



USY on Wheels East - Program Manual

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Welcome aboard USY on Wheels East!

Over the course of this trip participants will see amazing sights, make new friendships, engage in identity-shaping fun experiences, and take part in Jewish celebrations and traditions, all the while having the summer of their lives.

However; before embarking on the road to an *incredible* summer, we want to make sure you are prepared for the journey!

Contained in this guide you'll find information about what to expect when traveling with USY, from day-to-day living to Jewish living to important policies. Participants' understanding and acceptance of these policies is crucial to ensuring a successful summer and positive experience for everyone.

USY on Wheels is not just another teen tour of North America. It is a total immersive Jewish experience; an opportunity to live Jewishly with new friends from across North America.

The program is a chance to learn and to grow as Jews, whether that is through:

- Enjoying kosher cuisine across America
- *Praying* as the sun rises over a national park
- Living as a Jewish community traveling across North America
- Or engaging in *tikun olam* (repairing the world) by volunteering at a soup kitchen in a new state

Furthermore, each “Wheelnik” has a special responsibility as a participant in the program. They are not only representing themselves, but also USY and its parent organization USCJ, and are, therefore, expected to behave, speak, and act accordingly.

USY on Wheels is sponsored by USY/USCJ, and the Teen Engagement Committee, which underwrites each participant by subsidizing this program.

TRAVEL

USY On Wheels East begins at the Doubletree Hotel in Somerset, New Jersey. It is your responsibility to have your child meet the group at the beginning location. For those flying into New Jersey, a transportation form has been added to your child's regpacks account. Please make sure that all participant travel information is inputted into that form so we are aware of your child's arrival. Staff will meet participants at baggage claim upon arrival at Newark Airport. If your child arrives at another airport in the tri-state area, it is your responsibility to get them to Newark to meet the group. Our staff cannot meet participants at airports other than Newark Airport. If they arrive by train, they should arrive at the Newark Airport stop to meet the group.

Those driving should meet the group at the hotel, arrival information will be provided in early June. At the conclusion of the program, they will return to the airport. The staff will be sure that they get through security and will be in touch with them until their flight has departed.

Our bus will also have several pick up locations for those who drove to NJ. That information will be sent the week before the trip concludes.

It is important that participants advise us *in writing* of any special circumstances, such as a family event, which require they leave after or return by a specific date, etc.

GROUP SIZE & STAFF

Each trip or group is made up of approximately 20-45 teenagers and three to five staff members.

The carefully selected USY staff members are mature, responsible, and caring individuals. They are chosen based upon their commitment to, and experience working with, Jewish youth. Staff members include youth workers, rabbinical students, teachers, and others who devote their lives and talents to Jewish values and youth. A complete background check with reference checks as well as interviews are part of our screening process. Our staff is trained in basic first aid, CPR and mental health first aid.

Staff is responsible for the overall functioning of the trip as well as creating an atmosphere in which participants can grow and thrive. The low staff to participant ratio enables USY to supervise activities closely, hold small discussion groups, and ensure the highest level of personal attention and care for each participant.

During the summer, there is also dedicated staff based in the New York office that are committed to ensuring participants' safety and answering parent questions/concerns.

DAILY LIVING

A "typical" day on USY on Wheels starts with a wake-up call approximately between 6:00-7:00 A.M. Teens begin the day with *Shacharit* (morning) services and breakfast. Loading the bus is then handled by a committee of Wheelniks who see that this is done quickly and efficiently and that everyone's luggage is on board.

However, it is the *individual's* responsibility to make sure that all personal belongings have been put on the bus and taken from the hotel.

Daily bus trips vary in length. The bathroom on the bus is used for storage and will not be permitted for use as a restroom. Rest stops are scheduled throughout the day.

Longer rides are a great time to relax by listening to music, reading, journaling or bonding with fellow Wheelniks!

Each evening's curfew will be established by the group leader. Since Wheelniks will be keeping a very hectic pace during the summer, they will frequently have early morning quiet hours on the bus to catch up on additional sleep. It is extremely important that all participants observe the curfew and quiet hours in order to achieve the most from their experience.

Every Wheelnik serves on various *va'adot* (committees) throughout the summer. These committees are in charge of activities including loading the bus, meal preparation, *tefillot*, and Shabbat. *Va'adot* are often a Wheelnik's favorite part of the summer, as it is special to have ownership over the program in this way.

