



NETWORK
of Jewish Human
Service Agencies

2020 Canadian Public Policy Agenda

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. Network agencies provide assistance and services to the Jewish community, and to other diverse communities. The Network is the leading voice for Jewish human service organizations, the go-to resource for advocacy, best practices, innovation, and partnerships. The NJHSA advances advocacy priorities at multiple levels of government, including at the local, provincial or state, and national level. As NJHSA strengthens and supports member agencies that serve their communities through a wide range of human services, its public policy agenda reflects identified needs within these service areas. The areas of focus listed below are intended to be flexible to accommodate the changing health and human services landscape, NJHSA's public policy priorities* for 2020 include:

**The following items 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:

- Advocating for the Government of Canada to make the Canada Caregiver Credit a refundable tax credit, ensuring that call Canadians caring for relatives with a physical or mental impairment are treated equally.

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, Trans, Queer and Questioning, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2+) inclusion and equality.

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

- Encouraging federal and provincial governments to review and address how tax and other benefits offered to Canadians with disabilities are adversely affected by employment;
- Engaging the Government of Canada to make the Disability Tax Credit criteria more inclusive, the government should work with disability advocates to make the application process simpler, less subjective. And more accessible for individuals and medical professionals alike.

Employment: Helping increase the diversity and number of Canadians in the workforce by:

- Advocating for Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to improve the standard of living and life for all Canadians;
- Promoting a labour force that is highly skilled;
- Promoting an efficient and inclusive labour market.

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

- 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:

- Continuing to level diplomatic pressure on countries in Eastern Europe that have evaded their responsibility to pass meaningful restitution laws.

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:

- Ensuring that the federal Government's national housing strategy is implemented in partnership with the provinces. Ottawa should set a goal of ensuring five cents of every dollar spent on affordable housing goes to units for those with developmental disabilities.

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

- Working to ensure the Government continues to support refugees who are targeted for genocide or persecution;
- As with the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, initiatives to support targeted minorities should draw on Canadian civil society partners as sponsors and volunteers in supporting integration.

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

- 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.