

Request for Proposal Congregation Adath Israel, Newtown CT

Seeking -Web Site Designer/Developer
Project - Web Redesign Project

Proposals by
Friday, March 2, 2018 – midnight.
Contact: david.smith@congadathisrael.org

This purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to expand our public and community relations. Through updates to the synagogue's website, we will identify Congregation Adath Israel as a synagogue with a unique position in Western Connecticut, and enhance and improve accessibility of information related to the organization for both internal use and external communication.

1. Brief Project Overview

In 2017, Congregation Adath Israel requested and received a grant to improve its presence on the Internet and social media in order to increase membership participation and recognition in the larger community. This project was developed in fulfillment of the grant.

2. Organization Background

Congregation Adath Israel was founded in the early 1900s by a small group of Orthodox Jews who fled poverty and persecution in Eastern Europe. They arrived in the United States with little more than their skills as farmers and a desire to worship freely. After settling in Newtown, they worshipped for several years without a synagogue or rabbi. They erected the original synagogue in 1919 on Huntingtown Road, which was the center of the small and struggling farming community. The first rabbi arrived in 1923. In 1970, the congregation voted to change from Orthodoxy to a modern conservative doctrine. Women were made full participants in all aspects of the service. The original building, which still stands today just two doors away, was the congregation's home until the opening of our beautiful new building in September 2007.

The congregation, along with the entire Newtown community experienced a significant change following the events of Sandy Hook on December 14, 2012. The congregation, as well as religious organizations in the greater community, had a decline in members. In response, the congregation explored various options and ended up affiliating with United Synagogues of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) to build a viable and thriving

congregation. With better social media presence to strengthen our visibility and leadership in the community, we believe this is possible.

The congregation continues to have strong roots in Newtown, with descendants of the original families participating in leadership roles along with newcomers. We need to encourage participation from all our members and expand membership into the unaffiliated Jewish community of Newtown and the surrounding area. This will require a diverse approach to modern media targeting young and old with our message of an inclusive and caring Jewish organization.

3. Current Web Site

The current site uses an obsolete version of Joomla as a Content Management System. It is presently hosted on an EC2 instance at Amazon Web Services along with some of the synagogue mailing lists. AWS also provides the DNS services for our domain. Other mailing lists have been revised to use Google Groups.

We are open to alternative hosting and platform choices, but we need to resolve who will handle site backups and investigate an automated process for the files and the database. Please include the vendor's caching or content delivery networks (CDN) strategy.

4. Project Goals & Target Audience

The goals of this project are to increase our membership, enhance current member access to congregation information, expand our information and activities into the greater Newtown community, and increase current member participation in the larger Jewish community, including programs and activities from the Jewish Federation of Western Connecticut and USCJ. We would like to achieve these goals through creating a lively, maintainable social media presence backed by a modern website that allows non-professional content editing and promotion.

The target audience for this project is the Jewish community of Newtown and surrounding communities, both our current members and the unaffiliated families. In order to reach this community and deliver our message we believe the following goals to be critical:

Goal 1: Complete an update of the current synagogue website.

The new site will include tools for members such as Torah and Haftorah study aids, an event calendar, a private membership directory, and yahrzeit calculators. It will also reflect our affiliations with Federation and USCJ Web Analytics tagging and reporting in order to measure engagement and conversion actions by visitors. The website should be able to be updated by nonprofessionals and provide tools to link to new social media sites. Success of this goal will be determined by showing increase in usage of the site as measured by standard Web Analytics tools.

Goal 2: Increase audience through social media.

This will be measured by increasing friends and likes on Facebook, followers on Instagram and Twitter, and the increase in our newsletter mailing list and people who read it. The social media content should be designed to be integrated with the synagogue web site so that material placed on the web site can flow into the appropriate media venue. Success of this goal will be determined by showing the increase of usage according to standard social media analytics tools as provided by the venues.

Goal 3: Provide tools for member interaction.

Include the ability to post questions or concerns on the website and/or social media so that the synagogue leadership can acknowledge and act upon membership needs.

Our goal is to increase media awareness through Facebook likes by a minimum of 100 and increase participation in events within the synagogue and greater Jewish Community by 20% of our membership.

5. Scope of Work & Deliverables

The scope of work will be divided into Design, Implementation, Testing, and Operational phases. We expect to see the following deliverables for each phase:

Design

The design phase should end with a wireframe layout of the major sections of the website, platform and hosting recommendations, and an integration plan between the web site and the social media venues.

The design should include the following components:

- Updatable photo library
- Torah and Haftorah training aids (audio and visual)
- Congregational documentation (By-Laws, School handbook)
- Membership forms (application, High Holiday reservations, etc)
- Event Calendar
- Newsletter
- Member directory and yahrzeit calculator (private to membership)
- Access to congregational discussion lists
- Donation forms
- Feedback forms

Upon approval of the layout and recommendations the Implementation phase will commence.

Implementation

The implementation phase will deploy the new website onto a staging location accessible to the Communication Committee of the congregation to oversee the development.

Implementation phase deliverables will include administrator documentation of each component for use in testing and operations. As each component of the site is complete, that component will transition to the testing phase.

Testing

The Communication Committee will test both the front end and the back end (adding/editing content) of the web site. The testing will include review of the documentation provided in the implementation phase.

Operations

The operations phase will complete the project with sign-off from the Communication Committee both for the implemented site and for the operational documentation provided.

6. Timeline

Project Timeline: March 2018-May 2018

The proposal should break down the timeline into the phases described above.

7. Principal Point of Contact

The Communication Committee at Congregation Adath Israel will be in overall charge of the project. The committee members are:

David Smith: Education Chair, Webmaster of synagogue website

Susan Rubin: Synagogue Office Administrator, Newsletter editor

Lynn Wiener: Early Childhood Education and Educational Leadership

Amy Greenfield: Vice President

The primary liaison for the project will be David Smith

Other congregants involved in project

Karen Klein, Publicity Chair

Leah Newman, Membership Chair

8. Budget

The grant provides for \$5,000 for the entire project so that proposals will need to match that number.

9. Criteria for Selection

- Specialties in non-profit website design – preferably with Jewish organization experience.
- Creativity and some support with logo design integration
- Experience in developing easy to read Web pages on all types of devices and to a wide technology skill range and ages of audiences
- Experience with Analytics and Web Hosts
- Ability to sustain partnership

10. Format & Proposal Timeline

1. Please submit proposal with the following information
 - a. Experience with non-profit website development – preferably Jewish organizations
 - b. Include details of experience within the guidelines of the criteria for selection
 - c. Include examples of successful projects
 - d. Proposed budget for project
2. Please submit proposals by
 - a. Friday, March 2, 2018 – midnight.
3. Please send proposals to: david.smith@congadathisrael.org