

# Executive Director, Congregation B'nai Israel

Location: Northampton, MA

## Organization

Congregation B'nai Israel is the oldest and largest synagogue in Northampton, its origins dating back to 1904. As a congregation, CBI is affiliated with the Conservative Movement but welcomes those whose backgrounds and observance of their faith span a wide and diverse range of Jewish theology and practice. The synagogue welcomes interfaith and blended families, LGBTQ individuals and families, and provides a spiritual home for those with diverse political leanings and lifestyles.

The synagogue is currently on a strong financial footing, with steadily increasing membership in recent years and a small endowment that helps support our operating budget.

CBI's 390+ member households range from the traditional to spiritual seekers, mystics, and self-described non-believers. Services range from the traditional to services incorporating music, dance, and song, and alternative spiritual practice activities that meet the needs and interests of our diverse membership.

We offer a full array of educational programs and activities, ranging from a licensed preschool and a religious school through diverse adult education drawing on talents and resources in our own community, the five colleges in the area, and renowned national and international figures.

Unique to our synagogue is Abundance Farm, a working farm providing a platform for alternative spiritual practice, integration of environment and food justice into our educational programs, and active engagement with the broader community, such as major collaborations with our neighboring food pantry. Abundance Farm has gained national recognition for its innovative programming, which attracts thousands of people each year through classes and workshops, festivals, internships and community gatherings.

CBI welcomes open and probing debate about politics and religion and the ways they intersect. Through the synagogue, many members of the CBI congregation find meaningful ways to be socially and politically engaged with a focus on social action, inclusivity, diversity, and issues related to food justice. With strong collaborations and ties to other houses of worship in the area, CBI has taken a stand on issues of immigration reform and efforts to protect those at risk of deportation.

In 2017, CBI's Rabbi Justin David achieved national recognition upon receiving the seventh annual Rabbinic Human Rights Hero Award from the organization T'ruah: the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights. Northampton Mayor, David Narkewicz praised Rabbi David as "a longstanding voice for justice and human dignity." Rabbi Jacob Fine who serves as the Director of Jewish Life is the founder of Abundance Farm and is a nationally recognized leader in the Jewish environmental and community farming fields. Our robust Gan Keshet preschool, directed by Kate Holdsworth-Clarke, offers a nurturing environment for children to explore, question and develop an authentic voice, through a curriculum that introduces the Jewish community and its values.

With programs that are participatory and highly regarded, CBI has created a thriving intergenerational community of diverse learners and spiritual observers that promises to continue its growth and development in the years ahead.

## **The Opportunity**

Congregation B'nai Israel is at a pivotal point in its development. Our diverse range of spiritual, educational and social action programs attract a large number of non-member individuals and families. While some eventually become members, there is significant untapped growth potential and the need for strong leadership to help develop and pursue strategies for continued engagement. Following an intensive long-range planning process starting in 2012, a plan to expand CBI's physical space is also in progress. The planning process brought to light ideas for advancing CBI's mission by updating and improving the physical space to support current and future spiritual, educational, social justice, and community engagement commitments. This year, we retained an architect to develop conceptual drawings to support a planned capital campaign.

As CBI looks forward to building upon past successes and accomplishments, considerable innovation and strategic growth will be hallmarks of the years ahead. The next Executive Director will have an opportunity to lead this effort in collaboration with the congregation, the board, Rabbis David and Fine, and the staff. Guiding CBI's growth in dynamic ways, the incoming leader may introduce new modes of engagement for families through diverse levels of membership.

Over the next five years, Congregation B'nai Israel expects to:

- Develop and expand programming to meet the needs of a diverse, multigenerational congregation
- Engage new community members, expanding models of membership opportunities
- Carry out the planned renovation and building project
- Expand and strengthen the financial sustainability of Abundance Farm and related family programming
- Incorporate new social justice and food justice goals into existing and new programs

## **The Ideal Candidate**

The position of Executive Director requires an individual with a history of successful nonprofit management experience; a familiarity with spiritual communities, community-based, or membership organizations; a high level of comfort working with the public; and perhaps most importantly, the ability to foster collaboration among staff, the Board of Directors, and the committees and volunteers managing the synagogue and its programs.

The successful candidate will have proven skills in managing people, programs, and budgets; a good grasp of systems technology, social media, and marketing; and a genuine passion for working with people. Experience in membership engagement, recruitment, and retention is preferred.

In overseeing the day-to-day operations of the synagogue, including creating a secure and welcoming institution, the executive director will play a crucial role in the continuing growth of the community. CBI seeks a hands-on operational manager with skills in partnership building, multi-channel communications, and fundraising. This is a unique opportunity to join a vibrant organization that continues to develop in response to the interests of its congregants and the needs of its community.

## **Leadership Skills**

The successful candidate will be a strategic thinker, able to implement identified goals, objectives, and strategies for CBI's growth and development while working effectively with the Board of Directors and being accountable and responsive to its Executive Committee. Success in this position depends on flexibility, empathy, and diplomacy. The successful candidate will value innovation and active community engagement, and should have relevant knowledge of Jewish practices, holidays, and special events.

## **Application Process**

To apply please send your résumé and a cover letter to [CBI.EDSearch@gmail.com](mailto:CBI.EDSearch@gmail.com)

Résumés will be reviewed as they are received with a final deadline of February 14, 2019.

This is a full-time position offering a competitive salary and benefits commensurate with skills and experience, within the framework of the organization's budget.

Congregation B'nai Israel is an equal-opportunity employer and actively seeks a diverse pool of candidates. People of color, women, and transgender people are encouraged to apply.