



BRIT KEHILLAH:

A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Introduction

Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) board members are governed by WRJ's Brit Kehillah, which acknowledges our obligation and responsibility to one another as well as to WRJ. In serving on the board, we accept that it is incumbent upon each of us to create an environment of *kavod* (honor and respect) while striving to accomplish our shared mission. We hold ourselves to high standards as we engage in this holy work.

We enter this Brit Kehillah with the intention of modeling considerate, respectful, and courteous behavior, especially while acknowledging differences of opinion. When we demonstrate regard for one another in the spirit of *B'tzelm Ehohim* (being created in God's image) we cultivate each other's personal growth and are truly strengthened by one another. When one succeeds, we all succeed.

We value all board members regardless of age, marital background, financial means, ethnicity, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or gender assigned at birth.

These guiding principles are based on our Jewish values. In honoring this Brit, we will create a community of sensitivity, openness, and mutual respect.

Board Responsibilities and Expectations

I understand that as a member of the WRJ Board of Directors, I have a responsibility to ensure that WRJ does the best work possible in pursuit of its priorities and goals. I believe in WRJ's mission and will support WRJ as it strives to advance its mission. In doing so, I acknowledge my responsibilities as a WRJ board member.

Participation and Conduct:

1. I will serve one three-year term on WRJ's board, with the option to apply for an extension for another consecutive term of up to three more years.
2. I will participate in WRJ's "L'Atid" onboarding program during my first year on the board. I will attend as many sessions – both in-person and virtually – as possible, and will catch up on any I may have missed.
3. I will complete a [Conflict of Interest](#) form each year I serve on the board, and will excuse myself from discussions and votes where I have a conflict of interest.
4. I will attend all board meetings and district events – both in-person and virtually – during my board service, barring unforeseen circumstances. I understand that this includes typically three to five board meetings per year. I will read board minutes and/or watch recordings if I am absent.

5. I understand that my work on WRJ's board and its committees – including voting during board meetings – is integral to the organization's strategy and direction. I agree to give these items/projects the attention and thoughtfulness they warrant.
6. I will prepare for all meetings which I attend, both in-person and virtually. I will respect meeting agendas, including time restrictions, deferring to the oversight of the chair.
7. I will participate in committees and, if asked, will consider leadership roles.
8. I will read and abide by [WRJ's Policy on Harassment](#).
9. I will model my behavior in accordance with [WRJ's Brit Avodah](#), which sets WRJ's standard for volunteer-professional relationships.
10. I will be open and courteous to all and will refrain from *lashon hara* (negative talk, gossip, and slander). I will represent WRJ in a professional and positive manner, both publicly and privately.
11. I will respect privacy, maintain confidentiality, and support board and committee decisions, including those with which I might have disagreed.
12. I will remain connected to WRJ's board and other interest areas through Mighty Networks and will respond to communication, whether via Mighty Networks or email, in a timely manner.

Financial Commitments and Initiatives:

1. I understand that I will need to cover my costs for attending WRJ's annual in-person board meeting, which usually takes place over two to three days. If a board meeting is connected to a WRJ conference/event, I understand that the registration fee and costs for the board meeting will be separate from and in addition to those for the conference/event – which WRJ board members are also expected to attend, with similar estimated costs. These board meeting and conference costs include:
 - a. Registration fee (estimated at \$500-600 USD) per meeting/conference;
 - b. Hotel room (est. \$200-300 per room per night, generally for a 2-3 night stay); and
 - c. Airfare/travel (costs vary).
2. I will make a meaningful annual contribution that reflects, to the best of my ability, that my WRJ board gift is one of my top philanthropic priorities. I recognize the vital role that my board gift plays in providing unrestricted funds for WRJ operations. As of 2025, the annual minimum board giving commitment is \$1,000 USD, which members may meet through a combined "give or get" approach.¹
3. I will engage, to the best of my ability, with opportunities to support the [YES Fund](#) (Youth, Education, & Special Projects) – WRJ's philanthropic arm. These gifts enable grantmaking and emergency allocations to Reform Movement partners and other like-minded Jewish organizations. I will also, if possible, participate in WRJ's [Lifeline program](#) and [Ner Tamid Society](#).
4. I will be open to fundraising training to help identify and build relationships with prospective donors,

¹ To meet WRJ's annual board donation commitment each year, a member may fulfill their minimum annual gift via their own donation(s) and/or by "helping the organization to acquire funds from a third party, in place of their own gift." Gellman, A. Michael. "The Case Against Board 'Give or Get' Policies for a Nonprofit Organization." *Sustainability Education 4 Nonprofits*. October 17, 2023. <https://www.se4nonprofits.com/blog/the-case-against-board-give-or-get-policies-for-a-nonprofit-organization>

individuals, and/or organizations who could support WRJ.

