L'DOR V'DOR:
AVODAH STRATEGIC PLAN
2025 - 2027

Growing our Jewish justice community
for a more just and equitable world

Letter from the CEO

The leaders we need -- they have been at the heart of our year-long strategic planning process. This process has resulted in a sustainable, visionary plan to ensure Avodah can continue to foster our Jewish justice leaders, not just for the next three years, but for generations to come.

Our previous strategic plan was born at the dawn of COVID-19. This strategic plan was built in the tumult of the fall of 2023, in the ripe pain of October 7th. We are no strangers to bold ideas in the face of hardship. And we know that in times of hardship, Avodah is needed more than ever.

The Jewish community needs a place where they can engage in hard conversations, with respect, with trust, and with the understanding that we are all working together to build a better, more just world.

The next three years are critical. Today, the Jewish community and our country are being tested, and we believe that our leaders -- Avodahniks -- are up for the challenge.

In our vision for the future, more leaders of all ages can get involved in the demanding, difficult, and crucial work to create a more equitable and just world. Our plan guides us to carry out this work sustainably, so that we can support our community for the long haul.

By the end of 2027, there will be over 2,000 Avodahniks who have participated in year-long immersive Avodah programs, between the ages of 23 and 50. There will be thousands more who will have participated in our shorter term, justice-focused, Jewish programs.

I, for one, know the world will be a better place because there are thousands of Jewish leaders in communities across the country who call Avodah their home.

Join us as we ensure their future, as we stretch our community, and expand the possibility for a brighter future for us all.

May we continue to develop the leaders we need **l'dor v'dor**,

Cheryl Cook, CEO

Our Mission

Avodah develops lifelong social justice leaders whose work is informed by Jewish values and who inspire the Jewish community to work toward a more just and equitable world.

About this plan

L'Dor v'Dor is a bold plan to sustain and grow Avodah's ability to achieve this mission for the next three years and for generations to come.

It is the result of a 9-month planning process that convened stakeholders—including staff, board and advisory council members, donors, placement partners, and alumni—to develop strategies that deepen and expand Avodah's impact across the United States.

This process culminated in a three year strategy, as well as updated organizational values and a sharpened organizational theory of change.

Our Values

B'tzelem Elohim / We are all made in the image of the divine

We approach all human beings with radical empathy. Our commitment to justice centers around the dignity and sacredness of each human being. We value this in times of peace and of tension, remembering that at the core of justice is a deep, abounding love for humanity.

Simcha & Chesed / Joy & Lovingkindness

We believe justice is rooted in joy and love. We know that our world is filled with grave injustices, but also that it is a joyful and loving act to build a better future. Our Jewish tradition anchors us in the balance between the challenges we face and the opportunity for celebration.

Kehillah / Community

We know our lives are intertwined and we can't do this work alone. Most Jewish practices are grounded in community, from how we pray to how we study to how we mourn to how we celebrate. We know that no one person, no one organization, no one movement, can build a just future alone.

Machloket / Respectful Disagreement

We seek to understand across difference. While we do hold boundaries in order to clarify what is necessary to achieve our mission, we work hard to make sure that we are as expansive as possible.

Elu V' Elu / Both/And

We continue the Jewish tradition of wrestling with big questions and exploring multiple answers. We commit to consistent evolution of our ideas, programs, and practices to ensure that we are evolving with the world around us.

Our Story

For 27 years, we've been inspiring Jewish leaders to commit to a life of social change, promoting a vision of Jewish life rooted in justice, and engaging the broader Jewish community in some of the most pressing issues facing our country at a local and national level.

In 1998, nine young volunteers moved into Avodah's first **Jewish Service Corps** bayit (home) in New York City. Over the years, we expanded to Chicago, New Orleans, and Washington D.C, where more than 1,300 young Jewish leaders have served in local community nonprofits. It remains a core part of Avodah's programming today.

