



A HANDBOOK OF PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

**FOR CONGREGATIONAL SEARCH COMMITTEES
AND RABBIS IN SEARCH**

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OF THE
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INTRODUCTION

The Rabbinical Placement Commission's **HANDBOOK** serves as a guide for congregations, rabbis, and HUC-JIR rabbinical students entering into the placement process during the year prior to their ordination. The aim of this publication is not only to outline the procedures required by the Rabbinical Placement Commission, but also to encourage thoughtful self-evaluation on the part of both searching rabbis and seeking congregations. The procedures contained in this document have evolved over a period of years and reflect the cumulative experience of congregations and rabbis who have been in the search and placement process.

It is in this spirit that we have included in this publication the materials which we have created for both rabbis and congregations. It is the Commission's hope that in so doing there will be a greater understanding of the process from both perspectives. The **HANDBOOK** is always a "work in progress" and we welcome your comments for future editions.

The Rabbinical Placement Commission represents the entire Reform Movement in its deliberations and its rulings. It does so with the understanding that a successful conclusion to a rabbinic search redounds to the benefit of all. It is the hope of the Rabbinical Placement Commission that this **HANDBOOK** aids in this sacred endeavor.

It is in gratitude to the members of the Rabbinical Placement Commission, both past and present, that this publication is dedicated.

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PROCEDURES FOR CONGREGATIONAL SEARCH COMMITTEES

Introduction

Your congregation is now seeking a rabbi to be its spiritual leader. There is no more important work in the life of your congregation at this time than this search and its successful conclusion. We truly thank you for the thoughtful and sacred work you will be engaged in throughout the coming months. The chairperson and members of the Congregational Search Committee have been chosen because they represent the best interests of the entire congregation. It is a sacred and challenging responsibility. As you go forward, the Rabbinical Placement Commission of the Reform Movement, representing the CCAR, URJ, and HUC, is present to aid you in this endeavor. It is the mission of the Placement Commission, its members, and directors, to support your search as you move forward. This manual is written to help guide you during this process.

The Rabbinical Placement Commission

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, together with the Union for Reform Judaism and the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion established the Rabbinical Placement Commission in 1964. Each institution appoints four members to the Commission. The Commission, representing the entire Movement, thus has the responsibility to formulate rules and regulations to ensure the orderly placement of rabbis in URJ congregations. The Commission is always sensitive to the changing needs of both the rabbinate and congregations, and updates and evaluates the placement policies based on past experience and the needs of the Reform Movement at any given time. These policies are intended to provide order to the process and to ensure fairness and dignity to both the searching rabbi and the seeking congregation.

The administration of the Placement Commission is managed by two CCAR staff members: the Director of Rabbinic Career Services and the Director of Search Services. Rabbi Leora Kaye will guide and counsel rabbis in the placement process, and Rabbi Alan Berlin will assist and support congregations seeking a settled or interim rabbi. These directors also have the responsibility to uphold the rules of the Placement Commission as well as to make recommendations to the Commission and the Reform Movement regarding placement issues.

The Search Process

Experience has indicated that when a congregation begins the search for a new spiritual leader, it is a moment in time for that congregation to begin a process of reflection, self-evaluation, and planning for the future. The search and ultimate selection of a rabbi is made more meaningful, and the process more rational, when congregational leadership invests the requisite time and thought on the future direction of the congregation, as well as an honest evaluation of its recent past history. The materials that the Office of Rabbinic Career Services sends to the search committee are intended to aid in this endeavor. The URJ, through its Department of Consulting and Transition Management, stands ready as well to assist in transitional issues that will aid in the search. The URJ Consulting and Transition Management team works closely with the Director of Rabbinic Career Services and Director of Search Services to assist searching congregations, as team members are often familiar with the searching congregation, its history, and its leadership.

