

Shtiebel Fundraising and Finances FAQ

Updated May 15th, 2025

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The Big Picture

What's the Shtiebel's fundraising strategy?

Our strategy is growing alongside us. In the early years, we were focused on simply making it work month to month, often on a shoestring budget. Now, we're investing in the long game: growing a diverse donor base, tracking our finances with transparency, setting multi-year goals, and building strong partnerships with individual givers, grantmakers, and local funders.

Just as importantly, we're working to ensure that our development efforts reflect the Shtiebel's deepest values. This isn't just about raising dollars, it's about cultivating a culture where everyone feels invited to sustain and shape our shared future.

This document is here to show you how we're doing that. It outlines our strategy, priorities, and practices—and answers some of the most common questions we get about how we fund this sacred work.

We're building toward sustainability, not just survival. This means:

- Growing recurring gifts through our Buildership program
- Raising \$100,000 to close this year strong and position us well for next year
- Securing long-term foundation support
- Creating more ways for *you* to understand, engage with, and shape our financial life

And we're investing in storytelling—so our fundraising reflects not just what we need, but *who we are*. We're so glad you're here. Let's dive in.

If there is a question you have that you do not see reflected in this document, please add it using our [suggestion box](#) - an evergreen resource that will get your feedback directly to us. We'll keep this document updated!

What are our biggest financial challenges and how are we working to address them?

Like many young organizations, we're still learning how to match our vision with long-term sustainability. We're still new, and so much of how we build our budget, set goals, and make financial asks is based on thoughtful research and community feedback, but not yet on long-term patterns. This can be a real challenge! We're doing our best to make smart, values-based judgments about what will work, while staying flexible and open to change.

This is where our governing board and staff work hand-in-hand to manage risk:

- What happens if prices rise mid-year?
- If a new opportunity arises, can we say yes?
- If we change the brand of seltzer or cold brew, will our community notice? (They will. :))

Life happens. Things break. People face emergencies. Just like in our personal lives, having a financial cushion helps us respond with care instead of panic. Our goal is to eventually maintain three months of operating expenses in reserve. Right now, we aim to keep at least one month on hand at all times - but that's not always the case, which can lead to stress. Part of the goal of this campaign is to start to bring our community more directly into the fundraising process so we can navigate these challenges and opportunities together.

What are we working towards in terms of our financial health?

For the Shtiebel, financial health means:

- We begin each month with our essentials: staff, rent, insurance, and utilities already covered.
- We have at least three months of operating reserves in the bank, offering stability and flexibility.
- We can say yes to new ideas without putting our foundation at risk.
- We're able to plan for bigger projects down the road, like investment in a physical home.
- We can breathe. We can see each other. And we can be seen.

Financial health is about creating the spaciousness and stability that allow us to serve, dream, and grow with integrity.

What does it mean to be financially healthy?

A financially healthy Shtiebel is one that can **breathe**. That means we begin each month with our essentials - staff salaries, rent, and utilities - already covered, so we can focus on our key program areas: welcoming people, building relationships, offering nourishment, and sustaining joyful Torah.

Financial health doesn't mean having everything we've ever dreamed of. It means being able to show up for each other today while planning wisely for tomorrow.

Here's what we're working toward:

- A strong base of **monthly Builders and Tomchei** (see below) to cover core operating costs
- **Three months of reserves** to weather any hard season
- **Flexibility** to try new ideas without jeopardizing the basics

Who is the fundraising crew?

David Diamond from our Governing Board and Corey Freeman from our Advisory Board, alongside Neal Strauss, and Rabbanit Fruchter have been spearheading this initiative with the support of our volunteer leadership. We are looking for more people to step into this process. If you would like to be a part of the strategic conversations about fundraising, please contact [David](#) or [Corey](#).

What financial lessons have we learned?

Like many young organizations, we've grown quickly, adjusted often, and learned a lot along the way.

In 2020, just as we were starting to gain momentum, COVID hit. We pivoted immediately to meet our community where they were: offering care, connection, and support in a time of crisis. Like many others, this meant putting long-term financial planning on pause. We cut all non-essential expenses, our Rabbanit dramatically cut her salary and took on a second job, and we did what was necessary to get by.