In 2014, we launched the **Justice Fellowship**, which now operates in Chicago and New York City, bringing justice education to more than 300 young Jewish professionals in social change fields.

In 2016, Avodah began making our Jewish social justice expertise available to the wider community through educational resources, workshops, speaker events, and consulting that have reached thousands of individuals and organizations.

In 2022, we launched the **Avodah Institute for Social Change** to help Jewish leaders make lasting structural transformations within their communities and institutions. As of 2024, more than 40 Jewish leaders have participated in intensive programs, and more than 8,500 have connected with Institute offerings.

Our community of more than **1,600 alumni** continues to work for justice as professionals and lay leaders, in the Jewish community and beyond. They're leading organizations, educating Jewish communities on the issues that matter, advocating for change on a local and national level, and helping everyday Americans who are working to make ends meet. They support each other, celebrate Jewish life together, and collaborate in their work for change.

27 Years of Impact

1,600+
Program alumni ranging from Gen Z to Gen X

1M
Clients Served

1/10
Alumni are CEOs, EDs, or senior leaders of the organizations where they work

8,500
Jewish leaders reached through the Avodah Institute for Social Change

1 in 4
Alumni hold lay leadership positions at Jewish organizations

94%
Service Corps graduates stay in justice work

$30M
Added capacity to nonprofits

Our Vision for the Future

Expand the Justice Fellowship to participants from coast to coast

Increase Services for Avodahniks, the Largest Network of Jewish Changemakers in the US

Graduate over 2,000 participants from intensive, year-long, multi-generational programming

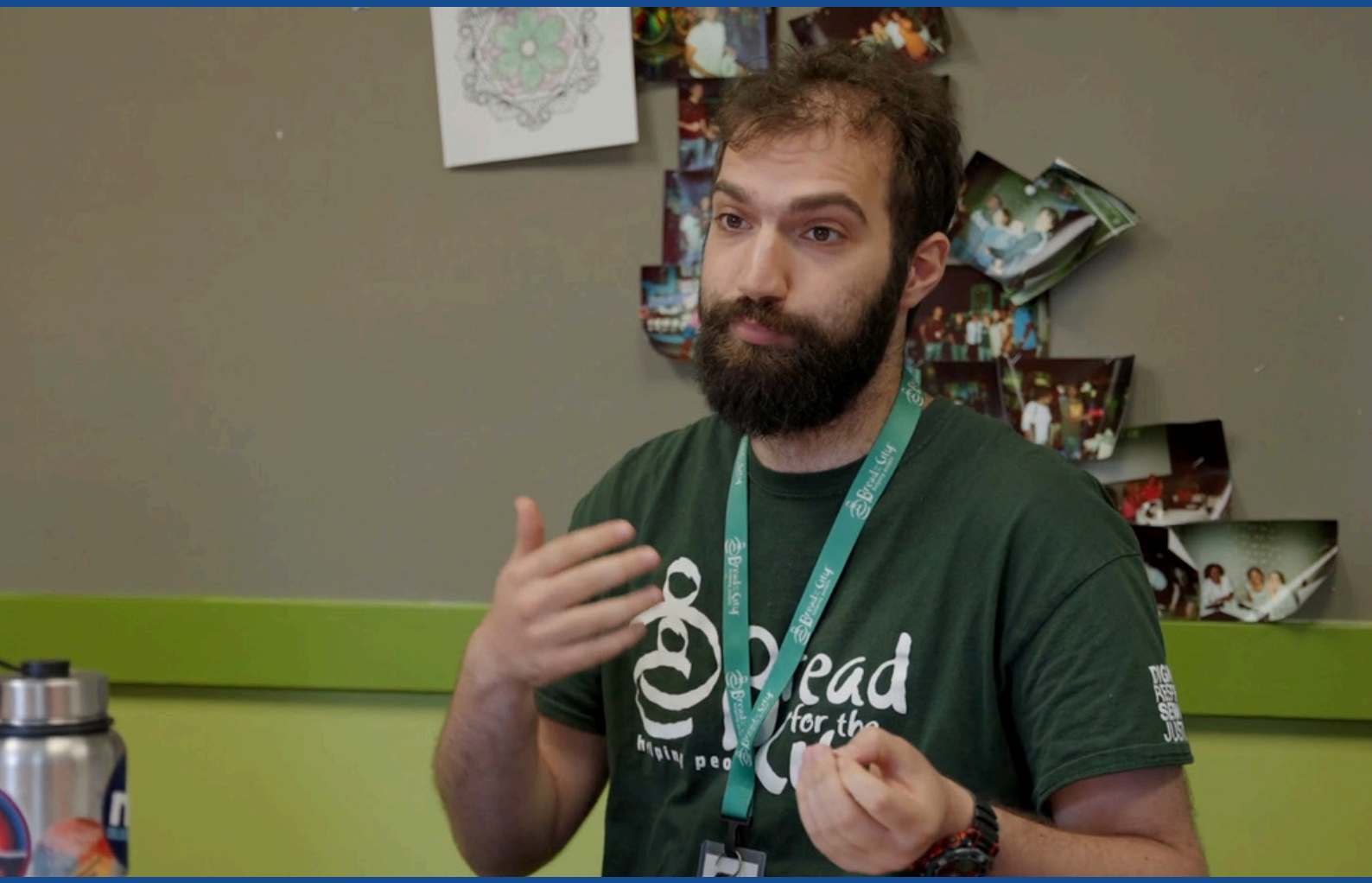
Provide 3.2 Million+ hours of service to communities in need

