

**The United Synagogue of  
Conservative Judaism**



**The 2009  
Solomon Schechter  
Awards  
for Synagogue Excellence**  
GUIDELINES and CRITERIA  
for  
**Performing Arts (Music, Drama, Dance)**

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

Jerry I. Klibanoff  
*Committee Chair*

Aaron L. Kischel  
*Staff Consultant*

Carole Korowitz  
*Biennial Convention Chair*

Rance Block  
*Biennial Convention Vice-Chair*

Rabbi Paul Drazen  
*Biennial Convention Director*

Raymond B. Goldstein, PhD  
*International President*

Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein  
*Executive Vice President*

## 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](http://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 – 10<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:kischel@uscj.org)**

## ***IV. PROGRAMS***

### **PERFORMING ARTS (MUSIC, DRAMA, DANCE)**

*Performing Arts (music, drama, dance) can enrich and enhance the quality of well-rounded synagogue programming, as well as to introduce members in the community to the variety of aesthetic and spiritual experiences available in a Jewish context - both as active performers and as an audience.*

1. Is a synagogue committee assigned oversight of performing arts activities? Does the congregation encourage and support –financially and administratively - the professional staff (Rabbi, Hazzan, Education Director, Youth Director, etc.) to pursue and present projects in the performing arts?
2. In liturgical/worship service settings:
  - a) Are performances of set “art” pieces integrated into the context of the services for variety and diversity?
  - b) Does the synagogue have a choir? Describe its role in services or congregational life. How is balanced maintained between ‘performance’ and ‘participation?’
3. Aside from any professional ensembles, to what extent is the congregation directly involved in the performing arts life of the synagogue? Does the congregation have a volunteer choir, a children’s choir, a drama group, a dance troupe? Are the groups led by volunteers or paid professionals? Are concerts and performances scheduled regularly throughout the year or at special events?
4. Describe how the congregation encourages the arts through presentations. Include descriptions of performing arts series, bringing in outside talent (amateur or professional). Is there a variety of offerings, including vocal, cantorial, instrumental, ensemble, drama or dance? Have seminars, lectures or workshops in Jewish performing arts been offered to the congregational community in adult education series? Is there an endowment fund to defray the costs of such presentations?
5. Has there been planning and presentation of new works -- new music, dramatic scripts, choreography -- perhaps utilizing grants or sponsors to underwrite commissions?
6. Are particular holidays or celebrations (e.g., Jewish Music Month) adequately highlighted by special performances in the congregational community?
7. How have the performing arts been integrated in the curriculum of the congregational school and/or the synagogues youth program (USY)?
8. Are there specific classes offered, utilizing various media now available (audio, visual, CD-ROM, etc.), and have performances been part of the celebratory or commemorative (e.g. graduation, *Yom HaShoah*, etc.) events?
9. Have the various arms of the congregation worked together to present programs of a larger scope?
10. Describe how the synagogue used available media (internet, TV - cable and public access, radio, print, etc.) to publicize and then to share performance with the community at large?