

## Israel Mission 2024 FAQs – Updated Oct 19, 2023

### 1. How will the recent current events impact the Mission?

- We are in close touch with our trip provider and they say that it is far too soon to make any decisions or changes to our trip next July. Their highest priority is always the safety of their trip participants. When there is clear information about anything that will impact our trip, they will let us know what and how.
- They also shared that the best way to show support for Israel is to come on the Mission!

### 2. Must I belong to a congregation to go on the trip?

- You are not required to be a member of a congregation to go on the trip.

### 3. If I am not affiliated with a congregation, what groups may I travel with?

- You may choose to travel with any of the participating congregational groups, or any of the other organizations hosting trips including Mayerson JCC/Jewish Federation, Chabad Jewish Center of Blue Ash, and Jewish Discovery Center.

### 4. Who is eligible to go on the trip?

- The trip is open to all members of the Cincinnati Jewish community who:
  - Are permanent residents of Greater Cincinnati (or child of)
  - Live in a Cincinnati Jewish household and/or
  - Work full-time for a Cincinnati Jewish communal organization

### 5. What is considered a Cincinnati Jewish household?

A household is considered Jewish if someone in the household identifies as Jewish based on practicing religious Judaism or Jewish cultural traditions; this could be an individual; a family where one parent identifies as Jewish; or one member of an interfaith couple married or living together where one identifies as Jewish.

*PLEASE NOTE: The goals and content of the 2024 Community Mission to Israel are intended for those who are part of Jewish households as described above, and not in accord with the teachings of Messianic Judaism, therefore Messianic families are not eligible to register for the trip.*

If you have additional questions regarding your eligibility for the subsidy, or to travel on the Mission, please contact your rabbi, trip leader, or [Jan Evans at the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati](#).

### 6. How much does the trip cost? Is it subsidized?

The trip is subsidized by The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati as follows:

- The land cost (hotel, most meals and tours) is \$5,985 per person (double occupancy; single occupancy is \$7,675). This does **not include airfare, gratuities or trip insurance**.
- The land cost for a third person in a room is \$5,345.
- Anyone who meets the grant eligibility requirements (see above) qualifies to receive a \$4,000 grant towards the land cost.
- A family traveling with children under age 18 may receive a maximum subsidy of \$12,000. However, post high school young adults aged 18 - 26 may apply for the grant independently, but still register as part of their immediate family.
- There is no charge for children under the age of 2 at the time of travel.

### 7. Who is eligible for the \$4,000 trip subsidy?

The subsidy is available to all members of the Cincinnati Jewish Community who are both:

- residents of Greater Cincinnati (or minor child of) living within [these zip codes](#) and live in a Cincinnati Jewish household
- and/or work full time for a Cincinnati Jewish communal organization (includes non-Jewish employees)

#### **8. How may I receive the subsidy?**

- You may apply for the subsidy through the [JFC grant portal](#).
- If you have previously applied for an individual grant (such as a Cincy Journeys Grant) through our portal, you may [login](#) with your existing credentials. If not, please [create an account](#). For more detail, review the [instructions](#) on how to register and access the application.
- Everyone who applies will receive the grant, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements.

#### **9. How may I reserve my spot?**

- You may reserve your spot by registering. Registration is open and will remain open through April 1, 2024. Visit <http://www.j2adventures.com> and enter into the search field the group you want to travel with or simply "Cincinnati Community Mission" to see all trips being offered.
- **REGISTRATION NOTES ABOUT ROOMMATES, ADJOINING ROOMS, AND SWITCHING TO ANOTHER TRIP**
  - If you are sharing a room with a spouse or significant other, please register together and include spouse name as the "roommate" and you will get a room with one bed to share.
  - If you're sharing a room with a roommate (not spouse or significant other), please register separately and include each other's names as the roommate in each registration form. This will insure you get a room with separate beds.
  - Roommates must be traveling on the same bus. Each group is managed as a separate entity and logistics will be unique to each group.
  - A family unit of 4 or 5 will get adjoining rooms. If it's a bigger family, there's no problem with booking more adjoining rooms.
  - If you registered for a trip and you'd like to change to another trip, you may do so before December 1, 2023.