VISITORS POLICY

Wheelniks are generally not permitted to leave the group. If they wish to see relatives around the country, they may invite them to visit the hotel or synagogue where the group is staying or the site the group is visiting.

This can occur **only with prior written parental permission, and permission of the staff at a time designated by them. Wheelniks are NOT permitted to arrange visitation on their own.**

No visits are permitted on *Shabbat*.

When visiting relatives or friends, it is expected that all USY on Wheels policies such as *kashrut* will be observed. Please note that at no time will anyone be permitted to stay overnight at a friend or relatives' home.

To obtain permission for visits during the summer, please make sure a parent has filled out the **Visitation Form in Regpack**. A parent or guardian must sign the form. No visitation will be allowed without this written permission.

If an opportunity for visitation should arise over the summer, parents should submit their approval to the New York office in writing (e-mail summer@usy.org).

FREE TIME

There are various occasions for free time while sightseeing during the summer. Free time must be spent in **groups of three or more Wheelniks**. *All Wheelniks have the cell-phone number of the Group Leader, so if they are not in the same immediate area and need assistance, they can easily get in contact with their staff.*

There are other instances on Wheels, however, in which Wheelniks will spend time in pre-arranged group activities and programming.

[SEE THE SAMPLE ITINERARY HERE](#)

CONTACTING WHEELNIKS

Wheelniks really look forward to receiving their friends' and parents' letters throughout the summer. Parents, please remember to write frequently to your child and keep in mind that the tone of your letter can directly affect your Wheelniks enjoyment of the trip.

You may send mail to any of the accommodation locations included in your child's itinerary.

When sending a package to your Wheelnik, we recommend it be sent to a "*Shabbat* Hotel" (a location where the bus will be spending *Shabbat*). If you will be sending something important in a package, such as medicine, please make sure to inform our office.

Senders are encouraged to track their package's progress to make sure that it arrives at its destination, and let the recipient know when and where it will be arriving.

Please make sure that when sending a package or letter, when writing the address, you write "HOLD FOR USY ON WHEELS" and whatever bus your child is on. It would also be helpful to write the date in which your child will be arriving at the hotel.

Parents, if your child has a birthday and you would like to send them a surprise package, please let our office know in advance. We do celebrate birthdays on our trip with special treats.

When the group arrives at a hotel the group leader will check the front desk for any mail or packages.

We have found that receiving mail at National Parks is not always reliable, and therefore, do not recommend it.

Participants are strongly encouraged to bring stamps with them for postcards. It is not always convenient to get to the post office while on the road.

If there is ever a need to share bad news with a Wheelnik, please call the USY office first so that the Director and group staff are prepared and can help facilitate the discussion.

ACCOMMODATIONS

HOTELS

There are many types of accommodations utilized by USY on Wheels. They commonly include hotel and motel chains such as Hilton, Holiday Inn, Hyatt, Sheraton and Marriott as well as college dorms. All accommodations are evaluated by a staff member or representative of the program to determine their suitability for use by our program.

Rooms usually contain two double beds for three or four Wheelniks. USY does not provide cots in the rooms and expects that the Wheelniks rooming together will share the double beds.

Rooming will be done on a rotational basis. At each new hotel, participants will have new roommates. This will give participants the opportunity to get to know all their fellow Wheelniks. USY strives to create a welcoming community for all of its participants. **There is no need to bring a sleeping bag or linens.**

There will be certain areas of the hotel that will be set aside for everyone's use to sit or talk with one another. **Please note: you must remain in the room to which you were assigned.**

HOME HOSPITALITY

At this point, we have suspended home hospitality stays. However, we will be visiting congregations during our journey for meals and meeting spaces.

ACCOUNTABILITY

HOTELS

When staying in a hotel, participants will not be expected to make their own bed. However; they will be expected to keep the room neat so that the hotel staff can easily tidy up.

Each Wheelnik and their parent or guardian is responsible for reimbursing hotels for damage done by them during their stay.

We ask participants to remember that they are staying in a "public" place. When you keep your belongings neat, things are less likely to get lost or disappear.

JEWISH LIFE

TEFILLAH (PRAYER)

USY on Wheels takes a fun and creative approach to prayer, which is a daily part of the Wheels experience. Imagine the beauty of a sunrise *Shacharit* service at the Grand Canyon, *Havdalah* at the beach, or expressing prayer through the arts.

