



## Frequently Asked Questions - 2026

### **Q: What is BJE's March of the Living and who participates in this program?**

BJE's March of the Living is a powerful two-week experiential education program that brings L.A. high school juniors and seniors to Poland and Israel as part of the International March of the Living – the largest Jewish educational program for teens in the world. The International March brings thousands of Jewish teens and adults from all over the world to Poland for the week surrounding Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) and then to Israel for the week surrounding Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day). The trip is preceded and followed by BJE educational and orientation workshops led by senior educators and subject experts.

### **Q: What is the itinerary for the program?**

In addition to joining the international March from Auschwitz and Birkenau on Holocaust Remembrance Day, the week in Poland also typically includes touring and visiting museums and historic sites in Warsaw, Krakow, and Lublin, as well as Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Majdanek camps, while interacting with Holocaust survivors and community leaders. The time in Israel, commemorating Yom HaZikaron (Israel Memorial Day) and celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day), includes visits to places of historical and contemporary significance. The itineraries may vary from year to year.

### **Q: What is the program fee and what kind of financial aid and grants are available?**

The fee for this unique program, including round-trip air travel from Los Angeles, room and board, tuition, ground transportation, security and varied social and cultural programs will be confirmed in early Fall 2025. The only expense not covered in the program fee is travel insurance, which is required for the participants and staff. For reference, last year's trip to Poland and Israel was \$8,650, including an application fee.

BJE's March of the Living experience is available to all Jewish teens, regardless of their family's financial status. There is substantial financial aid available, based on financial need, as well as subsidies available to all participants. Please mark the appropriate box indicated in the on-line application if you would like to receive more information. **For payment plans please contact Abby Cutler at (323) 761-8609 or [acutler@bjela.org](mailto:acutler@bjela.org).**

### **Q: What are the dates of the trip?**

BJE's March of the Living 2026 is slated to take place from Sunday, April 12 – Friday, April 24, 2026.

### **Q: Who can participate in BJE's March of the Living Program?**

BJE's March of the Living program is open to all Jewish high-school juniors and seniors in Los Angeles. We welcome participants from all academic settings (including public, private, Jewish and secular high schools) and work to build community through pre-trip workshops and Zoom calls.

### **Q: Does BJE's March of the Living conflict with the 2026 AP exams?**

The College Board will begin AP exams on Monday, May 4, 2026, so our program will not conflict with testing this program year.

**Q: How do I apply to join BJE's 2025 March of the Living?**

If you are interested in applying for the 2026 program, please visit [www.bjela.org/MOTL](http://www.bjela.org/MOTL) and click the link to the complete the interest form. This form includes a few short answer questions and is to be completed by the teen. Once prices are finalized and the application is open, everyone who completed the interest form will be emailed instructions to complete the application in CampMinder, our registration portal. **Note:** Even if the family already has a CampMinder log-in from a previous program, the teen still needs to fill out a registration form.

Additionally, a personal interview and a letter of recommendation are required prior to acceptance. Participants **are required** to attend all pre-trip programming. **Acceptance to BJE March of the Living, upon completion of these requirements, is at the discretion of the Program Leaders.**

Each delegation's forms and procedures are specific – please do not register or apply through any other delegation's website or through the March of the Living International office website, otherwise participants risk their applications being lost or misplaced.

**Q: How do I get excused from my school classes to participate?**

Contact Abby Cutler at [acutler@bjela.org](mailto:acutler@bjela.org) for a letter that can be given to your school counselor or administration that details the BJE March of the Living experience. We are happy to amend the letter to address school-specific concerns and can speak with teachers or school leaders if there are any further questions.

**Q: Is security a program concern?**

Throughout the March, security and safety are our top priorities. MOTL delegations travel with at least one armed security guard per bus, and all site visits are checked and 'cleared' by security in the mornings and before groups arrive. March of the Living International works with the highest levels of law enforcement and government in both Poland and Israel to ensure that the security of participants is top priority.

**Q: What happens if we can't travel to Israel because of travel restrictions or safety concerns?**

While our goal is always to offer an experience that includes both Poland and Israel, the global landscape plays a role in our decision. If we, together with our board of directors and experienced travel professionals, decide that an alternate travel plan is the safest program for our teens, we will pivot our itinerary and programming. We strive to make this decision before any payments are nonrefundable, so that families can make a decision that works best for them. Our program has been a Poland-only trip for the past two years and according to our alumni and veteran staff, the program is still incredibly powerful and an important part of their Jewish identity.

**Q: What Covid 19 protocols have been put in place to ensure the health and safety of BJE March of the Living participants?**

BJE may require that all participants and staff be fully vaccinated against Covid 19. In addition to vaccination and booster requirements, BJE may implement safety rules and precautions in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 such as mask wearing, hand washing, hand sanitizing, vaccination, testing, and social distancing.

**Q: What religious practices or expectations are there; is the food kosher?**

The program is set up to accommodate the religious needs of all its participants. All food in Poland and Israel is certified kosher and we offer a variety of Shabbat services for all levels of observance.

**Q: Is a passport required to participate?**

Yes, a valid passport is required for international travel. A passport is considered valid when it expires no earlier than 6 months after the scheduled return date. For the 2026 BJE March of the Living, passports need to be valid until October 24, 2026. For teens who hold an Israeli passport, a p'tor is required to enter Israel and families will need to contact the local Israeli embassy to issue a formal letter exempting the teen from military service.

**Q: What kind of staffing is provided?**

The staff accompanying the students includes a medical team, a mental health professional, educators, counselors, historians, and a song leader. All staff must pass a background check and California mandated reporter training to be a part of the program. There is approximately a 1 to 10 staff-to-teen ratio.

**Q: Is this a really depressing trip?**

This is a powerful and inspiring trip, and students come away from BJE's March of the Living program knowing that they have experienced a life-changing event. We have found that visiting the sites in Poland and Israel, while filled with emotion, is also quite uplifting and affecting in very positive ways, because there are thousands of Jewish teens from all over the world experiencing it together. In our reflection groups, we discuss the Jewish experience, past and present, and the impact that anti-Semitism has had on our community. A mental health professional accompanies the group to help guide teens and groups throughout the program.

**Q: Will I still be eligible for Birthright Israel if I participate in BJE March of the Living?**

Currently, Birthright Israel participation is open to March of the Living alumni between the ages of 18–26 years.

**Q: If I have additional questions or concerns, whom should I contact?**

Please contact Abby Cutler at [acutler@bjela.org](mailto:acutler@bjela.org) or (323)761-8609 at the BJE March of the Living office.