

Redirect Your Taxes

by Mitchell Kopelman, CPA

During these fall months when Federation's annual Campaign launches, we are all focused on the impact Federation has in our community and for Jews around the world. One of our outcomes – areas of focus – is Jewish continuity. These efforts to create pride among our children are directly supported by our children attending Jewish day schools and high schools. One of the simplest ways we, as Jews in Atlanta, can support Jewish continuity and Jewish education is by redirecting our taxes through the ALEF Fund.



How can I help the Jewish Community at virtually no cost, and perhaps savings, to me and my family?

For those of you who don't know what the ALEF Fund is, it is a Student Scholarship Organization (SSO) created by Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta in response to the 2008 Georgia Private School Tax Credit. This law allows Georgia tax payers to redirect a portion of their Georgia Income Tax and receive a dollar-for-dollar State tax credit. The money is redistributed to the SSO and then designated to private school's scholarship funds to assist students who cannot afford private school. The ALEF Fund represents seven of the Jewish day schools and high schools in the metro Atlanta area. By contributing, you, the tax payer, help make sending a child to day school or high school more affordable for those who cannot afford it.

There are some restrictions in this process. First, the State has allocated a \$50 million cap per tax year. In the past, this cap has never been reached. This year will be the first year since the inception of the law that the cap will likely be met. In fact, the money may run out right after the High Holiday season. As of September 9, 2011, over \$28.3 million has been pre-approved for SSOs, as compared to October 15, 2010 when only \$13.6 was pre-approved. Second, a taxpayer is limited to the amount they may redirect. A married couple, filing jointly may redirect up to \$2,500 and an individual may redirect up to \$1,000. Corporations or other entities can redirect up to 75% of their state tax liability and receive the same dollar-for-dollar state tax credit as individuals. Third, a taxpayer must fill out the Georgia Form IT-QEE-TP1. It is a simple [two-page form that you can find online](#) or call 404.870.1625 and the ALEF Fund professionals will assist you.

Please act now, before the \$50 million limit is hit; the approval is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

In addition to the dollar-for-dollar State tax credit you will receive, you can also deduct this amount as a charitable donation on your federal income tax return. And if you are subject to Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT), you can actually save up to 29% by replacing your State tax deduction with a charitable deduction to the ALEF Fund. To make things even better, the ALEF Fund accepts credit cards AND for a limited time has a matching grant program for new ALEF Fund donors.

As the New Year approaches, this is my free, unsolicited tax advice: support the Jewish Community, Jewish continuity and the Jewish day schools and high schools, at virtually no cost to you, by redirecting your State of Georgia Income taxes to the ALEF Fund. For more information, you can contact Stephanie Wyatt at The ALEF Fund at 404.870.1625 or swyatt@aleffund.org.

[Please view this 3-minute video my son helped produce about the ALEF Fund.](#)

Shabbat Shalom and May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year,

Mitchell Kopelman

Federation Board of Trustee Member; Secretary-Treasurer of the ALEF Fund