USY and its summer programs encourage a creative approaches toward *tefillah* in order to actively engage teens and strengthen their Jewish identities. For many participants, this will be the first opportunity to pray on a regular basis.

We work to foster an environment where participants and staff can come together to create a supportive atmosphere in which everyone can feel comfortable praying. This is a unique experience only offered by USY and we hope participants will take advantage in order to learn and grow.

All participants in the USY on Wheels program engage in daily prayer, including *Shacharit* (morning service), *Mincha* (afternoon service) and/or *Maariv* (evening service). On *Shabbat*, we have additional services starting Friday evening with a lively *Kabbalat Shabbat* and concluding on Saturday evening with a meaningful *Havdalah* ceremony.

Every meal begins with *HaMotzi* and ends with *Birkat Hamazon* (Grace after Meals). By the end of the summer, all Wheelniks will have an understanding of and hopefully, deeper appreciation for these prayers.

SHABBAT

Shabbat on Wheels is a truly memorable experience. No matter how much familiarity teens have with traditional Shabbatot, USY On Wheels gives them a special opportunity to enjoy and to participate in this meaningful experience alongside a community of peers. All week long participants will be traveling, visiting communities, and sightseeing.

On Shabbat, the bus stops and they will have the opportunity to slow down and relax with friends. We strive to achieve true Menucha (rest and peace of mind) and learn from one another.

In order to create the most effective Shabbat atmosphere, both as a group and as individuals, we refrain from: traveling, writing, handling money, listening to music (playing instruments), using phones in public spaces.

Religious Garb

USY on Wheels is a time when we come together to practice Judaism as a community, sharing common traditions and trying new experiences.

Each participant is expected and encouraged to bring and use a head covering at appropriate times, and *tallit* and *tefillin* at *Shacharit* (morning) services. Only head coverings are expected

for participants not yet of *B'nai Mitzvah* age.

We recognize that you may not own these items. Please be in touch with your synagogue rabbi or chapter youth director to borrow *tallit* and *tefillin*. We will strive to have extras available as well.

There will be USYers and staff available to help those who need any guidance in putting on these ritual items.

***Siddur* (Prayer Book)**

All Wheelniks will receive a *Siddur* at orientation as part of their 'Wheels kit.' This will be sufficient for the summer and there is no need to bring another.

MEALS/KASHRUT

We carry many supplies on our bus and purchase supplies throughout the trip. Breakfast is usually cold cereal, yogurt and fruit. When included in our stay, we will eat at the hotel breakfast buffet in accordance with our kashrut guidelines. We pack our own lunches and eat them as we travel during the day. Dinners are usually served at the hotel or synagogue and can come from local caterers or be shipped to us.

From time to time, groups will have meals in restaurants. Vegetarians and others with special dietary needs will be accommodated; however, we must be notified of participants' specific dietary needs prior to the summer.

One of the best learning experiences on Wheels is observing *Kashrut* (Jewish Dietary Law-- see below for specifics).

Observance of *Kashrut* as a group is in accordance with the tenets set by the Committee on Law and Standards of the Conservative Movement and applies to all meals served each day.

USY on Wheels has special food arrangements with various kosher caterers across North America. When preparing our own communal dinners or doing individual grocery shopping, Wheelniks will learn how to check product's ingredients to make sure that what they are eating is kosher.

***KASHRUT* IS OBSERVED AT ALL TIMES BY ALL WHEELS PARTICIPANTS AND STAFF.**

Kashrut is followed even when participants are away from the group (ordering or eating food on their own).

In accordance with dietary laws, after eating meat, participants need to wait a minimum of three hours before they can eat a dairy product (i.e.- ice cream, candy). If participants choose to wait a longer period of time, their wishes will be respected.

For those unfamiliar with these laws, there will be many opportunities to learn about *Kashrut* over the course of the summer.

In an effort to further clarify our policies, the *Kashrut* policy of the program is as follows:

1. The most desirable option of food service and preparation is in a supervised kosher kitchen using *hekshered* (rabbinical certified) food product. When possible use a kosher caterer or provide our own supervision or a vegan restaurant.
2. Products not needing kosher certification are fruits and vegetables, hard cheeses, and certified vegan food
3. 'K' is accepted except for circumstances in which a particular product is known to be suspect
4. The next most desirable option is the purchase of kosher food in advance and shipping it to the program location
5. Hot foods should be double wrapped in foil to be heated in non-*hekshered* ovens
6. When traveling, during free time, or when other options are not available, cold food is preferred and hot fish or dairy are permitted
7. When in a home hospitality situation, USY on Wheels will defer to the *Kashrut* policy of the host congregations set by the congregational rabbi as *Mara D'atra* of the congregation. All host congregations are informed in advance of the USY on Wheels *Kashrut* policy

When on their own, USY on Wheels participants may only eat food which conforms to the above guidelines.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Similar to USY's approach to *tefillah*, we also try to make learning a fun and interactive process for teens.

