



Jewish Security & Empowerment

LAB REPORT

Introduction and Background

260 participants joined the Jewish Security & Empowerment track, which was presented and planned in partnership with the Israel Action Network and Secure Communities Network (SCN). Together, all participants engaged in a series of dynamic learnings and discussions that served to advance shared understanding of what makes us feel secure and empowered as Jews – touching on issues related to physical security, antisemitism and Israel.

All presentations and other resources associated with this track are available online on the [FedLab Resource Hub](#).

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Understand the evolving landscape of threats and the dimensions of Jewish security and insecurity.
- Deepen our understanding of the human component of security: What makes people feel safe, secure and empowered.
- Learn representative practices from other communities in their approach to issues of Jewish security and empowerment.
- Build new connections and identify big questions and potential solutions by reframing problems using new tools and approaches.
- Collaborate within communities to assess security needs and establish local priorities.
- Determine a collective vision for Jewish Security & Empowerment to drive future efforts at the local, regional and national levels.

OUR PROCESS

The FedLab participant journey followed a path informed by design thinking:

- Discover: In-depth learning and discussion; digging deep to extract insights and understand existing approaches.
- Define: Synthesis of learnings and insights in order to clearly articulate questions to be solved with a focus on a specific “user” or perspective.
- Explore and Build: Using analogous problem-solving and lateral thinking to develop solutions and elevate solutions to key questions.

- Plan + Act: Aligning at the community-level around priorities, potential barriers and resources required.

Throughout, the process included presentations from experts and leaders within the Federation ecosystem who shared their knowledge on external threats, addressing antisemitism online, securing resources and fundraising for safety, and cultivating relationships with civic leaders. JFNA President and CEO Eric Fingerhut and Professor Deborah Lipstadt led the audience through a discussion on the relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism and the proactive steps individuals can take to address antisemitism in their own communities. Participants were encouraged to expand their horizons and activities, intentionally bringing together groups with diverse professional backgrounds and experiences.

As part of the workshop, attendees explored what personally made them feel secure and empowered in their Jewish identities. Building from their own experiences, participants identified what they believed to be a key area where Jewish institutions and Federations had an opportunity to make a difference and then were encouraged to identify one “user” or perspective they could design a solution for.

Results

PROGRESS AGAINST TRACK OBJECTIVES

- Participated in group learning and discussion on global and domestic threats, managing fear and anti-Zionism on campus to understand the evolving landscape of threats and dimensions of Jewish Security and Insecurity.
- Heard from 10 communities and professionals on representative practices, including approaches to Crisis Management, Trauma & Antisemitism, Leveraging Government Funding and Security Grants, and Community Relations to Fight Hate.
- Identified 24 “How Might We” questions and 48 potential solutions to address issues of Jewish Security & Empowerment.
- Conducted priority-setting and planning at the state and community level. This process resulted in communities within the same state and region coming together to explore new opportunities to partner together on security personnel, legislation and security funding, and advocacy efforts. It also helped JFNA staff better understand the local community and collective needs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- All communities should be working to form Community Security Committees comprised

