people know who is who, by using name tags.
- Making the event as friendly as possible, using networking time and getting attendees to introduce themselves to each other.
- Having a clear structure, with set start time and formal introductions.
- Keep the talk down to between 45 minutes to 1 hour, plus time for Q&A.

5 Publicity

5.1 Fliers

Having attractive and informative publicity fliers will help you generate interest in your new society and the events you run. As a rule, you should:

- Create fliers for programmed events once you have agreed the logo and branding style for the organization. The fliers need only be about Junior Legal/A5 in size.
- Distribute the fliers to Jewish community locations, libraries, archives and to other genealogical societies within the catchment area of the meeting venue.
- Program fliers should make clear who the speaker is and what the talk will cover.
- Any admission charges should be included on the flier to avoid any confusion on the day of the program/meeting.

Growing a JGS: Creating Marketing Materials

5.2 Society Brochure

Create a brochure that introduces your organization to the general public and includes a means of applying to join you. Suggestions for a brochure are in [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#).

5.3 What to Include in a Press Release or Article

A press release or article makes it simple for a newspaper or newsletter to publicize your society and your events. You simply provide them with the information describing, for example, the formation of your society or scheduled program meetings.

What is included in a press release will depend on the event being publicized. If the press release is about a program event, give clear and concise details about the speaker, their background, the topic and the content of the talk. Add any interesting details about the talk that might attract non-members. Include all details of the meeting location and how to book places. Make sure to include contact details, which ideally should be both an email address and a phone number. At the very least, include a phone number. You should promote the JGS itself through articles about the work the JGS will be doing to help people trace their Jewish roots.

5.4 Outlets for Print Publicity

Outlets for printed publicity will vary depending on the location of the JGS and whether it covers a small or large geographic area. Even if the area to be covered is very large many of the suggested locations for printed material are valid.

Jewish Outlets

Synagogues, Jewish community centers, Jewish schools, Jewish retirement communities, Jewish historical societies, local university or college departments of Jewish studies, Jewish newspapers, Jewish museums, Jewish archives or libraries, other Jewish communal organizations such as B'nai B'rith, Jewish gift shops, kosher markets/shops

Non-Jewish Outlets

Libraries, other local genealogical or historical societies, retirement homes, university or college community bulletin boards, archives, stores, and LDS Family History Centers. Supermarkets often have bulletin boards available to advertise local events.

5.5 Media Outlets

Public radio stations, public access cable channels, Internet sites, blogs, social media sites, Local newspapers (community calendar section), Local tabloid weeklies.

5.6 Telling the Worldwide Jewish Genealogy Community

Tell people about the new JGS through JewishGen's main discussion list and SIG lists, contact other JGSes via the IAJGS Forum once you have joined IAJGS. IAJGS will post a welcoming message on the IAJGS Forum once you become a member of the IAJGS.

5.7 Using Email for Meeting Notification

Use email as a means of communicating with members. Be aware of statutory rules and regulations on sending out unsolicited messages. Ensure message lists conform to the statutory rules and regulations. You may want to explore Constant Contact or Mailchimp in order to allow recipients to unsubscribe if they are no longer interested.

5.8 Create a Blog for the JGS

Having a Blog specifically for your own organization to promote activities and information about Jewish genealogy is a useful outlet. Many societies are using their blog as the main means of communicating with their members, rather than having a newsletter.

5.9 Social Media

Social Media is of growing importance in reaching out to non-members, especially to younger people. Consider setting up a Facebook page for your JGS for instance and using this to tell people about meetings and events you are holding. While many younger people have migrated away from Facebook, you can reach them using TikTok, Instagram and other social media platforms.

[*Growing a JGS: Using Social Media*](#)

Appendix 1 - Create a Society Brochure

Some Basics

Society brochures should be available at each meeting for prospective members.

They should be used as a marketing tool

Have them available on display tables at local genealogical meetings

Posted in local genealogical libraries

Posted in local Family History Centers of the Mormon Church

Displayed in the building where meetings take place

Distributed by your society's speakers at community genealogy programs

Displayed in the Jewish community center brochure rack

Your brochure may look very different from those of mature societies, but each society develops its own character.

Be creative but there should be graphics, pictures, design and your logo that make the brochure eye-catching. Do what feels right for you and serves your purposes.

Elements to Include in Your Brochure

Basic information you will probably want in your brochure include:

Name of society

Your society's mission statement

Contact person and/or address of society

Website details

How to become a member/small application form

Program arrangements

Information about the society (e.g. when formed, mention of any special projects, etc.) Benefits of membership (e.g., "beginner" starter kit, access privileges for the society library, subscription to society newsletter, and assistance with research)

Information about the newsletter (e.g., the name, publication frequency)

Maybe an interesting genealogical quote (some to be found in Jewish texts, in Arthur Kurzweil's *From Generation to Generation*, and many other genealogical books or journals).

