



USY Constitution  
*Updated February 2025*  
*Ratified March 10, 2025*

Article I- Membership

Section 1

The membership of United Synagogue Youth shall be composed of Jewish teens between the ages of thirteen and eighteen.

Section 2

The Members of United Synagogue Youth shall be organized in Chapters, sponsored by synagogues which are currently affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. If a synagogue ends its affiliation with USCJ, it is no longer considered a chapter. In special circumstances, the Director of USY can make exceptions.

Teens will also be able to join USY as individual members through a central membership system.

Each chapter shall have the power to elect leaders, charge dues for membership, and take part in programs that benefit its members. Chapters will have discretion over who is or is not eligible for membership. If a teen is a member of a chapter, they are considered a member of USY and can take part in any and all programs at any level (within eligibility requirements in place).

Section 3

Each Chapter shall be required to observe Shabbat, Kashrut, and other ritual practices following the guidelines set by their congregational rabbi. All programs organized by USY outside of chapters will be observant of Shabbat, Kashrut, and other relevant practices under the supervision of relevant USY and USCJ leadership.

Article II- Organization

Section 1

The officers of United Synagogue Youth shall be: President, Vice President of Programming, Vice President of Jewish Life, Vice President of Engagement and Outreach and Vice President of Communications.

The aforementioned Officers shall constitute the Executive Board of United Synagogue Youth.



The board will meet monthly and as needed at the direction of the President. Attendance at these meetings is required for all officers unless excused by the President. The board will serve in administrative roles as it relates to the functioning of USY leadership and in an advisory capacity related to the current programs and priorities of the organization.

The term of the executive board will be from June 1 to May 30.

## Section 2

- The Executive Board shall meet as soon as possible after the election of the officers in order to appoint an International General Board. Each officer will be able to create relevant positions working under them. These positions can change on a yearly basis and will reflect the goals and active projects of each officer.
- These general board members, in conjunction with the Executive Board, National Leadership Council, and presidents/chairs of each region or community council (when they are not the same entity), will constitute the full voting body of International USY leadership.
- The Executive Board may, in addition, appoint such committees as it deems necessary. The chairpersons of such Committees shall be members of the General Board only with the express approval of the Executive Board.
- The General Board will serve a term that starts from the time of their appointment (no later than September 30) through the end of the current school year (June 30)

## Article III- The Teen Leadership Council (TLC)

Within 3 months of their election, the president, with the assistance of other officers if needed, will form the Teen Leadership Council (TLC). The TLC will be an advisory body led by the USY President to give more USYers a voice in the direction and future plans of USY. The council will be formed through an application process, with preference given to USY members who live in geographic areas that are not covered by a community director or a structure that maintains regional leadership. For those areas where there is leadership overseen by a community director or otherwise, the president/chair of that area will serve as a representative on the TLC. They have the discretion to appoint a separate individual, if they so choose, in consultation with the President and overseeing staff members. The officers of the IEB will also sit on the TLC and can lead committees from within the TLC on an as-needed basis.



### Section 1: Requirements:

- Current USY member in good standing
  - If a teen participates in USY programming but their synagogue does not have a chapter, they can become a national member.
  - A member in good standing is one who has attended 50% of locally sponsored programs (chapter and community) and at least one immersive weekend within the school year of the application.
- Grades 10-12
- TLC members will be held to the same standards of behavior and Jewish engagement as IEB and IGB members
- Exhibit previous leadership experience or potential
- The size of the TLC will be at the discretion of the President but shall not exceed 30 teens

### Section 2: Meetings

- The TLC will meet at least 6 times a year at the discretion of the USY President.
- Meetings will consist of discussions about current issues and programs within USY
- In months where there are no meetings, TLC members will commit to participating in a virtual leadership training opportunity tailored to them

### Section 3: Term

- TLC members will serve a term of 1 school year.
- They can reapply but are not guaranteed to continue
- TLC members can be removed from the TLC by the USY President (in consultation with USY staff) if they do not meet their responsibilities (meeting participation, responsiveness to communication, and other tasks as assigned or volunteered for.)