#### **10. Important Passport Information**

- Please check your passport! To participate in the trip, your passport MUST be valid for at least 6 months AFTER the trip ends (through January 16, 2025). If your passport is expired, or expires before January 16, 2025, please begin the renewal process now. Passport renewal can take months. If you do not have a passport, please begin the process to obtain one now.
- Your passport number is required for registration. If your passport is expired or you need to renew it so it's still valid 6 months after the trip, please enter your old passport information in the registration form. If you don't have a passport, please call J<sup>2</sup> Customer Care and they will walk you through how to register for the trip without a passport for now. You will need to contact J<sup>2</sup> Adventures Customer Care to update this information when you receive your new passport (1-888-230-6008, M – Th, 8am – noon Eastern time).

#### **11. Is there a deposit required?**

- Yes. There is a \$500 per person nonrefundable deposit required upon registration.

**12. What is the cancellation policy? May I get a refund if I decide to cancel my trip?**

- Please see J<sup>2</sup> Adventures [Terms and Conditions](#) for an explanation of the cancellation policy.

**13. When is the balance due?**

- The balance of payment will be due 90 days prior to the trip departure (April 1, 2024)

**14. What is the “Early Bird Discount?”**

- Those who completed registration and paid the \$500 per person deposit by midnight, May 31, 2023, received \$150 off per person, which will be deducted from their final trip invoice.

**15. How much should I plan for gratuities and how does that work?**

- Our trip provider has advised us to plan for \$30 per person per day for gratuities, regardless of age, and there are 8 days of touring – so \$240 total for each person for the trip.
- Please plan to have \$240 in US dollars (or multiples of that based on how many in your party) in an envelope to give to your bus leader on Sunday July 14<sup>th</sup>.
- There are many auxiliary staff in Israel working on the trips behind the scenes in addition to those you will meet on your tour buses. J<sup>2</sup> Adventures will distribute the tips fairly and efficiently to all support staff.

**16. What is included in the trip?**

- 7 nights' accommodations.
- Late check-out on the day of departure.
- 8 days of touring with a tour guide and 7 days of touring in a luxury, air-conditioned bus.
- Daily breakfast, 3 lunches, 3 dinners & 2 communal evening events
- Water on the bus
- Porterage at the airport & hotels
- All site entrance fees & program fees as per your final program

**17. I've signed up for a trip, but I want to change to another trip. May I change it?**

- Yes, you may switch to a different trip on your mission until December 1, 2023. To make a change, please contact J<sup>2</sup> Adventures Customer Care at 1-888-230-6008 between 8:00am – 12:00pm ET, Monday through Thursday.

**18. What cities will we visit?**

- We will visit a variety of cities based out of hotels in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.
- Links to detailed itineraries of all trips being offered on our [Mission web page](#).
- There will be two community-wide events in Israel where all groups will convene in the same locations.

**19. Who is operating the trip?**

- All groups will use the same trip provider (J<sup>2</sup> Adventures) and stay in the same or comparable hotels.
- Each group leader has worked with the trip provider to create a customized itinerary that delivers meaning and impact relevant to each group.

**20. Do I need trip and/or flight insurance?**

- Travel and flight insurance are not required but highly recommended, and typically must be purchased within 2 weeks of registration. Please reach out to an insurance provider for more information.

- If you choose to purchase trip insurance, you should insure for the amount AFTER the Foundation grant subsidy(ies) have been applied (insure only out of pocket trip costs).

**21. Do I need to purchase additional health insurance?**

- That is a personal choice based on your own health risk factors and comfort level with your current healthcare coverage. It is not required.
- However, we strongly encourage you to review your current healthcare policy to understand your coverage benefits when traveling overseas and speak with your healthcare insurance provider to understand if a supplemental policy is recommended.

**22. Will the meals included on the trip be kosher?**

- All food on the mission will be supervised under the Rabbanut Harashit Leyisrael - The Israeli Chief Rabbinate or Local Municipal Rabbinate. Additional Kashrut requirements can be accommodated at extra cost.

**23. What if I have food allergies or other dietary restrictions?**

- It is important to let our trip provider know about any allergies you may have, or special meals you may need for health or dietary reasons, so that we can make accommodations as needed. If there is a severe food allergy, we will always notify the hotels and other food providers however they may not guarantee that the food provided will be free of the allergen. You will have the opportunity to notify our trip provider in the registration process.

