

Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago 2021-2022 Merit Israel Experience Scholarship

A limited number of merit scholarships (\$1,000 each) are available for Chicago-area high school students, college students, and young adults up to age 23 who are planning to participate in approved Israel programs. The goals of the program are to develop increased Jewish identity and greater commitment to Israel and the Chicago Jewish community.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Demonstrate evidence of leadership, range of community service and involvement (either Jewish or secular or both), and the potential impact of your Israel experience
- Be at least a sophomore in high school up to age 23 when you apply
- Live or attend school in metropolitan Chicago
- Participate in Jewish communal activities after returning from Israel
- Previous merit scholarship winners are *not* eligible to reapply. However, previous applicants who did not receive a merit scholarship may apply again.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

1. You will find the instructions for the merit scholarship program on the next page. **PLEASE BE SURE TO READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.**
2. You may seek additional funding from your Israel program, your congregation, JUF's financial need scholarship program, other JUF Israel experience savings programs, and other sources which may be available to you.
3. Before you are eligible to apply for a merit scholarship, you must apply to an approved Israel program, which does not begin until after the application deadline. **You can, however, apply for a merit scholarship before you have been ACCEPTED to your Israel program.**
4. The Scholarship Committee of the Jewish United Fund will make the final decisions on the awarding of merit scholarships. Remember that this is only an application and that no guarantee or promise of receiving a merit scholarship can be made until the Scholarship Committee reaches its decisions.
5. You will be notified of the Scholarship Committee's decision on your merit scholarship request via email. No information on scholarship awards will be given by phone.
6. The balance of fees due to the program is your and your family's personal responsibility. If you fail to complete the program, you and your family will have to repay any JUF scholarship award to the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago.
7. We ask that you provide any other information that you think would be helpful to us in making our evaluation of your application. Remember, however, this scholarship is not based on financial need.

INSTRUCTIONS—PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The merit scholarship program has two stages: the application stage and the interview stage. Some applicants will not advance to the interview stage.

- A. The application stage:** Applications (fully completed by you and not a parent) must be postmarked or emailed no later than the applicable due date (November 1st for winter and spring programs; March 15th for summer and fall/academic year programs). All materials must be legible and submitted on time. Applications which are incomplete, hard to read, late, or completed by anyone other than the applicant (except for recommendation forms) will not be advanced to the interview stage. Fully completed applications must include:
- 1. The application form and activities sheet.** Page two of the application form must be signed by you (not your parents or guardians).
 - 2. Three recommendations reflecting the range of your activities, service involvement, and leadership abilities.**
 - One must be from a teacher or rabbi. The other two should be from an activity sponsor, youth group leader, coach, employer, etc.
 - Do not submit recommendations from family, friends, or your peers.
 - Please give a recommendation form and an envelope with your name on it to each of your recommenders. Ask each to seal their completed form in the envelope and **return it TO YOU in time for you to submit your application by the deadline.**
 - 3. Most recent *official* school transcript.** For college and young adult applicants: The transcript must reflect ALL semesters completed, not just one semester or one year.
 - 4. A brief essay (one-two pages typed) on one of the following topics:**
 - a. What Jewish value or tradition do you believe has shaped you the most as a person?
 - b. What do you think is the most pressing issue facing Jewish teens today? Please note that there are no right or wrong answers; we are simply looking for your insight.
 - c. If you had \$10,000 to give away, what cause would you support and why? Please include your thoughts on whether the money should be spent locally vs. internationally. Please note there are no right or wrong answers; we are simply looking for your insight.
- B. The interview stage:** Federation reserves the right to interview only those applicants whose record of service and leadership make them serious contenders for a merit scholarship. Other applicants will be notified that their applications were not advanced to the interview stage. The interview usually lasts about 30 minutes. A parent does not need to attend. Staff will contact applicants to arrange an interview time.

Email isralexperience@juf.org for questions.