## Article IV- Officer Roles and Expectations

### Section 1

The President is the teen face of USY. This person will be the driving force behind the programs and initiatives that the board initiates and will serve as a thought leader behind the mission, vision, and values of USY. They will work to develop goals for the Executive Board as a whole, the IGB, and support each officer in developing and executing their individual goals. The president will set the agenda for IEB meetings and ensure that deadlines are met, holding each officer accountable. In addition, the president will lead the USY Teen Leadership Council, ensuring that it meets monthly, supports the work of the IEB and IGB, and becomes a source of ideas and feedback from USYers around North America.

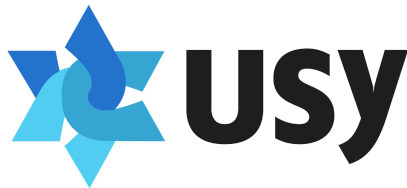
- The President shall serve as the chief administrator, presiding officer, and accredited representative of United Synagogue Youth.
- The officer shall serve as a member ex-officio of all committees.
- The President shall serve as a voting member of the USCJ Board of Directors

## Section 2

- The Vice President of Programs will be responsible for year-round programming and initiatives that engage USY members. This will include all aspects of Israel programming and advocacy, social action initiatives, leadership training, social programming, and all other areas of general programming (excluding summer programs and immersive experiences where there is local leadership taking the lead) that do not fall under the scope of another officer. They will work with appropriate USY professionals to take the lead in planning the immersive weekends that are run during the year. The VP of Programming will oversee IGB committees focused on Israel and SA/TO to ensure that those efforts move forward.
- The Vice President of Jewish Life will be responsible for creating programs and initiatives related to all aspects of Jewish culture, ritual, and learning. They will work closely with USY professional staff to provide input on the educational goals and programming of USY, and the ways in which Jewish culture and ritual are observed. They will create and oversee IGB committees focused on Jewish culture and Education, working towards the goals they set with the president at the beginning of their term.
- The Vice President of Outreach and Engagement will be responsible for leading efforts to create and implement a plan to engage new and returning USY members and develop strategies to connect with teens in our communities who are not involved in USY. They will focus on high school teens but advise USY professionals on strategies and initiatives that engage younger participants. They will create IGB committees to support outreach and engagement efforts, working towards the goals they set with the president at the beginning of their term.
- The Vice President of Communications will be responsible for working with the USCJ marketing team and USY professional staff to create and implement strategies and initiatives to connect directly with teens, share information, and spread the word about the work of USY. This will include social media, e-mails, and other communications. They will create IGB committees to support the various methods of communication and marketing, working towards the goals they set with the president at the beginning of their term

## Section 3

The officers of the IEB will take on additional assignments and roles as needed, as determined by the USY president and USY professional staff.



## Section 4

### Introduction:

“The world stands on three things: Torah (study), Avodah (prayer and ritual practice), and Gemullut Hasadim (acts of kindness).” – Pirkei Avot 1:2

As leaders of USY, the Officers serve as accessible Jewish role models (*dugmaot*) to the USY community. In that capacity, they are expected to aspire to live their lives in a way that strives to fulfill the mission and values of USY.

### Therefore:

- The officers of USY will strive to serve as Jewish role models for their peers. They should exhibit deep engagement with and connection to Jewish life in their homes and communities. As members of the IEB, USY leaders have a unique opportunity to grow as Jewish leaders and should use their time in office to challenge themselves to grow in different aspects of their personal Jewish practice, such as Shabbat, Chagim, and Kashrut. This area of growth will be identified under the mentorship of USY professional staff and nurtured over the course of their term, including regular check-ins, learning, and conversations, to ensure that it is a meaningful and impactful experience.
- USY, as an organization, is observant of Shabbat. This means that USY business, travel, and communication cannot occur on Shabbat or holidays except in an emergency. This includes meetings, email, and social media. USY programs that occur on Shabbat will also be Shabbat-observant, with the Mara D’Atra of the hosting community guiding decisions about what is and is not permissible. As leaders, USY officers are highly encouraged to make aspects of Shabbat observance a part of their life during their term of office and will maintain Shabbat observance when participating in a program that coincides with Shabbat.
- All USY programs will observe the laws of kashrut, with the Mara D’Atra of the hosting community guiding decisions about what is and is not permissible. As leaders, USY officers are highly encouraged to define a level of kashrut observance for themselves during their term of office. When USYers are able to acquire their own food during a USY program, officers will follow the laws of kashrut to the greatest possible extent within what is permitted by the appropriate Mara D’Atra.
- Officers will also commit to participating in ongoing Jewish learning opportunities, as well as volunteer or tikkun olam projects, in consultation with the Director of USY.



