
THE PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

a members guide





Welcome to NAASE!

Dear Congregation leader . . .

We thank you for your interest in the program and mission of the North American Association of Synagogue Executives (NAASE).

This booklet is being provided to you with our best wishes, and in the anticipation that the information contained in these pages and on the NAASE website at naase.org will be of interest to you, and as an encouragement to your soon-to-be Executive Director to become actively involved in this dynamic peer-to-peer network.

The role of the executive in the North American Synagogue has never been more vital.

Networking among the professional practitioners of synagogue administration is a dynamic blend of exploration, discovery, sharing and nurturing. And NAASE is the conduit for the communications and personal interactions that lead to professional growth, organizational benefit, and service delivery improvement. Your membership in NAASE opens all the doors . . . you select, you initiate, you respond, you cultivate, you improve and you foster. For no two of our colleagues is the benefit-set exactly the same . . . it is personally and individually reflective of your needs and your receptivity. This mini-guide is intended to provide you with a brief overview of the possibilities.



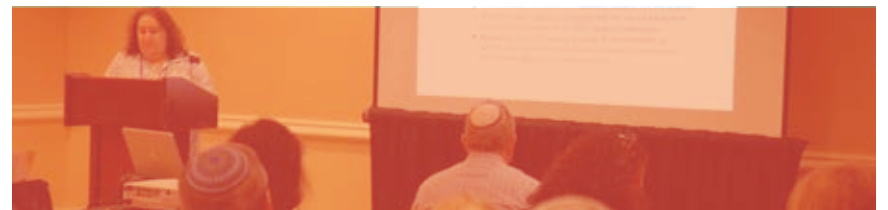
“How will we reach the ‘unreachable?’”



“How will we make the impossible possible?”



“How will we meet so many needs with few resources?”



“How will we protect the role of the North American synagogue as a force for good in our lives, and the world?”

WELCOME TO YOUR NETWORK



Annual Conferences

Each year, some 100-120 of our colleagues gather for immersive networking, study, discussions, speakers, rejuvenation and celebration of achievement. Classes at "NAASE University" cover approximately a dozen topics of interest to synagogue executives, from nuts-and-bolts to planning and "envisioning". Attendees participate in conversations and sessions throughout the span of the combined conference and study program, featuring panel discussions, large and small group break-out sessions, the annual Irma Lee Ettinger Memorial Lecture, and most importantly, profession-wide networking and communication. Held variously in the United States or Canada, and frequently in Israel, the annual conclave is well attended and characterized by enthusiastic anticipation and wholehearted participation.



Regional / Local Group Meetings

Some 17 local and regional groups span the United States and Canada, allowing Executive Directors with common geographic bonds to meet regularly with colleagues from different sized congregations, often including Reform, Reconstructionist and Orthodox Directors. A variety of scheduled monthly or quarterly midday meetings bring speakers on special topics to the groups, focused timely discussions, opportunities to enter into collective agreements of mutual congregational benefit, demonstrations of available technology and other administrative know-how. Each group decides its own agenda and policies, and meetings are well-attended and programs are diverse.





Conferences and Mission Trips to Israel

Once every six years, it is our custom to host our international conference on the ground in Israel! This immersive and highly-curated experience offers our members the experience of a lifetime, as we interact with Israelis from many different sectors, public and private, and tour the country in a manner designed to enhance both professional and spiritual cultivation. Additionally, our association frequently ventures to Israel for dedicated missions, advancing Israel-Diaspora relations and empowering the Masorti movement. The result is our ability to bring back to our home kehillot thrilling, and empowering content, and to establish a strong foothold for the future of the State of Israel.



Webinars and Distance Learning

Produced several times a year by the NAASE Distance Learning Committee, these on-line meetings feature guest lecturers from across the spectrum of areas of concern in the management of synagogues, speaking from first-hand experience, presenting innovative and timely sessions with direct applicability to the participants. The presentations are followed by group discussion and distribution of materials. With sessions typically lasting from 60 to 90 minutes, topics have included congregational mergers and program sharing, security matters and planning, implications of the recent Pew Poll, guarding against fraud in the synagogue, transforming congregations into mission-driven kehillot, and making strides toward development of a relational culture. Sometimes jointly sponsored with other organizations like the USCJ and NATA, many of these sessions are open to other synagogue professionals and to lay leadership, as well.



Telecommunications

The ExecNet listserv is an e-mail communication tool exclusively for NAASE members, devoted to exploring the world of synagogue life, providing an open forum and discussion platform on a wide variety of synagogue-related topics. In this unmoderated list, all messages received by the server from its subscribers are in turn immediately sent out to all subscribers. The online archives contain all of the messages since the ExecNet's inception, in a conveniently searchable database. The ExecNet Mission is to provide to synagogue executives of NAASE, both new and experienced alike, a forum that nurtures diverse learning, sharing and networking with executive directors across the world, in a timely and relaxed collegial environment not otherwise available.



