

JCPA Roadmap to Fight Antisemitism and Hate

At the JCPA2020 Conference, lay and professional participants representing Jewish Community Relations Councils, national Jewish organizations, JCPA board members, and policy experts from around the country engaged in two interactive sessions to build a roadmap to combat antisemitism and hate. Together, they leveraged the expertise and best practices of the community relations field and came up with eight priority strategic areas. JCPA was created in 1944 to fight antisemitism and hate by engaging the Jewish community with the larger society in building a just and pluralistic America.

Deliberations at the JFNA Fedlab convened earlier in the year underscored the positive impact of community relations work in fighting antisemitism. Picking up on this key finding, the JCPA Conference featured and explored multiple best-practice strategies and examples of leveraging community relations to combat antisemitism and hate.

Conference programming launched with a Saturday evening screening of *Who Will Write Our History*, followed by conversation with the movie's writer and director along with representatives of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington and Hadassah to discuss the importance of Holocaust education and their work in that arena.

The Sunday morning plenary session opened with a panel of experts, including Deborah Lipstadt, Eric Ward, and Dove Kent, each presenting ideas on where the community relations field can best make an impact. This was followed by the first of two interactive participant conversations, in which conference attendees shared innovative programs and advocacy strategies within table groups.

The first "Building the Roadmap" session showcased additional strategies and best practices from the field, including JFNA's Fedlab report recommendations on antisemitism; an example of state advocacy on hate crimes legislation in Indianapolis; the development of a diverse coalition to collect hate crime data in Milwaukee; the presentation of a community summit with follow-up action in Cincinnati; and the formation of a center against hate in Rochester.

Click here for the presentations:

- [JFNA Fedlab: How do we fight antisemitism?](#)
- [Milwaukee JCRC: Hours Against Hate](#)
- [Indianapolis JCRC: From the Frontlines: Bias Crimes Legislation](#)
- [Cincinnati JCRC: Driving Out Darkness: Engaging Allies in the Fight Against Antisemitism](#)
- [Rochester JCRC: Levine Center to End Hate](#)

The second session showcased examples of national legislative advocacy best practices. JFNA highlighted the [Non-Profit Security Grant Program](#), and ADL presented on its [Backspace Hate Campaign](#) and the [No Hate Act](#).

A final participant-roundtable session helped to develop out the roadmap, identifying the following eight strategic priority areas of focus. Over the coming months, JCPA will continue to

work with the field, soliciting and compiling a series of detailed recommendations and exemplary programs for each priority area:

Eight Priority Strategic Goals :

1. Strengthen relationships and work in common cause in coalition with other ethnic, racial, and faith communities.

The participants reaffirmed that the community relations model of building strong relationships and working in common cause with other diverse groups is the best way to counter growing antisemitism and hate. By sharing values and building a shared society, communities build trust, friendship, and a strong collective political voice. By advocating against discrimination, for civil and human rights, and helping the most vulnerable, we share our Jewish values of *tikkun olam*. The participants were particularly interested in strengthening Black-Jewish relations, followed by relations with Latino and Muslim communities.

2. Hold courageous conversations within the Jewish community and with coalition partners.

Entering into relationships with others allows us to hold difficult conversations and sensitize each other to antisemitism, racism and hate affecting each community. Learning to raise sensitive concerns can feel risky, but the consequences of not having the conversations can be detrimental in the long run. Courageous conversations can be held individually or in small groups. It is important to hold ourselves accountable and to create constructive educational moments when someone in your network (Jewish or non-Jewish) uses racist tropes and stereotypes.

3. Organize educational programs and summits and develop centers to address antisemitism and hate, building allies in your community and online.

Many diverse communities in the US are feeling vulnerable right now. By organizing local programming with diverse leaders together you can shift the conversation in the community. Such forums can enhance sensitivity and commitment to standing together in difficult times, and further a local advocacy agenda and plan of action.

4. Mobilize and advocate at the local, state and national levels on legislative priorities to combat antisemitism and hate.

It is critical that we leverage our relationships with legislators in combatting antisemitism. There is legislative work to be done to ensure that hate crimes are reported and followed up on in a systematic way, that specific religious and ethnic groups are not targeted, and that law enforcement creates safe communities for all people. To this end, the community relations network should launch, amplify, and prioritize advocacy campaigns in support of legislation, such as the No Hate Act. Such legislation allows us to educate the Jewish community and provides activists with the opportunity to work in coalition with others.

5. **Promote active civic engagement in local and state government, committees, commissions, and NGOs through a Jewish lens.**

The Jewish community relations field has a long history of involvement in local and state civic engagement organizations and governmental structures. Over the last few decades, this has decreased in many communities, creating a vacuum and distance between the Jewish community and other minority communities who are working on issues affecting their communities. Getting involved in local and state efforts, being appointed to committees and commissions, and joining the boards of non-profit organizations wearing a Jewish hat ensures that Jews are part of the conversation.

6. **Work with local and statewide K-12 and higher education students and administrative leadership – both institutional and organizational – to build awareness, educate, and provide curricular and other resources on antisemitism and hate.**

A new study revealed that only half of the US population is aware of the Holocaust. Additionally, antisemitism is not always taught in schools in the same way as racism, bigotry, and xenophobia. The Jewish community relations field should work with school officials at all levels to facilitate the adoption of curriculum and training on Jewish history, discrimination, the Holocaust, and civil approaches to solving conflict.

7. **Support increased awareness and understanding of communal security needs and build out the capacity of securing both Jewish and other institutions.**

The Jewish community has been successful in advocating for an increase in governmental funding for security to ensure the safety of Jewish institutions and people. As we strengthen relationships with law enforcement and advocate for security, we should also advocate for support for other diverse and vulnerable communities.

8. **Educate and unite the Jewish community on the distinction between criticism of Israel and antisemitism.**

The Jewish community continues to be polarized around Israel. The Jewish community should create constructive conversations highlighting the various distinctions. A curriculum around the IHRA working definition of antisemitism can be used to draw attention to when criticism of Israel crosses the line into demonization and delegitimization.

Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), a network of 125 local Jewish community relations councils and 17 national Jewish agencies, advocates for a just and pluralistic America, Israel's quest for peace and security, and global human rights.