The Search Committee

The board of trustees of a searching congregation delegates the responsibility of the search to a special committee of the congregation. The newly appointed search committee has the responsibility and mission to put in place those procedures that will enable the committee ultimately to recommend to the board of trustees and the congregation the candidate that will be their next rabbi. Since the search committee has this delegated responsibility, it is crucial that the search committee's membership represents a cross section of the membership as a whole. This includes making sure there is representation from marginalized communities and various cohorts that comprise your synagogue. Also, multiple members of a household should not serve together on a search committee. Past experience indicates that although the size of the committee differs from congregation to congregation, the optimum size is no more than ten (10) to twelve (12) members. It is equally important that the chairperson of the search committee be a highly respected member of the congregation who has served in leadership positions in the congregation. It is the chairperson who is in regular contact with the Office of Rabbinic Career Services and the Director of Search Services.

The search committee must maintain confidentiality with regard to the names of the candidates while also advancing transparency by putting into place procedures to inform the congregation of its progress during the search.

The search committee should be comprised solely of members of the congregation. No members of the congregation's professional staff, including clergy, should serve on the search committee or participate in search committee meetings, interviews, or deliberations. While clergy and professional staff should not participate in formal search committee proceedings, they should have ample opportunities to meet with candidates, particularly during in-person visits, and to be able to share feedback regarding candidates with the committee. An exception to this principle is made for assistant/associate rabbi and rabbi-educator searches, for which it is appropriate for a senior rabbi to participate fully in rabbinic search committee proceedings.

Placement Application

The Office of Rabbinic Career Services will provide an application form together with other related literature to the search committee at the time that the congregation makes application to list its new opening. The purpose of the application is twofold. The first is to aid the congregation in asking important questions regarding the values, philosophy, and history of the congregation. The second purpose is to provide as much information as possible to the searching rabbi regarding the community, the existing staff of the congregation, and the financial package being offered. The completed application form should be returned to the Office of Rabbinic Career Services as soon as possible. The opening is then placed on the CCAR website that is available only to members of the Conference. The Rabbinic Careers section of the CCAR website enables an opening to be announced immediately.

Placement Policies

Since its inception, the Placement Commission has formulated policies and procedures that lead to the fair and orderly process of placement between CCAR members and URJ congregations. You will find the policies that the members of the CCAR and that URJ member congregations in search are pledged to uphold included in this document. The essence of the rules is the pledge that all rabbis of the CCAR who are seeking URJ congregational positions will do so only through the Office of Rabbinic Career Services and only in consultation with the Director of Rabbinic Career Services. The URJ congregations make a similar pledge to only seek rabbinic candidates through the CCAR Office of Rabbinic Career Services.

Policies Related to the Search Application

Base Compensation

In 2018, the Rabbinical Placement Commission adopted the policy that all search applications must provide a stated range for proposed base compensation (the sum of salary and parsonage). The RPC made this decision after engaging in learning and discussion about the ways in which publication of salary ranges impacts positively on congregations' successful completions of their rabbinic searches and on narrowing the gender pay gap.

Implicit Bias Training

In 2025, the RPC adopted a policy requiring that all search committee members participate in implicit bias training. Congregational Board members are also strongly encouraged to participate in implicit bias training. The CCAR has produced [training materials](#) that are provided free of charge to all congregations in search. The CCAR is now also partnering with the URJ Racial Diversity, Equity, Inclusion team to provide training webinars for congregations in clergy search. The dates for these webinars can be found [here](#).

The Category System

One rule that impacts upon the search is the category system. It is based on the understanding that there is a connection between experience and successful placements. Congregations are divided into four categories based on membership size. Rabbis are eligible to apply to these congregations based on years of experience in the field. Below are the current categories. Please note that as circumstances change there is flexibility within this system. The current category system was adopted by the Rabbinical Placement Commission at the June 13, 2001 meeting.

Category	Congregational Membership ^a	Minimum Years of Rabbinic Experience
A	Up to 300	Newly ordained
B	301–599	3 years
C	600–999	5 years
D	1000 plus	8 years

^a **NOTE:** In counting congregational size, the Placement Commission uses the numbers provided by the congregations on its search application.