The NAASE Website

The constantly evolving and comprehensive on-line resource for reading materials and further reference that pertain to the work of the synagogue director, and that allow for Internet visitors to see the contributions of the synagogue executive to the dynamic and vital health of the Jewish community. Portions are accessible to all visitors, others are accessed by NAASE members through password access.



The New Directors Institute

There is no university where one learns how to be a synagogue director. Our expert community of colleagues have carefully crafted a series of programs, resources, touchpoints, sessions, etc., all geared towards providing new executive directors a platform to learn everything they need to know to perform their duties and serve their communities with excellence and experience. Topics of study include operations, finance, governance, programming, high, holy days, security, policy, and planning. .





Administrative Resource Center (ARC)

An on-line resource center accessible only by NAASE members, housing the best-practice examples of the most experienced of our colleague-authors who have shared their most highly effective forms, manuals, procedures, documents, policy statements and communication materials, for the benefit of executives developing new materials and new procedures. Categories of materials available and continually being updated include Bar/Bat Mitzvah Materials and Procedures, Building Security Planning, Celebration and Holiday Programming, Communications Policies and Procedures, Contractual and Professional Issues, Developing the Personal Professional Library, Effective Fundraising Projects and Facilities Maintenance/Usage/Scheduling/Catering, Financial Forms and Procedures, Inter-agency Coalitions and Community Outreach, Job Descriptions and Staff Relations, Leadership Development, Life Cycle Event Policies and Procedures, Membership Integration Programs, Membership Outreach Materials, Program Development and Evaluation Materials, Shabbat and High Holiday Procedures, and Targeted Programming.



Model Professional Contracts

While this is a sensitive area of mutual concern, sample agreements between colleagues and sister congregations can be most helpful to the goal of elevating standards in the entire profession. These working documents contain no names nor identifying specifics, but are intended to present possibilities for resolution and avoidance of the pitfalls of negotiating "in a vacuum". Executive Directors active in the field may find assistance in this compendium for determining which areas are appropriate for inclusion in their professional contracts and what provisions may be helpful in resolving existing difficulties in the contractual process and relationship. A panoply of supplemental materials complete the library, including "What is the Work of an Executive Director", "Preparing for Contract Renewal", "Professional Standards Guidelines" and "Selecting the Elements of the Contract".



Professional Development & Certification

Fellow in Synagogue Administration (FSA) is the professional certification that allows synagogue executives an opportunity to strengthen their image, status, and effectiveness by focusing on knowledge of the profession, and allows each person to make a contribution to Conservative Judaism through experience, study, performance and examination. This certification is NAASE's recognition that competence in the field can be aided through study and continued education. Certification follows the satisfaction of a series of educational and in-service requirements, including examinations in administrative theory, practice and techniques, Jewish history and principles of Conservative Judaism, the synagogue and synagogue administration.



Amin Tzibur (ATz) program commissions those professionals involved in the ministration of synagogues and their members. Conferred by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and NAASE and recognized by one's congregation, participants are awarded a Teudat Amin Tzibur and commissioned an Amin Tzibur, one who faithfully devotes oneself to the ministration of the community and the rebuilding of Eretz Yisrael. The purpose of the Amin Tzibur Program is to recognize the Judaic knowledge, skills, and work of synagogue professionals in congregational life. Candidates must be recognized by their lay leaders, membership, and congregational clergy as one of the religious leaders of the synagogue serving in sacerdotal areas of congregational and communal life including responsibilities such as leading religious services, serving as a member of the beit din (religious court), teaching, counseling, and ministering to the needs of the congregation in matters of life-cycle events, religious ceremonies, kashrut supervision, and other areas of Jewish living. in the field can be aided through study and continued education. Certification follows the satisfaction of a series of educational and in-service requirements, including examinations in administrative theory, practice and techniques, Jewish history and principles of Conservative Judaism, the synagogue and synagogue administration.





Mentoring

The newly refashioned Network Partnering initiative offers peer-to-peer assistance in identifying and strengthening professional skills, networking opportunities, resources and methodology. This initiative supports the membership integration and professional growth and development efforts of individual NAASE members, as they acclimate to their new profession. By pairing and bringing together new members with longer-standing colleagues, the growing one-on-one partnerships allow for personal introductions and peer-to-peer networking opportunities throughout the year and across programming events, as well as responsive conversation whenever sought. Individuals may wish to gradually add to their Network Partners throughout the year, and find additional colleagues to serve as nurturing agents of information, support and guidance.



Professional Surveys

In a quadrennial cycle, NAASE develops, conducts and distributes informational surveys of the membership and related institutions to develop useful data, monitor important trends, promote professional growth, and provide analytical literature about the profession. NAASE undertakes a cycle of surveys, maintaining a multi-year schedule of such surveys in order to analyze the longitudinal effects on personnel contracts, professional compensation, synagogue budgets, synagogue practices, congregational policies, and personal development. Spanning a four year cycle, NAASE strives to conduct a complete compensation survey in one year of the cycle, a survey entitled "Anatomy of an Administrator" in the next, and two others surveys on an assortment of aspects of synagogue administration. Periodically, the compensation survey has been conducted in conjunction with our Reform colleagues in the National Association of Temple Administrators (NATA) utilizing a professional data collection and analysis company. The "Anatomy of an Administrator" survey offers data trends and comparisons dating back to the mid-1960's and explores our demographics, educational backgrounds, work habits, employment histories, professional responsibilities, and personal opinions. The topics of study for the other surveys have included analyses of synagogue income and expenses, staffing, personnel procedures, catering policies, fund raising programming, and other areas.



