

LAB/SHUL

# BECOMING

**BUSINESS PLAN:  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
2025-2027**



“ Rites of passage are a birthright at all ages and stages. These moments — **powered by Jewish tradition** — deserve celebration, amplification, and elevation. ”

~ Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie,  
Lab/Shul Co-Founder & Senior Spiritual Leader



# Overview

BECOMING transforms our **coming-of-age milestones into meaningful rites of passage**, harnessing Jewish wisdom and tools in service of human flourishing and communal connection.

BECOMING programs provide space and time for individuals encountering key milestones in their human and Jewish journeys, seeking personal reflection, communal connection, spiritual direction and purpose.

**BECOMING reimagines Jewish traditional coming-of-age journeys as sacred tools for better living.**



# The Need

At a time of **growing societal divisions and intergenerational tensions** within and beyond the Jewish world, BECOMING offers innovative frameworks that offer Jews of all ages, as well as non-Jews who join their journeys, meaningful and mindful ways for lifelong engagement with Jewish life within the community.

Recent demand in BECOMING's signature rites of passage programs reflects a wider growing **desire to enmesh more deeply in Jewish community**, especially in response to the recent surge in antisemitism nationwide. BECOMING programs offer intimate, immersive interactions with Judaism's positive and meaningful teachings, as well as frameworks for critical thinking and discussions on evolving forms of identity.

As modern Jews continue to shift away from affiliating with traditional synagogue models, BECOMING **meets people on their terms, at critical life junctions**, offering tools and techniques that reframe personal purpose and communal participation.

“Adults today tend to prize different kinds of connections than their grandparents: more of our time and attention today is spent on more intimate contacts.”

~ Marc J. Dunkelman, *The Vanishing Neighbor*



# Vision for BECOMING

BECOMING is the **cornerstone of the next organizational chapter** for Lab/Shul – an everybody-friendly, artist-driven, God-optional, experimental community for sacred Jewish gatherings based in NYC and reaching the world – and a revolution for the Jewish spiritual communal infrastructure. In five years, BECOMING will be part of a powerful wave of Jewish engagement deeply rooted in **broad-based Jewish literacy**, drawing on Lab/Shul's pioneering and experimental approaches to **re-imagining ritual for use in marking major thresholds** throughout life and building bridges across difference.

Our business plan represents a **strengthening and streamlining of BECOMING** programs over the next three years to deepen our impact and build long-term sustainability.

*We invite your support in this meaningful work and look forward to hearing how our vision may align with yours.*

“Attendance at a BMitzvah is one of the top three most common occasions at which modern day Jews engage in a religious or spiritual context. This reinforces the notion that Rites of Passage matter, and shines a spotlight on their absence throughout the rest of life's journey.

~ Pew Research Center



# BECOMING Target Audience

Over the next three years BECOMING will focus on strengthening its signature coming-of-age programs, each with unique target audiences, and unite them under one cohesive banner:

The programs include:

- Raising the Bar (RTB)
- GENerate
- Pass/Age





# The Programs

## Raising the Bar (RTB)



Lab/Shul's unique, artistic, accessible and inclusive reimagined process and product of the traditional BMitzvah experience, for **young Jewish teens ages 11 – 14.**

RTB is a **robust, year-long NYC-based program** that will expand to include an **in-person cohort launching in the Hudson Valley in 2025**, with plans to expand its overall footprint in other communities post 2027, through strategic partnerships and new models for growth.

## GENerate

A year-long rite of passage program for **Jewish adults ages 60+** transitioning from career to retirement, and/or from child rearing to empty nesting and wise eldering.

GENerate, currently conducting the fourth cohort, is poised to launch a new cohort each year, with plans to create an **affinity cohort for those who identify as LGBTQ+** in 2026, and other affinity cohorts in the future.





## The Programs (continued)

### Pass/Age

Pass/Age marks the coming-of-age journey, engaging **Jewish adults in their 20s through 50s who are exploring their personal and collective identity, and their transitions and trajectory of life**, as inspired by Jewish wisdom. In 2025, we will offer separate weekend retreats for two age cohorts - 20s/30s and 40s/50s - to meet organic demand and test a tailored model with each demographic. Participants will be introduced to a powerful adult BMitzvah opportunity as part of each Pass/Age weekend, for those who seek to engage in that rite of passage.





# Key Program Components

BECOMING programs share unique hallmarks such as personal storytelling skills and Jewish ritual co-creation, multi-faith friendly and God optional philosophies, locally connected and digitally intimate experiences, and more. Lab/Shul's deeply impactful signature approach to Jewish life and literacy - **the Storhtelling Maven Method™** - sits at the heart of BECOMING programs, with its application evolving across programs.

The Storhtelling Maven Method™ illuminates classical Jewish learning approaches with contemporary stagecraft, informing and transforming the ways people of all ages relate to cultural legacy, ritual celebrations and spiritual heritage.