The Placement Timeline

There is no formal “placement season.” Past experiences indicate that, in an orderly placement process, it can take twelve to eighteen months to complete a search. However, some searches, particularly for assistant/associate rabbi or rabbi educator positions, can be much shorter. Placements are generally geared to have a new rabbi in place by July of any given year. This means that the search process is completed approximately six months prior to that date in order for a candidate to give timely notice to their current congregation or organization. The successful search committee creates a schedule of meetings well in advance and requires regular attendance by its members during the course of the search.

The Director of Search Services and the Consulting and Transition team of the URJ stand ready to provide assistance for congregations at the beginning of the search. The Director of Search Services provides, via video conferencing, a detailed placement process orientation to the search committee chair(s).

For the 2025/26 year, there will be an interview holding period from December 23 through January 1. Communication regarding scheduling interviews may occur during this period. but no remote or in-person interviews may occur during this time.

Resumes

After the congregational opening is published on the CCAR Rabbinic Careers website, eligible candidates may ask that their application materials be sent to specific congregations. Candidate’s resumes and personal statements will be sent to searching congregations upon request, usually within one business day. We send the names of all eligible candidates to searching congregations. “Eligible candidate” is defined not only by category considerations, but also contractual considerations and ethics and dues obligations through the CCAR.

Candidates currently under a contract, which does not expire by a date that fits the opening of the seeking congregation will have their resume sent only with the consent of the president of their current congregation.

The search committee, on receiving the resumes, should acknowledge receipt in writing via email to the candidate. Most resumes contain basic information including the experience of the candidate in previous positions and a vision statement. Should the search committee invite the rabbi for a second interview, they are encouraged at that time to invite the candidates to submit samples of their written, published, or filmed materials, including sermons and other material to augment their resumes.

The names of the candidates and their resumes are considered confidential, and may not be shared beyond the confines of the search committee.

References and Due Diligence

It is important that you learn as much as possible about the qualifications of each candidate. However, do not call any reference — or anyone else — in the rabbi's current congregation or community without first securing permission of the rabbi. Experience has shown that the rabbi's relationship with the present congregation can be adversely affected if inquiries are made prematurely. The placement rules indicate that candidates are not required to notify the leadership of their present post that they are contemplating placement until they have been invited to a second interview, whether online or in person. When an invitation has been received and accepted, then the rabbi is expected to inform at least one officer or trustee of their present congregation of the forthcoming interview. The RPC recommends that it be the president of the rabbi's present congregation. As the process moves forward the balance shifts and the congregation should ask the candidates for references both in and out of their present congregation. The Director of Search Services will guide the chair(s) of the search committee in this matter.

Narrowing the Field: Equal Consideration

The Reform Movement has repeatedly affirmed that in religious life all genders and sexual identities share equal rights and responsibilities. Reform Judaism takes great pride in those who have earned rabbinic ordination from the Hebrew Union College, as well as other recognized Reform Movement seminaries and other rabbis who have been admitted into membership in the CCAR. The search committee is expected to consider all candidates recommended to them by the Placement Commission, rabbis of all genders, sexual identities, races, older and younger rabbis, married and single rabbis, and second career rabbis.

You are not mandated to interview in person every candidate whose name is submitted by the Placement Commission, but it is to your advantage to arrange an

initial interview between each candidate and the members of the selection committee. The impressions you derive from an initial interview with the candidate, considered together with the resume and other material forwarded by the candidate, will help you in deciding which of the candidates you will invite for a second interview. It is crucial that the search committee prepare well thought-out questions for all phases of the search.

Congregations considering both an internal candidate who currently serves the congregation and external candidates should ensure that all have access to the same information and are considered equally with parallel interviews and interactions with the congregation. Local candidates should have the same parallel interactions with a search committee as remote ones including conducting Zoom interviews. When an external candidate is visiting the congregation in person, sensitivity must be paid to avoid interactions between candidates, both internal and external alike.