**24. I have relatives / friends in Israel. May I separate from my bus group temporarily to meet them?**

- As a part of our Mission, we prefer that you stay with your bus group throughout the trip and instead, plan to extend your trip or arrive before our tour starts to accommodate other plans. However, if you miss any activity, we ask that you please inform your trip leader.

**25. Do I need to pay [Value Added Taxes \(VAT\)](#) in Israel?**

- All prices exclude 17% VAT. Foreign nationals (including American citizens) are NOT required to pay VAT. Israeli citizens must pay VAT even if they have other citizenships.
- VAT applies to any goods purchased in Israel, by Israelis or foreign visitors. For valuable goods (jewelry, works of art, etc.) tourists can claim a refund of VAT at Ben Gurion airport providing that they are equipped with a form (given to them by the salesperson) and providing that they allow time for the refund process. Often there is a line, due to shortage of staff, but this is something that cannot be predicted. Items for which a refund is being requested might be inspected so they should be packed in hand luggage.
- VAT does not apply to the trip costs EXCEPT for someone with Israeli or dual citizenship. Israeli citizens will need to pay nonrefundable VAT at the hotels.

**26. May Israelis or other Jewish foreign nationals living in Cincinnati take part in the Mission?**

- Yes, if they are permanent residents of Cincinnati; have lived in Cincinnati for at least one year prior to applying for the grant; and can show permanent residency through tax return, driver's license, or employer pay stub.

**27. Is there an age restriction on who may go on the trip?**

- There is no age restriction. However, our travel provider says the trip is most meaningful and appropriate for children 10 or older. Whatever your child's age, we encourage you to consider their tolerance and your ability to manage them on long, hot days and through the rigors of sightseeing and group travel, as you make your decision.
- Children younger than age 10 are welcome to come, especially if they are attending with family and older siblings. All children 2 and older **at the time of travel** are considered full paying

participants and are eligible for the grant (assuming they meet all eligibility requirements).

- If you have children under the age of 18, we encourage you to check with your rabbi or trip leader to confirm the itinerary you are considering is family friendly. There are several congregations/trip leaders that are designing itineraries specifically targeting families.
- Children 8 and under must be in a car or booster seat at all times when traveling on the tour buses. Boosters will be available on the buses for those children who are no longer required to be in a car seat. **Written requests for boosters must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the trip.** Parents must bring car seats for those who still require them. Packable strollers and backpack carriers for babies are recommended.

**28. I (or a member of your party) have a disability. May I still go on the trip?**

- The 2024 Israel Mission trip leaders are striving to cultivate an inclusive travel experience that allows all members of our community to engage with Israel and our Cincinnati Jewish community. We recognize the spectrum of disability and health conditions which may affect the experience and will try to include people of all ability levels. Please [click this link](#) to begin a conversation with your trip leader concerning accessibility for yourself or a member of your party.

**29. What if the trip is canceled?**

- If Federation, Foundation or J<sup>2</sup> Adventures decide to cancel the trip, refunds will be made, less expenses already paid, as per terms that appear on the registration website.

**30. What is the deadline for registration?**

- Registration must be completed, and all fees paid in full no later than midnight, April 1, 2024.

**31. Do I need to book my own flights?**

- Yes. Participants are responsible for booking their own flights and should plan to arrive in Israel the morning of Monday, July 8 Israel time. Please keep in mind Israel is 7 hours ahead of our time zone. The return flight may be booked any time after 10:30pm on Monday July 15<sup>th</sup> (Israel time). Flights may not be booked earlier than 11 months before your return (mid-August 2023).
- If you would like assistance in booking your flights, please reach out to your own travel agent, or contact J<sup>2</sup> Adventures Customer Care (1-888-230-6008 between 8:00am – 12:00pm ET, Monday – Thursday) for a travel agent referral.

**32. Will there be a family friendly bus?**

- Yes, JCC/JFC Family Fun in Israel, Wise Temple Fantastic Israel for Families and Jewish Discovery Center are all offering family friendly itineraries.

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Please direct any questions about Registration to J<sup>2</sup> Adventures Customer Care at 1-888-230-6008 between 8:00am – 12:00pm ET, Monday through Thursday.

Additional FAQs will be posted as new information is available, so please check back regularly.

You may also check out additional [FAQs on our Trip Provider's website.](#)