

URJ Congregational Benchmarking and Assessment Project Covid-19 Congregant Impact Survey Information Sheet

URJ Congregational Benchmarking and Assessment was developed in 2016. Its primary purpose is to help congregations take an inward look at themselves using three evaluative tools: Congregant Survey, Qualitative Board Self-Assessment, and a Financial and Operating tool.

In response to the needs of congregations during these unprecedented times, the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) is offering its member congregations the opportunity to survey its congregants to better understand the mindsets of their congregants as a result of the Covid pandemic. Congregations will be able to assess general congregant satisfaction, participation at online events and get a sense of congregant involvement moving forward.

This is a short (approximately 4 minute) survey that the URJ will send directly to each congregant using member emails provided by each synagogue.

The URJ will administer the survey, provide the congregation with a report on the results and facilitate a group consultation for all the congregations that participate to help the congregation consider data-driven next steps based on the results.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What does the survey ask and what is the benefit?

The survey will ask participation and impact questions differentiating between “prior to” and “since” the pandemic began. This survey will allow you to take a pulse of your congregants and get a sense of how they are feeling about their membership at this time. This can inform your work in the immediate future, by telling you who is finding connection and meaning in your current offerings.

When you receive the results from the URJ, you will see data that will tell you how different demographics groups have responded to the work your synagogue has been doing in the pandemic. This will allow you to both deepen your engagement with those congregants as well as identify and reach out to any lesser engaged demographics.

My congregation has already done the URJ Benchmarking and Assessment Congregant Survey. Should we also do this?

Yes, you are in a great position to do this! We will ask some questions that are familiar to you (such as “I would recommend this synagogue to a friend”) and you will be able to benchmark your answers from now against when you last completed the survey.



When you communicate with your congregation, you should make sure your congregants know and understand why they participate in each survey, and a large part of that is reporting out the results and setting actionable goals.

What do we need to do to be part of the project?

Your congregation is responsible for promoting the survey to your congregations. While the email will be coming from us, you should be talking it up so that you get a great response while the survey is open..

What will the URJ do?

The URJ will send the survey to each individual email that you provide us with. Each person will receive a unique link to fill out the survey, which will allow us to properly track response rates. For this survey we will only be tabulating individual response rates and not household response rates.

On July 13, your congregation will receive the results of the survey. We will give it to you in both spreadsheet form as well as visualized data. The visualized data will include benchmarks against all participating congregations, as well as against like-sized synagogues (as long as enough similarly-sized synagogues participate in the survey as well).

The URJ will hold a group consultation on Wednesday July 15, 2020 to review the results and help your synagogue think about what actions can be taken as a result of the data.

If you would like to work with a mentor to help your congregation set data driven goals, please be in touch with us so we can help coordinate that.

What will the URJ do with our email list?

The emails you provide to us will be added to our database for informational purposes only. We will send each person one email to direct them to the survey. In the survey, they will be given the option to “opt-out” of future communications from the URJ. If they do opt-out, they will not receive unsolicited emails from the URJ. Please note that this is different from our current URJ Benchmarking and Assessment Policy.

Is there a cost for our congregation to do the survey?

Participation in URJ Benchmarking and Assessment Covid-19 Mini Survey is a benefit of your URJ membership. There is no additional cost.

Thank You

Thank you for taking this journey with us. We think your congregation will benefit greatly from the exercise of looking inward and strengthening itself.