The Second Interview

The goal of the initial video conference interviews, coupled with the study of the proffered material and the resume, is to determine which candidates are invited to the community for a second interview. The invitation for a second interview, and possibly an in-person visit, is an indication to a searching rabbi that their candidacy is being taken very seriously. It is at this point, as mentioned previously, that the candidate is required to inform a member of their current leadership that they are interviewing for a new position.

Congregations are responsible for the cost of travel and hospitality for each invited candidate if an in-person visit is possible. A member of the search committee should meet each candidate upon arrival in the community and appropriate hospitality should be arranged. Congregations are required to use a hotel for overnight stays, and not the home of a congregant.

The visit should include the opportunity for the candidate to visit the congregation, the community, and its resources, especially the Jewish resources of your community. The candidate should have scheduled time to meet the members of the congregation's professional staff. The formal interview should be designed to enable the search committee to learn as much as possible about the candidate. It is equally important for the candidate to learn as much as possible about the congregation during this visit.

After each interview the committee should assess its reactions to the candidate. In order for a search committee to continue with a candidate, it should have more than a majority vote to move forward. If the committee decides that the candidate will no longer be considered for the position, the candidate should be so informed in a timely manner in writing or by telephone call. Rabbi Alan Berlin, Director of Search Services (aberlin@ccarnet.org) should be informed and reason given. This information is requested so that the candidates can receive valuable and constructive feedback. During the second interview, salary and the benefits package should be discussed.

When the committee has narrowed the panel to two or three candidates, the

chairperson may arrange to have members of the search committee visit each of the candidates in their present congregation. While this practice used to occur regularly with most congregational searches, in recent years it happens less frequently since most congregations offer many opportunities for online congregational worship and educational experiences. If an in-person visit occurs, it should be scheduled over a weekend, giving those who visit a Shabbat opportunity to experience the rabbi preaching, teaching, in the rabbi's own congregation. It is necessary to schedule this visit with the approval of the candidate. Following these visits, it is recommended that the remaining candidates and their spouses or partners be invited back to the congregation for a final interview. This interview may be the time when other members of the board of trustees are invited to attend *ex officio* in anticipation of the search committee's recommendation. A successful search will culminate when the search committee recommends a candidate to its board of trustees and, through the board, to the congregation. That recommendation should be achieved with at least 75% of the search committee's approval. The search committee or some other appropriate committee will then meet with the successful candidate to begin the detailed contractual discussions leading to the formalization of the relationship between the rabbi and congregation. It is common for a rabbi to retain a lawyer to help with negotiation conversations. It should not be seen as adversarial, rather as a way for the rabbi to maintain distance from the more challenging aspects of contractual negotiations while beginning to create a sacred and trusted relationship with the congregation.

Placement Process for Students in the HUC-JIR Ordination Class^c

Most HUC-JIR ordination class students will enter the search process for congregations where they have no prior experience. Students may also be considered for positions at congregations where they serve as student rabbis or interns.

Ordination Class Eligibility

Beginning 2021, upon certification by HUC-JIR made to the CCAR Director of Rabbinic Career Services that a student is in good academic standing and has progressed sufficiently in their coursework and thesis/capstone project and there are no ethical concerns, such that ordination is expected that spring, the student becomes eligible to begin the placement process. Students may then apply for available Assistant Rabbi, Rabbi Educator and Senior/Solo (size A-Category) Rabbi positions.

For the 2025-2026 year, the CCAR will begin sending resumes on behalf of all students in the HUC ordination class who have submitted two chapters of their thesis/capstone to searching congregations on **December 8, 2025**. The only exception to this date is that students may request that the CCAR send out their resume to congregations before December 8, 2025 if the Rabbinical School Director informs the CCAR that the students (1) have submitted a complete draft of their capstone OR (2) have submitted a draft of two chapters of their capstone and are not enrolled in any courses for credit other than the Senior Seminar and the Capstone course.

In addition to the above, for congregations whose search applications are cross-listed with the CCAR and the American Conference of Cantors (ACC) for a clergy position for which students are eligible to apply, the earliest date on which the CCAR will send resumes on behalf of students in the ordination class is dependent on the ACC schedule.