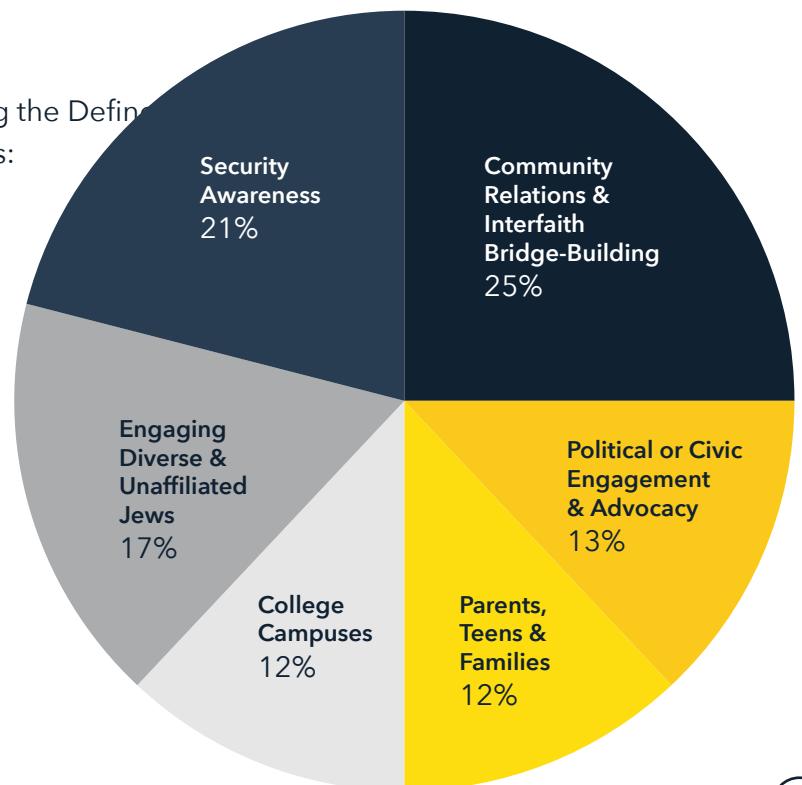
of relevant lay and professional leadership to discuss, weigh and advocate for communal security decisions.

- Institutions and organizations should be working to develop, implement and train on all-hazards emergency procedures and protocols.
- “You can’t be against one ‘ism’ (i.e., racism, antisemitism) and not another.”
- Jewish Security means a life free from fear, where Jews can celebrate their culture and identity.
- The biggest barrier is not a physical one but a mental one. Many get comfortable in the idea that “I can’t believe it could happen here,” but we all need to be prepared.
- Communities need to establish and maintain strong relationships with interfaith, intergroup, law enforcement and governmental partners.
- Funding (both government and philanthropic) for security needs to be a national and local priority for community leadership.
- Federations need to engage civic allies to learn about antisemitism and anti-Zionism.
- Community Relations is an important tool that needs to be utilized in Federations’ efforts to fight antisemitism.
- There is a strong correlation between strong community relations and feeling secure.

QUESTIONS

The 24 questions developed by groups during the Definition of the Lab were distributed across six key areas:

- **6** Community Relations & Interfaith Bridge-Building
- **5** Security Awareness
- **4** Engaging Diverse & Unaffiliated Jews
- **3** Political or Civic Engagement & Advocacy
- **3** Parents, Teens & Families



- 3 College Campus

CROSS-CUTTING SOLUTIONS

The following themes emerged from the solutions developed during the Explore & Build section of the workshop:

- **Antisemitism Awareness Campaign:** Use new and traditional media to communicate with the broader population on what antisemitism looks like, using effective data and storytelling.
- **Collaborative Policy Agenda:** Create coalitions with allies to work together on common issues and advocate for legislation that enhances the protection of minority groups.
- **Expert Training:** Provide training or seminars for communities around key dimensions of these issues, from running fire drills within houses of worship to interactive leadership training. Work in partnership with other communities to participate in empathy training.
- **Convening Partners around Shared Goals:** Convene civic leaders and other interfaith partners together to fight hate across all communities. Host targeted events to build relationships and connections rooted in shared values.
- **Facilitated Conversation:** Provide opportunities for intentional dialogue facilitated between different segments of the Jewish community and/or partners outside of the community with the goal of reframing language on difficult issues.
- **Inclusion and Outreach:** Activate technology tools and traditional organizing to “meet people where they are” and bring different Jewish organizations and Jews together to expand stakeholder involvement and increase community solidarity.
- **Travel Experiences:** Create travel-based experiences for Jewish leaders to travel and share experiences with specific groups, including civic leaders, funders, and community partners.

Conclusions & Discussion

The number of topics covered within Jewish Security & Empowerment was significant and included areas and departments of the Federation system that have previously operated in separate capacities.

The need for greater interdepartmental work on this issue is clearer for JFNA and Federations.

Given the established approaches from SCN on physical security, the new paths forward focused primarily on the human component of security. When it came to selecting the top solutions, Federation lay leaders and professionals elevated ideas related to community relations and bridge-building, as well as education and storytelling. The focus on user-centricity, which encouraged participants to focus on problem-solving related to a particular perspective, highlighted the desire among many leaders to better understand and communicate with those who do not share

their perspectives and beliefs on Jewish security, Israel and antisemitism.

