

Joint Cantorial Placement Commission

Cantor Nancy Kassel – Chair

Cantor Kay Greenwald – Director of Placement, ACC

September 2021:

The temporary policy of the Joint Cantorial Placement Commission (“JCPC”) regarding in-person interviews, implemented in July 2020, has been rescinded. In-person interviews and visits are again permitted, subject to the requirements outlined below. In order to participate in the placement process, all cantorial candidates and all searching congregations must sign the affirmation below, committing to follow these requirements.

Joint Cantorial Placement Commission

In-Person Interview Covid-19 Safety Requirements and Affirmation Form September 2021

The Joint Cantorial Placement Commission (“JCPC”) made up of representatives of the American Conference of Cantors (“ACC”), Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (“HUC-JIR”) Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music (“DFSSM”), and the Union for Reform Judaism (“URJ”), was formed in order to establish policies and procedures that advance a fair, orderly and dignified process of placing ACC member cantors in URJ congregations. The policies and procedures of the JCPC are designed to support equity in the search process for both cantors and congregations in placement.

Please note that the requirements stated herein are subject to change at any time should the status of the pandemic warrant it. We note that even as these requirements are being written, the situation continues to evolve.

The JCPC is committed to the needs of both cantors and congregations and holds in the highest regard the sanctity of the relationship between a cantor and the congregation he/she/they serves. The JCPC adheres to the highest values of equity and *pikuach nefesh*, saving lives.

In very similar fashion to the Rabbinic Placement Commission (“RPC”), we have created these safety requirements for on-site visits during the 2021-2022 cantorial search and placement cycle. We know there are no easy answers and that there are many important values to consider. We are committed to overseeing a placement process that is fair and safe during this extraordinary time.

The requirements outlined here do not supersede more stringent requirements, whether those requirements are federal, state or local mandates or the policies and procedures adopted by a synagogue in which a search is occurring. We ask that congregations adhere to the most stringent

health and safety requirements in effect at the time of the visit. All congregations in search and all cantors participating in the placement process will be required to provide the ACC Placement Department with a signed statement of agreement to adhere to these requirements.

While the requirements listed below speak to the candidate, they apply equally to the candidate's spouse or partner if they accompany the candidate on the visit.

The Requirements:

1. In order to ensure that the visit protects the health and safety of the candidate and the clergy, staff and members of the congregation, every person participating in the visit or present on the premises at any time during the visit must provide proof of vaccination for Covid-19 or proof of a negative Covid-19 test result taken within 72 hours of the scheduled visit.
2. Masks must always be worn by everyone in attendance, including children who are two years of age and older.
3. All local, state, and federal guidelines and all COVID-related policies and procedures of the synagogue in search must be followed, with the strictest guidelines taking precedence if guidelines are inconsistent.
4. Social distancing must be observed at all times.
5. All travel itineraries and plans must be worked out - and agreed to - by both the congregation and the cantorial candidate, in advance of any in-person on-site visit. These itineraries and plans include: Interviewing times and spaces; Model Shabbat services and/or auditions and the spaces in which these will take place; meetings; informal gatherings; meals; lodging; transportation to and from the congregation; transportation from the candidate's lodging space to all scheduled visit activities.

Travel and Ground Transportation

1. Whenever feasible, candidates should drive their own car or rent a car and drive themselves to and from all visits, including to and from the airport. Candidates should be reimbursed on a standard per-mile basis.
2. If a candidate is unable to drive or is uncomfortable driving, arrangements for a private taxi or Uber/Lyft should be made at the congregation's expense.
3. If the candidate is driven by employees or members of the congregation, the following guidelines should always apply:
 - a. No more than three individuals representing no more than two households should be in the car at one time. For example, if the cantor is accompanied by their spouse or partner, there can be only one congregational representative in the vehicle.

- b. All individuals must always wear masks.
 - c. Windows must be open if the weather permits.
 - d. Time spent in the vehicle should be minimized.
4. If the candidate flies, the candidate should be permitted to take the *shortest* available flight(s) rather than the least expensive.

Lodging

1. Candidates should be housed in a motel or hotel that follows extant CDC guidelines.
2. Candidates may be housed in a private residence if such residence is vacant, such as an empty home, pool house or guest house. Such a stand-alone facility must be empty for 24 hours prior to the candidate's visit and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected since last occupied.

Requirements for Physical Meeting Spaces

1. All gatherings must conform to the strictest federal, state and local regulations for gatherings. Though religious institutions are exempt in some states, we require that the strictest protocols be observed, including social distancing and the wearing of masks.
2. Meetings/gatherings should take place in large rooms to allow for appropriate social distancing. Gatherings held in a classroom or meeting space are limited to ten or fewer individuals, including the candidate. There may be no physical contact, including hugging or handshaking.
3. Gatherings in the synagogue sanctuary, as long as they are properly distanced and everyone is masked, are permitted for the purpose of cantorial auditions and/or a model Shabbat service (on a weekday). Because singing is a known Covid-19 super spreader, arrangements should be made for safe distancing between the cantor, and others in the sanctuary. People attending the audition and/or model Shabbat service must be limited to members of the cantorial search committee, members of the executive board of the congregation, and the synagogue professional team.
4. Meetings and gatherings should take place outdoors if weather permits. If gathering indoors, the room must be well ventilated with windows and doors open if possible. If the room is not already part of the building's HVAC system, an appropriately sized portable air cleaner or air purifier should be used. Amplification is recommended so no one feels the need to shout.
5. A room should be vacant for the greater of 15 minutes or two airflow cycles of the HVAC system before being repopulated with a new group of people.

Meals

Any shared meals should take place outdoors, if at all possible. Masks must be worn at all times when not eating and social distancing must be observed. Only those fully vaccinated may participate in shared meals.

Affirmation for the Joint Cantorial Placement Commission

For Congregations in Search:

This is to attest to the Joint Cantorial Placement Commission that on behalf of Congregation _____, I hereby affirm that I have read the *Joint Cantorial Placement Commission's In-Person Interview Covid-19 Safety Requirements* as outlined above and agree to abide by all of the stated requirements.

Signature of President and Date

Name of President

For Cantors in Placement:

This is to attest to the Joint Cantorial Placement Commission that I hereby affirm that I have read the *Joint Cantorial Placement Commission's In-Person Interview Covid-19 Safety Requirements* as outlined above and agree to abide by all of the stated requirements.

Signature of Cantor, or DFSSM Ordination Candidate, and Date

Name of Cantor, or DFSSM Ordination Candidate