Consideration for Student Rabbis and Interns

Students may find themselves serving as HUC academic year student rabbis or interns in a congregation that is considering hiring a rabbi. In such a case, the congregation may enter into search and the student may apply for the position. The congregation also has the option of offering the position to the student prior to going into search. The student may choose to accept the position. In such a case, the congregation and the student should notify in writing the HUC Director of the Rabbinical School and the CCAR Director of Rabbinic Career Services before December 8th.

^c **Note:** Effective August 2021, the RPC has adopted a [new policy](#) for the placement of newly ordained rabbis.

The Contract

The contract should incorporate the spirit and language of the [*Guidelines for Rabbinical-Congregational Relationships*](#) as adopted and recommended by the URJ Board of Trustees and CCAR (Fall 1984).

It is important to note the covenantal nature of rabbinic contracts with congregations. The contract between congregation and clergy therefore must emulate the highest values and holy nature of the work they do in partnership with each other. Therefore, it is important to note that “at-will” contracts and/or “termination *without* cause” language is inconsistent with the covenantal nature of the relationship between clergy and congregation. Such language as “at-will” or “termination *without* cause” will deem a contract as being no contract at all. Hence, the congregation or the clergy may enter placement at any time.

The Placement Commission recommends a written contract or a letter of intent from the president or another qualified officer of the congregation, addressed to the rabbi, and including the following although not inclusive (where applicable):

1. The **length and dates** when the terms are in effect.
2. **Base compensation**, to be paid directly to the rabbi. Base compensation includes salary, plus parsonage.
 - a. Parsonage (also known as Housing Allowance) is that portion of the rabbi's base salary, if the congregation does not provide accommodations for the rabbi, which is used to provide housing for the rabbi and family, including all expenses for the maintenance and operation of the home. How much of the compensation should be declared Parsonage is between the rabbi and their accountant—it is a percentage of the salary and does not impact on the total base compensation paid by the congregation. The amount should be declared as the rabbi's Housing Allowance, and so recorded in the minutes of the congregation. Under IRS regulations this portion of the rabbi's income is considered parsonage allowance and is excluded from income tax. The rabbi will not yet know the percentage to be allocated as parsonage at the time of negotiating the contract.
3. **Housing**, if the congregation provides living accommodations for the rabbi.

4. **Pension and Life Insurance:** The pension program calls for an annual contribution of 18% of the rabbi's salary, plus housing. The congregation pays at least 15% and the rabbi contributes the balance. These sums are payable to the Reform Pension Board.
5. **Hospitalization/Major Medical Insurance** for the rabbi and dependents.

6. **Long-Term Disability Insurance:** Inexpensive group coverage which assists the rabbi and relieves the congregation's fiscal responsibility in the event of the rabbi's total disability. LTD Insurance is available through the [Reform Pension Board](#). The time at which benefits commence depends on which plan the employer chooses, either 90 days or 180 days. Many congregations also specify that they will continue to pay the rabbi's salary and benefits in the event of total disability for a specified time.
7. **Convention Allowance,** which permits the rabbi to obtain professional enrichment derived from attending meetings of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism.
8. **Moving Expenses:** It is customary for the congregation to assume the full cost of moving expenses. Congregations are encouraged to research anticipated moving expenses before extending an offer to a candidate.
9. **Vacation:** The rabbi is entitled to an annual minimum of one month's vacation.
10. **Parental Leave and Family Leave:** See the [CCAR Resolution on Parental Leave](#).

In Conclusion

Wisdom dictates that "the end of the matter is not the end of the matter." A successful search is not completed until eighteen months after the new rabbi assumes his/her position. It is imperative that the congregation establish a transition committee in place to ensure a smooth transition from one rabbinic administration to the next. The congregation should be in contact with the URJ's Department of Consulting and Transition Management to engage a skilled facilitator who will help guide your congregation through the transition process. The directors and staff of the CCAR's Office of Rabbinic Career Services also stand ready to assist in this matter.

