

# Who is Working Well Together?

## Jim Joseph Foundation

*Grantmaker focused on education for Jewish young people embraces multiyear grants, funder collaboration as priorities.*

### Quick Grantmaker Stats

Type of funder	Private foundation
Geography/Issue Area	National/Jewish education
When founded	2006
Annual giving	\$35.7 million
Number of staff	15
Website	<a href="http://www.jimjosephfoundation.org">www.jimjosephfoundation.org</a>
Brief description of the program/ practice being discussed	Funder collaborations and multiyear grants supporting grantees to grow, sustain their work.

### 1. Describe the situation or practice.

The Shimon Ben Joseph Foundation, commonly known as the Jim Joseph Foundation, is devoted exclusively to supporting the Jewish education for youth and young adults who are residents of the United States. The foundation pursues this work through three strategic funding priorities: increase the number and quality of Jewish educators, expand opportunities for effective Jewish learning and build a strong field for Jewish education.

Over the last several years, the foundation has adopted several core strategies that it believes contribute substantially to the success and sustainability of grantees. Among these strategies are collaborative funding arrangements with other grantmakers to provide grantees with higher levels of support.

### 2. What have you tried to do differently?

The Jim Joseph Foundation actively pursues collaborative funding arrangements among grantmakers supporting education for Jewish youth and young adults. In the view of the foundation, collaborative funding often better

positions grantees to reach financial sustainability and ultimately to identify other, more varied sources of support. Additionally, the foundation believes that a collaborative funding structure offers a rich learning environment for grantmakers and their partners.

The foundation currently is leading a funder collaborative that is a follow-up initiative to its 2013 report, [Effective Strategies for Educating and Engaging Jewish Teens](#). The community is a forum for national and local funders to learn about best practices and to share ideas about teen education and engagement, prior to exploring various funding options.

Working in concert with the Jim Joseph Foundation, every local funder in the collaborative makes specific commitments as part of its participation. For example, each local funder commits to “invest time and resources in a comprehensive local planning effort with volunteer leaders, practitioners and teens to develop new, community-based Jewish teen education and engagement initiatives and to strengthen existing offerings.” These funders also agree to build coalitions of other local funders to support this work.

In addition to collaborative funding, the Jim Joseph Foundation focuses on making major, multiyear grants to a small group of core grantees. As of late 2013, 82 percent of the foundation’s granted dollars were awarded as multiyear grants of three years or more.

*“As a national funder, the Jim Joseph Foundation is committed to taking a leadership role in coordinating and sharing learning with our funding colleagues, identifying opportunities for co-investing in their efforts, and helping to fuel a national conversation about the importance of Jewish teen education and engagement.”*

*— Chip Edelsberg, Executive Director, Jim Joseph Foundation*

### **3. What has been the result?**

The funder collaborative for Jewish teen education and engagement already has led to one collaborative funding arrangement between the foundation and a community funder seeking to implement a local initiative, with four more potential collaborations actively under development. Today, this funder collaborative includes representatives from 14 foundations and federations — national and local funders representing a diversity of Jewish communities.

“There’s no question that the Jim Joseph Foundation leads its foundation peers in the importance of collaborative work with grantees and in the importance of seed money leading to sustainability,” said Morlie Levin, CEO of NEXT: A Division of Birthright Israel Foundation. “They are deliberative about funding; they are making large strategic bets; and over time, through the power of their results, they are able to galvanize a large consortium of funders to support big ideas.”

#### 4. What are your key insights from doing the work?

The Jim Joseph Foundation has been involved in numerous funder collaboratives, but the funder collaborative for Jewish teen education and engagement is its largest to date. “We are all learning together as we go,” Program Officer Josh Miller observed in a recent blog post about the effort. Less than a year after the initiative was launched, Miller offered some early insights on what makes funder collaboration work.

Among his key insights was the need to document shared understanding among partners. Working together to develop shared measures and to define expectations and roles of participants were important early activities for the collaborative. “This work proved especially valuable for our local funding partners as they began talking about the collaborative with their local stakeholders,” Miller wrote.

#### Other Funder Partnerships

In addition to its participation in the funder collaborative for Jewish teen education and engagement, the Jim Joseph Foundation participates in numerous collaborations with other funders focused on specific projects or grantees. For example, in 2012 the Jim Joseph Foundation and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation initiated a collaborative investment of \$6 million to kick off a larger campaign to enable Moishe House double its reach by 2016. Moishe House, a pluralistic international organization, provides meaningful Jewish experiences to young adults in their 20s. The Jim Joseph Foundation specifically offered up to a \$3 million, dollar-for-dollar match to Moishe House for all funds raised from local Jewish Federations and individuals over a four and half year period.