Membership Application Form

A membership application form, whether included in the layout of your society brochure or printed separately, should include the following:

Date of application

Name and address

Home phone, work phone, fax, and email address

Volunteer interests and availability for helping the society

Membership categories and fees, giving choices for membership levels such as "individual," "family," "out-of-town," "overseas" and levels over and above regular membership for those able to make additional donations to support the work of the society (if these apply)

How fees are to be paid and to whom

Instructions about how the newsletter is to be received, by mail or by email

Any statutory declarations for taxation purposes, such as when someone contributes to a qualified tax-exempt organization. The charity must let you know if they have received their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Similar declarations apply in other countries

Address where the application should be mailed

If you decide to have a family finder database for your organization, you will also want to obtain new member genealogical information when someone joins as this will be more expeditious than trying to get such information later.

Develop a form so that members can provide information about:

Surnames being researched

Countries being researched

States/provinces being research

Towns being researched

Appendix 2 - Sample Brochure Language

As a sample of a brochure, the following is from a brochure produced several years ago by the Jewish Genealogical Society, Los Angeles (JGSLA), USA:

The JGSLA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and availability of genealogical materials and to the sharing of techniques and tools to those searching their Jewish roots.

Since its founding in 1979, the Society has grown to over 450 members.

It is governed by an elected Board of Directors.

The Jewish Genealogical Society, Los Angeles, is a member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, the Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies, and the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles.

Objectives

To encourage genealogical and family research.

To assist Society members in the effective pursuit of their research goals.

To foster careful research documentation and scholarly genealogical writing.

To promote the preservation of and access to Jewish genealogical records and resources.

To instruct and educate members and the general public in researching family history.

Archives/Library/Forms

The JGSLA Archives includes conference tapes and all publications and news releases of the Society. Members can access this collection by contacting the Society Archivist.

The JGSLA Library includes several hundred reference books, hundreds of fiche, various maps and about two thousand issues of genealogical periodicals. Most of the collection is housed at the LA Family History Library.

An ever-growing collection of useful research forms is maintained for the benefit of JGSLA members.

Publications

Monthly, the Society issues "Dates & Updates", which provides information about upcoming meetings and late breaking news. It is sent to all members, and, on, for up to three months to guests.

Quarterly, the Society issues "RootsKey," its award-winning research journal. Past issues of RootsKey can be purchased from the Society. Please contact the Membership VP for more information.

Meetings

Meetings are generally held at 7:30pm on the third Monday of each month (July excepted).

They provide a varied mix of lectures, workshops and films geared to help genealogists searching their Jewish roots.

Quarterly, we offer entry-level tutorials before our regular meetings.

Meeting topic and location are published in our monthly, "Dates & Updates."

Most meetings are open to the public, with no parking or attendance fees.

Membership

Membership in the JGSLA is open to anyone supporting its objectives, upon payment of appropriate dues. Membership includes:

- a start-up kit of valuable forms and getting started instruction

- monthly meeting notices which include late breaking genealogical news

- monthly meetings offering a variety of informative presentations

- quarterly beginner tutorials and periodic directed library research visits

- participation in special interest groups allowing members to share with others in focused areas

- subscription to "RootsKey," the quarterly research journal of the JGSLA

- optional reduced rate subscription to FGS's quarterly journal, "FORUM"

- submission of names to the computerized Jewish Genealogical Family Finder

- participation and leadership in research projects for the general benefit of Jewish genealogy

- access to JGSLA archives and library (our library is conveniently housed at the LDS Family History Library) and most importantly, linkage to others searching their Jewish roots.

Appendix 3 - Create a Newsletter

Some Considerations
Design a Template for Your Newsletter
Content of Newsletter
Publish Your Newsletter
Mail the Newsletter

Some Considerations

Some societies have quarterly newsletters, sent seasonally or quarterly; these tend to be more substantial publications. Some societies have smaller newsletters monthly that may double as program notices. If you mail a newsletter, it will represent a significant budget item for printing and postage. Today the majority of groups provide an electronic newsletter distributed by email. Consider this being the default method of delivery rather than hardcopy. This cuts down on costs, but some hard copies may still have to be mailed. This includes copies going to libraries, other genealogical groups and those members or potential members without email.

You may want to consider a competition to name your newsletter as a way to engage members.

Sustaining a newsletter over the years may be one of the most difficult tasks, especially for societies with small membership. While a newsletter is a wonderful way of sharing information and maintaining member interest, keeping it going requires sufficient budget and, at minimum, one volunteer willing to devote considerable time on a regular basis. You may decide to forgo a newsletter until your society has increased membership. It is important to realize that not all JGSs have newsletters.

