



NETWORK
of Jewish Human
Service Agencies

2019 U.S. & Canadian Recommendations for NJHSA Public Policy Priorities

The Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA) is the membership association for 140+ non-profit organizations that provide a full range of human services for members of the Jewish community and beyond in the United States, Canada, and Israel. The Network is the leading voice for Jewish human service organizations, the go-to resource for advocacy, best practices, innovation, and partnerships. As NJHSA strengthens and supports member agencies that serve their communities through a wide range of human services, its public policy priorities reflect identified needs within these service areas. NJHSA's public policy priorities* for 2019 include:

*The following priorities are listed in alphabetical order; not in order of stated priorities.

Aging: Empowering older adults to age with dignity and an enhanced quality of life by:

- Supporting access to home- and community-based services such as affordable and accessible transportation, nutrition, affordable housing, supportive services, respite and family caregiver support through programs to promote aging in place;
- Providing older adults the opportunity to live in their own homes and communities safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level;
- Promoting funding research and services for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia; and
- Reducing barriers to senior employment.

United States:

- Protecting the integrity of the U.S. Social Security insurance program;
- Supporting Older Americans Act programs.

Canada:

- Advocating for policies to strengthen and expand access to palliative care in Canada, following the passage of Bill C-277.

Children and Families: Sustaining services by:

- Supporting resources and protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and harassment, including particular at-risk populations such as children, people with disabilities, and older adults;
- Supporting programs that help families meet their basic needs;
- Maintaining policies and programs which support both domestic and international adoption; and
- Supporting and affirming full Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Questioning (LGBTQ+) inclusion and equality.

United States:

- Supporting programs that help families meet their basic needs, like the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant and the Social Services Block Grant program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Disability: Advocating with and on behalf of people with disabilities across the lifespan by:

- Encouraging full inclusion and physical accessibility for all aspects of life and in the workplace;
- Supporting job training and integrated, competitive employment while allowing for choice;
- Promoting funding and policies for recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion; and
- Advocating for affordable and accessible transportation, housing, supportive services, respite care for caregivers, and the right of all people with disabilities to live in and receive support in their own homes and communities.

United States:

- Promoting educational equality for students with disabilities and robust funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- Safeguarding and enhancing the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Canada:

- Improving access to the federal Disability Tax Credit, particularly for people with non-physical and/or episodic disabilities that make obtaining employment difficult.
- Advocating for increased federal efforts to support employment opportunities for people with disabilities, such as by expanding summer employment programs for youth with disabilities.
- Engaging the Government of Canada and all parties on Parliament Hill to support and offer constructive policy suggestions on the Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81).

Employment & Workforce: Helping increase the diversity and number of North Americans receiving education or training toward joining the workforce by:

- Supporting continued funding to help address adult education and workforce training for all individuals to successfully enter and succeed in the job market; and
- Supporting legislative policy to enhance employment opportunities for older workers.

United States:

- Supporting continued funding and reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to help address adult education and workforce training.

Gun Violence Prevention and Response Efforts: Addressing the impact of gun violence on the communities and populations we serve by:

- Advocating for increased funding for mental health services, peer support for teens, and societal education on gun violence, including but not limited to domestic violence, suicide, and mass shootings;
- Promoting policies that support safer communities and training for law enforcement and other helping professions on the traumatic impact of gun violence, especially on children and in underserved communities; and
- Supporting access to quality mental health care for every person in need, including survivors, their families, first responders, and the broader communities impacted by the traumas inflicted by gun violence.

Healthcare: Protecting long-term care, mental health and wellness initiatives, and the health safety net for all by:

- Accessing health information technology funding for behavioral health and long-term care;
- Promoting mental health services, including full mental health parity;
- Supporting efforts to bring increased prevention and treatment options for those struggling with the impact of opioid, substance abuse, and other forms of addiction;
- Supporting incentives to transition those living in nursing homes and other institutions into less restrictive settings;
- Advancing preventative measures and promoting efforts that would reduce the number of uninsured; and

United States:

- Protecting U.S. Medicare and Medicaid;
- Reauthorizing the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project, offering states Medicaid incentives to transition those living in nursing homes and other institutions into less restrictive settings.
- Opposing efforts to turn the Medicaid into a block grant or voucher, privatize Medicare, or cap health entitlements;
- Supporting funding for the U.S. Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) on state and federal levels.