Train thousands of leaders of Jewish organizations to create more equitable and inclusive Jewish communities

Serve 300+ nonprofits

Provide $35M in added capacity to nonprofits

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Priority 1

Expand Access to Jewish Justice Programs

Priority 2

Activate Thought Leadership

Priority 3

Strengthen Program Sustainability

Priority 4

Strengthen Infrastructure to Support High Impact Work

EXPAND ACCESS TO JEWISH JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Grow and expand our multigenerational scalable program models, focused on the Justice Fellowship and the Alumni Network.

Rationale

As division and isolation rises, there is a clear need for immersive, deep community building programs bring Jews at many stages of life together to make a difference locally. By expanding the Fellowship to new cities, and increasing our programing to our ever-expanding alumni network, we will build the spaces and provide the resources that are essential to a thriving, just Jewish future across the United States.

Measures of Success

- 4-6 new Justice Fellowship cohorts, serving hundreds across the country
- Increased number of alumni across generations engaged in leadership development and community building programs
- Participants say they are more deeply connected to a vibrant network of Jews who are committed to social justice for inspiration, resources, and community

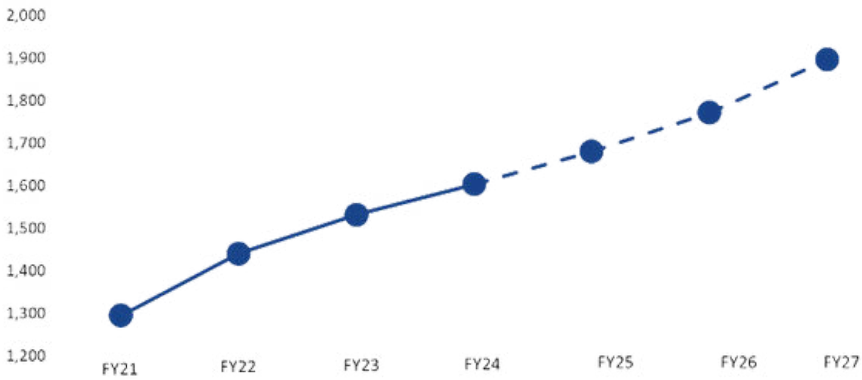


Figure 1: Number of Avodah alumni has been steadily increasing; by 2027, we project we will have 2000 alumni.

