

Request for Proposals  
Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah  
Study of Applied Jewish Wisdom

Background:

Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah promotes and supports efforts to help Jews and others apply Jewish wisdom to live better lives and shape a better world.

In 2016, the Foundation sponsored a prize competition, the Lippman Kanfer Prize for Applied Jewish Wisdom, to encourage, recognize and reward programs that engage individuals and communities in applying Jewish wisdom in exemplary, creative, and impactful ways. The term “Jewish wisdom” refers to the accumulating body of teaching and practice embodied in Jewish texts, traditions, history, and the lived experience of Jews today. Programs in any area of Jewish life where Jewish teaching and practice are being used to help participants live better lives and shape a better world were eligible for the Prize. This includes applying Jewish wisdom to enhance personal growth, spiritual development, family life, business and professional activity, community life, society and economy, and the environment.

Over 200 programs were submitted for the Prize. Profiles of those deemed semifinalists are collected on the Prize website: [www.lippmankanferprize.org](http://www.lippmankanferprize.org). In addition, the Foundation has a database of submissions that includes additional material from many of the applicants – materials produced by the programs, videos, press coverage, etc.

One of the Foundation’s goals in creating the Prize is to use the information collected to illuminate how Jewish wisdom is being applied in a variety of settings today.

The Research:

For this reason, the Foundation is now seeking proposals from researchers who are interested in working with the information collected to explore this process and to generate new insights into

- a) The nature of the Jewish wisdom that is being embodied, transmitted, and applied in these programs
- b) How that wisdom is being made accessible and being conveyed for application
- c) How the wisdom is being applied
- d) The effects of the programs

Examples of areas of inquiry and research questions that might be pursued include:

1. The nature of “Jewish wisdom,” e.g.,
  - a. How do the programs define and understand the term “Jewish wisdom”?
  - b. How do they operationalize this in their work?
2. How the programs transmit and apply Jewish wisdom, e.g.,
  - a. What approaches do they use to transmit Jewish wisdom?

- b. How do they envision this wisdom being applied – in what ways, in what settings?
  - c. What do they do pedagogically and/or in other ways to encourage their target audience(s) to apply this wisdom?
  - d. What are the programs' operative (or implicit) theories of change as they relate to the transmission and application of Jewish wisdom?
3. The outcomes of their work, e.g.,
- a. What outcomes do they seek from the application of Jewish wisdom?
  - b. What outcomes do the programs appear to achieve with respect both to individuals and the larger socio-cultural environment (Jewish and general)?
  - c. What factors contribute to or inhibit the programs' success in having their audience(s) apply Jewish wisdom?
  - d. What factors contribute to or inhibit the programs' success in achieving the outcomes they seek?
4. Program participants, e.g.,
- a. What assumptions do the programs make about their audience(s)
  - b. What assumptions do the programs make about what makes Jewish wisdom of interest to these audiences?
  - c. How does the experience of the programs validate, modify, or disprove these assumptions?
5. Larger implications of the programs, e.g.,
- a. How does the work of these programs reflect and/or contribute to larger trends in American Jewish life?
  - b. What does the full collection of programs suggest are the arenas of human experience to which the application of Jewish wisdom is most salient at this moment?
  - c. What do these programs contribute to our understanding of Jewish identity, community, and culture today?
  - d. What do these programs contribute to our understanding of Jewish education and the process of moving from exposure to internalization to action?

**We also encourage researchers to pursue additional and alternative questions to guide their research.**

A good proposal might tackle several of these questions, or only one. The key is the coherence and integrity of the research design and the salience of the question(s) being addressed.

The Request for Proposals:

Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah seeks proposals from individuals interested in conducting research along the lines outlined above using the information gathered in the Prize competition (program profiles and ancillary materials) plus whatever additional resources the researcher may choose to employ. Researchers will work under the overall guidance of Dr. Jonathan Woocher, Senior Fellow at the Foundation.

Results of the research should include (a) a report to the Foundation, either text or slide-deck, (b) a draft of a submission to a peer-reviewed academic journal, and (c) a draft of a shorter, more accessible article

for a popular audience that articulates some key findings. The research product should be submitted to the Foundation no later than December 1, 2017.

Research may be conducted by an individual or by more than one person working together.

Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah will pay a stipend of \$5000 for each research project approved.

The research proposal should be no more than three pages and include the following items:

1. Name of the researcher(s)
2. Current professional status (professor, graduate student, educator, etc.)
3. Academic background / CV
4. Current affiliation (if any)
5. Proposed focus of and plan for the research, including
  - a. rationale for the research (why is it of value)
  - b. questions to be addressed (from among those above or others)
  - c. hypotheses to be tested (if any)
  - d. programs or program areas to be included
  - e. additional material to be used (if any)
  - f. anticipated form of presenting results
  - g. anticipated date of submission of results
6. Contact information for the researcher(s)

Proposals should be submitted digitally as a Word document to Dr. Jonathan Woocher at [jon@lippmankanfer.org](mailto:jon@lippmankanfer.org).

Research products will be the joint property of the researcher(s) and Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah, either or both of which may disseminate the product, or not, as they see fit. However, neither party will be able to modify the product as submitted without the other's permission.

Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah will approve research proposals on a rolling basis. However, all research products are due no later than December 1, 2017. Upon approval of a proposal, the Foundation will send out a contract to the researcher(s) that will detail the terms of the agreement.

#### Questions:

Please address any questions to Dr. Jonathan Woocher, [jon@lippmankanfer.org](mailto:jon@lippmankanfer.org), 347-395-0623.