

Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago 2023 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
- Participation in Jewish communal activities after returning from Israel is *strongly encouraged*
- 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

Applications (fully completed by you and not a parent) for summer and fall/academic year programs must be submitted no later than March 15th. All materials must be legible and submitted on time. Applications which are incomplete, late, or completed by anyone other than the applicant (except for recommendation forms) will not be accepted. Fully completed applications must include:

1. **The online application.**
2. **Two recommendations.**
 - One must be from a teacher. The other should be from a Jewish communal professional.
 - Do not submit recommendations from family, friends, or your peers.
 - Please give a recommendation form to each of your recommenders. Ask them to submit their completed form and recommendation letter via email (isralexperience@juf.org) **by the deadline.**
3. **A brief essay (maximum of one page typed, double-spaced) that addresses the following:**
 - ✓ Why did you choose this Israel program?
 - ✓ How will this Israel program strengthen your Jewish identity?
 - ✓ How will this Israel program help develop your connection to Israel?
 - ✓ In what ways do you plan to be involved in the Jewish community in the future?

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: "21-22" or "junior"
3. Share the recommendation forms with your recommenders early enough so they have time to do them carefully and before the deadline.
4. 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.
5. The application and all accompanying materials (see checklist below) must be submitted by the deadline in order for your application to be considered. No exceptions will be made.
 - ✓ Completed online application
 - ✓ Essay
 - ✓ Recommendations

Questions? Email isralexperience@juf.org.