



The Jewish Federations®
OF NORTH AMERICA

Public Affairs 2022 Working

Public Policy Agenda

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The Federation system advances policy priority areas based on both challenges Jewish communal life faces and opportunities to further strengthen it. In supporting specific legislative and policy vehicles within each area below and in adding compelling new legislative priorities, we prioritize issues with a nexus to the agencies and communities we represent and strive to be balanced and bipartisan. The following list is a working document and is subject to change based on legislative or community needs.

Jewish Communal Security and Support for Israel

SECURITY

Nonprofit Security Grant Program: In the seventeenth year of the program, Jewish Federations will continue to lobby for an increase in funding from \$180 million to \$360 million. Jewish Federations play a critical role including support for the administration of and participation in the program to ensure at-risk faith-based and charitable organizations have the resources and training they require to safeguard their institutions and communities. We will additionally continue to support expanding the number of state and local programs established to supplement the federal NSGP across Jewish and other faith communities.

Pray Safe Act: Jewish Federations support this legislation which would establish a federal clearinghouse for faith-based organizations to access information on safety and security best practices, available federal grant programs like NSGP, and training opportunities.

Preventing Gun Violence: In 2021, JFNA created a coalition of more than 20 national and local groups in the Jewish community focusing on gun violence prevention funding recommendations to Congress. The coalition encouraged Congress to double funding at the CDC and NIH focused on research into the causes of gun violence, while also encouraging appropriators to establish a Community Violence Intervention Initiative to implement evidence-based community violence prevention programs, provide increased funding for the Department of Justice to improve enforcement of existing gun laws including more effective and rapid utilization of the existing background check system, and work with the Department of Veterans Affairs on assistance in preventing military suicides, most of which stem from firearms.

COMBAT ANTISEMITISM

Support Nomination of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism: Jewish Federations led several national and local Federation and JCRC sign on letters to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee urging the committee to expeditiously fill the position and hold a hearing on nominee Dr. Deborah Lipstadt.

Combatting BDS: Jewish Federations oppose Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) efforts that seek to delegitimize Israel and work with state governments to support, enact, and enforce the policies and legislation to curb BDS.

IHRA Definition: Jewish Federations embrace the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism and urge the Department of Education to formally adopt its use to inform its enforcement of Title VI actions.

Other specific legislation/initiatives in development: Including but not limited to expanding Holocaust and genocide education.

SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

Iron Dome: Jewish Federations support continued robust funding for the Iron Dome Missile Defense System, which provides life-saving protection from thousands of rockets indiscriminately targeting all who live in Israel – including the \$1 billion in supplemental funding necessary to replenish stockpiles following the 4,000+ rockets launched by the terrorist group Hamas in May.

Abraham Accords: Jewish Federations support the Israel Relations Normalization Act of 2021, which uplifts and recognizes the power of the historic Abraham Accords to lay the groundwork for positive diplomatic relations between Israel and its neighbors.

Alliance for Middle East Peace: Jewish Federations supported passage of the Nita Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act, establishing a fund to promote people to people programs. Jewish Federations support funding the program annually in FY 2022 and 2023 appropriations.

Communal Infrastructure

CHARITABLE PROTECTIONS

Oppose Ace Act: The Accelerating Charitable Efforts or ACE Act would create limitations on the use of donor-advised funds, including by eliminating the current up front charitable deduction for most of them, establishing term limits on the use of DAFs, impose extensive new record keeping requirements on sponsoring organizations and donors, and, in our estimation, significantly undermine the use of donor-advised funds and giving through this charitable vehicle. Jewish Federations are helping to lead a coalition to raise concerns about the ACE Act in Congress.

Universal Charitable Deduction: Jewish Federations have long provided leadership and support to extend and expand a universal charitable deduction for those who do not itemize. The 2020 CARES Act included a modest \$300 individual above-the-line deduction that was expanded to \$600 per couple and extended through 2021. We are championing the Universal Giving Pandemic Response and Recovery Act which extends it through 2022 and significantly expands the deductible amounts of charitable giving.

