



Shmita Hives  
transform rest • embody action

PLEASE NOTE: Some information in the document pertains to forming hives for Tishrei 5782 (September 2021). If you are finding this document after that time and have questions, please reach out to us! [ShmitaHives@gmail.com](mailto:ShmitaHives@gmail.com). If you are interested in accessing the Shmita Hives curriculum, please go to [tinyurl.com/SHInterest](https://tinyurl.com/SHInterest).

## Introduction

Welcome! This is a landing page for information about Shmita Hives, a free resource in development that will be available in the Jewish year 5782 (September 2021 - September 2022). As you may know, every seventh year is Shmita, which is Hebrew for “release.” Shmita is a time for letting go of control, allowing ourselves to rest, and sharing resources. In the Torah, Shmita is a time to work less, nourish the land, and reduce wealth gaps. There’s never been a better time for this mitzvah. What does it look like to bring Shmita into our contemporary lives? Let’s see what happens when we slow down.

We invite you to use the tools we’re developing to explore Shmita in a small group (“hive”) in your local community. You may wish to meet on Friday nights or Saturdays to connect weekly cycles of rest and vision on Shabbat with larger Shmita cycles of social transformation. The curriculum will guide your hive through a year of monthly gatherings.

- Study the history and values of Shmita
- Practice rest and collective care
- Nourish your imagination with play and embodiment tools
- Identify needs in your local community
- Collaborate on a social or environmental justice project

With the purpose of building local community, these activities are designed for groups to meet in person. If meeting online is more accessible for you, or you’re connected with people who live

far away and want to form a hive together, the activities can be adapted to make that work. There will be an opportunity for cross-pollination among groups midway through the year, in the form of an online retreat in winter 2021/22. We hope this can be an opportunity for local hives to connect with a broader network, and find inspiration and support to sustain their local projects.

## Join a Hive

You can sign up at [www.tinyurl.com/SignupSH](http://www.tinyurl.com/SignupSH), and we'll connect you with a group. Or, if a group listed below has provided contact info, you can get in touch with them directly.

(There are many hives forming which are open to the public. Their first meetings will be in Tishrei, and you can join in time for the first or second meetings. We'll list them below as soon as a person within each hive volunteers to be the contact person.)

### LOCALLY-BASED HIVES

**A group in Olympia, Washington** (Nisqually territory) is open to members of Temple Beth Hatfiloh, and any additional community members who would like to be involved. Email Alexander ([alexandergracevickery@gmail.com](mailto:alexandergracevickery@gmail.com)) to join or ask questions. Alexander says, "While Shmita is a Jewish concept and we will be exploring rest and action through that lens, this is a group open to anyone who would like to strengthen themselves and their community through slowing down. I would like the design of this group (ex., pace, location, time, size, available resources, content, etc.) to be as collaborative as possible to address the diverse needs of our community. Please reach out to me so we can start a conversation about your Shmita dreams! The hive will require vaccination and masks; other safety measures will be co-decided based on feedback from the group with the ongoing option to move virtual if desired."

**Groups in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota** (Dakhóta territory) are open to anyone who has an earnest interest in Shmita. To join or ask questions, email Asher ([aesc1123@gmail.com](mailto:aesc1123@gmail.com)). Asher says, "You are welcome if you have Jewish heritage, come from a multi-faith family, or are a Jew by choice. Non-Jewish allies are equally welcome. Making this group accessible is a priority, and I am grateful to know your access needs (childcare, fragrance, mobility, public transportation, etc). We will gather once a month. There is a hive in St Paul on Wednesdays at 4pm; a group with childcare in Minneapolis on Tuesdays 6-8pm; a group in Minneapolis on Saturdays noon-2pm; and probably one more group in Minneapolis, tentatively Sundays 3-5pm."

**A group in Seattle, WA** (Duwamish territory) will meet once a month on Shabbat afternoons, starting September 18 for Tishrei and October 30 for Cheshvan. For now, the group plans to meet outside. Contact Hannah Woodworth to join: [hannahmwoodworth@gmail.com](mailto:hannahmwoodworth@gmail.com).

**A group in Pittsburgh, PA** (Osage and Haudenasaunee territory) will have its kickoff event online in October. Contact Charlie Baron to join: [charlie.f.baron@gmail.com](mailto:charlie.f.baron@gmail.com).