As we returned to in-person gatherings, our community grew beyond our wildest imagination, but our financial infrastructure stayed small. We stretched to meet the

moment, often carrying the financial load behind the scenes so the community could grow at a sustainable and emotionally grounded pace.

Another area of learning came from our community's incredible generosity. Volunteers stepped in constantly to meet needs: donating toys, ritual items, kiddush supplies, art materials, and more. In the moment, it kept us afloat. But because we didn't have a consistent way to track these gifts, it became hard to plan. Over time, these items needed replacing, replenishing, or scaling, and we didn't always know their cost or origin. We now have improving systems to track in-kind donations so we can budget wisely and steward gifts with clarity and care. When one of us asks for a receipt or cost estimate, it's part of helping us prepare for the future.

We also learned that planning to be *scrappy* only works for so long. Responding in the moment kept us going, but didn't always set us up for what's next. That's why our volunteer leadership and staff are now working together to understand our real costs, invest in long-term planning, and strengthen our financial infrastructure, so it's as strong and steady as the cold brew each Shabbos morning.

The Numbers

How much does it cost to run the Shtiebel?

Our current Fiscal Year (FY 24–25) budget is \$635,000. These funds support everything from salaries and our rent, to Shabbat kiddush lunch, youth offerings, security, holiday events, and everything else that supports the spiritual infrastructure of our space. Our expense budget for our next fiscal year, starting on July 1, is \$698,000.

It costs us an average of \$50,000 to keep our spiritual home functioning every month, though some months are more expensive than others due to holidays, lifecycle events, or unexpected repairs, and others are less.

What are the biggest line items on our budget?

Our budget reflects what we care about. Here's how it breaks down:

- People (staff and contractors): 35% Supporting the people who make the Shtiebel run: organizing, cleaning, leading, listening, and holding it all together.
- Space (rent, utilities, insurance): 28% Creating a warm, safe, and accessible place to gather, learn, daven, and play.

- Program areas (kids, learning, chaburot, ritual items): 23% From family programs to Torah learning to the objects that make our rituals feel alive, this is where community comes to life.
- Food (kiddush, snacks, coffee, tea, cholent): 11% Because nourishment is one of our love languages.

Can you share the Shtiebel's budget? (Added May 20)

We believe deeply in financial transparency, and we also believe that transparency doesn't mean sharing every detail with everyone.

We need to balance our desire to bring folks into the process with care for sensitive information, care for in-process decisions, and care for the work it takes to present financial information clearly and responsibly. That's why we're sharing budget categories and percentages rather than full line-by-line documents.

This approach allows our community to understand how we allocate resources, what we prioritize, and where we invest without exposing private or sensitive information. The Governing Board approves the annual budget and receives detailed updates throughout the year, and our staff and bookkeeper ensure responsible spending and tracking.

If you have questions about how something works or want to understand a specific area of spending, we're always open to a conversation!

Why does the budget increase from year to year?

As our community grows, so do our needs. More people means more food, more chairs, more staff time, more community care and rabbinic support, more security, and more opportunities. We also aim to pay our staff fairly and invest in infrastructure that helps us thrive long-term. This year, we're also adjusting the way that we are projecting our budget - we're implementing a more standard non-profit practice of raising more funds than what we estimate our expenses to be to ensure we're ready to support the needs of our growing organization.

This year we're aiming to raise more than our projected expenses because it's important for us to have a buffer if something unexpected comes up. Whether it's an emergency repair, a last-minute opportunity to grow a program, or just rising costs (like rent or supplies), having a buffer means we don't have to scramble, cut programs, or chase last-minute funding.

Why do we have a fundraising gap at the end of our fiscal year?

Our fiscal year ends on June 30 and begins on July 1. Like many communities similar to ours, we receive much of our funding in the Fall and Winter. As we approach the end of the fiscal year, we often find ourselves needing a final push to close the gap, bringing in enough funds to cover ongoing programs and operational expenses through the summer.

