

RABBINIC SEARCH TIMELINE

Phase

01 MAY-JUNE

Your congregation forms a search committee reflective of your particular community.

Phase

02 JUNE-JULY

The search committee surveys congregants as to what they want in their next clergy member. This may be done using a variety of methods such as town halls, parlor meetings, and surveys.

Phase

03 JULY-AUGUST

Your congregation then registers for an account on the [Rabbinical Assembly website](#). Once approved, your search committee starts to fill out the questionnaire as a webform on the site. The form is now completely online. If you prefer to use a worksheet as a draft, you can find it here, all of your answers must be transferred before posting. If you prefer to complete it online from the start, you can work on it slowly and save it as draft until it is complete, then click submit. PLEASE NOTE: there are now character limits so if you wish to use the worksheet, double check your characters so you will not be cut off when transferring it to the online form. Characters include spaces and punctuation.

There is a [video tutorial](#) to walk you through the entire process, and a [short video](#) about identifying your congregation's priorities in Section 2. Register and post your questionnaire after September 1st.

Phase

04 AUGUST-NOVEMBER

By the High Holidays, most rabbis will know if they will be in search, and by November, most of the congregations that aren't renewing will have told the rabbis. After the High Holidays, applications will start coming in. Respond to each resume via email with your intent to move forward or not. Be sure to respond to ALL candidates, even if you aren't moving forward with them.

Phase

05 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

Compile your list of candidates and set up screening interviews by phone or zoom. After reviewing the candidates, follow up with those you are no longer interested in as well as the narrowed list of candidates. Conduct a second round of interviews by Zoom.

Phase

06 DECEMBER-JANUARY

After reviewing the candidates, follow up with those you are no longer interested in and invite your top 2-3 candidates to visit your congregation in person on a weekend where there are no B'nei Mitzvot.

Phase

07 FEBRUARY-MARCH

Host the candidates at your synagogue. Survey the congregation after each candidate visit. Using this information, complete a final review of your top candidates. Decide which candidate will be receiving an offer. If one of your candidates would be suitable as a second option, have that offer ready as well. Check their references, including potential visits to the candidate's current congregation.

Phase

08 MARCH-APRIL

Submit your offer to your candidate. Negotiate and sign all contracts. If your first choice candidate does not accept the position, repeat the steps for your second choice.

For any number of reasons, steps in this process may be delayed. Don't worry. This is simply a suggested timeline to aid in your search. If your congregation falls off schedule, hop back on when you are ready.



RABBINIC SEARCH TIPS

COMMITTEES

- When setting up your committee, try to get members that reflect the congregation population.
- All committee members must commit to staying for the entire process, including the transitional period from the previous to future rabbi.
- Majority vote wins on the committee, this includes votes of committee members who cannot make a particular meeting.
- All committee meetings are confidential. Do not discuss the process outside of the committee to non-committee members.
- Assign one member to record meetings.
- Assign one member to take and distribute notes from the meetings and interviews.
- Assign one member to collect and distribute resumes among committee members.
- Meet in the same place, in person or zoom, at consistent times to ensure group attendance.
- Assign one member to be in charge of correspondence between the candidates and the committee. This person should be timely in all responses.

PROCESS

- Write 3 strengths and 3 weaknesses about the soon-to-be former rabbi to use in comparing candidates.
- Based on surveying the congregation, create a checklist of qualities your congregation would like in the new rabbi.
- When conducting Interviews, pre-plan questions that will be asked by 1 or 2 people maximum while the others on the committee just listen. The note taker should be taking notes of all of these interview answers as well.
- Communication is crucial. You must be clear in how you respond to each person. Don't leave them hanging if you are not interested; let them know as soon as possible. Additionally, you may lose someone by not responding quickly enough to tell them that you like them.
- The search committee should communicate with congregants via e-blast or website and tell them what is going on. Failing to share details will not be helpful. But do not share who you are interviewing until you are bringing them in for a visit.

Have questions? Contact Mindy Block Gordon at mgordon@uscj.org

