

**The United Synagogue of  
Conservative Judaism**



**The 2009  
Solomon Schechter  
Awards  
for Synagogue Excellence  
GUIDELINES and CRITERIA  
for  
Strategic Planning**

*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)**

# ***I. ADMINISTRATION***

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

*Congregations need strategic planning to maintain synagogue vibrancy and vitality; it is needed on a regular basis. The process should include a congregational review as well as a plan for implementation. Entries will be judged on the manner in which the plan was developed and on the process of implementation. We know it often takes more than two years to develop and implement such a plan. We will accept entries of plans that were implemented since May 2007, although the planning may have begun earlier.*

*While we recognize the value of having paid outside consultants, **our awards are given to congregations who do substantive planning work, not for following the plan given them, even as we recognize the value and amount of work that entails.***

1. Describe the structure of the Strategic Planning Committee and its relation to and with the synagogue Board.
2. Describe the nature of the review process:
  - a. Did it review the mission and vision of the congregation?
  - b. Did it review the congregation's infrastructure?
3. Explain how the congregation was involved in the process.
4. Explain how the clergy and professional staff contributed to the process.
5. Describe the implementation procedure.
6. Analyze the success of the plan:
  - a. What were the goals? Were they achieved? What measures were established for determining success?
  - b. What changes have been made in the congregation as a result of the strategic plan?
  - c. What did you learn from your experience in the process of strategic planning?
7. Entry must include a copy of the final report.