This year's campaign helps ensure we can finish strong without compromising on the quality, consistency, or care that define our offerings. Even as we work toward building reserves for greater stability in the future, we are committed to using those reserves only when truly necessary, not as a default solution.

Why are we trying to raise \$100,000 by June 30th, 2025?

This goal enables us to end our current fiscal year (FY 24-25) without financial stress, while positioning us to begin the next fiscal year (FY 25-26, starting July 1st) in a place where we can build towards sustainability.

It is difficult to build for the future while fundraising for now. The goal of this campaign is to provide the opportunity for us to think about what's next by covering out most immediate cash flow needs.

If we fall a bit short, we'll still be okay, but it will require tighter spending and could lead to more financial stress as we enter the new fiscal year.

Here's how we'll use the funds from this campaign

- 65% Ongoing costs (rent, utilities, payroll, cleaning, security, maintenance)
- 20% Upcoming bills
- 10% Planning for next year
- 5% Unexpected costs

Financial Decision Making

How do we decide what to spend money on?

We ask: What helps people feel connected? What deepens Jewish life? What keeps us grounded and growing?

Every budget decision is shaped by our values: hospitality, presence, Torah, and responsibility. Some things are non-negotiable (paying staff fairly, keeping the building safe and warm or cool). Others come from listening closely to what the community is yearning for, and asking what will have the most impact per dollar. We also try to stay flexible. Sometimes the best opportunities don't come with six months' notice.

What kind of oversight is in place?

Financial oversight at the Shtiebel is structured, collaborative, and continues to evolve as the organization grows. We are committed to stewarding every contribution with care, transparency, and alignment with our mission.

In the earliest days of the Shtiebel, financial decisions were shared between Rabbanit and the small non-local board with which the Shtiebel launched. From the beginning, Rabbanit Dasi recognized that this would not be sufficient for the long-term health of the organization. As soon as it became possible financially, she hired a professional bookkeeper. After that, with the partnership of our non-local board and funders at the time, we were able to hire an Executive Director, which freed up additional capacity to nurture a local Governing Board. Each of these steps reflected our vision that financial health requires robust systems, multiple layers of accountability, and professional expertise.

Today, our financial management includes several key players:

- **The Executive Director** manages day-to-day financial operations, oversees budget tracking, and ensures timely reporting.
- **The Rabbanit** offers vision-based guidance and helps ensure that spending reflects our core values and community commitments.
- **Our bookkeeper, Ken Schoenfeld**, reconciles expenses, prepares financial reports, and supports compliance and clarity in our records.
- **The Governing Board** holds fiduciary responsibility and participates in reviewing and approving our budget.

We operate with a Board-approved annual budget, and the Executive Director and bookkeeper provide regular financial updates to our Governing leadership. These updates include year-to-date income and expense tracking, grant reporting, and narrative context to support informed decision-making.

Day-to-day decisions are made by our staff leadership team, guided by an annual budget approved by the Governing Board and grounded in our communal values. That includes things like what supplies to order, how to allocate funds for programming, and how to select vendors. We prioritize responsiveness to community needs.

Larger decisions such as hiring, entering into contracts, and investing in infrastructure are made collaboratively by our staff and governing board. We use a values-based framework and consult with relevant volunteer teams. Community input is often solicited for decisions with broad or long-term impact (see our most recent real estate process, which included a survey, in-person meetings, and many communications), and we aim for transparency, shared wisdom, and strategic clarity.

Oversight also includes grant compliance, regular consultation with professionals, and review of restricted gifts to ensure funds are used appropriately and transparently. We continue to grow toward best practices. One of our current goals is to nominate a dedicated Governing Board member to focus on financial health and to eventually form a small finance committee that can help guide strategy, sustainability, and financial resilience.

Funding our Operations

Why do we need staff?

While volunteers are at the heart of the Shtiebel, it has always been core to our mission to create spaces that nourish without exhausting the people who serve them. We aim to sustain a community where gathering, care, and spiritual life can flourish, not only because of heroic volunteerism, but also through thoughtful, professional support. In a world that often feels chaotic and overwhelming, we believe professional leadership helps us offer the steadiness and clarity our community needs and deserves.

