



Sustaining a JGS: Outreach Programs

Deborah Long, [Triangle Jewish Genealogical Society](#) (2015)

Once your society is established, it is important to create and develop relationships with other organizations that may be interested in genealogy or in Jewish community issues. These relationships will stimulate growth in your society as well as provide a source of fresh programs.

First, identify which members of your group are members of other organizations that might have an interest in Jewish genealogy. No doubt some of your members belong to synagogues and kehillahs or have children or grandchildren enrolled in Hebrew school. Other members may also be members of other genealogy groups, live in retirement centers and be active in educational, political, and social organizations in your communities. These groups are usually hungry for programs and speakers. In my JGS, our members belong to the JCC, serve on the boards of their temples and are involved in “welcome to our community” organizations. We are also fortunate to be in an area that is rich with other genealogical societies, such as the North Carolina Genealogical Society and several local chapters. These groups like the diversity that our members can bring to their organizations.

Second, identify the best speakers in your organization who can speak on topics that are accessible to a larger audience. Topics such as “Introduction to Jewish Genealogy” or “Using Jewishgen” or “Jewish Names” or “How I Found my Holocaust Family” appeal to many audiences.

Third, advertise these programs and your speakers’ bios on your website, in your newsletter, on your Facebook page, and on the [JewishGen Discussion Group](#).

When your speakers provide their programs, make sure they are equipped with marketing materials, such as flyers about your next JGS meeting and/or your membership brochure. (Sometimes, we take our portable exhibit booth with us, too.)

Should your society’s speakers receive an honorarium? Our society provides outreach programs for free, but if an organization wants to make a donation to our JGS, we are happy to accept it. If asked, we suggest \$100-\$150. If our speakers must drive a significant distance, it is appropriate to ask for travel expenses. All of these matters can be discussed on your website where your JGS offers its outreach programs.