Educational experiences during the summer will include *sichot* (discussion groups centered around contemporary issues of concern to teens), presentations, or *Divrei Torah* (explanations of particular themes in the Torah or a prayer).

Participants will be encouraged to seek an understanding of Jewish traditions and values and connect them with how they relate to our everyday lives. We strongly urge participants who are interested in continuing these discussions to ask staff members to sit and to talk, whether individually or in a group.

In the past many USY on Wheels participants have also learned how to speak Hebrew while traveling. If a Wheelnik would like to learn basic Hebrew or spoken language skills, our staff is always willing and available to work with them.

USY on Wheels participants' learning is largely experiential. In observing *Kashrut*, engaging in daily prayers, and celebrating *Shabbat*, Wheelniks will gain a unique understanding of and appreciation for Jewish life, something that cannot be found by reading a book or interpreting a text.

USY on Wheels is a wonderful opportunity to increase educational and cultural exposure to Judaism.

SOCIAL ACTION AND TZEDAKAH PROGRAMMING

While traveling across the country, participants will do more than just sightseeing. Each bus will get several opportunities throughout the summer to take part in social action projects; examples include serving meals at soup kitchens and singing at retirement homes.

It is important that our trips not only visit, but also give back to the communities in which they travel.

In addition to social action projects, each Wheels bus raises hundreds of dollars of *Tikun Olam*, USY's International *Tzedakah* fund. Over one hundred Jewish charities around the world benefit annually from the money raised by USYers.

FINANCES

INDIVIDUAL EXPENSES

Each Wheelnik should bring money to cover personal expenses. The exact amount participants bring should be discussed with their parents, figuring that during the summer they will need money for snacks, souvenirs, and any additional activities.

Past participants recommend \$500 as an ample amount of spending money. USY recommends that participants carry money in the form of a reloadable debit card (in case the Wheelnik requires additional funds).

Past participants have also used a Visa or American Express check card. Most banks and AAA have Visa/debit cards available for purchase. All money brought and the budgeting of that money is the participant's own responsibility throughout the summer.

Lost cash cannot be recovered.

COLLECTIVE TREASURY (Group *Kuppah*)

There are a number of events that occur during the summer such as birthdays, which the group will want to celebrate with a special activity.

In order to do this, the group will establish a *kuppah* (treasury). Each Wheelnik will contribute **\$100 per person**. These special events as well as the bus driver tip, which will be given to the bus driver at the closing banquet, laundry, birthdays and other celebrations.

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GRATUITIES

Aside from the bus driver's tip (as mentioned above), **we do not allow staff members to accept gratuities**. The staff members receive a salary for their summer work and we request that parents not present them with monetary tips.

In lieu of gratuities, we suggest that you make a donation to the USY Summer Experience Scholarship Fund in honor of your child's staff member. You will receive a mailing during the summer that will explain this donation procedure.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Our highest priority of the summer is to keep each and every participant safe and healthy. Failure to disclose medical information will prevent USY from giving each Wheelnik the medical coverage and attention they deserve.

This includes, but is not limited to allergies, psychiatric care, and past illnesses.

The Medical Form is to be filled out completely and signed by a parent/guardian and doctor. No individual whose physician felt that he/she could adapt to the program has been turned away from participating on USY on Wheels.

In order for the USY on Wheels staff to be able to deal with medical problems, they must be made aware of them. Failure to report existing or developing conditions may jeopardize participation on USY on Wheels.

The medical form must be submitted ASAP if you have not done so already.

MEDICATIONS

All prescription medications are held by a staff member for the duration of the trip. They must be clearly indicated on the medical form or in writing if prescribed after submission. Wheelniks

may not hold their own prescription medications (with the exception of one epi-pen and an emergency inhaler). Our staff will hold the second epi-pen. Our staff will oversee the taking of the medication and hold all as needed medications as well as over the counter medications.