Helpful Hints for your Merit Scholarship Application

1. Please tell us as much about your activities as you can. If you don't list it, we won't know you did it. Even small activities are important!
2. Be sure to list your activities by school year: "20-21" or "junior"
3. Give the recommendation forms to your recommenders early enough so they have time to do them carefully and before the deadline. Late recommendation forms sent directly by recommenders are a major cause of applications not being advanced to the interview stage.
4. Choose your recommenders carefully and be sure that they reflect the range of your activities. If all your recommendations come from your synagogue or from your high school teachers, they probably won't reflect the range of your activities and then we won't know enough about all the other things you do!
5. Be sure to order your **official** transcripts early so they arrive by the deadline.
 - a. College freshmen should also submit an **official** complete high school transcript.
 - b. First-year grad students should submit **official** college transcripts.
6. A copy of your essay (without your name) goes to the Scholarship Committee, so be sure to proofread and spellcheck carefully! We recommend that you ask someone else to proofread your essay and give you feedback to help catch little mistakes.
7. The application and all accompanying materials (see checklist below) must be emailed or postmarked by the deadline in order for your application to be considered. No exceptions will be made.
 - ✓ Completed, signed application (2 pages)
 - ✓ Activities sheets (3 pages)
 - ✓ Essay (1-2 pages, typed)
 - ✓ Recommendations
 - ✓ Official school transcript

LIST OF RECOMMENDERS (three required):

- 1. Rabbi or teacher: _____
- 2. Name: _____
- 3. Name: _____

How did you hear about the JUF Merit Scholarship?

II. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Israel Experience Program: _____

Sponsoring organization (if applicable): _____

Program term: Summer Semester Year Other: _____

Date program begins: _____ Date program ends: _____

I have already applied to participate in the above-named Israel program: Yes No

III. ATTESTATION FORM

I attest that this application and the other information submitted are true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge, and that the applicant has completed it by themselves. I understand that this is only an application for a scholarship and that there is no guarantee of receiving a scholarship. I understand that receipt of a scholarship is contingent upon acceptance to the program to which I have applied and that failure to complete the program will necessitate repayment of the scholarship.

(Applicant's signature)

(Date)

Please email isralexperience@juf.org if you have any questions about this application.

Work Experience

Employer/company	Position/title	Dates of employment	Hours per week

Summer activities including work, camp, summer school, travel, etc.

2018	
2019	
2020	
2021	

If there is any additional information you would like us to know, please share below (use the back of this sheet or add additional pages if necessary). Be sure to type or write legibly in ink.

Return fully completed application materials to: IsraelExperience@juf.org

- OR -

Israel Experience
Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago
30 S Wells St #5033
Chicago, IL 60606

**Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago
Merit Israel Experience Scholarship Recommendation**

APPLICANT: Complete the section immediately below and give this form to your recommender.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, state, zip: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RECOMMENDER:

Name: _____

Organization/institution: _____

Position/title: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

The applicant named above has applied for a Jewish United Fund Merit Israel Experience Scholarship. A limited number of merit scholarships will be available for participants in an approved Israel experience program. The goals of the merit scholarship program are to increase Jewish identity and to develop greater commitment to Israel and the Chicago Jewish community.

We are looking for young people who have demonstrated leadership qualities through service and involvement at school, in extracurricular activities, to the Jewish community, by volunteer work, through employment, etc.

We would appreciate your assessment of this applicant, as well as their leadership abilities, motivation, and other qualities, which would (or would not) make them an appropriate recipient of a merit scholarship. **Your recommendation will play an important part in our evaluation of this applicant so we urge that you answer as thoughtfully and completely as you can. Thank you for your time and assistance.**

Please answer the questions below **by attaching typed pages.**

1. What is your relationship with the applicant? How long have you been acquainted with them? Please explain in detail.
2. Please describe the qualities (i.e. maturity, dependability, commitment) that make this applicant a good candidate for a Jewish United Fund Merit Israel Experience Scholarship.
3. How has this applicant shown leadership initiative?

We ask that you place this recommendation in a sealed envelope and return it to the applicant **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**
Please understand that a late recommendation will disqualify this applicant.