The Officers shall participate actively in the affairs of their respective Chapters (in as much as they are available, depending on how active their chapter is) and in the activities of their respective Regions or communities to the best of their abilities.

Officers shall commit to timely responses to all communication and meet deadlines set out for individual projects and tasks.

These standards will apply to members of the IEB, IGB, NLC, and Community councils

## Article V - Convention

### Section 1

United Synagogue Youth shall designate not less than one meeting per year, either at a convention or virtual, for the purpose of electing Officers, voting on policies or procedures, and a report from the President on the current state of USY. The President will have discretion over this in consultation with the Director of USY or their designate.

### Section 2

Any member in good standing of USY can participate in the convention or vote at the meeting when appropriate.

### Section 3

The fiscal year will start on July 1 and end on the June 30 following. USY will follow the fiscal calendar of USCJ.

## Article VI- Election of Officers

### Section 1

- In order to be eligible to become an officer of United Synagogue Youth, one must:
  - Have been a member in good standing of United Synagogue Youth for at least one year prior to the election, and
  - Have served as a regional officer, community council member, National Leadership Council Member, or as a member of the IGB for a period of at least six months duration sometime prior to the election.
- No person shall be elected to the same office more than twice.
- All candidates shall be matriculated high school students. If a candidate has completed the academic requirements of high school, but still considers themselves a “high school student,” the USY President and Director will have discretion on a case-by-case basis to judge their candidacy. No candidate for office shall be a matriculated college student or enter college during their time in office.

- Successful candidates for IEB may not serve on a Regional Board or Community Council during their IEB term so as to preserve their IEB responsibilities as primary. The USY President and Director can allow IEB members to serve in these roles on an as-needed basis.

## Section 2

- Candidates shall be required to submit to the President written notice of their intention to be a candidate for a particular office and written notice of their qualifications for that office by the deadline set by the president, which will be no later than April 1.
- Candidates will need two written recommendations, at least one of which should be from their rabbi or senior member of their synagogue's professional leadership. If a candidate is not a member of a chapter or synagogue, they should consult with the USY Director in order to fulfill this requirement.

## Section 3- Speeches for in-person elections

- The order of election shall be: President, VP Programming, VP Jewish Life, VP Outreach and Engagement, VP Communications.
- Presidential candidates shall have 5 minutes to speak. All Vice Presidential candidates shall have 3 minutes to speak.
- The sitting Communications Vice President shall time all speeches. If the Communications Vice President is a candidate for another office, then the President shall time all of the said office's speeches.
- No candidate is allowed to use any visual aids during the candidate's speech, including posters, cell phones, or any other props or devices. Candidates must go up to the podium with only their speeches in hand.
- To be elected, a Candidate must receive a majority, defined as 50% + 1, of the votes cast, abstentions excluded.
- Presidential candidates shall be permitted to be a candidate for no more than two different offices at the election. All Vice Presidential candidates shall be permitted to be a candidate for only one office (i.e. Vice-presidential candidates may not "drop down").
- Presidential candidates who plan on dropping down must inform the presiding Executive Board of the candidate's intentions to do so before elections are officially opened
- There are no candidates allowed from the floor for positions with no candidates. If a position has no candidates for election, it will be skipped over during the election process.
- In the event that an office has no candidate, the remainder of the newly elected Executive Board shall elect an eligible member to the office within 60 days following the International Convention, provided that a majority of the incoming IGB and NLC vote in favor.