Another consideration: Many JGSs belonging to IAJGS send their newsletters to other JGSs. Some send only to groups that send newsletters in exchange while others do not require such a trade arrangement. Although newsletters from as many other groups as possible will certainly benefit your members, you will have to determine if publishing your own newsletter is cost effective in order to receive those newsletters requiring exchange.

Design a Template for Your Newsletter

Include the following:

- The society name, newsletter name, logo, date, and volume.
- A list of the officers and board of directors, and their phone numbers and email addresses.

- A statement about your copyright rules and a disclaimer that the opinions expressed in your newsletter are those of the authors, not those of the society (optional).
- A section to advertise your “tribute” cards or any other fund -raising events.
- A section to describe fees for paid advertisements (consult government agency for non-profit newspaper advertising rules, if any).
- A calendar or program of society events.

Content of Newsletter

Obtaining interesting and relevant content can be difficult. Here are some suggestions for useful articles and items to include:

- Many newsletters begin with a president’s message.
- Experiences of your members with genealogical research in archives and libraries, and on vacations.
- Family history stories from members.
- Sources of genealogical information that members found particularly helpful.
- Carefully and judiciously glean tidbits of genealogical news from various other newsletters, journals, newspapers, and other published works. Always properly attribute the source of your information or ask for permission to use copyrighted information.
- Use information from the IAJGS Leadership Forum, JewishGen, Genealogy Blogs, etc. (again sourcing the information properly)
- Include genealogical articles the editor writes.
- Write book reviews of genealogical resources.
- Summarize meeting programs.
- Include photographs of families, towns, documents, or society events to enhance the articles.

The key thing to remember is that the newsletter should contain informative, readable, entertaining and thought-provoking articles and information that will make the reader eager for the next edition. Keep it lively!

Publish Your Newsletter

Before printing a copy of the newsletter, send a copy electronically to another member to proofread it mainly for grammatical and spelling errors.

If printing the newsletter in-house, print the newsletter on a good quality printer on the best quality print setting. If the society can afford to, use a printing company to print the newsletter in order to get the best quality result.

As stated before, consider electronic copies to be the default method of publishing. Electronic copies are best sent out in Adobe Acrobat PDF format.

Mail the Newsletter

If you are mailing newsletters, have the publication copied on the best quality paper that your budget allows. Have it collated and stapled (if necessary), before applying labels to the newsletter itself or the envelope it is to be sent in.

The United States post office prefers, and sometimes enforces the rule, that you do not staple a folded newsletter or flier because machines mutilate the mail as it automatically processes the stapled pieces. To avoid this problem, it is advisable to mail newsletters in envelopes. For those outside the U.S. check post office regulations in your country.

To ensure that newsletters sent overseas (via airmail) arrive in good condition, put them in envelopes.

While your society is still small, you might want to approach the larger institution where you meet and ask if you can include your mailings with theirs to take advantage of their bulk-mailing rate. When your society gets large enough, you will want to apply for bulk mailing privileges as a non-profit institution if that applies in your locality.

Growing a JGS: Creating Newsletters

Appendix 4 - International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies

About IAJGS

The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) is an organization of organizations formed in 1988 to provide a common voice for issues of significance to its members, to advance our genealogical avocation, and to coordinate items such as the annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy.

The IAJGS is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions made by U.S. residents are tax deductible.

Most local and national Jewish Genealogical Societies (JGSs) and a number of Jewish genealogical Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and historical societies are members.

The purposes and objectives of the IAJGS are well outlined in its [bylaws](#).

Objectives of the IAJGS are:

1. To collect, preserve, and disseminate knowledge and information with reference to Jewish genealogy.
2. To assist and promote the research of Jewish family history.
3. To provide opportunities for the sharing of Jewish genealogical information.
4. To encourage the publication of worthy material in the field of Jewish genealogy.
5. To promote membership in member Jewish genealogical societies.
6. To act as spokesperson for Jewish genealogical societies in areas of mutual interest.
7. To provide member societies with services to help them become more effective organizations.
8. To elevate Jewish genealogy among people who are searching Jewish roots and in the academic community.
9. To promote public access to genealogically relevant records.
10. To foster creation of Jewish genealogical organizations in unserved areas.

IAJGS also:

- Routinely provides new and potential societies with organizational assistance.
- Presents achievement awards recognizing excellence in various aspects of Jewish Genealogy.
- Provides monetary awards to facilitate activities that provide resources for Jewish Genealogists.

- Ensures the continuity and effectiveness of the annual [International Jewish Genealogy Conference](#).
- Facilitates communication between member society presidents, program chairs, and newsletter editors
- Provides U.S. member societies with access to 501 (c) (3) status under an umbrella agreement
- Offers access to a Business Zoom account at a discounted rate allowing for up to 300 participants, free phone tech support and free searchable and printable transcripts of calls.

