

January, 2019

JCPA Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Vision & Mission, Goals, Approach

Introduction

The concept of ‘community relations’ refers to a strategic approach to relationship building by the Jewish community with key influential groups and leaders including public officials; civic, racial, ethnic and religious leaders; social justice organizations; and media at the local, state and national levels. It also refers to the ability to mobilize the organized Jewish community to action on issues of societal importance and significance to other minorities, thereby serving as a source of grassroots activism for the organized Jewish community.

The community relations field has been a great success story of the American Jewish community in its contribution to American society and to the overall good standing, well being and security of what is probably the greatest Diaspora Jewish community in history. A powerful infrastructure of relationships has been built and maintained with key political, civic, ethnic and religious leaders and organizations, including by playing a leading role in the civil rights struggle and opposing racism and bigotry, as well as efforts to free Soviet Jewry and advocate for Israel.

This relationship-based methodology of engagement remains as important and effective now as it has been for the past seven decades. Nevertheless, given today’s challenges, both external and internal, it’s a good time to examine and update our approaches. It’s time to take stock of the changing nature of engagement such as the use of social media or big data, emerging constituencies, recent ideological shifts and changing patterns of affiliation. It is also time to examine the ‘business model’ of the community relations field in order to ensure its continuity and growth.

The central infrastructure of community relations has been the network of 125 Jewish Community Relations Councils (JCRCs) that exist within communities across the USA; 16 additional agencies; and the four denominations of religious Judaism. This network is hereinafter referred to as JCRCN. The central organization of Community Relations field and the JCRCN is the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) working with the JCRCN and other agencies.

This plan is designed to provide for a robust field of Community Relations serving the long-term security and well-being of American Jewry by improving the capacities of the JCRCN and the JCPA.

Background: Changing Trends

The community relations landscape is being transformed by powerful trends that may affect the long-term security and well-being of American Jewry and represent significant challenges and opportunities for the JCRCN. These trends include:

- **The Jewish community is small and shrinking** relative to a growing and diversifying general population;
- **Israel is becoming a 'wedge issue'** in American politics and subject to growing criticism in key circles;
- **The logic of intersectionality is expanding**, allowing for new coalitions that are anti-Israel, sometimes in anti-Semitic ways that exclude American Jews from key coalitions and spaces;
- **Polarized Jewish community** within a polarized American society over domestic and international issues including Israel;
- **Threats to tolerance and pluralism** by global populist resurgence that makes minority groups more vulnerable, including Jews;
- **A growing number of local campaigns that manifest anti-Semitism and delegitimization of Israel.**

Vision

The vision that inspires the JCPA and the JCRCN is of an American society that is devoted to the security and well-being of American Jews and Israel. Realizing this vision requires that:

- **The 'organized' Jewish Community maintains strong, vibrant and credible relations with key external groups and their emerging and current leaders;**
- **The Jewish Community plays an integral role, in coalition with other minorities, in fostering a pluralistic democratic society** especially in intersectional spaces;
- **Support for Israel remains a bipartisan American issue and a 'political firewall' exists around Israel** preventing attacks on its fundamental legitimacy;
- **The Jewish Community is able to work together around common causes** in spite of the deepening political divides in American society;

Against this backdrop, we envision **the community relations field and, within it, the JCPA and JCRCN to be indispensable to the wellbeing and security of local and national Jewish communities.**

Mission

The mission of JCPA is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of American Jewry in a just, tolerant and pluralistic America and its continued support for Israel as the nation state of the Jewish People by inspiring, leading and representing the JCRCN on common public policy agenda.

Purpose

The purpose of the JCPA is to be the hub of the JCRC Network by:

- **Playing a leading role in managing community relations** on behalf of the organized American Jewish community;
- **Serving public interests of the American Jewish community** on issues of concern at the local, state and national levels e.g. dealing with hate crimes and anti-Semitism;
- **Working in common cause with other communities reflecting core values of the Jewish community** e.g. on civil and human rights, anti-discrimination, religious freedom and separation of church and state;
- **Providing forums for diverse voices in the Jewish community to manage disagreements and build consensus on public policy matters;**
- **Supporting the JCRCN** and empowering the community relations field through education, training, infrastructure investments, research and strategy, programming and advocacy.

Approach: A 3-step process for 2019-2023

The challenge of community relations is rapidly evolving due to powerful technological, political, demographic and social changes. Furthermore, crises in community relations have taken place more frequently and in varied locations.