While we prefer that the medication be pre-packaged, it can come in the original container. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT PILLS THAT ARE IN A GENERIC MEDICINE DISPENSER WITHOUT THE ORIGINAL PRESCRIPTION ON IT. If your child takes growth hormones or other injectables, please be in touch with our office immediately to discuss transporting them safely.

In order for our staff to be properly briefed and prepared, it is absolutely necessary that we be informed of any:

- Special medical, health conditions
- Dietary restrictions (including vegetarianism and lactose and/or gluten intolerance)
- Personal conditions

If a medical situation changes between the time we receive the initial information and the time of the bus' departure, we should be notified **immediately**.

Only with honest, up-to-date information can we be responsible for participants' health and well-being.

IF ANY PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ILLNESS OCCURS ON THE TRIP AND IT IS FOUND THAT THERE IS A PAST HISTORY OF THIS ILLNESS WHICH WAS NOT REPORTED, THE PARTICIPANT MAY BE SENT HOME AT THE EXPENSE OF THEIR PARENTS.

If Wheelnicks wear **glasses** or **contact lenses**, we ask that they bring an extra pair **plus** a written copy of their prescription.

USY SUMMER EXPERIENCE VACCINATION POLICY

All participants attending a USY Summer Experience must be up to date on the following vaccines:

1. DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) with one dose after age 4
2. Polio (oral or inactivated – with booster dose after age 4)
3. Tetanus Booster -Td or Tdap (Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis) within the past 5-10 years (5 years preferred)
4. MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) – 2 doses after age 1
5. HBV (Hepatitis B)

6. Chicken Pox (in absence of disease history) – 2 doses - 1 after age 4
7. Menactra (meningococcal meningitis)
8. Hepatitis A
9. COVID 19 vaccination

Medical exemptions to any of our policies will be handled on an individualized basis.

If a Wheelnik contracts mononucleosis within 60 days of the day of departure, they must obtain written authorization from their physician in order to participate in the program.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION POLICY

USY on Wheels will utilize local doctors and hospital emergency rooms to treat teens that need medical care. We will carry a full first aid kit and over the counter medicine on the bus, but whenever the child is sick, staff will seek professional care.

If a participant is taken to the doctor for any reason, their parents will be called.

We will attempt to call parents before their child is seen by a doctor, but please realize that this is not always possible. However; at no time, unless in a dire emergency, will there be any major treatment without prior parental knowledge and approval.

If a prescription is needed, the participants will pay for a prescription on site. In addition, if special rest or conditions are necessary, we will do our best to accommodate.

If a situation arises in which together the Director and the parent decide that the child would be better off at home, we will arrange that as well. Flight arrangements are at the family's expense.

If there are any medical emergencies during the summer, we will do our best to be in touch with the parents immediately. If we are unable to do so, we will be in touch with parents as soon as possible after the proper treatment was given.

Please be sure to provide us with all the appropriate information with regard to participant's health insurance.

INSURANCE

Every Wheelnik **must** be insured for accidents and sickness for the duration of the program and we must have the name and address of their insurance company. Please make sure that the proper information is given in Regpack.

Also, please list the insurance policy numbers of your coverage as well as what it includes. **Please make sure the front and back of your insurance card has been uploaded to Regpack.**

All medical expenses incurred during the summer will be the responsibility of the Wheelnik and their parent/guardian.

PACKING INFORMATION

When packing clothing, participants should take into account both the informality of the program and the warm climate of the United States during the summer months.

We encourage participants to pack **sport clothes that are lightweight and easily laundered**. Ironing is difficult, so please bring drip-dry, wash-and-wear, no-iron permanent press-type clothing. Jeans are desirable for certain places. Bring an ample supply of underclothes.

Since the sun is strong, all participants **must** bring a good pair of sunglasses, a hat and a water bottle.

While traveling, Wheelniks will probably find it most comfortable to wear jeans or sweatpants and a sweatshirt on the air-conditioned bus.

We recommend participants do not bring their very best clothes as the circumstances of travel are not always ideal. Clothes that are casual and wash-and-wear are most useful.

While we want Wheelniks to dress neatly and cleanly at all times, please bear in mind that simplicity and modesty should be important guidelines in choosing clothes to bring.

DRESS CODE

Kavod (dignity or respect) should be embodied in participants' attire.

- Clothing on which profanity or inappropriate language, pictures, or symbols are written, printed, or depicted is prohibited
- Clothing cannot be made of see-through material and undergarments should not be visible
- Clothing, including bathing suits, should be of an appropriate length such that a person's private areas are adequately covered.