May the work of your Search Committee be successful, thus strengthening your congregation, the rabbinate, the Reform Movement, and the Jewish community.

INTERIM RABBINATE POLICY

The Rabbinical Placement Commission, through the CCAR Directors of Rabbinic Career Services and Search Services and in conjunction with the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Department of Consulting and Transition Management, will at times recommend to a searching congregation that it seek an interim rabbi to help the congregation through its transition. This is particularly true in the case of a senior rabbi transition. In so doing, the following procedure is recommended by the Commission.

The position will be listed on the CCAR's website under the heading, **Interim Rabbi**.

A rabbi becomes eligible to apply for an interim position eight years following ordination, provided that they have at least seven years of congregational experience. When a congregation seeks an intentional interim rabbi, the Office of Rabbinic Career Services will first provide resumes of rabbis who have completed at least one phase of interim rabbinic training through CCAR or comparable training; should there be a second round of resumes sent from the Rabbinic Career Services office, these may include candidates who may not have had interim rabbinic training.

Length of Service as Interim Rabbi

The term for an interim rabbi shall be for one year.

A congregation may submit a request to the Commission that an interim rabbi serve an additional year based on the needs of the congregation in its transition.

Interim Rabbi's Eligibility for the Permanent Rabbinical Position

The purpose of the interim rabbinate is to guide a congregation in a smooth and effective transition to its next settled rabbi. Congregations will benefit from an interim rabbi's counsel and honesty because the interim rabbi is not auditioning for the settled position. Therefore, both interim rabbis and congregations need to know that it is only under the rarest of circumstances that their interim rabbi could be considered a candidate for the settled rabbinical position.

In very rare circumstances, a congregation that has completed a search unsuccessfully and wishes to consider the interim for a permanent position may do so only if either one of the two following processes has taken place:

- A. The congregation has completed a full search and has not found a candidate that it can recommend for the position of rabbi.
- B. The congregation has completed a full search and no candidate has accepted the congregation's offer to become rabbi of that congregation.

In order to make the interim candidate eligible to be a candidate, the congregation must petition the Placement Commission in writing to seek a waiver from the rule that an interim is not to be considered for the permanent position. In considering the waiver, the Commission, through its director and chair, will ascertain whether A or B above has taken place, and will determine further whether it is in the best interest of the congregation, the interim rabbi, and the integrity of the placement process.

PLACEMENT GUIDELINES FOR RABBIS

Introduction

The purpose of the Rabbinical Placement Commission at its founding in 1964 was to put in place rules and procedures that would ensure a fair and equitable system for rabbis and congregations of the Reform Movement during the time of search. The members of the CCAR and the congregations of the URJ jointly pledged to uphold the ethics promulgated by the Placement Commission and the rules and regulations that the Placement Commission puts into place. When a rabbi decides to activate their resume and look for a new congregation or other position, it is strongly recommended that the rabbi first seek counsel with the Director of Rabbinic Career Services to discuss career options, as well as future planning. Experience has indicated that when a rabbi is beginning the search process, it is an opportune time to evaluate goals as well as past experience. The Director of Rabbinic Career Services and the rabbinic members of the Placement Commission are good resources as you begin the placement process.

Placement Commission Procedures

The following is normal operating procedure for the Rabbinical Placement Commission, but the Placement Commission reserves the right to be flexible as conditions may warrant:

Openings will be listed on the CCAR members-only section of the website as those positions become available. No position will receive the resumes of candidates until the position's availability has been announced on the website.

The Placement Commission, through the office of the Director of Rabbinic Career Services, may solicit the interest of appropriate candidates in a given post.

The Director of Rabbinic Career Services will endeavor to keep all candidates informed of their progress in placement. Candidates should also keep the Director informed of their own progress.

Placement Rules

Rabbis are committed to seek placement for URJ congregational positions only through the Rabbinical Placement Commission. Rabbis who engage in the placement process through the RPC commit to exclusive search through the RPC for congregational positions. If a rabbi decides to apply to other congregational positions outside of the RPC placement process in different movements, they must put any RPC search on hold. Preliminary conversations with non-URJ congregations, before a formal interview, are allowed. In the case of unique situations, questions should be addressed to the Director of Rabbinic Career Services.