The IAJGS Board members are listed on the IAJGS website at:

<https://www.iajgs.org/about/current-board/>

Other Member organizations are listed at:

<https://www.iajgs.org/membership/member-societies/>

Membership of IAJGS

The criteria for voting membership includes both Regular Members and Special Interest Groups.

Regular members must be a non-profit organization whose principal purpose is to promote Jewish genealogy

Special Interest Groups must be associated with a fiscal sponsor, or an organization organized for purposes other than profit and whose principal purpose is to promote genealogy.

The following criteria apply to both Regular Members and Special Interest Groups:

1. Has at least 10 dues-paying members. In the case of a SIG this requirement applies to the fiscal sponsor or associated organization
2. Holds regular meetings at least quarterly or conducts meaningful on-going 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.
3. Has elected officers. In the case of a SIG this requirement applies to the fiscal sponsor or associated organization.
4. Pays its annual IAJGS membership fees.

Regular Members and Special Interest Groups are entitled to vote on matters concerning the Association, participate in IAJGS activities, receive mailings and other information, and are eligible to receive and purchase products and services produced by the IAJGS for its members.

There are also two categories of non-voting membership:

Virtual Members are an organization organized for purposes other than profit, whose principal purpose is to promote Jewish genealogy

To qualify they must meet the following criteria:

- a. Holds meetings only online.
- b. Does not have dues-paying members; and
- c. Has no 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, including, but not limited to, genealogical societies, family associations, historical societies, libraries or archives, educational institutions, or genealogical vendors.

Neither Virtual or Associate Members are entitled to vote on matters concerning the Association but may participate in IAJGS activities, receive mailings and other information, and are eligible to receive and purchase products and services produced by the IAJGS for its members.

To join IAJGS it is necessary to complete the following application form:

<https://www.iajgs.org/membership/membership-application/>

You will also have to send payment of the annual membership fees, which are currently 50 cents (US\$) per member of your society or a minimum of \$18. By indicating an interest in organizing a JGS, you have already received one benefit from the IAJGS: this handbook.

The IAJGS Board of Directors looks forward to your membership in the Association and to your valuable contributions to our worldwide community of Jewish genealogists.

Annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

Attending an annual international conference on Jewish genealogy is a rewarding experience whether you are a novice or experienced genealogist. Held since 1981, they have all served (and will continue to serve) the purpose of bringing together those interested in Jewish Genealogy, to learn, to research and most importantly, to share. You will want to encourage your members to attend!

The International Conferences have been held in the U.S., Canada, United Kingdom, France, Poland and Israel. For more information on IAJGS International Conferences visit www.IAJGS.org

Starting a JGS: Joining IAJGS

Appendix 5 Sample Budget

Building a Starting Budget

Revenue

How do you build a budget for a JGS before you know what you'll have as revenue? We need to make some assumptions for starters. Many JGSes have an individual membership of around \$25 and household memberships of around \$35. Let's assume you get 25 members initially and of those 5 are households so account for 10 of your members if you allot 2 members to a household membership. When we do the math, we have \$725 to work with.

Over time your membership will grow. If your meetings are open to non-members, you may want to ask them for a contribution of \$5 for each meeting they attend. That will also generate additional revenue and if they like what they see, they may become members. You may have benefactors who donate \$100 or more. Let's assume two people do that so you have \$925 of revenue in total.

Expenses

So what expenses are you likely to have?

Zoom and Websites

In recent years, JGS's have evolved to do more of their activities on-line. You will want a Zoom Pro account and a website. Having a website means you will need a web address ("URL") and website hosting. Some hosting companies provide tools with which you can build your own website. Perhaps you have a volunteer with website experience.

Keep in mind that a budget is typically just for one year, but you can get better pricing on some of your expenditures for your website and URL by paying for several years. That means you will not have a recurring expense the next year, but you may need to pay more cash up front.

Program Expenses /Speakers

Zoom is the most affordable way to bring speakers in. For a local speaker you may still want a space and perhaps choose to have a hybrid meeting or record the session to make it available later for those who cannot attend in person. Many spaces are available for free. Libraries generally will provide space for meetings. Synagogues or JCCs might be willing to make space available and elder facilities are also an option. If you make use of a Jewish elder facility, you may want to arrange that their residents can attend for free.

Speakers are critical to your programming. Generally, honorariums are around \$100, although some may request more. Initially you will want to find speakers among people in your community. Some may offer a presentation for free. Authors of books relevant to genealogy may be willing to speak without cost to publicize their book. Perhaps some of your founding members would have an interest in presenting. If you want to have more meetings

without incurring additional cost, you can hold informal gatherings of your members to share what they are working on.

Other Expenses

There will be other expenses as well. For example, IAJGS dues which are \$0.50 per member with a minimum of \$18. Your JGS may need printed materials, postage, and other office supplies as well. Don't forget, on many of your expenses, you may be able to get taxes waived as a non-profit organization.

