

# **BACKGROUND UNITED ISRAEL APPEAL THE JEWISH FEDERATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA**

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## ***History***

United Israel Appeal (“UIA”) was first established in 1925 as the United Palestine Appeal (“UPA”) in order to unify fundraising in America for a Jewish national homeland. Keren Hayesod, the fundraising organization for the Jewish Agency, Hadassah, Hebrew University, the Jewish National Fund and Mizrahi were the constituents. It was dissolved in 1930 and reconstituted in 1936 by Keren Hayesod and the Jewish National Fund. In 1938, UPA entered into a partnership with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (“JDC”) to found the United Jewish Appeal (“UJA”).

UIA has undergone vast changes since those early days. The most significant changes prior to 2000, in addition to 1938, came as a result of the reconstitution of the Jewish Agency for Israel in 1971. After the Reconstitution Agreement, for the first time, American Jewish leaders from federations, as well as all the American Zionist organizations, served as members of the UIA Board. UIA also gained control of 30% of the seats on the Board of Governors (“BOG”) of the Jewish Agency. UIA appointed only federation representatives to the Jewish Agency Board. The American Zionist organizations had seats on the Jewish Agency Board through their membership in the World Zionist Organization.

The Reconstitution Agreement led UIA to name the Jewish Agency for Israel as its exclusive operating agent in Israel.

In 1999, United Jewish Communities (“UJC”) was created as a merger of UIA, UJA and the Council of Jewish Federations (“CJF”), into a single, national organization. After this merger, UIA became a subsidiary of UJC, since renamed the Jewish Federations of North America (“JFNA”). One result of the merger was the loss of participation by the Zionist organizations on the UIA Board.

## ***UIA Today***

United Israel Appeal continues as a nonprofit charitable organization whose principal objectives are to assist immigration into Israel: the relief, rehabilitation and resettlement of the immigrants therein, and to aid charitable, educational and scientific institutions in Israel. UIA has its own U.S. 501(c)(3) tax status and Board of Directors. It provides fiduciary oversight and allocation of the funds provided to it from donors and the allocations to UIA from American Jewish Federations and JFNA. UIA monitors and evaluates the programs operated on its behalf by the Jewish Agency. UIA is a principal link between the American Jewish community and the people of Israel through the Jewish Agency.

UIA secures and monitors a United States Government Resettlement Grant for the immigration and absorption of Jewish humanitarian migrants to Israel from countries of distress, including areas within the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Eastern Europe and the Near East. Congress initiated the U.S. Resettlement Grants during the early 1970s in response to the first large influx of Soviet Jews to Israel. Since 1973, UIA has been awarded U.S. government funding in an amount in excess of \$1.7 billion.

UIA continues to functionally control 30% of the votes within the Jewish Agency Board of Governors. In consultation with JFNA and individual federations, UIA

nominates members and observers of the Jewish Agency BOG, members of its committees and designates delegates to the Jewish Agency Annual Assembly.

UIA is a principal owner of the Amigour Housing Company. In 1967, American Jews wished to support Israel after the Six-Day War, but were precluded by US law from providing direct support to the Government of Israel. As a result, UIA, in the name of American donors and federations, purchased low-income housing from *Amidar*, the Israel Public Housing Company, and created *Amigour*. UIA holds seats on the Amigour Board and plays an active role in the oversight and management of this company. Today, Amigour has evolved into the largest provider of low-income, senior citizen housing in Israel.

### ***Israel Education Fund (IEF)***

The Israel Education Fund was founded in 1964 as a partnership between UIA, UJA and the Jewish Agency for Israel. The partnership continues as a joint effort of the UIA, JFNA and the Jewish Agency. Its historic purpose is to raise funds for supplemental educational buildings, scholarships and other capital projects in Israel as part of the mission of the Jewish Agency.

IEF, together with Project Renewal, Partnership 2000, followed by Partnership 2Gether, and the North American system, has built over 1,200 educational institutions ranging from colleges; high schools; community centers; pre-kindergarten daycare centers; youth-activity centers; libraries; adult-education centers; recreational, sports and senior-care facilities; academic scholarships and academic enrichment programming. UIA holds the title to these buildings and works with the program providers and municipalities to ensure that the original wishes of the donor or donor community continue to be fulfilled. UIA monitors and evaluates these projects and buildings through an ongoing program of onsite inspections. IEF reports to donors and donor families as well as federations on the state of their project.

UIA controls over 80 companies managing those educational assets and their activities. It is estimated that these projects touch the lives of one in seven Israelis every single day.

UIA has offices in New York and Jerusalem.

UIA assists American Jews to fulfill their ongoing collective commitment to contribute to and participate in the building of the State of Israel. UIA, with the Jewish Agency as its partner, has performed this function since before the creation of the State of Israel and continues to the present day on behalf of the federation system and JFNA.

### **THE JEWISH FEDERATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA**

The Jewish Federations of North America, representing the 153 Jewish Federations and 300 smaller Network communities, help care for people in need at home, in Israel and around the world; and nurture and sustain Jewish community. JFNA leads the Jewish Federations in mobilizing financial and social resources through philanthropic endeavors, strategic initiatives and international agencies that strengthen the Jewish people. The Jewish Federations, collectively among the top 10 charities in North America, protect and enhance the well-being of Jews worldwide through *chesed* (caring and compassion), *Torah* (Jewish learning), *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *tzedakah* (charity and social justice).