5. I understand that my financial support of WRJ is critical and will contact WRJ as soon as possible if I have any concerns about being able to meet the above-listed expectations.

Outreach:

1. I will be an ambassador for WRJ and its values in Jewish and wider communities, and will be an informed spokesperson on WRJ's behalf.
2. I will bring my understanding of the points of view of WRJ members, sisterhoods/women's groups, and/or Districts to board and committee conversations, as these perspectives contribute to and help inform our work.
3. I will share my knowledge of other Jewish organizations and wider communities, when I believe that an awareness of their interests may be helpful to WRJ.

WRJ's Responsibilities to its Board Members

In turn, WRJ will support my board service and encourage my success in the following ways:

1. WRJ will share financial reports and activity updates on a regular basis, so board members can follow WRJ's progress toward meeting its goals.
2. WRJ will provide board members with opportunities to participate in professional development trainings, enabling them to be stronger participants in board and other WRJ activities.
3. WRJ will keep board members informed about timely issues in Jewish and wider communities that affect WRJ's interests, activities, or values.
4. WRJ Staff will support board members' work as needed, including responding to questions that are necessary to carry out their commitment to the board and to WRJ.

My signature below affirms that I have read and understand WRJ's Brit Kehillah. If for any reason I am unable to fulfill my duties as a board member, I will contact Karen Sim, WRJ President.

Signature

Date

Full name (print)

ADDENDUM:

Values for Conducting Meetings

WRJ expects its board members to operate in WRJ meetings and interactions with the following Jewish values:

"My God, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile. Open my heart to your Torah, that my soul may follow your commandments."

Sh'tikah: Silence and Listening

"All my life, I have been raised among sages, and I have found nothing better for a person than silence." – Pirke Avot 1:17

In order to listen, there are times that one must keep silent. While silent, we can reflect, watch, hear, listen, and thereby have a better chance of understanding.

Dibbur: Speech

"Speak as if God were listening to everything you say." – Martin Buber

When it is time to speak, it is best to proceed slowly; lest we hurt others with our words and tone.

Savlanut: Patience

Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch would restrain his angry outbursts until he had looked into the codes to learn whether anger was permissible on the occasion in question. But how much real anger could we feel after searching the authority in the Shulchan Aruch?

The word for patience in Hebrew comes from the root that also means to bear, to suffer, to carry a heavy load. To carry another's truth is to feel their load. Patience allows us to become more empathetic towards others.

Elu V'elu: Both This Opinion and That Opinion Have Within Them Truth

In debates between Hillel and Shammai, a heavenly voice was heard saying that since some decisions had to be made, the opinion of Hillel would generally prevail, but nonetheless: "*Elu V'elu devrei Elohim Chayim*" – Both Hillel and Shammai teach the words of the living God." Though one opinion may prevail, the Rabbis found the truth was in the discourse and preserved for all time the minority opinion.

B'yachad: Together

A favorite saying of rabbis at Yavneh was "I am God's creature and so are other people." – BT Berachot 17a.

Rabbi Chalafta taught: "When two or more discuss words of Torah, God's presence comes to rest among them." Progress emerges from collaboration. Traditional Jewish study is done in *hevurata*, in pairs; we pray in a minyan; we require witnesses for any important lifecycle event. "Together" is a philosophy in Judaism, a point of reference. The genius of the group is greater than any individual.

Derech Eretz: Decency

Hillel used to say: "In a place where human decency is lacking, practice decency yourself."

Respect and human decency are signs of good character. It places the concerns of others at the top of every group interaction.

Dayenu: It is Enough

"Where there is much talking, there is no lack of transgressing, but the one who curbs the tongue shows sense." – Proverbs 10:19.

"There is a time to keep silent and a time to speak." – Ecclesiastes 3:7

When enough is said, say nothing.

Rabbi Karyn D. Kedar, adapted from "Introducing Synagogue 2000 Partnerships for a New Vision."