Shabbat Dress Attire

To celebrate and mark the important distinction between *Shabbat* and the weekday, *Shabbat* dress attire is required. The following attire is acceptable for *Shabbat*:

- Slacks, khakis, dresses or skirts
- Blouses, collared shirts or sweaters with sleeves
- Dress shoes or sandals
- Religious head covering

EVERY WHEELNIK MUST REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CARRYING THEIR OWN SUITCASE. WE ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO PACK LIGHT FOR EASY MOBILITY AND IN ORDER TO HAVE ROOM FOR SOUVENIRS PICKED UP IN THEIR TRAVELS.

LUGGAGE

Each participant is limited to **one suitcase no larger than 30" in height. The total dimensional sum of the suitcase must not exceed 56". Absolutely no expandable suitcases or duffel bags are allowed on the bus.**

Each bus carries a large supply of food and utensils and therefore, we have a limited amount of space. For this reason, if your suitcase is larger than the maximum size, you will be required at orientation to purchase a suitcase that follows the specific dimension requirements.

A list of stores near the orientation location will be provided should it be needed.

Please make sure your suitcase measures no taller than 30" (56"total in height+width+length). No duffel bags are permitted.

The suitcase should be lightweight and sturdy since it will have to take a lot of wear and tear over the course of the summer. Suitcases with wheels are permissible and highly recommended.

If the suitcase has an expandable feature, it must fit the **56"** guidelines. If expanding the suitcase will cause it to exceed **56"**, participants may use it but not expand it in any way.

Everyone will receive an ample-size USY on Wheels duffel bag at orientation to hold their everyday items on the bus including a camera, sweatshirt, religious items, and books. You may also bring a small backpack for daily use.

Everyone is responsible for carrying their own luggage. Please attach an identification tag to the inside and outside of the luggage.

If flying to the orientation site, please check with the airline regarding specific weight restrictions and additional luggage fees, as USY is not responsible for these costs.

CLOTHING LIST

We recommend bringing 14 days' worth of clothing.

CLOTHING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 14 sets of undergarments
- 1 sweater/ sweatshirt (you can purchase a Wheels sweatshirt)
- 3 skirts or dresses of appropriate length or dress pants (or khakis)
(NO low cut, backless or off the shoulder dresses)
- 12-14 short sleeve shirts
- Blouses, collared shirts or sweaters with sleeves for Shabbat
- 6 pairs of shorts
- 2 pairs of pajamas
- 2 pairs of long pants (such as jeans)
- 1 pair sweatpants (participants can purchase Wheels sweatpants)
- 2 bathing suits
- 1 pair comfortable sneakers
- 1 pair of dress shoes
- 2 pair sandals/flip flops
- 14 pairs of socks

The following miscellaneous items are recommended for all participants:

- Stamps (postcard stamps especially)
- *Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- *Deodorant, Shampoo/ Conditioner
- *Suntan lotion (spray sunscreen recommended)
- Sunglasses
- Hairbrush and comb
- Mouthwash
- *Water bottle/ canteen
- Insect Repellant
- Notebook for journal writing
- Towel
- Blanket and/or pillow for the bus

**Items are mandatory*

SUNGLASSES, HATS, AND A WATER BOTTLE ARE A MUST!

Please try to **LABEL** anything that may be important

LAUNDRY

There will be two occasions when the group will travel to a laundromat to do laundry. In between laundromat visits, Wheelniks can hand wash and dry clothing items overnight in their hotel rooms. This is included in your kupah. As a reminder, participants will do their own laundry at these laundromats. We recommend bringing clothing for approximately 14 days.

Opportunities for dry cleaning will **not** be available.

CAMERAS

While we realize most participants use their phones as a camera, some Wheelniks come with separate cameras.

To ensure Wheelniks can take all the pictures they want, we recommend bringing memory cards with space for 600-1000 pictures, a battery charger, and/or extra camera batteries.

To protect cameras, keep them in a case and with the Wheelnik's name on it. The summer is full of memorable experiences and participants will treasure their pictures.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITEMS

We accept responsibility only for those items of value held by the staff—i.e.-passports. For any trip that requires passports and/or birth certificates, the staff will collect and hold on to those items.

Please understand that we do not have facilities to store large items such as cameras or video equipment, and cannot take responsibility for those items.