# Program Calendar

Between 2025 - 2027, BECOMING programs will scale through **measured, steady growth for sustainable impact:**

| PROGRAM                            | 2025                                 | 2026                                 | 2027                                 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>RAISING THE BAR</b>             | RTB Cohort 14                        | RTB Cohort 15                        | RTB Cohort 16                        |
| <b>RAISING THE BAR NEW CITIES</b>  | Hudson Valley Cohort 1               | HV or Other Cohort                   | HV or Other Cohort                   |
| <b>GENERATE</b>                    | GENerate Cohort 4                    | GENerate LGBTQ+ Cohort 5             | GENerate Cohort 6 (Affinity TBD)     |
| <b>PASS/AGE</b>                    | Pass/Age Weekend Model 20s/30s       | Pass/Age Weekend or 3-Month Model    | Pass/Age Weekend or 3-Month Model    |
|                                    | Pass/Age Weekend Model 40s/50s       | Pass/Age Year-Long Cohort            | Pass/Age Year-Long Cohort            |
| <b>BECOMING TRAINERS INSTITUTE</b> | BECOMING Institute                   | Institute R+D                        | BECOMING Institute                   |
| <b>BECOMING/LAB SHUL RETREAT</b>   | BECOMING/Lab Shul Retreat (December) | BECOMING/Lab Shul Retreat (December) | BECOMING/Lab Shul Retreat (December) |

We project the following numbers for cohorts, participants, and trainers in the coming years, based on historical participation, market research, and business model development:

|                             | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| <b># TOTAL COHORTS</b>      | 2    | 5    | 5    | 5    |
| <b># TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b> | 18   | 31   | 61   | 67   |
| <b># TOTAL TRAINERS</b>     | 8    | 8    | 12   | 15   |



# BECOMING Institute and Training Model

## THE VISION

Educational Trainers are a core component of BECOMING's success equation and scalability. Lab/Shul trainers serve as spiritual leaders for participants, creating transformative experiences individually for participants and community-building for cohorts.

Lab/Shul is committed to building and professionalizing the field of creative, spiritual, progressive educators to guide individuals at all ages and stages in marking key milestones in life through a Jewish lens. The BECOMING Institute and Training Model will serve as the intellectual and creative hub of this work, equipping trainers with the skills, tools, expansive thinking, and ongoing learning opportunities to nurture and guide individuals throughout meaningful moments in their life.





# BECOMING Institute and Training Model (continued)

## FROM CURRENT STATE TO FUTURE STATE

In 2025, we will continue to work with our existing trainers to lead our programs, and continue to strengthen and support their development. Concurrently, we will begin to develop our new training model, centered around the BECOMING Trainers Institute and Program, to launch in phases over the coming years. Below is a recommended starting point for the institute's organization, to be explored in the next phase of BECOMING work.

In the future state, the BECOMING training model will include:

- Competitive application and nomination process
- Certification and continuing education process
- Growing cadre of senior trainers and trainers delivering curriculum
- BECOMING Training Institute Retreat and supplemental modules (virtual training, observation and apprenticeship, feedback, trainer support, resource bank)
- Partnerships with creative content providers (nature, technology, etc)
- Underwriting by institutional funding partners

The BECOMING Training Institute is projected to take place in 2025, and will run every other year thereafter. To prepare for the Institute, Lab/Shul will build the training model and update, codify, streamline, and scale the curriculum. It will invest in the following infrastructure:

- Form a **BECOMING curriculum taskforce in Sept 2024** to outline its scope of work to codify and update the curriculum over the course of the next 6 - 9 months.
- Hire a contract **Instructional Designer** to create and package the curriculum, codify and design materials, and design the Institute schedule.
- Engage a **BECOMING Program Coordinator or Lab/Shul staff member** in building administration and logistics for the Institute.



# Organizational Structure

For the next three years, BECOMING will continue to be incubated within Lab/Shul, leveraging Lab/Shul's organizational assets and strengthening its impact and sustainability. Beyond 2027, BECOMING may remain a part of Lab/Shul or may spin off, acknowledging that its impact has potential to spread beyond the Jewish world.

BECOMING's success will rely heavily on its talented staff who bring the vision, capacity, and strategic focus to bring BECOMING programs to life under a unified umbrella, and creating deep impact across the broader Jewish community.

BECOMING requires dedicated leadership focused on BECOMING, providing cohesive vision and execution of all programs underneath the umbrella. Beginning in 2026, our model includes:

- A full-time **BECOMING Program Director**
- A full-time **BECOMING Program Coordinator**
- **One designated Lab/Shul senior program lead for each program** to increase strategic focus (3 people total)
- **Senior Trainers and Trainers** to co-lead the Training Institute, lead cohort sessions for BECOMING programs, and provide 1:1 support for program participants. The number of trainers increases over time to match the growing number of participants.
- **Lab/Shul support** for BECOMING programs at both the **senior advisory and administration level**, decreasing over time as BECOMING leadership takes root



# Revenue Model

BECOMING is designed as a financially sustainable model with **diversified revenue streams** that demonstrates a **greater degree of self-funding** over time. Its revenue streams include fee-for-service from participants (including a sliding scale for access and equity) and contributed revenue from institutional foundations and individual donors whose values and vision align with that of BECOMING.