STABILITY OF COMMUNAL INSTITUTIONS

Employee Retention Tax Credit: The Employee Retention Tax Credit was a form of COVID relief created in 2020 to help employers sustain their payrolls that was eliminated in 2021. To promote additional COVID relief for nonprofits and to help alleviate critical workforce shortages, Jewish Federations are working to retroactively restore this credit, extend it through 2022, and expand eligible payroll expenses to include childcare and education subsidies.

WORK Now Act: The Work Opportunities and Resources to Keep Nonprofit Organizations Well Act would create a new grant program to help nonprofit organizations retain their employees, scale their service delivery, and provide unemployed people with new jobs serving their communities. This bold initiative would inject \$50 billion into frontline nonprofits to enable them to pay the wages, salaries, and benefits of returning or newly hired employees.

Health and Human Services

HEALTH CARE AND SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE OR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS, INCLUDING OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Home and Community Based Services: Jewish Federations support investments made in the Better Care Better Jobs Act of \$150 billion into Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) to support low-income people with disabilities and older adults, offering essential services that help them live at home in their communities. This federal investment in Medicaid HCBS also would raise outdated reimbursement rates for HCBS providers, such as our Jewish family service agencies, to ensure that they are able to continue delivering these vital services and address the direct care workforce crisis.

Long-Term Care Financing & Delivery Reform (legislation in development): Jewish Federations support pragmatic long-term care reform that embraces efforts to build a public sector-private sector partnership covering catastrophic and non-catastrophic illness for vulnerable Americans. Jewish Federations will expand its advocacy for long-term care insurance coverage that will alleviate the strain on the Medicaid program and sustain our robust network of long-term care communities for future generations.

Mental Health: Jewish Federations are committed to strengthening access to mental and behavioral health care for both children and adults, and ensuring Jewish partner agencies have the resources they need to sustain and grow their services to meet community needs. We support legislation and regulations to expand mental and behavioral health access and coverage in Medicaid (the single largest source of funding in this area), Medicare, and commercial insurance. We have and continue to advocate for financial relief for mental and behavioral health providers due to the COVID-19 pandemic; continued coverage for telehealth, including audio-only telehealth, even after the public health emergency ends; and expanded resources for maternal and child mental health, suicide prevention, behavioral health crisis response, and the mental and behavioral health workforce to name just a few.

ABLE Age Adjustment Act: Jewish Federations support passage of the ABLE Age Adjustment Act to protect the financial security of more people with disabilities. This legislation would allow six million more disabled individuals to establish tax-free savings accounts which help pay for disability-related and health care expenses, providing them a pathway to greater independence.

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Restoration Act: Jewish Federations support passage of the SSI Restoration Act, legislation that would lift more than 3 million impoverished older adults and people with disabilities out of poverty. The SSI Restoration Act would raise decades out-of-date SSI benefits up to the Federal Poverty Level and increase caps on income and assets to reflect the current cost of living, as well as eliminate SSI's current "marriage penalty" (25% benefit reduction when two SSI beneficiaries marry).

Older Americans Act and Related Programs: Jewish Federations support Older Americans Act-authorized programs, as well as related programs to provide senior transportation, senior nutrition, family caregiver support, and other initiatives that promote aging-in-place and combat social isolation, as well as flexibilities to ensure these programs continue due to COVID restrictions. We also secured funding in the Dallas-Plano, TX area to provide transportation to older adults and people with disabilities to medical appointments and congregate meals and social programs.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program: The Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program is the federal funding stream at Department of Health and Human Services establishing JFNA's Holocaust Survivor Initiative of the Center on Aging and Trauma. This program leverages public-private partnership opportunities with nonprofits, foundations, and the private sector to address the urgent needs of the survivor population, other traumatized aging communities, and their family caregivers. Currently funded at \$5 million per year, Jewish Federations are seeking to increase funding to \$10 million in the FY 2023 Labor-HHS budget.

ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

Child Care: To achieve the dual goals of ameliorating the workforce shortage and providing support to resource-limited nonprofit providers like JCCs and day schools, Jewish Federations support the passage of a robust, bipartisan federal early child care and universal pre-kindergarten program that is fully inclusive of faith-based child care centers and schools.

Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit: A key, proven solution to fighting poverty, Jewish Federations support permanent extension of the American Rescue Plan CTC and EITC expansions and full refundability of the CTC.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program: Critical in enabling human service agencies to support families and individuals experiencing food insecurity and temporarily in need of shelter, Jewish Federations support annual appropriations for this program and represent the system on the national Emergency Food and Shelter Program Board.

Education: Jewish Federations support healthy, vibrant, and affordable Jewish day schools, while supporting public education, in addition to creating new tax incentives for primary and secondary education, including scholarship programs, and federal loan repayment assistance.

Federal Food Assistance Programs: Jewish Federations support the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program as critically important tools to fighting food insecurity, and have been working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure SNAP beneficiaries

are able to use their benefits online and, respectively, to increase kosher and halal food items in the TEFAP program.

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND EQUITY

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI): Jewish Federations integrate a JEDI focus into all our public policy priorities. Whether on safety and security, health equity, workforce development, anti-poverty initiatives, aging and trauma, advancing racial, gender and LGBTQ+ justice and equity, supporting civic engagement and more, we do this with the sole aim of fostering a culture of belonging for all, and setting a stable democratic environment in which all of our communities can flourish.

Jewish Federations' JEDI Initiatives work with communities on issues relating to race, gender, LGBTQ+, and communal belonging. Together, we partner closely with leading organizations and have created a number of specific JEDI related community platforms and resource groups including JEDI's LGBTQ+ Initiative called "Chodeshim." During Chodeshim's first year, we established a leadership board and have begun mapping Jewish Federations' LGBTQ+ efforts nationwide, assisting our communities in identifying and lifting up these priorities. Chodeshim is also a part of Keshet's Nonprofit Leadership Project cohort for advancing LGBTQ+ justice and equity in the Jewish communal ecosystem.

Another JEDI Initiative to support the deepening and advancement of racial justice and equity is, "Moed," Jewish Federations' only program to be founded and led by Jewish People of Color (JOC). Moed's leadership board works across Federation priorities, including public policy, to inform best practices on racial justice and equity.

COMBATTING ALL FORMS OF HATE, DISCRIMINATION, RACISM, AND EXTREMISM

NO HATE Act: Jewish Federations were proud support the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act and the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act, signed into law last spring. This law establishes grants within the Department of Justice (DOJ) for states and local government to improve law enforcement activities to address hate crimes committed on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability, and improve data reporting. This work will be done in partnership with community organizations. Jewish Federations are working closely with DOJ to ensure effective implementation of the programs authorized by this legislation and will advocate for \$5 million in program funds for FY 2023.

Discriminatory Faith-Based Regulations: For the past several years, as a member of the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination (CARD) coalition, Jewish Federations have worked to roll back harmful federal regulations that place LGBTQ+ individuals at risk of discrimination, allowing federally-funded health and human service programs to discriminate against LGBTQ+ clients by not requiring them to provide notice and referrals to alternate providers. The current Administration has indicated they are willing to make these changes and Jewish Federations are working with CARD to lay the groundwork.

LGBTQ+ protections: We support extending necessary and appropriate civil right protections to the LGBTQ+ community under federal law.

REFUGEES AND IMMIGRATION

Afghan Resettlement: To facilitate significant resettlement needs of human service agencies and Afghan evacuees themselves, Jewish Federations are mobilizing Federations, JCRCs, and Jewish agencies in 10 to 15 states in advocacy campaigns in support of state and local funding and policy opportunities to support resettlement efforts. Key objectives include but are not limited to: direct support of resettlement affiliates; housing and rental assistance; food and cash assistance; and citizenship and other status adjustments and related legal assistance.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program Supplemental Funding: Jewish Federations support supplemental funding streams as a crisis response to support human service agencies as they serve influxes of migrants crossing the southern U.S. border.

SUPPORTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Safeguarding Voting Rights: We continue to support bipartisan approaches to ensure voter access.

Civic Engagement Incubator: We look for opportunities to support civic engagement to foster a stable democratic environment in which our communities can flourish. To that end, Jewish Federations are spearheading a civic engagement incubator across the Federation/JCRC system to invest funds in 30 communities to support long-term strategic planning and community inter-group and interfaith relationship building. Our initial cohort will share learnings, engagements, and best practices on civic engagement initiatives.