See the sample budget below as a guide.

Appendix 5 Sample Annual Budget

This is a starting budget for a new JGS with 25 members. As you mature you may add more paid speakers, charge a small fee for non-members, and perhaps seek more benefactor contributions. Some JGSes make use of management software and its associated costs. The budget is not static overtime but represents your programming decisions.

<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Ave</u>	<u>Income</u>
Individual memberships	15	\$25	\$375
Household memberships	10	\$35	\$350
Contributions / Donations	2	\$100	\$200
Total Revenue			\$925
EXPENSES			
Zoom Pro			\$150
Domain name registration			\$15
Website hosting			\$90
Printing			\$200
Supplies			\$100
Speakers *	3 paid	100	\$300
IAJGS Dues			\$18
Total Expense			\$873
Net Revenue less Expense			\$52

*This assumes you have four speakers who are contributing their time in addition to three paid speakers at \$100 each. To expand your programming while managing your budget, you may choose to offer a smaller honorarium or turn some of your meetings into brick wall discussions, drawing on your more experienced members without a fee. Some groups meet monthly, others less frequently. You need to consider your programming in order to budget appropriately.

Appendix 6 - Sample Organizational Documents:

Sample Bylaws

These sample Bylaws were compiled, with permission, using the existing bylaws of the Triangle [NC] Jewish Genealogy Society and the Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County. They are meant as a guide and each organization should determine for themselves as to what best fits their needs and any requirements imposed by their state or country of domicile. Jurisdictions vary in their requirements and the organization should always check the requirements, if any, for organizing a non-profit society in their state or country. For those organizations located outside the United States the Society should check with applicable procedures in your country and conform with the local practices, rules and authority for charitable and nonprofit organizations.

[You may wish to read other actual bylaws. Links to two other examples are included in the companion About Bylaws article]

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be the XXXX (the "Society").

ARTICLE II: NON-PROFIT CHARACTER

The Society shall be operated as a non-profit organization under XXXXXX [if incorporated in a state name the state, if under section 501(c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code include that].

ARTICLE III: OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Society shall be:

- To assist and promote the research of Jewish family history;
- To provide opportunities for the sharing of Jewish genealogical information;
- To educate members and the public on Jewish genealogy through lectures, seminars, workshops and the publication of a newsletter;
- To provide instruction in and advance the use of sound research methodology to attain the highest standards of accuracy and thoroughness;
- To serve as a service and support group for genealogical libraries and historical associations; and

- To promote preservation of and access to Jewish genealogical records and resources.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership shall be open to all individuals who are interested in Jewish family records, family history, genealogy, or local history.

Section 2. Annual membership shall be considered to extend from January 1 through December 31 to any individual or family willing to promote the objectives of the Society. Members shall have voting rights upon submission of a written application and payment of prescribed dues.

Section 3. For continuing members, dues are payable January 1st of each year. For new members, dues are payable upon joining the Society. Any member whose dues are in arrears for XXX months or more, after due notice from the Society, shall be dropped from membership in the society and all rights and privileges granted shall cease. To be reinstated, the required dues must be paid and such fee will be retroactive to the beginning of the calendar year. Only members in good standing may vote and hold office.

Section 4. Any member may be expelled from the Society by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board of Directors for good cause.

ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice President Membership, the Vice President Program, the Secretary, and the Treasurer (the "Officers"), as determined by a vote of the membership.

Section 2. The Board of Directors (the "Board") shall consist of the Executive Committee, the immediate past President and a minimum of XXX and a maximum of XXXX members at large, as determined by a vote of the membership.

Section 3. The Board shall make all decisions for the Society in keeping with its Bylaws. The Executive Committee shall be authorized to act on behalf of the Board, as the need arises, between regular Board meetings. Its actions shall be consistent with the established policies of the Board.

Section 4. The Board shall meet a minimum of four (4) times per year to carry on the business of the Society. A meeting of the Board may be called by the President and must be called upon the request of any two members of the Board. Any or all members of the Board may participate in a meeting of the Board or any committee thereof by means of telephone conference call or online conference or any other means of communication by which all persons participating are able to communicate

with each other. The Secretary shall notify all members of the Board by email or regular mail of the time and place of each meeting at least two weeks in advance. For meetings that are held by telephone conference call or an online conference, the Secretary shall send notifications at least three days before such meetings. In addition, the Board may consider and vote on issues using email, in which case no advance notice is required. [check to determine what if any restrictions your state may require on unanimity or quorum are required for email voting]

Section 5. The Executive Committee may conduct business in person, by telephone conference, or online conference.

Section 6. Any member of the Board who resigns, or who is absent from XXX consecutive meetings of the Board without indicating valid cause, shall be dropped from the Board and the unexpired term shall be filled by the President, with approval by the Board, from among the roster of members.