Based on the responses, it is clear that Federations around the country believe there is an opportunity to deepen the investment in community relations while pursuing appropriate measures to ensure the physical security of their houses of worship.

Some outstanding questions for future discussion:

- For smaller Federations, what is the appropriate security investment approach?
- Given the focus on outreach and bridge-building, what types of training and support do Federations need in order to execute this effectively?
- What does it mean for the Jewish Community to have solidarity on some issues and not others? What is the difference between solidarity and unity?
- What investments need to be made for all Federations to do better at this work?
- How can JFNA better assist communities with security needs and funding?
- How do we keep Federations informed about security updates and trends in the landscape?
- What are baseline security protocols, and how can they be shared?

APPENDIX A: BIG QUESTIONS AND IDEAS

Note: Asterisks (*) denote the eight ideas that received the most votes from participants for future exploration.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS & INTERFAITH BRIDGE-BUILDING

How might we engage non-Jewish, marginalized communities to support the fight against antisemitism?

- Empathy training workshops and programs with other communities. *
- PSA campaign (i.e., TV, bus shelter, social media): "This is what antisemitism looks like." *

How might we help Jewish leaders make a direct connection with non-Jewish leaders in order to address concerns in their own community and create partnerships to address common concerns?

- An invitation to an interfaith roundtable.
- Interfaith field trips to create shared experiences. *

How might we prevent the Jewish community from feeling threatened from the left and from the right (the 20% on the fringes)?

- Build relationships with the 80% in the middle and make them our partners in pushing back the fringes. Make it unacceptable to adhere to repugnant antisemitic, anti-Israel behavior. *
- Effectively communicate the perniciousness of antisemitism, so that we and our partners (the 80%) ensure that there are consequences for antisemitism.

How might we build relationships between the Jewish community and influential non-Jews in order to create true partners and be a part of the solution: A mutually aligned coalition to combat antisemitism?

- Technology platform: Jewish LinkedIn, AIPAC model, one-on-one stewardship.
- Grassroots community-building Shabbat.

How might we engage Jewish and non-Jewish professionals in order to reduce feelings of isolation and insecurity and create understanding, civility and fundamental agreement on shared, immutable principles?

- Facilitated standing meetings.
- Shared storytelling endeavors.

How might we create a collaborative culture with the broader community to raise awareness of antisemitism and create a broader network of allies?

- Host events such as:
 - Worship & Worry—different perspectives.
 - Dine and/or Dash—a fundraiser and/or communal meal.
 - Poverty & Perspectives—social action.
- Create a collaborative committee to fight hate across all communities.

SECURITY AWARENESS

How might we help our local Federations more effectively educate engaged community members to lead on issues of security and antisemitism?

- Bring a one-day seminar/training to communities with interactive leadership training.
- Use existing resources to create a national repository of ideas, speakers, data and other relevant information of value on these topics.

How might we motivate Jewish community members who are apathetic about Jewish security in order to create urgency around the need to fortify security in Jewish institutions?

- Bring in speakers with personal experiences/case studies/statistics/success stories.
- If we educate people, they will be motivated to join—use marketing and PR campaigns and get the conversation going with the right messengers.

How might we encourage potential donors to fund initiatives to enhance security?

- Birthright-like mission to Pittsburg or local Jewish institutions with no security barriers. Produce a video that demonstrates the needs, benefits, testimonials, and a virtual tour demonstrating the changes.

How might we create major security awareness campaigns that resonate with a relative audience?

- Leverage expertise in creating campaigns with existing relationships: Advertising/PR gurus, political capital, interfaith, local community and business.
- Engage the target audience through a multi-faceted approach.

How might we build the skills of people in Jewish spaces, both physical and virtual, to feel confident in being proactive in order to create a sense of safety?

- Create a culture of responsibility in the community (i.e., pledge, creed, code that would be plastered everywhere telling people how to behave).
- Create a strategic plan for training the community at different levels; highly trained staff, task responsible people, larger community – stay calm, closest exit.

ENGAGING DIVERSE & UNAFFILIATED JEWS

How might we learn of the need for the disaffected to create an environment where they feel they belong in order to inspire a sense of personal responsibility to the Jewish community?