Canada:

- Advocating for the preservation of conscience rights of physicians who object to physician-assisted dying in Canada; and
- Advocating for provincial governments across Canada to pass legislation banning discrimination on the basis of genetic test results within their jurisdiction (in light of the uncertain status of the federal Bill S-201, which is currently before the courts).

Holocaust Survivor Assistance: Easing the lives of survivors of the Holocaust by:

- Safeguarding the critical needs of Holocaust Survivors through funding, partnerships, supportive services, and enhancement of safety net services that promote their dignity, strength, and empowerment; and
- Promoting policies to address the unique social welfare, healthcare, and emotional needs of survivors.

Canada:

- Continuing to urge relevant European embassies in Canada to pass legislation to allow Survivors to secure restitution for properties and assets stolen during the Holocaust and encouraging the Government of Canada to continue raising this issue directly with European governments.

Housing: Advocating for the expansion of affordable housing options for low-income and at-risk populations, including older adults, people with disabilities, refugees and other communities:

- Promoting social and economic services to low- and moderate-income tenants and homeowners, older adults, and persons with disabilities;
- Combatting homelessness across age groups, income levels, and sexual orientations; and
- Advocating for programs that include housing preservation and stabilization efforts, crime prevention initiatives, and commercial revitalization activities.

Canada:

- Urging federal and provincial governments in Canada to earmark a set allocation of affordable housing funds for people with disabilities, with a specific earmark of 5% of all affordable housing funds for those with developmental disabilities.

Hunger & Food Assistance: Ending food insecurity by:

- Supporting both kosher and non-kosher food banks, home meal programs, and congregate nutrition sites;
- Protecting and strengthening supplemental nutrition assistance and child nutrition programs; and
- Promoting initiatives supporting the needs of those who struggle with daily challenges of food insecurity.

United States:

- Protecting and strengthening the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and child nutrition programs;
- Promoting initiatives that support the needs of the millions of Americans who struggle with the daily challenges of food insecurity.

Immigration Reform and Protecting Refugees & Asylum-Seekers: Carrying out the tradition of “Welcoming the Stranger” and affirming our Jewish values and history by:

- Advocating for robust funding that supports the integration of refugees in their new communities;

United States:

- Promoting comprehensive immigration reform and policies that support family unity in immigration reform and provide protection for undocumented immigrant youth brought as children;
- Advocating for the continuation of refugee resettlement programs;
- Advocating for safe, humane and legal asylum systems and the refugee resettlement program; and
- Supporting Jews and other religious minorities fleeing persecution by extending the Lautenberg Amendment.

Canada:

- Supporting the government initiative to make Canada’s immigration system more inclusive for people with disabilities, and continuing to advocate for an end to any remaining barriers that make it difficult for applicants with disabilities to immigrate on the basis that they would pose an “excessive demand”; and
- Advocating for a constructive Canadian role in addressing the situation of African asylum seekers in Israel.

Institutional Support: Supporting interests and goals of human service organizations by:

- Advocating for reduction of barriers in obtaining disaster assistance for individuals and organizations;
- Advocating for funding to improve the security of human service organizations;
- Promoting policies that improve education, respectful workplaces, staff development, and retention in the social services sector.

United States:

- Protecting the existing charitable tax deduction, advocating for a new “above-the-line” charitable deduction for those who do not itemize, opposing any further limitations on the itemized deduction, and expanding the IRA Charitable Rollover;
- Opposing restrictions on the advocacy rights of charities while preserving the Johnson Amendment which prohibits charities’ intervention on behalf of or in opposition to political candidates.
- Safeguarding charities from regulations that threaten to reduce charitable activity;
- Instituting safeguards that prevent houses of worship from proselytizing or using other prohibited forms of religious practice to deliver publicly-funded social services;
- Advocating for nonprofit access to public funding streams to build and support infrastructure.

Canada:

- Advocating for changes to Canada’s national census (on which Jewish Federations and agencies significantly rely for planning) to address a deficiency in the “ethnic/cultural origin” question that led to the massive underreporting of the Jewish “ethnic” population in the 2016 census;
- Advocating for continued federal and provincial support across Canada for Jewish and other ethno-specific service agencies, particularly those working to combat poverty, and urging governments to continue engaging these agencies in policy development;
- Advocating for greater federal and provincial support for at-risk minority communities across Canada to cover the costs of security for their facilities (including houses of worship, schools, and community centres); and
- Advocating for amendments to Canada’s federal tax laws to recognize the value of volunteering.