Section 7. Any Board member may resign by giving written notice to the Board or the President of the Society. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice, or any later date specified therein. The acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 8. The Board shall determine the dates and nature of all meetings and events of the Society with due consideration being given to any expressed wishes of the membership.

Section 9. A quorum of the Board shall consist of a majority of the Board members. In the absence of a quorum, the Board may propose suggestions for an ensuing meeting, but no actions may be taken until a quorum is present. In addition, in cases in which the Board circulates proposals by email for a decision, one more than half the number of Board members' email approvals shall be necessary to approve action. [Check your state to determine if they have a minimum requirement of number of Board members email approvals for email board votes]

Section 10. During their term of office, each Officer or director shall promptly send or give a copy of any correspondence initiated by him or her concerning the Society to the President and Secretary. Directors shall turn over all properties, materials, records and correspondence pertaining to their respective offices to their successors within fifteen days after their terms of office expire or at the first regular board meeting of the calendar year.

Section 11. The latest available edition of *Roberts Rules of Order* shall govern all meetings of the Board whenever they are applicable and are not in conflict with these Bylaws or any special rule adopted by the Society.

ARTICLE VI: ELECTIONS

Section 1. No later than September 30th of each year, the Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of a Chairman, selected from the Board , one (1) additional member of the Board and one (1) member at large.

Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall propose a slate of nominees for the Executive Committee for the Board and shall furnish their results to the Secretary no later than October 31.

Section 3. The committee's report shall be published in the announcement for the November general meeting. Additional nominations to the Board may be made at the November general meeting. Any person nominated from the floor must either be present and orally agree to serve or have signed a written acceptance that is available for inspection at this meeting.

Section 4. No later than November XXX, the Secretary shall issue the call for the Annual Meeting, to be held on a date in December to be determined by the Board at its first meeting of the calendar year, enclosing the slate proposed by the Nominating Committee and if there are any nominations from the floor made at the November general meeting. This shall be circulated in time to reach the membership by regular mail or e-mail in advance of the Annual Meeting.

Section 5. The elections shall be held at the Annual Meeting. Terms of both the Officers and members of the Board shall be for one year subject to re-election. No individual shall serve as President for more than three years consecutively.

Section 6. All elected Officers and Board members shall assume their office at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VII: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The President shall be the principal executive officer with the responsibility for general supervision of the affairs of the Society. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society and of the Board but may designate the Program Vice President to function when the President is unavailable. With the approval of the Board, the President shall appoint all committees and shall serve ex-officio except on the Nominating Committee. The President, shall, by appointment, and with the approval of the Board, fill a vacancy in any office. Such appointed Officer shall continue in office until the next general election held December of the appointed year.

Section 2. The Program Vice President shall substitute in the absence of the President and shall carry out whatever responsibilities may be assigned by the President or Board. The Program Vice President shall organize and arrange programs for the general membership meetings of the Society. The Program Vice

President shall coordinate notices to the general membership of upcoming meetings and events.

Section 3. The Membership Vice President shall be the overall Membership Officer for the Society. The Membership Vice President shall conduct a membership recruitment program. In coordination with the Treasurer, he/she shall maintain an up-to-date listing of the membership. The Membership Vice President shall carry out whatever responsibilities may be assigned by the President or Board.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Society and of the Board and carry out any necessary correspondence on behalf of the Society.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the Society; shall deposit them in insured financial institutions or invest them pursuant to policy established by the Board; shall pay all bills and shall receive monies collected for dues by the Vice President Membership, any monies given to the Society as donations or as fees and any debts owed to the Society.

Section 6. Any Officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board or to the President of the Society. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later date specified therein, and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

ARTICLE VIII: MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Section 1. The Society shall hold regular meetings during the year. The Society shall also hold an Annual Meeting in December at a time and place selected by the Board. Due notice of the meetings and the meeting agenda shall be circulated to the membership at least two weeks in advance of the meeting and may be given by email or regular mail.

Section 2. For the transaction of any business requiring the approval of the membership at large, a quorum shall consist of twenty percent (20%) of the voting membership.

Section 3. Decisions shall be made by one more than half of the number of members present or represented by proxy voting at the meeting. In the event of a tie, the President shall cast the deciding vote.

Section 4. The latest available edition of *Roberts Rules of Order* shall govern all meetings of the Society whenever they are applicable and not in conflict with these Bylaws or any special rule adopted by the Society.

ARTICLE IX: FEES AND DUES

Section 1. Charges, fees, and dues shall be established by vote of the Board which shall have the right to establish classes of membership.

Section 2. Dues are payable in advance and become due by January 1st each year. It shall be the responsibility of the Vice President Membership to send a dues reminder to members by October 31, which notice may be sent by email or regular mail.