**A group in Baltimore, MD** (Piscataway land) may be based at Hinenu: The Baltimore Justice Shtiebl. Contact Hannah Freedman to ask whether it's happening and about the potential to participate: [hannah.r.freedman@gmail.com](mailto:hannah.r.freedman@gmail.com).

**A hive in Columbus, OH** (Wyandott, Hopewell, and Adena territory) welcomes people to join. They will probably do a combination of Zoom and in-person gatherings. Contact Jodi Kushins to join: [jodiekushins@gmail.com](mailto:jodiekushins@gmail.com).

**A hive in Oakland, CA** (Ohlone territory) is for queer and trans antizionist Jews. It looks like meetings will start in person, October 1, and continue once a month on Fridays 6-8pm. Contact Olivia to join: olivia63195 [at] gmail [dot] com.

**A hive in Tovaangar, specifically in Los Angeles, CA** is open to people joining. Contact Jordana Fraider at [jordanafraider@gmail.com](mailto:jordanafraider@gmail.com) if you're interested. The first meeting will be Thursday September 30, 7:30-9pm, outdoors.

Other geographically-based hives which are open to the public are forming and haven't chosen an individual contact person yet. Email [ShmitaHives@gmail.com](mailto:ShmitaHives@gmail.com) to be added to the group's email thread.

- **Asheville, NC** (Tsalaguwetiyi and Catawba territory)
- **Pasadena, CA** (Tongva territory) hive for parents of young children
- **Winter Park, FL** (Seminole and Timucua territory) hive for radical Jewish artists

## ONLINE HIVES THAT AREN'T PLACE-BASED

**The People's Zoom, a virtual community**, will host a hive online. Email Tzomi Sara ([thepeopleszoom@gmail.com](mailto:thepeopleszoom@gmail.com)) to join or ask questions. Tzomi says, "The People's Zoom started pre-covid with the intention of providing a virtual space for Jews who are isolated due to being anti-Zionist and rural, disabled, or low-Jewish-population. You can learn more here: <https://www.patreon.com/thepeopleszoom>." The first meeting will be Sunday October 3.

**Disability community hive** is online and open to anyone who identifies as disabled (or Deaf, crip, chronically ill, mad, neurodivergent, etc). Folks in the hive are in the process of choosing a time to meet and finding ways to keep people connected when they can't make it to meetings. Email Jessica Goodsell to join: [jgood.blue@gmail.com](mailto:jgood.blue@gmail.com).

Other online hives are forming:

- **queer and trans community hive**
- **hives open to everyone** -- one starts September 30 and meets Thursdays at 4:00-6:00pm PST / 7:00-9:00 EST. Another has its first meeting Oct 3, and its second Oct 31: Sundays at 1:30-3:30pm PST / 4:30-6:30pm EST

Contact the people in a hive you'd like to join -- or fill out the form at [www.tinyurl.com/SignUpSH](http://www.tinyurl.com/SignUpSH), and the organizers of Shmita Hives will connect you with a hive.

## Start a Hive

Alternatively, you can start a local group anywhere! Meeting online is another option. Here are your first steps.

- 1) **Contact Alexander and Asher (the people who are coordinating Shmita Hives overall).** Their joint email address is at the end of this document. Let them know you're interested in starting a hive, and whether it's open to the public (such that we can refer participants to you) or private (by your invitation only).
- 2) **Invite people.** Five to 12 people is a good group size. The curriculum is designed to be flexible. You'll have a different experience depending on who you invite, but many configurations are possible -- friends or acquaintances; people with shared radical politics or diverse political views; religious people or atheists; people who are familiar or new to Shmita. You could invite people involved in the Jewish community or keep the group open to non-Jewish allies. You could center a shared identity, such as Jews of Color. You might invite friends and add others through word of mouth. You might be a member of a synagogue or JCC willing to host the group and send an announcement in its newsletter. You might be a member of an affinity group that wants to participate in Shmita Hives together to support its activism. [Here's a flyer you can share.](#)
- 3) **Choose a monthly gathering time.** Friday evenings or Saturdays are suggested to feel how the rhythm of Shabbat connects with the rhythm of Shmita. If you choose Friday nights and want to incorporate Shabbat dinner, and many people in your group are age 21-39, consider applying to an organization like [OneTable](#) that might pay for your dinner. If you've invited many people, a free online scheduling poll like [When2Meet](#) might be helpful to find a day/time when most everyone is available.
- 4) **Discuss COVID safety.** Shmita Hives was designed to be practiced in person. You're encouraged to do that if it's safe and accessible to the people who have come together as a group. Considering that public health needs are shifting quickly and daily, we encourage you to adjust for the wellbeing of your hive. Online might be the only safe, accessible option for some groups, and you can form a strong community as a hive that meets online. Find out what works for everyone. You can choose to meet in person or online; indoors or, weather permitting, outdoors; masked or unmasked; etc. Keep communication open in case anyone's COVID-19 safety practices changes in ways that require the group to adapt to remain inclusive. All groups that gather in-person are responsible for following CDC, state, and local COVID-19 advice.
- 5) **Find a way to gather resources** that will meet the group's basic needs. Ask group members what accessibility looks like for them. Shmita is about collective care, and creating an environment where people can relax is a meaningful part of this project. Think about how to provide food, where is a comfortable and accessible place to gather, and how to meet other needs such as childcare. You could ask your local Jewish Federation to financially support you, or ask your local synagogue or JCC to sponsor you. Your hive could also organize itself independently.

