



Dues Reduction Grant Application 2020-2021

Dear Synagogue Leader,

In these unusual times, we understand that you are interested in requesting a Dues Reduction Grant from USCJ. Please understand that with so many of our congregations requesting relief because of COVID-19, we want to use our limited resources to provide grants in an equitable manner. Please read this form carefully and provide us with as much information as you can so we can make an informed determination.

USCJ is a partnership of nearly 600 member synagogues in North America. In support of our partner synagogues, USCJ:

- Works with synagogue leadership teams, like yours, to provide guidance, materials and expertise in areas of financial sustainability, membership, relational Judaism, Sulam leadership development etc. -- these programs are available to our partners at no additional costs, beyond your dues payments;
- Convenes thousands of synagogue leaders annually in a variety of workshops and conferences addressing the global challenges of Judaism in the 21st century;
- Engages more than 12,000 teens to strengthen their Jewish identity and skills as they reach adulthood;
- Welcomes 3,000 annual visitors and learners to the Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center;
- Serves as the voice of Conservative Judaism to the North American governments; and,
- *We're doing all of the above and much more in a virtual manner during the global health emergency. In addition, many of these programs are available to you at no cost beyond your dues payments.*

The manner in which dues are presently assessed is commensurate with your congregants' dues. Your USCJ dues are calculated as follows:

- \$37.25 per membership unit paying your synagogue between \$191- \$500 per year
- \$74.50 per membership unit paying your synagogue \$500 or more per year
- No USCJ dues are assessed for membership units paying your synagogue less than \$191 per year.

We have established a dues relief grant process so that synagogues who encounter extraordinary and unusual financial hardship may apply for dues assistance. The USCJ Dues Committee has defined hardship as follows:

1. When a synagogue has incurred unusual loss of income due to a catastrophic situation, or
2. When a synagogue has incurred expenses because of unusual and unreimbursed damage, or
3. When a synagogue has experienced unusual conditions, which result in expenses that could not be reasonably anticipated, planned for, and/or routinely financed.

While we would like to honor your requested grant amount, it is not always possible. Out of fairness to other synagogues, applying synagogues are responsible for the final dues determined by the USCJ Dues Committee, not the amount they request to pay.

Please read and complete this entire application, including required signatures and documentation, no later than December 31, 2020. The entire completed application, along with supporting documentation, should be emailed to USCJ at ar@usci.org.

Thank you for your partnership.



Haran Rashes
Chair, USCJ Dues Committee

Dues Relief Grant Application Eligibility Requirements

- No dues relief grant applications for fiscal year 2020-21 will be accepted for review until outstanding dues for prior years are 1) paid in full; or 2) an agreed payment plan is in place and being met; or 3) the prior obligation and how your synagogue plans to address the balance is included with the dues reduction grant application.
- Since you are applying for relief of current dues, you already should have completed at least one or more dues payments. To indicate a good faith intention to pay dues commensurate with the grant you are requesting, the amount paid should be commensurate with both the amount requested and how far along we are in USCJ's July through May dues year. Your application will not be accepted unless you have made some payments.
- USCJ's dues structure is based on a synagogue's membership numbers reported on the MRF. Thus, any reduction in membership is already reflected in the dues calculation and is therefore not relevant as part of a grant application.
- The Dues Committee commends those synagogues that have included their MRF-based USCJ dues obligation in their budget. **Failure to budget for USCJ dues** or failure to budget for the full amount of USCJ dues, as assessed per the MRF, will not be considered as part of a dues reduction grant application, nor as justification for a reduction.
- Applications submitted by the December 31, 2020 deadline will receive priority consideration. Applications received after that date will be considered based on the availability of funds. Grant applications received after the deadline **may not be processed if all available funds have been exhausted**.
- USCJ will make billing adjustments to your dues obligation for this year once your signed dues grant reduction determination letter has been received.
- **Those receiving a dues relief grant must agree to either a) pay the balance of their dues obligation within four weeks of the date of their grant acceptance or, b) agree to a monthly payment plan via ACH (electronic fund transfer).**
- All financial commitments are due by the end of May 2021, unless there is a specific approved payment plan in place.

