

Memphis Jewish Federation – Lemsky Endowment Fund
Application Guidelines for 2026
Memphis-based Israel Engagement Projects
(July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027)

Mission Statement: Memphis Jewish Federation’s Lemsky Endowment Fund, established through the generosity of the late Abe Lemsky, OBM, strengthens bonds between the Memphis Jewish Community and Israel by awarding vital funding to **Projects in Israel** that care for the vulnerable and/or strengthen Jewish identity and **Programs in Memphis** including: (a) Grants for high school teens and young adults to participate in educational or volunteer programs in Israel; (b) Grants to Jewish day school students for organized school trips to Israel; (c) Needs-based flight grants for first-time adult visitors to Israel participating on organized Memphis trips; (d) Support of local Israel engagement programs for all Memphis Jewish demographics.

The guidelines described below apply to Memphis-based organizations seeking funding for Israel engagement programs taking place in Memphis.

Note: If you are applying for a new program, please do not hesitate to reach out to lemskygrants@jcpmemphis.org to discuss whether your program idea aligns with the Lemsky Fund Mission & Funding Criteria (below).

Funding Criteria

Proposals for local Israel engagement programs will be considered for funding if they:

- Address the Lemsky Fund’s mission of strengthening the bonds between the Memphis Jewish community and Israel;
- Program goal is for participants to deepen their understanding of Israel-related issues and/or to increase their solidarity with, concern for, and connection to the people and State of Israel;
- Fulfill an unmet Israel engagement need in the Memphis Jewish community;
- Meet desired program outcomes (see below);
- Fulfill scoring criteria (see below).

Eligibility Requirements

1. An applicant must be a non-profit organization based in Shelby County, Tennessee.
2. Applicants must be tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code and “not a private Fund” under section 509(a) of the Code. An applicant may use a fiscal sponsor if the fiscal sponsor meets these requirements and submits a letter to the Lemsky Fund accepting expenditure responsibility.

3. Previously funded applicants must complete the required reports as described below. A new application will not be accepted if applicant is not in “good standing.”

4. Fund restrictions - The Lemsky Fund does not make grants supporting: a) general agency overhead costs including existing salaries; b) educational institutions for their regular, educational operations or capital programs; c) congregations for their trips to Israel; and d) programs of a fundraising nature, including capital campaigns.

The Lemsky Fund will support the pro-rated compensation of additional, non-salaried staff needed to manage the specific program to be supported by the Fund.

Currently, the Fund is not accepting proposals for speakers/speaking engagements.

Lemsky Fund Support

1. Lemsky Fund grants are one-year awards ranging from **\$2,000-\$40,000** and are designated only for approved programs that support the mission of strengthening the connection between the Memphis Jewish community and Israel.
2. Grant Requests:
 - a. **There is a maximum grant request and maximum award of \$40,000.**
 - b. Lemsky Fund grants will fund a maximum of 75% of the total program budget for a new program.
 - c. Grant applications must be submitted annually. Funding during one year does not create any guarantee for funding for any subsequent year.
 - d. A returning program may reapply and is eligible for up to 50% of its total program budget. Returning programs must meet all outcome and reporting requirements and are subject to the same annual grant review process and scoring as first year programs.

Lemsky Fund Desired Program Outcomes

Awards will be given to programs that seem likely to result in one or more of the following outcomes:

- Program participants increase their connection to the people and State of Israel as evidenced by taking more trips to Israel, increasing charitable giving to Israel, becoming involved in Israel education, programming, and advocacy, and increasing attendance at Israel-related programs in Memphis and elsewhere;
- Program participants increase their general involvement in Jewish communal life.

Lemsky Fund Funding Preferences

In addition to the basic funding requirements and desired program outcomes, the Lemsky Fund strongly encourages programs that a) Are structured with significant collaboration with other agencies; b) Where applicable generate program revenue; c) Have clear plans for program sustainability after the Lemsky Fund grant; and d) Have a tie to JAFI, JDC or World Ort.

The scoring rubric (see below) is utilized by the committee as a guide in making granting decisions. Programs meeting all the criteria will have a higher chance of grant approval.

Application Process/Timeline for 2026

- Applications must be submitted via MJF's online portal by the close of business on **Thursday, March 5, 2026**.
- Every applicant will present its agency's application before the entire Lemsky Endowment Fund committee on Thursday evening **March 19, 2026**. Time slots will be assigned to each applicant.
- Grantees will be notified of awards in June 2026 following approval by the Memphis Jewish Federation Board of Directors.

Grantee Responsibilities

- Grantees are to acknowledge Memphis Jewish Federation in all marketing and publicity surrounding the program funded by the Lemsky grant with the following tagline: "This program is funded ("in part", when applicable) by a generous grant from Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund.
- Grant recipients will submit mid-year progress and final impact reports.
- Applicants for FY 2026-2027 who received a grant for a previous year must be in good standing, having submitted a mid-year and final report for their program.
- Grants are draw-down reimbursement grants. Documented expenses will be submitted for reimbursement two times per year, by December 30 and June 30 of the relevant fiscal year.
- Organizations receiving grants from Memphis Jewish Federation will participate in Federation's efforts to understand evolving community needs and ensure a sustainable Jewish community by sharing demographic and engagement information as needed for certain studies, surveys and other planning efforts.

Lemsky Grant Review Criteria and Scoring

- **Program Goals & Activities Align with Lemsky Mission:** Program's goal and design fulfill the Fund's mission of strengthening bonds between the Memphis Jewish community and Israel.
- **Program Need:** There's a demonstrated need for the program in the community; It fulfills an unmet or underserved Israel engagement need; Program is not duplicative or it adds value to what already exists.
- **Program Approach & Implementation:** Activities are organized and well-planned, target populations are clearly delineated; timeline is clear and reasonable. Staff needed to implement program are clearly identified.
- **Program Outcomes:** Desired program outcomes are set and clear; Program seems likely to meet outcomes and have desired impact. Returning program has demonstrated evidence of meeting outcomes.
- **Outcomes Measurement/Evaluation:** Proposal includes a plan for evaluating and measuring outcomes; Evaluation plan integrated into program.
- **Budget:** Budget is clear and provides detailed justification for the amount requested. Project costs are appropriate and reasonable. Income from program (where applicable) and from other funding sources is clearly identified; Expenses are clearly delineated.

POINT VALUE	CRITERIA
25	Appropriate Program/Aligns with Lemsky Mission
10	Program Need
15	Program Approach & Implementation
10	Program Outcomes
10	Outcomes Measurement/Evaluations
30	Budget
Bonus Points	Funding Preferences:
(+10)	Collaboration with other agencies demonstrated.
(+5)	Generates program revenue
(+5)	Clear plan for program sustainability
(+5)	Program has tie to JAFI, JDC or World ORT