



# NETWORK of Jewish Human Service Agencies

## 2019 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.

**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.

**Disability Rights:** 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.

**Employment & Workforce:** Helping increase the diversity and number of individuals 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.

**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
- Advocating for funding to support the programs for children’s health insurance at all levels of government.

**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, health care, and emotional needs of Holocaust survivors.

**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 by:

- 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.

**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.

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

- 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;
- Supporting Jews and other religious minorities fleeing persecution; and
- Advocating for robust funding that supports the integration of refugees in their new communities.

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

- Advocating for reduction of barriers in obtaining disaster assistance for individuals and organizations;
- Safeguarding charities from regulations that threaten to reduce charitable activity;
- Opposing restrictions on the advocacy rights of charities while preserving laws which prohibit charities’ intervention on behalf of or in opposition to political candidates;
- 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;
- Advocating for funding to improve the security of human service organizations; and
- Promoting policies that improve education, respectful workplaces, staff development, and retention in the social services sector.