Dues Reduction Grant Application Process

1. Your complete dues reduction grant applications and supporting documentation should be submitted to USCJ at <ar@uscj.org> no later than December 31, 2020.
2. We will verify that all the required information is included and will contact the synagogue if information is missing. Only complete applications will be processed.
3. If your synagogue does not have the capacity to gather this data, please contact your District Synagogue Consultant to discuss your specific situation and receive consultation on what data you can provide to USCJ.
4. Within each district, a District Dues Committee will review each grant application and may request additional information from you.
5. The District may make a written recommendation to the Dues Committee.
6. A member of the Dues Committee, from a district other than your own, will review your materials, consult with the district if necessary, and make a written recommendation.
7. The recommendations of the Dues Committee member and the District Dues Committee will then be reviewed by the chair of the Dues Committee for a final determination.
8. A confirmation of the determination will be sent to you signed by the chairperson of the Dues Committee.
9. The president, treasurer, or Executive Director (whoever is authorized to enter into a binding agreement) of your synagogue is required to sign one copy of the letter and return it to USCJ headquarters in New York by mail, fax or email.
 - Please note that until a signed copy of the dues reduction notification letter is received by USCJ headquarters, your dues reduction will not be finalized and you will continue to be billed for your full dues obligation.
10. Our goal is to ensure that we are fair to all. If after receiving the determination related to your synagogue's dues reduction grant you have questions or concerns, you may contact the Dues Chair, Haran Rashes at haran@umich.edu. Please send a copy of your email it to ar@uscj.org.
11. Please note: Haran Rashes is a lay leader and not part of USCJ professional staff.

**USCJ DUES REDUCTION GRANT APPLICATION
(Formerly Dues Variance)
2020-2021**

DUES DIVISION – All information submitted is for internal use only.

All information must be received by your district/regional office no later than December 31, 2020 to be given priority consideration. Applications received after that date will be considered at the discretion of the Dues Committee. Please type or print all information within this application.

Synagogue Name: _____

Address: _____

Today's Date: _____

Communications on this matter should be addressed to the following individual:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State/Province, Zip: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Position at Synagogue: _____

Email Address: _____

Current Rabbi (if applicable): _____

Current Executive Director (if applicable): _____

We certify that the information contained within is true and accurate and that our synagogue will accept the decision of the Dues Committee in consideration of this application and bind our synagogue to payment of the final amount in dues by May 30, 2021 (BOTH SIGNATURES ARE REQUIRED).

Signature: _____
(President) (Treasurer or Executive Director)

(Please Print Name) (Please Print Name)

(Email Address & Phone Number) (Email Address & Phone Number)

Required information for Dues Reduction Grant

Please answer the following questions and provide the requested information. Please give the committee a full and complete picture of your synagogue's hardship. In addition, you may attach other explanations and supply any other material that you feel will assist the committee in gaining a complete picture of your synagogue. All documents and memorandums will be kept in strict confidence within the Dues Committee only.

We encourage synagogues to inform their District Synagogue Consultants prior to submitting this application. Upon request, a member of the Dues Committee will be happy to arrange a telephone call to discuss your application and guide you through the process.

Please attach:

- The two most recent years' budgets and actuals (income and expense) plus the current year budget with year-to-date actuals;
- A current balance sheet listing all assets, liabilities and capital funds;
- If your synagogue has an endowment, a summary showing how much is in that endowment and a list of the last 12 months' disbursements from that endowment, with the reasons for such disbursements; and,
- Please make sure your 2020-2021 MRF has been completed: [Click here for this year's MRF](#)
We are unable to accept any applications without a current MRF on file.

Questions regarding your dues reduction request

(Please provide a narrative answering all of the below questions)

1. Is your need for a dues adjustment COVID-19 related? If so, please complete the separate section on COVID-19 Dues Relief.
2. What is the cause of your hardship? Ongoing issues, anticipated financial issues, or an emergency short-term problem?
3. How has your synagogue covered your deficits, or what plans do you have to do so?
4. What other financial obligations are you seeking to reduce and what is the status of those requests?
5. When were your member's dues last increased? (Please provide both actual dollar amount and the percentage increase).
6. What is the current status of your dues payment?
 - a. How much of your USCJ Dues have you already paid this year?
 - b. How much are you requesting to pay in 2020-2021 dues to USCJ? (Please remember this number is only a request; there is no guarantee that we will be able to award you this full amount.)

If you are not sure about where to send your material, please contact Barry Mael at mael@uscj.org /732-738-4302, or Roumi Kovachev at ar@uscj.org/646-519-9261.

COVID-19 Specific Questions

If this need for a dues adjustment is COVID-19 related, please answer the following:

1. Did you apply for a Payroll Protection Program Loan or any other sort of public or agency assistance (e.g., Federation)?
 - a. Please provide a copy of your applications.
 - b. Did you receive such, and if so how much and from where?
 - c. If you did not receive such, please state the reason, if any that you were denied.
2. What specific revenue losses or reductions have you experienced due to COVID-19? (e.g., preschool, rental income, etc.).
3. Have you eliminated any staff positions or reduced any salaries due to COVID-19?
4. If you chose not to prepare a budget for 2020-2021, please state so and explain how you will be tracking your income and expenses compared to previous years.
5. Is there any other information that you would like the Dues Committee to consider?