

Sacred Synagogues, Sacred Spaces Chicago Cohort

Sacred Spaces partners with Jewish institutions across N. America to build healthy systems for preventing and responding to sexual abuse and other abuses of power. In Spring 2019, Sacred Spaces is joining with Chicago's Jewish United Fund, Jewish Child & Family Services, SHALVA, and Chicago Board of Rabbis to bring its *Sacred Synagogues, Sacred Spaces* cohort program to Metropolitan Chicago. This initiative will provide congregations with comprehensive training and guidance on developing institutional policies for creating safe and sacred synagogues that prevent and respond to abuse and harassment of adults.

The program includes two foundational components. First, our workshops, open to all Chicagoland synagogues, will cover topics such as best practices in recruitment, screening, and hiring; responsible reporting procedures and victim support; and policy review and implementation. The program's second component enables five synagogues to participate in a collaborative, cross-denominational cohort that, over six months' time, receives additional support on policy development through access to expert consultants. Both the workshops and the intensive cohort experience provide synagogues with an opportunity to proactively address abuse and, in so doing, serve as models in the Jewish community.

The five synagogues in the cohort will:

- Engage in comprehensive training to create safe and sacred congregations that prevent and respond to abuse and harassment of adults
- Build collaborative, cross-denominational relationships with four other Chicagoland synagogues
- Receive individualized guidance on developing policies and best practices
- Access Sacred Spaces' team of expert consultants for assistance with policy review/implementation

Cohort Timeline:

Spring 2019

Sacred Spaces will guide cohort synagogues in: forming internal committees to oversee participation in this initiative, generating communal buy-in, and preparing for the training and policy work ahead.

October 2019-March 2020

- Five half-day in-person trainings (open to all local synagogues, both in the cohort and beyond)
- Expert consultants guide committees on policy development and review draft language (one-hour consult provided for each training)
- Synagogue committees work independently to craft policy language in between trainings
- One red-line review of full policy by expert consultant
- Final one-hour planning session on policy implementation and maintenance