



2023 Canadian Jewish Human Service Sector Public Policy Agenda

Canadian member agencies of the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA) serve as a critical safety net for communities throughout Canada, providing assistance to hungry families and the recently unemployed, care for isolated older adults and persons with disabilities, mental health services for those in distress, and resources for resettled immigrants and those fleeing persecution. NJHSA has established the following as its 2023 Canadian Jewish Human Service Sector Public Policy Agenda and in doing so seeks to address the most pressing needs of member agencies and the clients they serve.

Workforce and Social Services:

- That governments acknowledge and address the crisis in the non-profit sector, including staffing shortages and lack of wage parity in competition with the private sector, and how this reduces operational capacity at a time of continued extreme demand for services.
- That the Government of Canada re-introduce emergency funding for non-profit social services to address short-term urgent capacity needs.
- That the Government of Canada establish a Non-Profit Strategy that will provide the multi-year support needed to stabilize the non-profit sector. This should include:
 - Supporting the training, hiring, and retention of DSW and PSW workers to address the staff shortage and ensure that seniors, including Holocaust Survivors, new immigrants and refugees, especially those with young children hit hardest by the pandemic, and others in need get the care they deserve.
 - Encouraging youth and new graduates to enter the non-profit sector through internship opportunities, wage supports, and educational opportunities.
 - Promoting opportunities for nonprofit employee recruitment and retention including tax credits and grants.

Housing:

- Supporting the continued implementation of the National Housing Strategy to increase capital and operating funding for ethnocultural housing through both new builds and refurbishment of old units.
- Encouraging the building of more affordable housing by advocating for reforms of social service and non-profit housing to make it easier to convert existing units into affordable housing.
- Ensuring that safe and affordable housing is available for vulnerable communities, including refugees and newcomers, those fleeing domestic violence, youth leaving care, and those facing mental health or substance challenges.

Food Insecurity and Economic Mobility:

- Ensuring food security for Canadians by promoting the continuation or increase in support for food programs, including those to provide fresh and healthy food to those in need.
- Advocating for requirements that food security funding programs acknowledge and protect access for ethnocultural communities with religiously mandated dietary requirements, including access to kosher options.
- Calling on government to make sure the needs of the most vulnerable Canadians are included in measures to combat inflation.

The Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA) is the membership association for over 160 non-profit organizations that provide a full range of human services for over 1 million clients each year, including healthcare, employment, residential, and mental health services, as well as programs for youth, families, older adults, Holocaust survivors, immigrants, refugees, asylees, persons with disabilities, caregivers, and domestic violence survivors. NJHSA acknowledges that Canadian member agencies are situated on treaty lands, the traditional lands of the many indigenous nations and peoples within and across Canada. This document was approved by the NJHSA Board on January 9, 2023 and does not preclude NJHSA from responding to or pursuing other timely policies related to core services or client-base, as necessary.



Mental Health and Addictions

- Raising the urgent need for increased mental health and addiction support in Canada and calling on the federal government and provinces to finalize Mental Health Transfer negotiations and implement funding as soon as possible.
- In partnership with federal, provincial, and municipal governments, advocate for the investment in ethnoculturally appropriate care for mental health and addiction initiatives.
- Ensure a specific focus on youth mental health in government support, especially the need to study and address the long-term effects of the pandemic on youth and parents.

Disability

- Calling on the Government of Canada pass the Canada Disability Tax Benefit as soon as possible.
- That legislation and regulations are put in place with the appropriate governments to encourage hiring employees with disabilities, to protect these employees from predatory practices, and ensure that employers are not de-incentivized to hire employees with disabilities.

Skills Training and Newcomer Support:

- Advocating for increased funding to help address adult education, skills training, and technology disparities so that all individuals are able to successfully enter and succeed in the job market, including integrated, competitive employment for persons with disabilities.
- Pressing government agencies to reduce backlogs, especially applications for new immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers that are pending processing by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

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