- In partnership with career services, the Federation could develop a matching database of unmet community needs and expertise that exists among the unaffiliated/dissatisfied. They will work with marketing to recruit the disaffiliated for employment in Jewish communal work.*
- Federation hires a director of engagement who is tasked with identifying pockets of unaffiliated Jews and meeting them where they are.

How might we ignite a spark in the next generation (specifically non-engaged) in order to spread awareness about antisemitism?

- Podcast or newsletter that truly sparks joy and curiosity and brings them to action.
- Bringing guest speakers, famous proud Jews with a compelling story, to cultivate the feeling that they are part of that.

How might we foster and build unity and respect for Jewish communal diversity, and recognize that we are one people, in order to survive and thrive?

- Expand stakeholder participation through parlor meetings, committee appointments, one-on-ones, clear and transparent participation.
- Emphasize common bonds and peoplehood.

How might we support non-traditional and marginalized Jews to be empowered as equals in order to fully participate and contribute to the Jewish community at large?

- Lean into difficult (facilitated) conversations but first teach and learn how to do so – how to communicate across differences. “Resetting the table” for dialogue.
- “Nothing about us, without us” – diverse, representative voices especially in decision-making positions.

PARENTS & FAMILIES

How might we help parents and family members feel safe and secure in the current environment?

- Work with subject matter experts (gov, law enforcement, heads of orgs) to create a protocol for safety and security across a variety of situations (bomb threats, angry parents, active shooters), using a “fire drill” method to educate and communicate the protocol/plan with the entire community.
- Engage mental health professionals and Jewish leadership in discussions with families focused on using rational and logical thinking to focus on the “why” of Jewish education.

How might we reassure Jewish parents, so they gain the confidence to participate fully and safely in Jewish communities with their kids?

- Ensure that our institution provides training and information that is transparent and accurate, and that creates clear expectations in a loving and Jewish way.
- Physical security improvements.

How might we help children and young families feel more secure and be more secure in order to balance “welcoming” vs. safety?

- Offer first-responders free access to create a community where their presence is visible, and so these responders are familiar with our people and facilities.
- Video surveillance system with facial recognition that presents a welcome message on a monitor for kids that has a cartoon style with sound and a “please check in” message for those not recognized.

POLITICAL OR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

How might we effectively create and use coalitions of religious, civic and political groups to enhance our effectiveness in combating antisemitism and anti-Israel bias?

- Create coalitions to advocate for legislation that enhances the protection of minority groups. Pass bill to allow for the designation of domestic groups as terrorists. *
- Expand programs to bring civic leaders to Israel with systemic follow-up programs (i.e., civil rights trips, border trips). *

How might we educate policymakers on the negative impact of antisemitism throughout the greater community?

- Engage and align with “allies” to work together on common issues – support advocacy efforts, reach out to other groups and advocate on their behalf, grassroots program (e.g., Stranger to Neighbor); Latino/Jewish Alliance; Black/Jewish Roundtable. *
- Execute multi-pronged media campaign denouncing antisemitism, racism, and hate; engage celebrity influencers.

How might we educate civic leaders to advocate for democratic values?

- Invite civic leaders into Jewish spaces for dialogue and vice-versa (going into civic spaces).
- Facilitated table-top discussions with diverse participation.

COLLEGE CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

How might we help Jewish university students feel safe on campus while feeling included and empowered?

- Intentional dialogue with a facilitator to explore educational opportunities, safe space; invite voices of authority.
- Normalization through engaging marketing experts, third-party validators, film stars, social media influencers, Israeli Arabs.

How might we help teens develop a positive Jewish identity to prepare them for college?

- Find an online solution to meet them where they are. Jewish social network; influencer videos; mentoring; relevant, compelling content; video games with incentives.
- Create an immersive experience (i.e., a 3-day music festival); appeal to all teens.

How might we educate and empower college students to feel comfortable with/proud of their Jewish identity?

- Roundtable of Jewish leaders on campus that brings different Jewish organizations together.
- Initiatives that meet students where they are and engage them in communities with other students with similar interests—the chavurah model on campus.



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