- a) Food. Options include a sponsor pays for meals, the group does potlucks, or individuals take turns bringing food for the whole group. Ask members whether anyone keeps kosher or has other dietary restrictions.
  - b) Location. Options include meeting in an institution, or in group members' houses, or in a covered outdoor space if the weather welcomes it. Depending on what group members need, it might be important to consider factors like bus routes, chair sizes, or wheelchair-accessible ramps.
  - c) Childcare. If parents belong to the group, ask whether childcare would be supportive. Everyone might pool money to pay a childcare provider. Or maybe the parent would feel safe allowing each group member to do a work-trade with one friend who would take a turn providing childcare while your Shmita Hive meets.
- 6) **Find a contact person for your group.** This person will have two responsibilities: First, bottomline that the group sets a time/place to meet every month, and keep everybody informed about when and where that will be. Second, stay in touch primarily by email with Shmita Hives so that its coordinators can support your group throughout the year. It's a low time commitment.

## What Hives Do

Shmita Hives curriculum follows the Jewish calendar. Every month, your group can pick 2 or 3 of the tools provided to practice together. Different categories of tools may feel right each month.

- Text study
- Heart work and Spiritual practice
- Solo reflection
- Movement and embodied play
- Art and creative tools

There is also a tool to assess needs in your community and choose one to address in the spirit of Shmita. Alongside the other activities, you will take action together. What this looks like is entirely up to you. It could be something small you do at the monthly gathering -- for example, each time you spend 5 minutes calling politicians to advocate for a cause you care about.

Lastly, midway through the year, you will be invited to an online retreat in the winter of 2021/22. This will connect Shmita Hives across geographic locations. Participation is optional, and details will be provided as we get closer to that season.

There will be links to the curriculum on this page starting in Tishrei 5782 / September 2021.

## Contact Info & More Details

Two friends started Shmita Hives. Alexander Vickery lives in Unceded Dx<sup>w</sup>sq<sup>w</sup>ali?abš (Nisqually) Territory in the Pacific Northwest, while Asher Edes lives on Dakota and Anishinaabe land in Minnesota. We became a chevruta through ALEPH's Keshet Fellowship. Some of our identities (shared or separate) include queer, 30-something, white, trans, Jewish, and working in food

advocacy. We set out to create this project from a shared desire to explore Shmita in our respective local communities.

Interested in being part of Shmita Hives? You can reach out to Alexander and Asher at [ShmitaHives@gmail.com](mailto:ShmitaHives@gmail.com). Our response times may be slow, because we are practicing the Shmita value of rest, and we are volunteers on this project. We would love to talk about how you can do any of these things:

- Start a group with our support
- Find out whether others in your local area have expressed interest
- Connect us with funding to support this project

Thanks for letting us know when you're starting a hive or using the material in other ways. Please attribute it to us and Shmita Hives. If your group creates its own material and wants to add to the shared resources for other hives, we'd be delighted to receive and upload it.

We welcome you to use the content we created for free because we want it to be accessible. If you start a group, please keep it free for people to participate. As a group, you might collectively decide to cover costs for food, access needs, etc., but please find a way to make this sliding-scale and optional so that no one is turned away for lack of funds.

We imagine most people who start a group will be volunteers like us, but it's possible you'll get paid to organize a group as a staff member of a host organization or as a grant recipient. In that unlikely but awesome situation, please ask the organization that pays you to incorporate two expenses into the budget for your Shmita Hives group: give 10% to Alexander and Asher for content use, and put 10% toward financial/land restitution in your local community.