Placement Services/Consultations

The NAASE-USCJ Joint Commission for the Placement of Synagogue Executives is a cooperative effort by NAASE and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), and is the official and only placement agency for Conservative synagogues. Experienced members of the Placement Commission are available to speak with congregational search committee representatives to discuss the development of the search process, the structuring and evaluation of the executive position, and the planning of an effective interview process. There is no cost to the USCJ-affiliated congregation nor to NAASE candidates for this service.



Week of Study at the Jewish Theological Seminary

Embodying the purest form of study, Torah Lishmah, for almost thirty consecutive years, groups of two dozen committed Conservative Executive Directors have, in years past, gathered each June for a five day course of intensive study at the world- renowned Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The week of study is sponsored jointly by NAASE, the Seminary and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The annual study conference examines theory and practice, drawing on the work in the field done by executive directors, including discussions and explorations of how this work enriches and challenges executives in their own spiritual lives. The faculty is drawn from among the most exciting and inspired of the teachers and scholars of the Seminary and is set in the relaxed atmosphere of the summer classroom with colleagues.





West Coast Institute

The inaugural NAASE West Coast Institute (2009) was organized in partnership with the American Jewish University MBA Program in Non-Profit Management. University faculty provide participants with the tools they need in order to implement today's best management practices. In years past, our keynote speakers, field experts and panel participants inspire and empower us to take an active role in helping to shape our synagogue's staff and volunteer leaders of the future. Featured sessions on a variety of current issues in synagogue management, and keynote speakers utilized lecture, readings, conversation and interaction as the multi-modal approaches in this content- packed two day marathon. Often, study sessions are led by specialized practitioners in the field who are also faculty members of the prestigious AJU MBA program. Plans for future conferences at the AJU and elsewhere on the West Coast will be generated reflective of future interest.



Social Action / Awareness

NAASE's commitment to serving the needs of agencies and tzedakot active in the locales where our annual Conference takes place, across North America and in Israel, in partnering with Jewish social service agencies and with Conservative congregations and chavurot in Israel. Each NAASE Conference features an integrated programmatic component of Social Action Awareness that encourages hand-on involvement by attendees with a local community group with a passionate and compelling mission.



Retirement and Pension Opportunities

The Joint Retirement Board for Conservative Judaism (JRB) serves a wide constituency of professional staff members of the Rabbinical Assembly, The Cantors Assembly, the North American Association of Synagogue Executives, the Jewish Educators Assembly, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The JRB is a non-profit body that provides retirement, insurance and planning services. If you are in a USCJ-affiliated congregation, your membership in NAASE makes you eligible to participate and to benefit..



Profession-wide Resource Sharing

In a marvelous arrangement developed several years ago with our sister organization, NATA (the National Association for Temple Administration) serving our colleagues in the Reform Movement, NAASE members may access all the resources and programs of NATA as a direct and no-cost benefit of NAASE membership, and the courtesy reciprocates to our NATA friends, as well. NAASE has, for over a decade, been an active component of the Jewish Communal Service Association of North America, along with several dozen other professional organizations, in promoting the field of Jewish communal service as an attractive field for professional fulfillment and service. This cooperative interaction provides many opportunities for profession-wide activity and resource development.



Congregational Consulting Service

In this newly re-energized cooperative program, with synagogue professionals and experienced lay leaders helping congregations meet today's challenges, NAASE members provide service to congregations without professional staff leadership. This program of consultancy to affiliated congregations in the Conservative Movement rests on the foundation established in the early 1980's by NAASE's PALS Program, through which consulting services were provided to synagogues in need of administrative guidance and review. The original program has given affiliated congregations access to the combined expertise and experience of hundreds of professional synagogue administrators throughout North America, typically assisting between 15 and 20 congregations each year. The Congregational Consulting Service is a dynamic joint program of the North American Association of Synagogue Executives and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE....



If you're behind the times, they won't notice you. If you're right in tune with them, you're no better than they are, so they won't care much for you. Be just a little ahead of them.

—Shel Silverstein

Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

—Proverbs 23:18



Personal and Professional Growth

We look to ourselves to grow our skills and passions, to



The Helping Hand of Our Network

We build a community, so we may offer community. With care and accountability, we can challenge ourselves to be our best selves, and to embody the spirit of chavruta.



The Betterment of Our Communities

If not now, when? Our mission is not to grow and learn for our own sake, but to enhance the communities who have put their sacred trust in us as their directors.

Reach Out
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naase.org