Section 3. Any person joining the Society in October, November, or December of the year shall not be required to pay dues again until January 1st after the following December. Any person joining the Society at any other time of the year shall be required to pay the full dues.

ARTICLE X: DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the Society, the Board shall, after payment of all liabilities, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes and in such manner or to such an organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at that time qualify for exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. [If incorporated use] After all debts have been satisfied, then remaining in the hands of the Board, shall be distributed as required by the Articles of Incorporation of this Society and applicable law.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

Section 1. These Bylaws may be amended, altered or repealed or new Bylaws may be adopted by a majority vote of the members in good standing at an Annual or Special Meeting of members at which a quorum is present, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been included in the notice of the meeting.

Section 2. Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by the Board and approved for distribution to the membership by a majority vote of the Board voting at a duly called Board meeting, in person (which may include by conference call, online conference or by email) or by written proxy.

Section 3. Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed in writing by any member in good standing, provided they are accompanied by the signatures of at least 3 other members in good standing of the Society. The Secretary will circulate such proposals to the Board, which may approve any amendments by a majority of the Board voting in person, by email or by proxy. Upon approval by the Board, the Board shall include the amendment in notice of the next Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting to be called for the purpose of considering and voting upon the proposed amendment. The proposed amendment shall be adopted by the vote of a majority of the membership voting at the meeting for which notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given.

ARTICLE XII: PROHIBITION AGAINST SHARING CORPORATE PROFITS AND ASSETS

Section 1. No member, director, Officer, employee, or other person connected with this Society, or any private individual, shall receive at any time any of the net earnings or pecuniary profit from the operations of the Society, provided, however, that this provision shall not prevent payment to any such person or reasonable compensation for services performed for the Society in effecting any of its public or charitable purposes, provided that such compensation is otherwise permitted by these Bylaws and is fixed by resolution of the Board; and no such person or persons shall be entitled to share in the distribution of, and shall not receive, any of the Society's assets on dissolution of the Society. All members, if any, of the Society shall be deemed to have expressly consented and agreed that on such dissolution or winding up of the affairs of the Society, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, the assets of the Society, after all debts have been satisfied, then remaining in the hands of the Board, shall be distributed as required by the Articles of Incorporation of this Society and applicable law and not otherwise.

ARTICLE IX. EFFECTIVE DATE OF BYLAWS

Section 1. These Bylaws shall take effect immediately upon their adoption by the general membership. [Depending on what requirement is stipulated in your bylaws, the adoption of bylaws may be by the general membership or Board—see Article XI].

Appendix 7 - Program Ideas

While not meant to be exhaustive, this list gives a good idea of the wide range of possible program topics. A survey of your members can help determine which topics will interest them the most.

Programs for New Societies

Beginner's workshop (sessions on genealogical nomenclature and forms, naturalization and immigration, passenger lists, census, local research centers, cemetery research)

Ask the Experts (panel discussion/audience questions)

Introduction to JewishGen

Jewish naming patterns

Terminology specific to Jewish genealogy

How to find and use state and federal census records

Vital records and city directories

Court and other official records

How to use the resources of Family History Centers

Computer genealogy (websites, equipment, and programs)

Cemetery research

Communicating effectively with both family and strangers to elicit genealogical information successfully

Successfully acquiring genealogical information by mail and email

Research in the society library and member networking

Geographical Studies

Geography and genealogy

Research in Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Germany, Galicia, South Africa, Australia, Great Britain, Italy, etc., based on interests of membership

Eastern European genealogical sources for research (gazetteers, maps, and translation guides)

Finding your ancestral town

How to prepare for a research trip away from home

Preparing for the next international conference on Jewish genealogy

Geography and Jewish cooking

Travel tips from members' recent genealogical research trips

Evaluation and Organization of Genealogical Information

How to evaluate your research material and correctly document the facts

How to organize your genealogical information

Compiling a Family History

What to include in your written family history story

What to include in a family history (documents, trees, stories, oral and/or visual, books, etc.)

How to take an oral history

How to publish your genealogical findings

Practical Uses for Genealogical Research

Practical applications of genealogical research

Preservation of documents and heirlooms

Private detective speaks on how to find living relatives

Holocaust research

Yizkor books: what they are, where they are, and what they offer

Genetics and genealogy

Modern terminology for diseases and causes of death on old death certificates

DNA Testing and interpreting results

Programs of General Interest

Rabbinic research

Sephardic research

Translators for members' documents and letters

Where do I go from here? (Intermediate workshop)

How to cite your research sources

Short-cuts and clues to more efficient genealogical research

Field trips to local archives and libraries

How to plan a family reunion

Case studies by members in society

How to cite your sources for a family history publication

Your society might also carry out a project such as:

An inventory of local archives/other documents related to the Jewish community in your area.

A database of burials in local cemeteries.

A database of obituaries in local newspapers.