Are we lean?

Very. We run with a small staff and lean infrastructure, and many of our programs are volunteer-powered. We do our best to stretch every dollar while staying grounded in our values.

Lean doesn't mean we have *just enough* food at kiddush. It means we spend and invest in the program areas that drive our mission and values and limit our spending where we need just enough. The term we've been leaning into recently is *Scrappy Abundance*. We love to project abundance while finding ways to be scrappy and DIY.

Can you tell me about our highest budget program areas, Kiddush and Space?

Serving abundant, home-cooked, delicious food on Shabbat and holidays isn't just a nice extra, it's one of our core program areas and a defining part of Shtiebel's communal culture.

For Kiddush, we ground ourselves in our values of nourishment and hospitality, our annual budget, and the oversight of our strategic staff and bookkeeper to ensure we're spending responsibly. We are always looking for ways to cut costs (*send us your favorite smoked fish dealers, please!*) while staying true to the abundance that makes the Shtiebel special.

It's also worth noting: to cater the meals we serve each week would cost at least two to three times more and would lack the personal touch we're able to provide. Kiddush lunch takes significant staff and volunteer time, and we are honored to make it a joyful, sustaining centerpiece of our community life. It is also worth noting that our incredible volunteers make our staff expenditures so much less!

Our physical home is central to helping our community feel rooted, safe and nurtured. What we spend on rent is about average for square footage in our neighborhood.

I'm anxious about the money we spend. Are we doing a good job saving and buying smart?

We hear that worry, and we want to meet it with care.

At the Shtiebel, we stretch every dollar. We work hard to balance vision with responsibility, running lean while still showing up with warmth and abundance. Our biggest expenses are the essentials: people (who make the community run), space (where we gather), and programs (what we do together). A seemingly small decision is usually pretty intentional - as we weigh inclusion, access, dietary needs, aesthetics, and hospitality along with cost.

We'd really appreciate if you would use the thoughtful feedback channels we've built if you're ever curious about how money is spent or how a decision was made, we'd truly love to share. We value feedback that comes from a place of love, whether via [email](#) or our [Suggestion Box](#).

What kinds of institutional grants do we get and why?

We receive grants from foundations and philanthropic partners who believe in the Shtiebel's mission: building an inclusive, rooted, and spiritually vibrant community that blends halacha and rootedness with creativity.

Our grants typically come from the following philanthropic priorities:

- Orthodox feminism and inclusive Orthodoxy
- Innovative Jewish learning and leadership development
- Spiritual care and community wellness
- Family and youth engagement
- Infrastructure and capacity-building
- The revival of Jewish life in South Philadelphia

We seek out grant funding that aligns with our values - partnerships that don't just fund programs, but help us grow in ways that are sustainable and mission-driven. If you have an idea of a grant we can apply for, please reach out!

Type of Financial Support

Buildership

What is Shtiebel Buildership?

Buildership is our regular means of support which comes directly from our community. Being a Builder means you've committed to a recurring (monthly, quarterly, yearly) gift of any size to help sustain the Shtiebel. It's our version of community buy-in; it's framed around shared stewardship and trust. Builders give the Shtiebel a steady rhythm of support. They help us plan ahead. They help us show up with consistency and care.

Why is Buildership our model?

Buildership emphasizes shared investment. Unlike traditional membership dues, it invites each person to give what they can, regularly, with heart and intention. It's a model of community stewardship which allows us to include in our supporters local

Shtiebelers and also folks not directly involved in our community but passionate about vision for the Jewish world.

Do Builderships cover our expenses?

Right now, **recurring gifts cover about 28%** of our income. That means we start each month with a small cushion of certainty, but we still have a long way to go. In the next fiscal year, we'd like Builderships and Tomchei to cover at least 38% of our expenses. We don't expect them to ever cover *everything*, but they're the foundation we build on.

When you become a Builder, you're not just making a regular donation. You're helping the lights stay on. You're making davening happen. You're nourishing the learning, gathering, and care that makes this place feel like home.

