



Application Materials Checklist

This checklist is designed as a practical, step-by-step tool to refine your resume and cover letter before submitting it to a job. Use it as a final review after you have drafted your materials to ensure your narrative is compelling, your formatting is polished, and your experience directly aligns with what the hiring committee is seeking. Implementing this checklist during the final polish phase of your application process will help you eliminate common oversights, showcase your key achievements strategically, and present a cohesive, professional story that invites further conversation in an interview.

1. Big Picture Strategy

- ☐ **Measurable Achievements Over Descriptions:** Does each bullet point read like a success story rather than a job description? (e.g., instead of "Led services," use "Created participatory services that increased attendance by X%").
- ☐ **Draw the Lines:** Don't make the search committee do the math. Does your resume explicitly show how your past experience solves their specific needs?
- ☐ **The Interview Layout:** Is the content written narratively to invite follow-up questions? Are you mentioning things you want to talk about more to showcase your accomplishments?

2. Formatting & Layout

- ☐ **Address:** Remove your physical street address, including your city and state. It ages the resume and is unnecessary in the digital age, especially if you are aware you will need to relocate for the job.
- ☐ **Contact information:** Do not forget an email address and phone number. Ideally, use a professional-sounding personal email address rather than your work email address.
- ☐ **Prioritize Relevance:** Lead with your most relevant experience. If you have experience from non-rabbinic fields and you are applying for a pulpit job, does your "Pulpit" or "Rabbinic" experience appear before "Other" professional work? Move Education to the bottom (unless you are a recent graduate).



Rabbinical Assembly CAREER CENTER

- ❑ Consistency: Check your bullet points. Are you using periods at the end of every bullet, or none at all? (Either is fine, but it must be consistent.)
- ❑ Check the tense of each bullet point on your resume. Jobs from the past should be in the past tense. Your current job may be in past or present tense.
- ❑ Readability: Is the font at least 10–12pt? Is your name the largest text on the page and bolded?
- ❑ Section Headers: Are these visible? Do they make sense to the reader? Do you want to separate out the most relevant experience? (e.g. "Pulpit Experience" followed by "Additional Rabbinic Experience" for non-pulpit work when applying to a pulpit job)
 - Common section headers (remember, relevant experience is most important and you do not need all of these!): Professional Experience, Educational Leadership Experience, Youth and Young Adult Education, Education, Fellowships, Memberships and Professional Development, Honors and Certifications, Publications, Awards and Recognitions, Languages
- ❑ Length: Is the resume 2 pages or less? A resume is not a CV, it does not need to include all of your experience, only relevant and/or recent.

3. Content Refinement

- ❑ Quantify Success: Wherever you mentioned grants, fundraising, or program growth, did you include a specific number or dollar amount?
- ❑ Eliminate Repetition: If you've proven a skill (like "counseling" or "grant writing") in one section, don't repeat the same description in another. This is a way to create more space to showcase additional different skills.
- ❑ Cut the Noise: Have you removed short-term roles (less than 3 months) or very old skills that aren't relevant to your current goals?
- ❑ Second Career Rabbis: If you have a previous license or degree, such as a law degree or a Master's in social work, even if it is relevant to your rabbinic work, it shouldn't overshadow the rabbinic experience. While you can include it, remember to highlight experience for the job you are seeking.



4. The Cover Letter

- ❑ The "Tie-in": Did you include a sentence that bridges your past work to their future? (e.g., "I did X at my previous congregation, and I want to do that for you.")
- ❑ Research-Driven: Does the letter reference something specific from their questionnaire or website (like a specific social justice cause they champion)?
- ❑ Word Choice: Are you repeating words in close proximity? Are your verbs active and energetic? (check out [this list](#) of powerful active verbs)
- ❑ Narrative Expansion: Does the letter expound on 2–3 key stories from your resume rather than just listing everything again? This is your chance to speak narratively about yourself to create intrigue and invite conversation at the interview.
- ❑ Explaining A Career Transition: If you are transitioning from one field to another, did you explain why you are making that move, and why now? Answer the questions they will be asking in their minds.
- ❑ Combine Into One Document (if applying on the RA site): If you are submitting your materials through the RA job application portal, only one document can be submitted per application so your cover letter must be combined with your resume (Word or PDF format) prior to applying.

5. Final "Nitpick" Sweep

- ❑ Remove "References available upon request." You can and must provide them when asked, and should have them ready.
- ❑ Ensure your title (Rabbi) is consistent on both pages and be sure you use the name by which you want to be addressed.
- ❑ Check for doubles - don't use the same action verb twice or in close proximity.
- ❑ Verify all links to publications or websites are active and clickable.

By thoroughly reviewing your application against these criteria, you can submit your resume and cover letter with full confidence. Taking the time for this final polish ensures your application reflects your highest potential and invites the search committee into a deeper conversation. Good luck!