ACTIVATE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Build Avodah's relationships and reputation with institutions and leaders to bolster our impact, grow our resources, and strengthen our recognition as experts in Jewish social justice.

Rationale

Avodah has a unique and highly valuable expertise, that is increasingly sought after by those who are familiar with its work. By proactively seeking opportunities to share its story in more public forums, Avodah will be better recognized as a Jewish social justice luminary. Multiple channels, and in particular the Institute, will reach mainstream Jewish and secular organizations, to provide expertise to those working in the communal field while bolstering opportunities to develop lasting connections that further impact.

Measures of Success

- Be recognized and sought after among Jewish influencers, leaders, and change agents to inform communal discourse
- Secular partner organizations view us as bridge between justice and Jewish worlds and seek us out for support related to antisemitism trainings or other questions related to Jewish community
- Clear articulation of what the Institute offers and a regular cadence of sustainable, robust programming each year

91% of Institute participants said they now intend to help make their organization more inclusive and welcoming to people from historically marginalized groups.

STRENGTHEN PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

Maintain the excellence of our signature Jewish Service Corps program and Avodah Institute for Social Change with a combined focus on economic sustainability and efficiency.

Rationale

Our impact data is clear that both the Jewish Service Corps and the Institute for Social Change are transformative programs that have impacted thousands of Jewish leaders over the course of more than 27 years. At the same time, both models require significant resources: the Service Corps -- by nature of being an immersive residential program, and the Institute, our newest program, still requires a long-term business plan. Over the next three years, we will develop and act on recommendations to shore up these programs and ensure they are operating efficiently and with excellence for years to come.

Measures of Success

- Reduce Service Corps costs while maintaining program excellence
- Business model for Institute is clear, sustainable, and revenue-generating

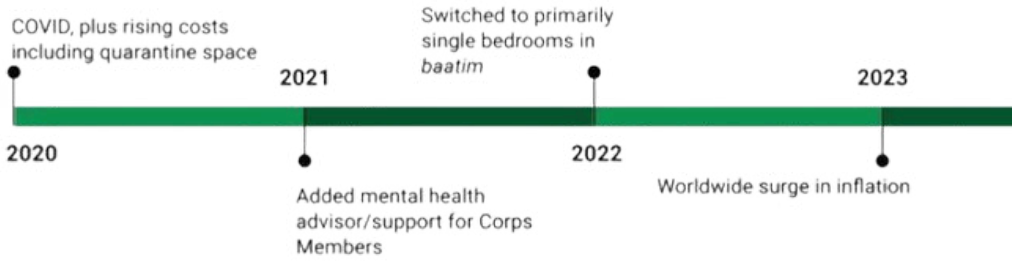


Figure 2: A variety of factors have played a role in Service Corps costs increasing over the past 4 years, causing the cost per Corps Member to increase as well.

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STRENGTHEN INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH IMPACT WORK

Strengthen and adjust Avodah's data systems, fundraising, and staff development to meet the shifting landscape, strengthen our culture, and foster a sustainable organization.

Rationale

As we expand ambitious fundraising efforts to provide the resources to make the vision laid out in this plan a reality, it is more important than ever to have robust data to demonstrate our impact clearly and to strengthen all areas of our work. In addition, Avodah's core values demand continued investment in staff development and training so that it can continue to deliver transformative programs and maintain a strong organization.

