

**The United Synagogue of
Conservative Judaism**

The 2009



**Solomon Schechter
Awards
for Synagogue Excellence**

**GUIDELINES and CRITERIA
for**

Elementary Education

*to be presented at the
Biennial Convention
December 6-10, 2009*

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Solomon Schechter Award Guidelines

Please review and follow these guidelines when applying for a Solomon Schechter award. Entries must be in our hands by the deadline of 5:00 pm Eastern time, Monday, April 17, 2009.

1. United Synagogue's Solomon Schechter Awards program recognizes congregations, not subgroups or affiliates. Therefore, please be sure that all entries are submitted by the congregation. We do not accept submissions from separate departments, programs, or people from the congregation.
2. Multiple entries are allowed but only one entry per award category. Please choose the category for each entry based on the printed guidelines and criteria, and indicate that category on the application.
3. You may put more than one entry in a box, but each entry must have its own application. You may copy the application form [or download the application from www.uscj.org] if you need more application forms.
4. Entries are accepted and judged based on your responses to the guidelines and criteria in each of the award category. We provide guidelines and criteria to simplify the application process and to help the judges to evaluate entries. *You need not respond to every item in the guidelines.* You may describe your entry in narrative form; be sure to include samples of all supporting materials. We encourage materials be submitted in *green formats*. Provide as much in electronic [CD or DVD] media as possible. The web site awards must be submitted in electronic form.
5. **Only congregations in good financial standing as of JUNE 30, 2009 are eligible to receive an award.**
6. Each entry must meet the basic criteria stipulated for its award category. To win an award, an entry must demonstrate extraordinary characteristics or unusual and outstanding aspects that go beyond the expected norms. Entries within award and congregational size categories are compared to each other.
7. We plan to award one gold and one silver award for each congregational size division for each category.
8. **Please note: Materials submitted will not be returned.** All submissions become the property of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism for its use. United Synagogue reserves the right to use materials from the submissions, in whole or in part, with appropriate credit, in materials to be produced or distributed by United Synagogue
9. Award-winning entries will be on display at United Synagogue's biennial convention in December 2009. We strongly encourage representatives from the award-winning congregations to attend the convention to accept the awards and to share information about the programs.
10. Applications **must** include an executive summary (**with a maximum of 2-3 brief paragraphs**) on the summary form sheet on the reverse side of the application.
11. The application must be signed as indicated on the application form.
12. Applications and supporting materials must be shipped by delivery services that allow for package tracking (such as Federal Express, USPS Priority Mail or UPS). Materials **MUST** be in our possession by the deadline of **April 17, 2009**. Entries, which include application, supporting material and summary, must be sent to:
Solomon Schechter Awards - The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rapaport House – 10th Floor
820 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017

For additional or clarifying information, please talk to our staff consultant, **Aaron L. Kischel**,
at the New England office of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Phone: 617-964-8210 e-mail: kischel@uscj.org

II. EDUCATION

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The criteria listed below are based on A FRAMEWORK FOR EXCELLENCE FOR THE CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE SCHOOL by the USCJ Department of Education. (Applications are to be endorsed and validated by the Regional Commission on Jewish Education, where there is one.) Congregations are expected to submit data on the following areas of their synagogue school program:

Curriculum

1. United Synagogue Curriculum: The School program and each grade course of study follows an articulated, coherent curriculum the aims of which are consistent with the aims set forth by the **Framework: Aims of the Conservative Synagogue School**. This includes proper supervision, evaluation, and achievement levels.
2. Textbooks, supplemental material and teaching aids are available as needed.

Administration

1. The school board meets regularly and is responsible for setting the school's policies, providing for its needs and establishing an efficient administration. Its budget must be adequate to provide for the educational needs of the school, be prepared at a definite time each year and include a detailed estimate of all income and expenditures.
2. The school maintains appropriate records and must have a school calendar published at the beginning of the year and available to the board, faculty and parents.

Standards

The synagogue school must either have been recognized as a “Framework for Excellence” school or meet all of the requirements to be so recognized. All required documentation showing same must be provided. **If this is the case, how is this different than Framework?**

1. Graduation and/or Bar/Bat Mitzvah on Shabbat or holiday morning, must require the satisfactory completion of at least a five-year course of study.
2. Opportunity is provided for individual student differences so as to promote educational growth.

For further information about the Framework or the required documentation, please contact the USCJ Department of Education or email <education@uscj.org>.