



Strategic Plan Summary

2023 - 2026

“A dream written down with a date becomes a goal. A goal broken down into steps becomes a plan. A plan backed by action makes your dreams come true”

Greg S. Reid

Welcome to JRC

OUR MISSION

JRC is a diverse, participatory, and sacred community dedicated to a daring, deeply-rooted, Judaism.

OUR VISION

JRC will thrive as a celebratory community that joyfully innovates and reconstructs our Judaism to create an engaging and relevant spiritual home for generations to come.

OUR CORE VALUES

- ***Kehillah, Community:*** We value our collective life as a congregational community.
- ***B'tzelem Elohim, Made in God's Image:*** Affirming with understanding and acceptance the fundamental equality, fair treatment, and inclusion of all people regardless of our differences.
- ***Tikkun Olam, Repair of the World:*** We are committed to creating a just world and supporting others in this mission.
- ***Chesed, Loving Kindness:*** Showing up for one another and taking action to help those in need.
- ***Living in Two Civilizations:*** As Reconstructionist Jews we understand that we live in both American and Jewish civilizations - and that the values of each support and strengthen our identity as Jewish Americans.
- ***K'vod Sicha, Respectful Conversation:*** We use an intentional process to discuss difficult issues in order to honor our diversity, encourage a cohesive congregation where we agree to disagree, and allow authentic conversations to unfold.
- ***Bal Tashchit, Do Not Waste or Destroy:*** We take seriously our responsibility to preserve and replenish the Earth's limited resources.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning is an active and evolving process where synagogue lay leaders and staff create a roadmap for the next three to five years. A short-term (18-month) plan was adopted by JRC's Board in December 2020, given the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Fall 2021, the Strategic Planning Team set a goal to develop a new Strategic Plan to help JRC move forward, as we return to our building with multi-access programming.

Continuing to use a design thinking approach, the work of the Strategic Planning Team can be summarized in five steps.

Step 1. We began by reviewing the 2020 JUF Jewish Chicago census data and the 2020 Pew Research national study data to examine how these trends compared with our own congregational needs.

Step 2. We sought input from our members. From November 2021 to January 2022, all adult members, including our newest adult members from 7th to 12th grade, were invited to participate in small focus groups, both in-person and on Zoom. The demographics of the more than 50 focus group participants were closely representative of each membership category, geographic location, and years of membership. Participants shared what attracted them to JRC, what would enhance their experience in our community, and what dreams they had for JRC's future.

Step 3. We summarized ideas expressed in the focus groups. Members repeatedly told us that JRC is a comfortable spiritual home. While they want to maintain open, inclusive, approachable connections with one another, it is also critical to decrease silos and barriers to participation within our community and to find meaningful ways to connect.

THE PLANNING PROCESS (CON'T)

Members also desire diverse and enhanced, multi-generational educational, ritual, and social programs that explore a variety of topics through a Jewish lens. To meet these current opportunities and create a sustainable future, members seek greater transparency in the relationship between money and membership size. They desire a more focused public image emphasizing our uniqueness, joyful celebrations, and how we show up and care for one another.

Based on what we heard at these meetings, the strategic focus areas of *Community*, *Jewish Experiences*, and *Growth and Retention* emerged.

Step 4. JRC's Annual Planning Retreat was held in February 2022. Using the focus groups' input, the Board and staff together re-examined JRC's Vision Statement and Core Values to create goals for the next three years. Over the following two months, the Strategic Planning Team worked to create this Plan.

Step 5. This Strategic Plan is a living, dynamic document. Each year, the Board and staff will set an action plan to implement, evaluate, adjust, and accomplish the goals of this plan.

OUR GOALS

Goal 1: *Kehillah/Community*

וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת-כָּל-עֵדֻת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
Vayakhel et kol adat bnai Yisrael

And they convoked the entire community of Yisrael (Exodus 35:1)

Within the next three years, JRC lay leaders and staff will nourish opportunities for members to connect with one another in order to have *chaverim* (friends), *minyan* (a spiritual and ritual collective), and *achrayut* (responsibility for and commitment to one another – a sense of community).

Goal 2: *Chavayah/Jewish Experiences*

נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמַע
Na'aseh v'nishmah

We will do and we will learn by doing

Within the next three years, JRC lay leaders and staff will expand the tools that enable members to bring our talents, knowledge and creativity to co-create vibrant Jewish learning, ritual practice, tikkun olam, and celebratory community experiences that reflect our values.

Goal 3: *Harchavah: Growth and Retention*

הֲרַחֲבִי אֶמְקוֹם אֹהֶלְךָ יִרְיעוֹת מִשְׁכְּנֹתַיִךְ
Harchivi m'kom Elohayich v'yiri'ot mishkenotayich
Enlarge the size of your tent, expand your sacred dwelling place
(Isaiah 54:2)

Within the next three years, JRC lay leaders and staff will develop and implement membership retention and growth strategies to reach our goal of a 500+ household congregation, in order to sustain a vibrant community that serves and engages our members.

ACTION PLAN

During Spring and Summer 2022, JRC's lay leaders and staff will set priorities and develop an action plan to achieve these goals for implementation in FY 2023 and beyond. The Strategic Planning Team looks forward to partnering with the broader JRC community in the work ahead.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

The Strategic Planning Team:

* Becca Sperling * Linda Mathias Kaskel * Diana McNelis * Kim Moldofsky
* Cindy Aaronson * Cece Lobin * Megan Kashner * Barbara Pinzur * Debi Lewis

In addition to:

* The JRC Board of Directors
* The JRC Staff and Clergy
* Focus Group Participants

Approved by JRC's Board: April 13, 2022