A rabbi under a contract, whether oral or written, is ineligible to apply for placement to any position that commences prior to the termination of their contractual commitment, unless the making of such application is consented to by the president of the rabbi's present congregation.

If a rabbi has an "at-will" contract or "termination *without* cause" language in their contract, there is no need to complete the contractual status form from their synagogue's president (see At-Will/Termination *Without* Cause language on page 15) should the rabbi choose to enter placement.

A rabbi may only interview for a congregation after the Rabbinic Career Services office has forwarded their resume to the congregation.

A rabbi who accepts a speaking engagement or addresses a congregation that is in the placement process is considered not to be a candidate for that position unless they have received a waiver from the Director of Rabbinic Career Services.

Rabbis are encouraged not to proffer the names of other rabbis to searching congregations. All such recommendations should be referred to the Director of Rabbinic Career Services.

A rabbi invited for an onsite interview is obliged to inform at least one officer of their present congregation, preferably the president, prior to such interview, and should keep that individual informed of progress in placement.

Should a candidate decide to pull out of a particular congregation search, Rabbi Leora Kaye, Director of Rabbinic Career Services (lkaye@ccarnet.org), should be notified and a reason given. This information is requested so that congregational search chairs can receive valuable and constructive feedback. The rabbi is also responsible for informing the synagogue they are not continuing.

A rabbi who accepts a new position is required to give the current congregation timely notice. Timely notice generally means approximately six months prior to the rabbi beginning their new position, but there can be exceptions to this timing. It is important to read through contract stipulations that may affect this timing. Other arrangements may be made by mutual agreement of the rabbi and the present congregation.

A rabbi may be a candidate for more than one congregation at a time. However, once a rabbi accepts a position, the rabbi must notify all other congregations that their candidacy is being withdrawn. Once a position is accepted, the rabbi may not interview for any other position. This notification to the other congregations can occur directly or through the Director of Search Services. If in-person interviews have already been scheduled at other synagogues, the rabbi is required to cover whatever costs have been incurred for the visits.

Official acceptance of a position occurs when negotiations have concluded, and the terms of the contract have been agreed upon. Even in the absence of a signed contract, so long as there is an oral agreement and a meeting of the minds, acceptance of the position has taken place for this purpose. Therefore, the congregation, too, is obligated to notify all of its other active candidates that the position is no longer available.

In the event that a rabbi receives a firm offer, i.e., an offer with explicit terms, from one congregation while negotiations with another congregation are pending but incomplete, *derech erez* (common courtesy) dictates the following options:

1. The rabbi may accept the firm offer or decline it.
2. The rabbi may ask for time to consider the offer. If the rabbi requests additional time, the rabbi needs to clarify a timeline and confirm with the congregation that it will maintain their offer before going to another candidate. The congregation making the firm offer has the right to stipulate the length of time they will wait for a decision.
3. If the congregation insists on an immediate answer, the rabbi will be obliged to accept or reject their offer.

Resumes

The first contact a searching congregation usually has with a candidate is through the resume that has been forwarded by the Office of Rabbinic Career Services. It is to the advantage of all candidates that they take great care in the preparation of writing the resume, and writing the personal vision statement that is part of that resume. Many CCAR rabbis now also have personal websites that highlight online examples of teaching or worship leading. The Director of Rabbinic Career Services is a good resource for counseling in this area. The CCAR also offers suggestions of resume counselors to members in search. Candidates should familiarize themselves with the various resources available on the CCAR member-only section of the website. These resources include:

- [Preparing a Rabbinic Resume for a Congregational Position](#)
- [Preparing a Resume for an Organizational Position](#)
- [The Rabbinic Personal Statement](#)
- [Preparing for an Initial Video Interview](#)
- Additional [documents and rabbinic employment-related videos](#) are also available.

Interviews

Typically, congregations conduct initial and, in some cases, second interviews via video conferencing. Final interviews are normally conducted in person.

