

*...maximizing opportunities for Jewish students to explore, celebrate and sanctify life in a Jewish way.*

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## Jewish Life at Washington University: Frequently Asked Questions

- **Who does the St. Louis Hillel serve?**

Although the Alvin & Jeanette Goldfarb Hillel building is adjacent to the Washington University campus, Hillel programs reach students at all St. Louis area colleges and universities, including St. Louis University, the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Fontbonne University, Webster University, Maryville University, and the St. Louis Community Colleges.

- **What is the Jewish community like at Washington University?**

It is estimated that one-third of the undergraduate population of Washington University is Jewish. Students involved with Jewish life on campus are often representative of the greater Washington University community – self-motivated individuals with diverse interests intent on maximizing their college experiences. St. Louis Hillel offers many opportunities to get involved, as a leader, a participant, and as a Jew. Whether you want a social action network, a religious community, Jewish culture projects, Israel programming, or simply a place to be with other Jews, there are a number of ways to get involved at many different levels of participation. Students are also encouraged to create new types of programming.

- **What kinds of programs and groups does Hillel have?**

The St. Louis Hillel is committed to enabling the more than 2,000 Jewish undergraduate and graduate students we serve to “do Jewish.” Hillel is not a building, a synagogue, or a youth group. Our programming reflects the interests of students, and consequently evolves as students' interests change.

Hillel advises the [Jewish Student Union \(JSU\)](#), a Student Union recognized group that unifies Jewish programming organizations at Washington University. JSU works to connect the Jewish community, creating a means for all Jewish student groups to communicate and to work together on programming initiatives. It is led by an executive board elected for a year-long term and a general board consisting of representatives from every Jewish student group on campus. These groups strive to create opportunities targeting the diverse interests and needs of Jewish students.

The current JSU student groups advised by Hillel are:

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|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| • Community Development Fellowship (first year mentoring) | • Jewish Progressive Action Committee | • Shabbat-in-a-Box                           |
| • Conservative Minyan Committee                           | • Keshet (LGBTQA programming)         | • Social Action Committee                    |
| • Holiday Committee                                       | • Magniv Israeli Dance Group          | • Social Committee                           |
| • Holocaust Education and Awareness Committee             | • Orthodox Minyan Committee           | • Staam (a cappella)                         |
| • Jews in Greek Life                                      | • Reform Chaverah                     | • Thresholds (Senior programming)            |
|   |                                       | • Washington University Students with Israel |

St. Louis Hillel also advises other groups which are not part of JSU. They include Aviva (Greek women's leadership initiative), [Taglit-birthright israel: Hillel](#), Black Women/Jewish Women, Gesher (a program reaching out to students at other St. Louis area universities), Shabbat Lunch, the Takkana Social Justice Fellowship and the Executive Director's Student Advisory Board.

Check out our websites!

[www.stlouishillel.org](http://www.stlouishillel.org) and [www.washujisu.com](http://www.washujisu.com)!

- **I don't consider myself to be very religious. Will I still feel comfortable participating in Jewish activities on campus if I don't attend services regularly or don't know a lot about religious practices?**

Hillel and JSU are committed to a pluralistic view of Judaism, where every Jew can celebrate Judaism in his/her own way! Both Hillel and JSU provide opportunities for social action, advocacy, political involvement, arts and cultural programming, and, of course, plenty of time for pure socialization. A majority of Jewish life on campus does not happen in the Hillel building! Observant students will find it easy for their religious needs to be met on campus (kosher food and single-sex living), If you are interested in learning more about Judaism, there are committees for the three largest denominations (Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox), holiday-based programs, and discussions on current Jewish topics. The Hillel rabbi and staff are great resources!

- **This is my first time away from home for the High Holy Days. What are my options?**

Each holiday will be a great experience for you as Hillel and JSU provide meals, services, and the opportunity to celebrate with an active community. Student-led Reform and Conservative services are held on campus, and area congregations open their doors to members of the Orthodox community. More than 1,000 students attend High Holy Day services & meals.

- **What happens on Shabbat?**

Friday night at Hillel is a moving experience for many students. You can end your busy week with a relaxing evening with friends. Students can choose from three student-led services (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform), followed by a festive communal dinner. Services start at about 5:45 p.m., and dinner at around 6:45 p.m. Dinner is catered by Bon Appetit Dining Services and reservations are due by Wednesday at 12:00 noon each week. Dinner costs more if you reserve after the deadline or walk in. Kosher meal plan students do not need to make reservations. Shabbat dinner fees are payable in cash, check, or points. You can make reservations by calling 314-935-7098 or at [http://dining.wustl.edu/mealplans\\_kosher.shtml](http://dining.wustl.edu/mealplans_kosher.shtml). *Reservations cannot be made at Hillel.*

- **Is there a Kosher meal plan?**

Yes! Kosher food is prepared by Bon Appetit, the University's food service provider, under the rabbinic supervision of the Vaad Haeir of St. Louis. There is a hot kosher meal served in Center Court, the residence halls' dining area, every evening. In addition, kosher food is available all day in nearly every eatery on Washington University's campus! The Washington University meal plan system works on a declining balance of points. Everything you buy at any campus eatery will cost a certain number of points. Kosher food works on the exact same system! Check out [www.diningservices.wustl.edu](http://www.diningservices.wustl.edu) for more information.

- **What is the Jewish community like in St. Louis?**

In addition to housing the Cardinals, Rams, Blues, Anheuser-Busch, and the Arch, St. Louis is home to more than 60,000 Jews. Many students find jobs at local synagogues teaching religious school, advising youth groups and working at summer camps. There are also opportunities to gain professional experience through mentoring and internships with the organized Jewish community. St. Louis has kosher butchers, bookstores, and restaurants -- all at your convenience. Check out [www.jewishinstlouis.org](http://www.jewishinstlouis.org) for more information.

- **How can I arrange to stay with a Jewish student when I visit?**

There are many Jewish students willing to host prospective students. Simply contact St. Louis Hillel at (314)-935-9040 or [hillel@stlouishillel.org](mailto:hillel@stlouishillel.org) and we will do our best to match you up with someone who has some of the same interests, enjoys similar activities, or who closely matches your level of observance.

- **How do I get to Hillel?**

The St. Louis Hillel is located at 6300 Forsyth Boulevard. From the Washington University South 40 (area of campus where the residence halls are located), go to the underpass, and make a right before you actually go under Forsyth. Go up the stairs, and walk down Forsyth until you see St. Louis Hillel on the right. (It will be across from the architecture school, which is past Brookings). [Campus Map](#)

If we can be of any additional assistance, please contact us at 314-935-9040 or [hillel@stlouishillel.org](mailto:hillel@stlouishillel.org).