Participants must take responsibility for their personal belongings used on daily basis. **If you are afraid of losing or breaking it then please think twice before packing it.**

We strongly advise against bringing laptop computers and other expensive electronic equipment.

We suggest that parents and/or guardians contact the company that handles their homeowners insurance to see if they have coverage for items lost while traveling. If not, we recommend you consider supplementary coverage through travel agencies or insurance companies.

PASSPORT

Passports are not needed for USY on Wheels East. Please send your child with a form of id (school id, etc.) should it be needed.

CELL PHONE POLICY

The trip is very busy, packed with sightseeing opportunities to learn, grow, and bond with new friends. Time spent on cellular phones and other mobile devices takes away from this experience.

Cell phones are permitted during the summer, but are only allowed to be used during free time and/or in participants' rooms at night. Cell phones may be used as cameras or to play music.

They are not permitted to be used for internet or calling purposes on the bus or during any type of programming. This includes phone calls, texting and Internet use.

Though we encourage communication throughout the summer, we ask parents to please work with their child to limit the number of times they will call home.

USY on Wheels is not responsible for lost cell phones or chargers.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

We know that the Internet, when used wisely, provides many positive ways to stay in touch with friends and family and can be a constructive outlet for self-expression.

We remind all our participants that once they identify themselves as a member of the USCJ/USY community in a social networking profile, website, group page or blog, or use the USCJ/USY name or logo, everything and anything that you post can be viewed as a reflection of USCJ/USY.

Therefore, we require participants to observe the social media policy guidelines below. We've established these guidelines to ensure that USCJ/USY remains an emotionally and physically safe environment for all staff, participants, and their families.

USY participants must be respectful of USCJ/USY and its programs, participants, and employees in all communications (e-mails, messages, social media profiles, blogs or other Internet sites). This means that participants will never:

- Share or post e-mails, blogs, images or any content that is cruel, demeaning, disrespectful, or intentionally hurtful to a member of the USY/USCJ community
- Post comments that are derogatory with regard to any individual's race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or any other group protected under applicable federal, state or local law
- Engage in harassment or intimidation or post content that presents USY/USCJ programs, their participants or staff negatively
- Share, send, or post material of a sexual nature or that which includes nudity, violence, drug or alcohol use, illegal actions, delinquent behavior, destruction of property, harassment or intimidation, or any activity against the program rules
- Post photographs that compromise anyone's privacy or that are used to demean, humiliate or otherwise embarrass anyone

BEHAVIOR POLICIES

In connection with USY programs, including travel to and from this program:

1. There is to be no smoking or vaping. There is to be no possession of cigarettes, e-cigarettes or any associated liquid or paraphernalia
2. There is to be no possession or use of any narcotics, marijuana, illegal drugs or prescription drugs not prescribed for the user, or matches, firecrackers (or similar devices), knives, sharp or dangerous objects
3. There will be no possession or consumption of any alcoholic beverages
4. There will be no shoplifting or theft of any kind
5. If a USYer is caught in possession of/or found to have used alcohol or illegal drugs or is caught shoplifting and/or involved in theft of any kind, they will immediately be sent home at their parents' expense. Furthermore USY International Policy states, "If a USYer is apprehended for an infraction of the International Youth Commission's policy regarding drug and alcohol abuse or any other criminal offense (including, but not limited to, shoplifting) punishment for that offense will include suspension from USY events (including, but not limited to, the International USY Convention and USY Summer Programs) for one year following the infraction.
6. At no time are males permitted in sleeping rooms or on floors occupied by females and at no time are females permitted in sleeping rooms or on floors occupied by males
7. Each participant is expected to maintain proper decorum and attitude during the entire program. Disruptive behavior (including, but not limited to, inappropriate sexual behavior) will not be tolerated. Participant's parents will be responsible to pay for any damage their child may cause