Hence, **this strategic plan emphasizes the need to build robust and versatile capacities for community relations at the local level**, emphasizing the crucial significance of the continental spread of the JCRCN, especially in smaller communities, as well as the ability of the JCRCN to generate state and national-level 'network effects'.

Hence, **by 2023, the goal of this strategic plan is for the JCRCN to have the capacities to address current and emerging challenges in the field of community relations in the US.** Toward that goal, we devised a three-step approach:

- **Step 1:** Strengthening the foundations and capacities of JCPA (see **Annex A**)
- **Step 2:** Building the backbone of the JCRCN by focusing on mid-sized JCRCs (staff of 2-7 with a budget over \$250k) and developing the model of 'regional hubs'; (see outline of model JCRC in **Annex B**)
- **Step 3:** Scaling excellence across the JCRCN

Goals for 2019-2023

- **Goal 1: Developing Infrastructure for excellence:**

By 2019: Design the JCPA infrastructure for a high-performing national hub in the following areas:

- **Leadership and playbook team** developing and disseminating best practices on operation, management, technology, social media, fundraising, talent and leadership development, qualitative and quantitative measurement tools and budgets;
 - **Thought leadership unit** to create and disseminate knowledge on high level topics and concerns to the entire network and to help apply them on state and local levels;
 - **Programmatic team** to create and share programs for the entire field, including by modeling local successful initiatives;
 - **Public policy and Israel advocacy team** to develop public policy priorities engaging member agencies legislative offices and other influencers on local, state and national levels. This team will be working out of both DC and New York;
 - **Technology team.**
- **Goal 2: Build capacity of mid-sized JCRCs (in accordance with model JCRC)**
 - By 12/2019: Have an agreed definition of a 'Model JCRC'
 - By 2020: Have 10 JCRCs who fit the criteria of a 'Model JCRC'
 - By 2023: Have 75% of JCRCs fit the criteria of 'Model JCRC' and 95% JCRCs committed to the model en-route to deploying it
 - **Goal 3: Scaling excellence across the JCRCN (2020-2023)**

Economic Model

- The long-term economic model of the JCPA is based on a combination of JFNA and federation allocations, JCRC dues, private foundations and donors;
- The long-term economic model of the JCRCs is based on a combination of allocation by their federation, potential national support from JCPA, JFNA or large federations, private foundations and donors;
- Hence, the value-proposition of JCRCs to their federations and of the JCRCN to the Federation System (JFNA) needs to be modeled and fundraising capabilities need to be developed.

Annex A

JCPA Core Team and Budget

- **Personnel:**
 - Leadership Team (6): CEO, COO, CFO, EAs (2), technical officer)
 - CTO (design of tech solutions to JCRCN needs e.g. web-platform) (1)
 - Program and Policy Team / Thought Leadership Program (4)
 - Communications (1)
 - Affiliate engagement (3)
 - Development (1)
- **Budget (\$3,400,000):**
 - 16 x 150,000 = ~\$2,400,000 for salaries
 - Operations = ~\$1,000,000
 - Current budget = ~\$1,800,000
 - Required addition = ~\$1,600,000

Annex B

Outline of the model JCRC

Community Relations

- Identifies and maps the external community
- Builds relationships and partnerships with non-Jewish institutions and leaders around issues of shared interest (domestic policy priorities)
- Manages vibrant social-media presence
- Sensitive to the political environment and responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges
- Regularly briefs and educates key Jewish community leadership on its activities and provides opportunities for mobilization and advocacy

Government Relations

- Maintains strong relationships with elected officials and policy makers at the local, state and national levels on behalf of the community relations field
- Engages the Federation and its member agencies in its public policy and government affairs work
- Works with local Federation and JFNA to secure government funding for local Jewish social service and security needs
- Works in association with other JCRCs at the state level to ensure coordinated approaches and maximum impact at the state level
- Convenes and partners with JCPA national member agencies to advance Jewish community policy priorities.

Big-Tent Entity

- Convenes diverse Jewish communal voices around the JCRCN mission
- Engenders respect/gravitas in the community (includes important voices and engages in substantive thought leadership and strategic action)

Benefits the JCRCN

- Models successes and shares failures
- Helps identify local trends with national implications

Structure

- Dedicated staff and properly capitalized operation

- Deliberate and strategic operation based on a plan and execution

End.