Can I earmark my Buildership towards specific uses/programs?

No. Builderships sustain our daily operations; keeping the lights on, staff paid, and doors open. There is something called "Tomchei Shtiebel" (learn about this below) which allows the benefit of allocating a portion of your pledge as a flex account for Kiddush and Seudah Shlishit sponsorships throughout the year. See more about restricted donations below and we are happy to have conversations about donations towards specific program areas.

Can I pause, change, or cancel my Buildership?

Yes. Always. We understand that life circumstances change, and we're grateful for any amount of time you've supported this work. You can change your giving at any time. There is a simple link you can use to pause, change, or cancel your Buildership, which can be found at the bottom of your last Buildership receipt.

Tomchei Shtiebel

What is Tomchei Shtiebel? I've never heard of it before!

That makes sense - we've only just started to do a soft launch of this incredible opportunity to support the Shtiebel. Tomchei Shtiebel is a way for those Shtiebelers who can give at a higher level to direct their gifts to sponsorships or passion areas throughout the year. These gifts are our way to bring in steady funds to support the Shtiebel beyond Buildership. You can join Tomchei with a yearly gift of \$10k, \$15k,

\$25k, or \$50k. A benefit of being part of Tomchei Shtiebel is that you can allocate a portion of your pledge as a flex account for Kiddush and Seudah Shlishit sponsorships throughout the year.

Isn't that like an exclusive society? That's not what we're about!

All Shtiebelers are treated the same, regardless of how much they contribute. This group of generous community members are helping us build in a way that supports those who can't give as much and, as a community, we lean on them in times of celebration, growth, and financial hardship to sustain our mission. Being part of Tomchei is an opportunity, it's an investment, and it may not work for everyone. You can give generously without being in Tomchei and you'll hear from Rabbanit, Neal, and see appreciation at a similar level.

Sponsorships, Donations, & Dedications

What do Kiddush sponsorships cover?

Kiddush sponsorships help cover the cost of food, supplies, and staff time that go into creating our abundant, home-cooked Shabbat lunches. Some weeks have multiple sponsors, and others have none. We love that sponsorships are an opportunity to honor so many different kinds of life's moments. At the Shtiebel, Kiddush is one of our core program areas. It's where community is built, conversations deepen, and children grow up surrounded by joyful Jewish life. We don't cater; we cook. And while that keeps costs down, it also means that Kiddush involves a significant investment of time from both staff and volunteers.

Your sponsorship directly supports:

- Groceries and ingredients for a full communal meal
- Supplies and equipment
- The behind-the-scenes work that makes Kiddush feel generous, warm, and welcoming

This year will be our first fiscal year that kiddush sponsorships will cover most, if not all, kiddush expenses! This is a tremendous moment for our community and it's due, in a large part, to a generous community member contributing towards this area. We want each of you to continue sponsoring in an amount that feels right and we also need those

of you who can, to give more when you sponsor, so that we continue to build on this year's success.

If kiddush sponsorships don't cover the total cost of kiddush, where does the rest of the money come from?

Kiddush is one of our core program areas. We are committed to funding kiddush each week to ensure there is nourishing food and opportunities for community to be built; a space for conversations to deepen and children to grow up surrounded by joyful Jewish life.

When we don't have kiddush sponsorships or sponsorships don't fully cover a week's expenses, we lean into our 'Where it's needed most' fund to support this.

Does a donation to the Tzedaka Fund support the Shtiebel or count as my Buildership?

Donations to the Tzedaka Fund are incredibly important. They do not support our costs here at the Shtiebel. Rather, Tzedaka gifts, including those for *Matanot L'Evyonim* or *Ma'ot Chitim*, are restricted funds: they can only be used to directly support individuals in need. They're tracked in a separate line item in our budget ("Charity"), and unlike other funds, whatever comes in, must go out. We don't use these funds for rent, programs, or barley for cholent. Neal tracks the total amounts received, and the Rabbanit distributes funds as needs arise. To ensure both privacy and accountability, all individual disbursements are reviewed by our bookkeeper, who is not affiliated with the Shtiebel community.