8. No participant may leave the USY event except at such times as those specified by the schedule (if such times are specified) or with the express permission of the Group Leader. All participants must be at all scheduled programs and during specified free time, remain within boundaries set forth by the Group Leader. At curfew, all participants must return to their assigned room/host home and remain there until the program resumes the next day
9. Each participant is expected to conduct him/herself appropriately as a Conservative Jew (including through observance of *Shabbat* and *Kashrut*), in accordance with the applicable standards of the Law and Standards Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly and/or the local Rabbinic Authority
10. Participant is expected to adhere to the dress code as stipulated by the International Youth Commission. Specifically, bare midriff styles, halter-tops or see-through blouses are prohibited. Clothing on which any profanity or inappropriate language, pictures or symbols are written, printed or depicted is not permitted. No visible underwear is permitted for both males and females. During *Tefillah*, inappropriately short skirts or shorts, or tight garments, are not permitted
11. The Director of Teen Travel and Programs or their designee reserves the right to search the room and belongings of any attendee if he has reasonable grounds to believe that such a search is necessary to secure the health, safety and/or welfare of the program and or its participants. USY also reserves the right to enforce other rules relating to the integrity of the program and/or the safety, health or welfare of its participants
12. USCJ and USY have a ZERO tolerance policy regarding any activity that can be construed as bullying, hazing or harassment. This includes Cyberbullying that is bullying that is using the internet, a mobile phone or other technology (e.g. a camera) to engage in any of the following inappropriate misconduct: Posting nasty or threatening comments on someone's social networking profile; sending anonymous texts or picture messages to intimidate or embarrass; hacking existing website accounts or create fake profiles of people to intimidate or embarrass; scaring or embarrassing others; or spreading rumors or try to isolate others using technology. The above list is not inclusive. Any individual involved in these or similar acts will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal from our programs.
13. USY reserves the right to enforce other rules relating to the integrity of the USY on Wheels program and/or the health, safety or welfare of its participants

SAFETY AND SECURITY

We are committed to ensuring that USY is a safe physical, spiritual and emotional space for teens. Here are some of the ways in which we do that:

- **USCJ has a zero-tolerance policy toward any inappropriate behavior, including any and all actual or alleged hazing, bullying, harassment or sexual abuse occurrences**
- **There is a Youth Protection Officer (YPO) at every regional and international USY event whose focus is to promote a culture of awareness concerning USCJ's zero-tolerance policies**
- **Each participant is given the YPO's phone number at program orientation**
- **All USY staff and volunteers must sign a statement of conduct for working with youth that reads, "USCJ/USY is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants. It is the duty of the staff and volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of the participants and to prevent physical, sexual or emotional abuse of the participants with whom they come into contact."**
- **All USY staff and volunteers must adhere to behavioral guidelines regarding relationships between staff and USYers; guidelines include the below:**
 - **Excepting emergencies and brief room checks at curfew, no staff member should be in any participant's room unless another adviser is also present**
 - **One-on-one contact between staff members and USYers is not permitted in private. A staff member should never be in a room with any USYer with the door closed. In situations that require personal conferences or discussions, these should be conducted in a separate section of a public area (i.e. the hotel lobby away from the rest of the group)**
- **All USY staff receive training and agree to abide by all USCJ policies prior to employment; failure to abide by any policy may result in immediate dismissal and termination of employment agreement**
- **All USY staff and volunteers must clear a National Sex Offender Registry background check**
- **All USY staff and volunteers, as well as program participants, MUST report any incident of inappropriate behavior to the event YPO**

USY is committed to being a safe physical, spiritual and emotional space for teens. Please contact our Mauria Atzil Director of Child and Youth Protection at atzil@uscj.org to report any inappropriate behavior.

PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE

All participants give USCJ/USY permission to use any photographic, video or audio representations of minors that may be taken during the scheduled activities to be used in print, online, or in other media produced by USCJ/USY for publicity, promotional, or any other purposes without further permission.

EARLY LEAVE/DISMISSAL POLICY

In the event that a USYer must leave the program before its conclusion, the following guidelines will apply:

- A. If the decision for the USYer to leave early is made by the parents/guardian or the USYer, there is no refund, and all related expenses (such as return travel arrangements) are the responsibility of the parents
- B. If the USYer is dismissed from the program because of behavior problems or actions that are deemed to be detrimental to themselves or the group, there is no refund and all related expenses are the responsibility of the parents
- C. If the USYer must leave for medical reasons, USY will reimburse parents 60% of the non-transportation costs of the remainder of the trip on a daily pro-rated basis, knowing that USY is not able to cancel arrangements that have been made

MEMBERSHIP

USY membership is a prerequisite for any USY Summer Experience. Anyone who is not a member of USY should email membership@usy.org for assistance.

CONCLUSION

We are excited and looking forward to a happy and healthy summer full of life changing experiences, new friendships, and personal growth!

If you have any further questions or concerns after reading this guide please contact Michelle Rich, Director of Teen Travel and Programs at 212-533-7800 x136 or rich@uscj.org.