Categories of Eligibility

Below are listed the categories of eligibility. From time to time, based on the situation, the Placement Commission may modify the categories.

Category A. Newly ordained rabbis and those with less than three years of rabbinic experience shall be eligible for recommendation to congregations numbering up to 300 members.

Category B. Rabbis who have completed three years or more in the rabbinate shall be eligible for congregations numbering up to 599 members.

Category C. Rabbis who have completed five years or more in the rabbinate shall be eligible for congregations numbering up to 999 members.

Category D. Rabbis who have completed eight years or more in the rabbinate shall be eligible for congregations numbering from 1000 members.

The current category system was adopted by the Rabbinical Placement Commission at the June 13, 2001 meeting.

Associate. Rabbis who have completed three years or more in the rabbinate are eligible.

Associate-Successor. Open to rabbis eligible for that position as if it were listed for a senior rabbi for that category.

A rabbi who will be entering a new category in regard to their current position may apply for a position in that category, provided that position will not be open prior to July 1st of the year of eligibility.

Rabbinic Contracts

When negotiations have been completed between a candidate and a congregation,

the terms of the negotiations should be formalized in a written contract or letter of intent. A representative of the congregation and the rabbi should sign the documents. It is urged that the contract follow the suggestions and guidelines of the *Guidelines for Rabbinical-Congregational Relationships*, the joint agreement between the CCAR and the URJ (adopted December 1984). Rabbis are also urged to use the CCAR's "[Rabbi's Contract Checklist](#)" as supporting material during their contractual negotiations. The CCAR is not able to provide legal advice and we strongly suggest consulting with an attorney. The Director of Rabbinic Career Services can suggest attorneys with specialization in rabbinic contracts.

Transitions

Once the search has been completed and a rabbi has been chosen, the Rabbinical Placement Commission strongly recommends to the congregation that it create a rabbinic transition committee. The Placement Commission also recommends that where the rabbi is succeeding a retiring rabbi that both rabbis familiarize themselves with the [CCAR Ethics Code](#) dealing with rabbi and rabbi emeritus relationships, as well as the document *Recommended Best Practices for Retiree Successor Relations* . The Placement Commission stands ready to assist in this transitional period as well.

**CONTRACTUAL STATUS STATEMENT
FOR THE RABBINICAL PLACEMENT COMMISSION**

(This [document](#) can also be found online.)

The Rabbinical Placement Commission rule regarding placement and contractual obligations states:

A rabbi under a contract, whether oral or written, is ineligible to apply for any position that commences prior to the termination of his/her contractual commitment, unless the making of such application is consented to by the president of the rabbi's present congregation.

(Adopted 11/04/96)

Therefore (check 1 or 2):

- _____ 1. This is to attest to the Rabbinical Placement Commission that my current contract will expire on _____(day) (month) (year) and therefore, by the rule of the Rabbinical Placement Commission, I am eligible for a position that commences on or after July 1, 20.
- _____ 2. This is to attest to the Rabbinical Placement Commission that my current contract will not expire in a timely fashion, but that I have received written permission by the president of my current congregation to have my resume activated for a position that commences on or after July 1, 20 .

(If #2 is checked, the statement below must be signed by the president of your current congregation.)

Signature of Rabbi and Date

Name of Rabbi

Congregation (the "Congregation") consents to Rabbi_____activating his/her resume, participating in the placement process for a position that commences on or after July 1st, 20____, and, accepting any offer that may be extended as a result of the placement process. I understand that by my signing this consent on behalf of the Congregation, the Congregation is waiving and releasing any claims whatsoever against the Rabbi and the Rabbinic Placement Commission for the Rabbi leaving the Congregation under the terms of this Statement. The Congregation understands that any existing, unexpired contract between the Rabbi and the Congregation remains in full force and effect unless and until (1) the start date of any contract the Rabbi accepts as a result of this placement process, or (2) the Rabbi and the Congregation agree otherwise.

Signature of President and Date

Name of President