So while giving to the Tzedaka Fund is a powerful act of compassion, it's different from Buildership, which helps cover the core costs of running and sustaining the Shtiebel itself.

There is a new idea I want to fund. Can I do that?

Yes! Many of our most beloved initiatives began when someone like you said, *"I have an idea, and I'd love to help fund it."*

This could be something focused, like sponsoring a particular Kiddush, covering the cost of stroller-walking when the eruv is down, or supporting new ritual items. Or it could be something bigger, like piloting a learning series, expanding accessibility, or helping us dream toward a larger vision.

We're always happy to explore possibilities together. Just reach out to [Neal](#) or [Rabbanit Dasi](#) to start the conversation. We'd love to hear what you're imagining and see if it aligns with our current goals and capacity.

Can I dedicate a ritual object?

Yes, dedicating a Siddur, Chumash, or other ritual object is a beautiful way to honor someone you love, mark a meaningful moment, or support the Shtiebel in a lasting, tangible way. It helps offset our costs and allows us to steward our sacred materials with care and intention. When you dedicate a ritual object, we'll include a nameplate or inscription as a gesture of gratitude and remembrance. These items live in the communal space, for the sake of everyone's use and spiritual nourishment. Your dedication becomes part of the object's story and the life of the community, not something we reserve, store, or track on an individual basis.

Other Financial Support

Can I donate stock or from my Donor Advised Fund (DAF)?

Yes. Both are wonderful ways to support the Shtiebel and may offer you tax advantages as well. You'll email us to let us know you're planning to make a stock gift, and we'll provide you with our brokerage information (account name, number, and DTC code). Once the transfer is complete, we'll issue a formal acknowledgment for your records.

For a donor advised fund, request a grant through your DAF provider, such as Fidelity Charitable, Schwab, Vanguard, or a local federation, including our full name and address and Tax ID (83-3191074). It's also helpful if you let us know a check is coming so we can properly thank you!

What about legacy giving?

Legacy giving is a powerful way to ensure that the values and community you care about today can thrive for generations to come. Legacy giving (sometimes called planned giving) means including the Shtiebel in your **will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy**. It allows you to make a lasting impact, often without affecting your finances during your lifetime by designating the **Shtiebel as a beneficiary** of your will, IRA, 401(k), or life insurance policy. If you're comfortable sharing, let us know so we can thank you now and, if you'd like, honor your commitment in our records. Even a

small percentage of your estate can make a lasting difference. And your gift will become part of the story we tell about what it means to belong to and build a sacred community.

Non-monetary support

I want to help but can't give much money. What can I do?

You're not alone—and that spirit of wanting to contribute is everything. Some of our most beautiful and sustainable programs have been built by people offering time, talent, and heart instead of dollars.

Here are some small-but-mighty ways to make a real impact:

- Join our CSS team, help with Shabbat setup or cleanup, or cook for Kiddush
- Become a monthly donor—even \$25/month makes a significant difference
- Write a testimonial about what the Shtiebel means to you
- Host a parlor meeting or backyard fundraiser
- Sponsor a learning session, Kiddush, or holiday gathering
- Invite a friend to a Shabbat davening, program, or class
- Help us share our story—introduce us to someone who might want to give
- Offer your unique skills—whether it's outreach, music, design, organizing, or something else

We're always looking to co-create opportunities that **match your gifts with the needs of the Shtiebel**. Let us know what you love to do and what you have time for.

Can I donate vegetable stock? Ha! But in all seriousness, can I donate items to the Shtiebel, like a recurring order of plates or washing cups for the bathroom?

We love the spirit behind this question, and your vegetable stock *might* just find a home in our kitchen! In all seriousness, yes, in-kind donations are possible, but not always preferable.

Here's why: we often purchase items in bulk, with specifications in mind. We also sometimes receive discounts or nonprofit pricing when ordering for ourselves. That said, if there's something you're eager to contribute, like a recurring supply order or a specific

improvement to our space, we're happy to talk and see if it's a good fit. In most cases, a financial gift toward the item allows us to meet the need most efficiently, while honoring your intent. To explore a donation like this, just send [a note to Neal](#). We're always grateful for creativity and generosity in all its forms.