Appendix 8 – Possible Library Acquisitions

This list is not exhaustive or a requirement but provides ideas.

For beginners

- *Abraham's Children: Race, Identity and the DNA of the Chosen People* by Jon Entine (Grand Central Publishing)
- *Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy* edited by Sallyann Amdur Sack and Gary Mokotoff (Avotaynu)
- *A Field Guide to Visiting a Jewish Cemetery* by Rabbi Joshua L. Segal (Jewish Cemetery Publishing)
- *Finding our Fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy* by Dan Rottenberg (Genealogical Publishing Co.)
- *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Family History* by Arthur Kurzweil (Jossey-Bass)
- *A Practical Guide to Jewish Cemeteries* by Nolan Menachemson (Avotaynu)

For Sephardic and converso researchers

- *Dictionary of Sephardic Surnames*, 2nd edition, by Guilherme Faiguenboim, Paulo Valadares and Anna Rosa Campagnano (in Spanish, Fraiha, available through Avotaynu)
- *Sangre Judía* by Pere Bonnin Aguilo (in Spanish, available through www.casadellibro.com)
- *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* by David Gitlitz (Jewish Publication Society of America)
- *Sephardic Genealogy: Discovering Your Sephardic Ancestors and Their World* by Jeffrey S. Malka (Avotaynu)
- *To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico* by Stanley M. Hordes (Columbia University Press)

For Eastern European and Ashkenazi researchers

- *A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names: Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation, and Migrations* by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu)
- *A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames* by Lars Menk (Avotaynu)
- *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland* by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu)
- *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire* by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu)
- *Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust* edited by Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder (New York University Press)
- *Genealogical Gazetteer of the Kingdom of Hungary* by Jordan Auslander (Avotaynu)
- *German Name-Change Gazetteer* by Otto Kredel and Franz Thierfelder (Avotaynu)
- *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* by Simon M. Dubnow (Avotaynu)

- *Jewish Personal Names: Their Origins, Derivation and Diminutive Forms* by Rabbi Shmuel Gorr (Avotaynu)
- *Jews of Lithuania: A History of a Remarkable Community 1316-1945* by Masha Greenbaum (Gefen Publishing House)
- *Russian-Jewish Given Names: Their Origins and Variants* by Boris Feldblyum (Avotaynu)
- *Where Once We Walked: A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust* by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Amdur Sack with Alexander Sharon (Avotaynu)
- *Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia* by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu)

Appendix 9 - Ten Commandments for Genealogists by Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern

- I. I am a genealogist dedicated to true knowledge about the families I am researching.
- II. Thou shalt use family traditions with caution and only as clues.
- III. Thou shalt not accept as gospel every written record or printed word.
- IV. Thou shalt not hang nobility or royalty on your family without verifying with experts.
- V. Thou shalt clearly label the questionable and the fairy tale.
- VI. Thou shalt handle all records in such a way that the next users will find them in the same condition you did.
- VII. Thou shalt credit those who help you and ask permission of those whose work you use.
- VIII. Thou shalt not query any source of information without supplying postage.
- IX. Thou shalt respect the sensitivities of the living in whatever you record, but tell the truth about the dead.
- X. Thou shalt not become a genealogical teacher or authority without appropriate training and certification

Appendix 10 – Starting, Growing and Sustaining a JGS

Starting a JGS is just the beginning. This handbook is primarily focused on that first stage, but as your organization matures you may want to explore new directions. For that purpose, we refer you to the articles on our website on *Starting, Growing and Sustaining a JGS*. The articles on starting a JGS may go more in-depth and the sections on growing and sustaining may introduce new areas to consider.

Starting a JGS

[Introduction](#)

[Organizing the First Meeting](#)

[Finding Meeting Space](#)

[Holding the First Meeting](#)

[First Meeting Follow-up](#)

[Leadership Job Descriptions](#)

[Developing Bylaws](#)

[Organizing Structure](#)

[Obtaining a Bank Account](#)

[Building a Budget](#)

[Getting IRS Status](#)

[Joining IAJGS](#)

Growing a JGS

[Attracting Members](#)

[Getting to Know Members](#)

[Reaching Youth](#)

[Developing a Web Presence](#)

[Creating Marketing Materials](#)

[Using Social Media](#)

Starting a Library

- [How to Build a Jewish Genealogy Library from Scratch](#)
- [Critical Books for a Jewish Genealogy Library](#)
- [Library of Congress Classifications](#)
- [Library of Congress Subject Headings](#)

Organizational Tools

Developing Meeting Topics

Finding Speakers

Zoom Meetings

Recording a Zoom

Editing Your Video

Holding Hybrid Meetings

Sustaining a JGS

Building Longevity

Building Leadership

Finding Volunteers

Retaining Members

Working With Partners

Developing Outreach Programs