

## 2025 Canadian Jewish Human Service Sector Public Policy Agenda

*The Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (The Network) is the membership association for over 170 non-profit organizations in Canada, the U.S. and in Israel that provide a full range of human services for close to 2 million clients each year. Canadian member agencies of The Network serve as a critical safety net for communities throughout Canada, providing assistance to hungry families and the unemployed, care for isolated older adults and persons with disabilities, mental health services for all ages, and resources for resettled immigrants and those fleeing persecution.*

*The Network's 2025 Canadian Jewish Human Service Sector Public Policy Agenda seeks to elevate the most pressing needs of Canadian member agencies and the clients they serve. The Network acknowledges that Canadian member agencies are situated on unceded and treaty lands; the traditional lands of the many indigenous nations and peoples within and across Canada. Our history as a Jewish people has taught us about what it means to be displaced and to feel a deep sense of longing and commitment to the land we call home.*

### **Antisemitism:**

- Recognizing that the Jewish community holds a collective historical trauma that must be acknowledged, The Network is concerned about the dramatic increase in antisemitic rhetoric and frequent incidents within the social service sector workplace and the resulting impact on staff and community.
- Using the Government of Canada's IHRA Handbook when providing antisemitism training and ensuring its content is included in all EDI workshops/courses.
- Providing all PSWs/DSWs and those who work in culturally specific environments with training to understand how to identify, call out and report antisemitism.
- Addressing anti-Jewish bias in supportive housing applications and placements.

### **Workforce and Social Services:**

- Working with government to ensure that there is an understanding of the crisis in the non-profit sector, including staffing shortages, retention, wellbeing, and lack of wage parity in competition with the private sector, and how this reduces operational capacity at a time of extreme demand for services.
- Advocating for flexibility in the multi-year funding that agencies require to address under-resourcing and gaps in youth services and mental health supports.

### **Housing:**

- Supporting the continued implementation of the National Housing Strategy.
- 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, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and those facing mental health or substance challenges.

### **Food Insecurity:**

- 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, with a dedicated program for ethno-cultural food services.

**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, including targeted funding for hate crime support and to address the impact of rising antisemitism.
- Work in partnership with federal, provincial, and municipal governments, to ensure investment in ethnoculturally appropriate care for mental health and addiction initiatives.
- Ensure a specific focus on youth mental health in government support, especially in relation to the impact of encampments on university campuses.

**Disability Services:**

- Calling on the Government of Canada to implement the Canada Disability Benefit by July 2025 and to include Jewish agencies in the development of its content and regulations.
- Advocating for improvements to the Canada Disability Tax Credit to better serve those with disabilities.
- Working with government to ensure that that legislation and regulations are put in place to encourage hiring employees with disabilities, to protect these employees from predatory practices, and to 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 can successfully enter and succeed in the job market, including integrated and 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).
- Acknowledge that human service agencies play a key role in newcomer supports, especially ethnoculturally, and should be funded accordingly.