Can I offer my support to help apply for more grants?

Yes! A major learning from the church opportunity was your willingness to help us find grant opportunities. Looking at your network, seeing who you know, and how you can connect us with a foundation or decision maker has the opportunity to impact our grant strategy in a significant way.

Fundraising in the Jewish World

Is our budget large compared to other Jewish communities?

For an organization of our size, ~150 community members each Shabbat, nearly 300 during chagim, and strollers overflowing into our entryway, we actually operate on a relatively modest budget. Communities with similar attendance and programming often have budgets exceeding one million dollars, while having fewer offerings and significantly larger staff teams. We keep our budget lower thanks in large part to our incredible volunteers - *thank you for all you do!*

How does Buildership compare to other shuls?

Many established shuls cover 40-50% of their budget with dues or membership. As a newer community, we're still building that base. Many shuls of our size also have substantial portions of their income come from lifecycles/space rentals and early childhood programming.

How do we make sure our fundraising reflects our values?

We aim to fundraise in the same way we gather: with warmth, honesty, and hospitality. That means:

- We lead with **vision**, not fear
- We welcome **questions**
- We don't pressure or shame
- We treat every gift of **money, time, or wisdom** as sacred

- We believe our community deserves to be supported with **kavod** (honor). That's the energy we bring to every financial conversation.

How do we talk about money without shame?

We name that it's hard, and that we're practicing. Many of us didn't grow up talking openly about money. Finances are not the only thing that matters, but they **do** matter. Money keeps the lights on. It keeps the fridge stocked with cold brew. It allows staff to show up rested, grounded, and ready to serve. So we talk about it. We ask. We celebrate when people give at whatever level makes sense to them.

I don't feel like I "give enough." Should I feel weird about that?

No. Not even a little. The strength of this community doesn't come from any one person's wallet. It comes from what we build **together**, through presence, participation, creativity, and generosity in all its forms. If you're giving what you can, from where you are, that is enough.

What does it mean to sustain something Jewish and local in 2025?

It means choosing to build something real and rooted, right here, with the people around us.

There are easier ways to "have Jewish life", a streaming subscription, a lecture on Zoom. But this is different. This is people showing up with soup when you're sick. People remembering your kid's name. People davening for your healing. People holding the roof up together. To sustain the Shtiebel is to say: this matters. Let's protect it. Let's grow it. Let's make sure it's here tomorrow.

Financial Next Steps

How often will I be asked for money?

For the Shtiebel, fundraising is not a side hustle, but part of the sacred and practical rhythm of communal life. You'll see a peak around the High Holidays, as we ask for donations in honor of the new year and remind you about Buildership. You'll see events and campaigns throughout the year, and you may get an email asking you for a meeting or with an invitation to a parlor meeting.

Sometimes, we get it right the first time. Other times, we ask when we have time and not when is right for you. Help us figure this out. When we ask, give us feedback on when would be better, what would be a more appropriate amount for you, and how to structure the gift in a way that feels meaningful.

What are these parlor meetings?

In the month of June, we're hosting a few **small *parlor meetings***; intimate gatherings where we'll share our vision, offer a deeper look at our financial picture, and invite meaningful partnership.

Parlor meetings are intended for those who are in a position to contribute in a significant way, either through generous financial support or by committing focused time to help us advance key priorities (fundraising, operations, logistics, etc).

There will be a clear and respectful ask at the end of each meeting. If you would like an invitation to one of these parlor meetings or if you have an idea of who should be in those conversations, please reach out to [Rabbanit Dasi](#).

Support the Shtiebel

Help us reach our goal of \$10k by May 23rd, 2025

Every contribution will be matched up to \$10,000.00! This will get us to 20% of our goal. Make a donation [here](#).

[Make a donation](#)

[Become a Builder](#)

[Join Tomchei Shtiebel](#)

Questions

If there is a question you have that you do not see reflected in this document, please add it using our **[suggestion box](#)** - an evergreen resource that will get your feedback directly to us. We'll keep this document updated!