UJA-Federation of New York
Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal
Beginning Jewish Families Task Force
Request for Proposals

UJA-Federation of New York’s Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal (COJIR) is responsible for strategic planning and allocations in the area of Jewish education. Through a diverse portfolio of initiatives and collaborations, COJIR seeks to support renewing and strengthening Jewish life in New York and around the world.

Through its Beginning Jewish Families Task Force, COJIR is making available a limited number of Ignition Grants to organizations who think boldly about programs and practices. The Beginning Jewish Families Task Force intends for the Ignition Grants to serve to support new and prospective parents in making choices toward a long-term commitment to Judaism by engaging them in Jewish life from the first moments of their journey as a Jewish family until the time when their children enter nursery school. The Ignition Grants will be made available to support programs with a primary focus on innovative Jewish identity-building experiences for expecting parents and parents of babies and toddlers in the northernmost areas of Westchester. Through these grants, COJIR seeks to attract unaffiliated Jewish families who are not currently participating in Jewish life with a particular focus on the needs of a diverse array of modern families, including those who may be interfaith, single-parent, LGBT, Israeli, Russian-speaking, or adoptive families.

Parents and children throughout the collection of towns, villages, and hamlets of northernmost Westchester are already gathering for events and classes. COJIR would like to encourage neighborhood-based program providers to serve the Jewish community and support Jewish organizational efforts to reach families in public spaces. We also want to support the growth of grassroots efforts to reach people in individual homes through personalized events. These grants will provide seed money to pilot ideas that will strengthen Jewish identity among families with young children.

Jewish institutions and community organizations are encouraged to test innovative and established program models that will attract new and expectant parents living in the northernmost areas of Westchester to Jewish life. Organizational collaboration is encouraged.

Support Available
Grant awards will range in size from $5,000 to $20,000. Grantees will also receive two days of marketing consulting from Kveller, at www.kveller.com, which is poised to launch a Northern Westchester community page in July.

Eligibility
Qualifying organizations must be registered nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status that have a track record of responsible stewardship and internal practices that demonstrate transparency and accountability.

Use of Funds
UJA-Federation Ignition Grants may be directed to assist organizations with programs that:

- Cultivate community-building relationships among parents.
- Foster Jewish experiences for parents and their children.
- Increase access to Jewish life and experiences.
- Develop new models of inspired Jewish community.
- Take place in public spaces or in people’s homes.
- Make use of existing networks and such social media as parents groups, Facebook, and blogs.
- Reach areas that have few existing Jewish opportunities for our target demographic, including zip codes 10501, 10511, 10518, 10520, 10526, 10527, 10536, 10547, 10548, 10560, 10566, 10567, 10576, 10589, 10590, 10597, and 10598.

Timeline
Ignition Grant must be complete within 12 months of the receipt of funds.

- The application will be available Tuesday, March 15, 2011.
- Applications are due Monday, May 23, 2011.
- Ignition Grants will be awarded by Thursday, June 30, 2011.

Reporting
A standardized report form will be provided to Ignition Grant recipients twice a year. Grant reports must detail how funds were spent, what was achieved with the funds, and how the grant has made an impact on the organization and on the target audience. We require grantees to use qualitative and quantitative means to evaluate the impact of their grants, and to include individual feedback from participants and beneficiaries.

Download an application at www.ujafedny.org/grants, or e-mail an application request to cojigrants@ujafedny.org. For background, you can review UJA-Federation’s Jewish Early Engagement in New York report at www.ujafedny.org/researcevaluation. For additional information, please contact Rebecca Spilke at spilker@ujafedny.org.