Measures of Success

- Revenue and funder portfolios grown, including a diverse range of new donors
- A planned giving program that is starting to bear fruit
- Clear ways to tell the story of our impact to stakeholders, and efficient systems to evaluate our impact
- Strong systems for staff and board training and development
- Staff and board demonstrate their commitment to and implementation of best practices related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

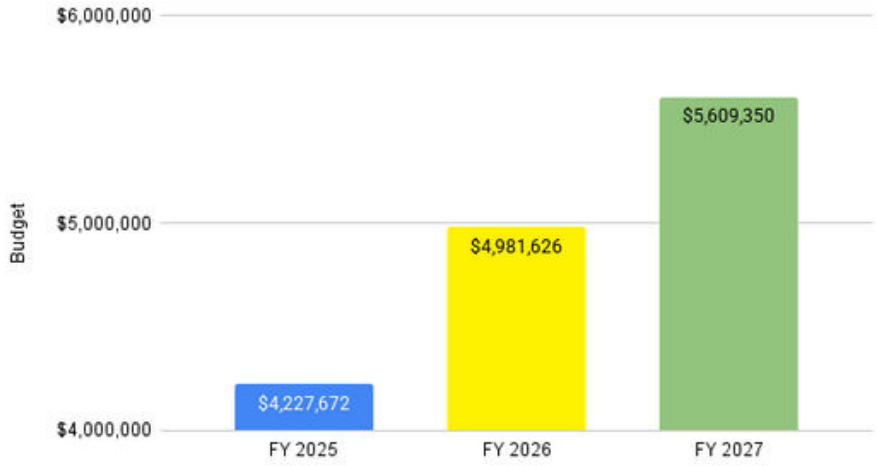
90% of Avodah staff would recommend Avodah as a great place to work.

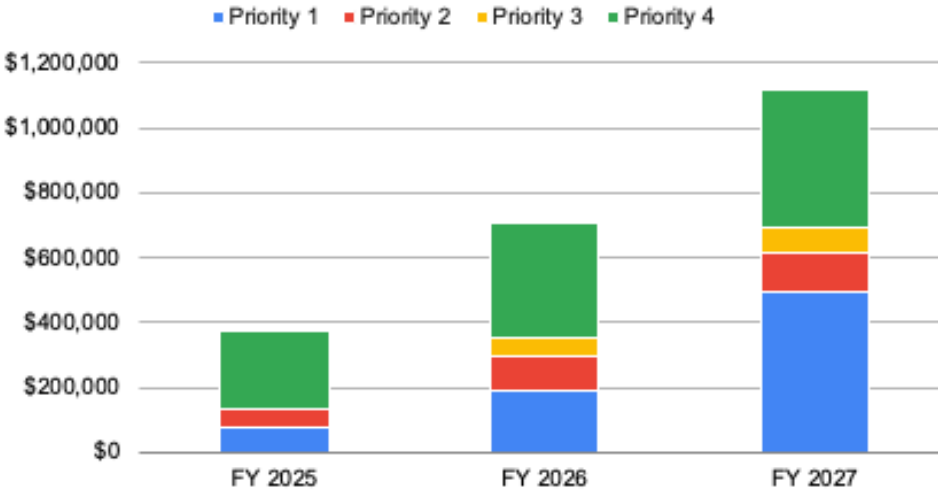
FINANCIAL PLAN

This strategic plan requires investment over the course of three years.

Estimated Organizational Budget

This chart depicts the estimated organizational budget required to accomplish the strategic goals enunciated in this plan.





Priority Investment Breakdown

This chart depicts the breakdown of investment in plan priorities per fiscal year.

Conclusion

We are honored to be a home for so many Jews who are committed to social change -- whether because they have come through our programs, supported our work, or are members of our broader community. There is no more critical time than now to ensure that the doors are open for all Jews interested in seeking justice together. There is no more critical time than now to ensure that our community is strong.

We need your support to build this community, to build this world, for generations to come.

If you would like to partner with us to help bring our vision to life, please reach out to us. Our doors are open to all who believe in the value of a Jewish community that prioritizes justice as a central component of a thriving Jewish life.

Thank you!

We are proud to stand arm in arm with so many people and organizations who enable and bolster Jewish justice leadership and community.

We'd like to thank Abigail Callahan Consulting for helping bring this plan to fruition.

And a big thank you to **Crown Family Philanthropies, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, and The Righteous Persons Foundation** for supporting this strategic planning process, enabling us to plan for a sustainable and just future.

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