### Section 3A- Speeches for Virtual Elections

- Candidates will give their speeches live on whichever platform is used for the election. They will record them in advance and submit them to the president and USY director just in case they experience technical difficulties.
- Speeches or recordings will follow the same order as in-person elections.
- Voting will take place in the same order as with in-person elections but will depend on the capabilities of the platform being used.
- The USY president, a representative for each candidate, and the USY director will have access to the virtual voting results to ensure fairness and transparency.
- The IEB can decide to extend voting outside of the official meeting and establish procedures to ensure that eligible voters listen to speeches before voting.

### Section 4- Voting

- Delegates will be able to vote for candidates using a ranked-choice voting system.
- A candidate is elected to office with a simple majority of 1st choice votes. However, if no candidate receives a majority on the first ballot, instant run-off elections shall be held by eliminating the candidate with the smallest number of first choice votes. In each round of voting, delegates receive one vote. All voting shall be done by Closed Ballot. Each candidate will be able to have a representative who observes the voting to ensure fairness and transparency.
- If a candidate is unopposed, no further action is needed after their speech, and they will be declared the winner.
- If voting is held virtually, the IEB, with the input of the NLC and IGB, will institute voting procedures that depend on the capabilities of the virtual platform being used. These rules must be finalized at the same time that interested USYers can begin the candidacy process.

### Section 5

All Officers shall be elected annually and hold office until such time as their successors are duly elected and installed. The Officers shall assume their duties on June 1 following their election. The Executive Board of United Synagogue Youth may enact such procedures pursuant to this Constitution as they deem necessary for the purpose of governing the manner in which elections and campaigns are conducted.

Every chapter and community of United Synagogue Youth shall strive to implement all international election processes to ensure consistency and fairness across all levels of the organization.





## Article VII - Impeachment

### Section 1

Any officer of United Synagogue Youth may be impeached for nonfeasance or malfeasance, including conduct unbecoming an officer of United Synagogue Youth.

### Section 2

A petition signed by ten members of the IGB or NLC detailing the charges against the accused Officer must be submitted to the President and the Director of USY (or their designate) no fewer than thirty days prior to the trial. The Director of USY has the discretion to remove an officer immediately and without a trial if the conduct of the officer is not public and a petition is not brought, or they are in clear violation of code of conduct rules at an in-person event.

### Section 3

No officer shall be convicted without the concurrence of two thirds of the IGB and NLC and without having had an opportunity to personally hear the charges and to present a defense on one's own behalf.

The accused officer will be given the opportunity to resign prior to the trial.

### Section 4

When the President is tried, the Vice President of Programs presides.

### Section 5

Consequences shall consist of removal from Office and immediate disqualification from holding office in USY from that time forward.

## Article VIII- Vacancy

### Section 1

In the event of a vacancy in the Presidency, the Officers, excluding the President, shall nominate and elect one current International Officer to fulfill the duties of the absent President for the remainder of the term. If the Officers cannot come to a conclusion, the IGB and NLC will be called upon to vote into office one of the four Executive Officers as President.

In the event that there exists a vacancy in the office of the Vice President of Programs, Vice President of Jewish Life, Vice President of Outreach and Engagement, or Vice President of Communications, the President shall appoint a member of the IGB or NLC to fill the vacated office, provided that a majority of the IGB and NLC transmit to that member the approval of the appointment within 30 days.



## Section 2

In the event that an officer is absent or incapacitated for an extended period of time and is, therefore, unable to discharge the duties of the office, the President may appoint a member of United Synagogue Youth to assume the duties of that office until such time as the officer is able to resume responsibilities.

## Article IX - Amendment

### Section 1

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the council made up of IGB and NLC, provided that the International Youth Commission consents.

All amendments must be received by the International President at least 30 days prior to voting, as outlined in Paragraph One above, and must be distributed to all voting delegates at least 20 days prior to voting.

This Constitution may be ratified through the same procedures by which it may be amended.

### Section 2

In all cases where the business of United Synagogue Youth is transacted, a quorum shall consist of a majority of the members of the body in session.

### Section 3

The authority to interpret this Constitution and all rules, laws, and regulations made in pursuance thereof shall be vested in the Executive Board of United Synagogue Youth.

### Section 4

This Constitution shall become effective immediately upon its ratification. This Constitution and all rules, laws, and regulations made in pursuance thereof shall be the supreme law of United Synagogue Youth and all affiliated Chapters and communities thereof.