**For 2025, we seek \$200,000 in contributed revenue from funding partners** to codify and strengthen our program model and training hub, as well as develop our new program models for RTB Hudson Valley and Pass/Age weekend retreats. We seek funding of \$275,000 per year thereafter from funding partners in the form of multi-year commitments.

Our projected balance of contributed revenue vs. earned revenue decreases each year, allowing Lab/Shul to engage funders as partners in charting out the future of BECOMING while also building long-term sustainability.

“Taking participants through the training curriculum, I witnessed - time and again - serious, experienced educators **growing and deeply expanding their pedagogic practices**, immediately integrating tools for literacy, comprehension, creativity and meaning-making. Educators who came to us with deep Jewish literacy **found new discoveries of how to engage students** in why this content matters, in embodied, visceral, **soul-searing work**.”

~ Naomi Less

Co-Founder, Ritual Leader, Associate Director, and B Mitzvah Education and Ritual Director



# BECOMING Budget

The three-year budget demonstrates growth in both earned and contributed revenue, reflecting growing numbers of participants in a steady number of cohort programs as well as ongoing and growing commitments from foundations and individual donors. 2025 is largely a building year, focused on developing core components of the program model while shoring up support and expanding marketing for its continued growth. 2026 represents the largest growth in revenue, while allowing Lab/Shul to sustain its continued growth and keep pace with its capacity in 2027 and beyond.

The budget projects a net positive model, acknowledging that two core programs subsidize others – Raising the Bar, due to its high price tags and associated demand, and GENerate, due to its projected ability to attract contributed revenue from foundations interested in engaging adults 60+, one of the fastest growing populations with growing degrees of engagement in communal life. Pass/Age has yet to be tested in its funding potential and participant demand, and while BECOMING Trainers represent an area we believe to be a significant funding priority in the market, it is an inherently expensive program, so is projected to be net negative. Overall, the budget is designed to balance each year.



# BECOMING Budget

## HIGH LEVEL BUDGET: YEAR 1 - 2025

|                      | GENerate  | Raising the Bar | Pass/Age  | Training + Mgmt | Other | Totals    |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>  | \$119,250 | \$305,000       | \$10,400  | \$100,000       | \$0   | \$534,650 |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b> | \$88,304  | \$238,441       | \$49,400  | \$143,866       | \$0   | \$520,011 |
| <b>NET INCOME</b>    | \$30,946  | \$66,559        | -\$39,000 | -\$43,866       | \$0   | \$14,639  |

## HIGH LEVEL BUDGET: YEAR 2 - 2026

|                      | GENerate  | Raising the Bar | Pass/Age | Training + Mgmt | Other | Totals    |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>  | \$127,500 | \$367,000       | \$90,800 | \$125,000       | \$0   | \$710,300 |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b> | \$88,020  | \$297,554       | \$58,240 | \$257,308       | \$0   | \$701,122 |
| <b>NET INCOME</b>    | \$39,480  | \$69,446        | \$32,560 | -\$132,308      | \$0   | \$9,178   |

## HIGH LEVEL BUDGET: YEAR 3 - 2027

|                      | GENerate  | Raising the Bar | Pass/Age | Training + Mgmt | Other | Totals    |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>  | \$138,500 | \$417,500       | \$90,800 | \$132,500       | \$0   | \$779,300 |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b> | \$87,952  | \$319,167       | \$54,580 | \$294,061       | \$0   | \$755,759 |
| <b>NET INCOME</b>    | \$50,548  | \$98,333        | \$36,220 | -\$161,561      | \$0   | \$23,541  |



# Operational Model

The BECOMING operational model is designed to achieve efficiencies in economies of scale. Core infrastructure needs for a successful BECOMING model include:

- Clear messaging and participant recruiting
- Skilled and sufficient staffing
- Scalable curriculum model
- Shared back-end services (financial management, technology, communications, etc)
- Diversified revenue model

Each of these elements is addressed in detail throughout the business plan, supporting Lab/Shul in building the organizational infrastructure to support meaningful rites of passage for many years to come, harnessing Jewish wisdom in service of human flourishing and communal connection.

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## Join us in BECOMING.

We are actively seeking individual donors, institutional funders and strategic partners to invest in this work.

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- If interested, please contact Sarah Sokolic, Co-Founder & Executive Director of Lab/Shul at [sarahed@labshul.org](mailto:sarahed@labshul.org)
  - For all other inquiries related to BECOMING, please email [hello@labshul.org](mailto:hello@labshul.org)
- 



 [hello@labshul.org](mailto:hello@labshul.org)

 (212) 908 2536

 [www.labshul.org](http://www.labshul.org)

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