



2012 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) represents 155 Jewish Federations and over 300 independent Jewish communities across North America. JFNA's Washington office brings the Federations' voice to Capitol Hill and the White House, advocating for life-saving and humanitarian assistance in the United States, Israel, and 60 other countries around the world.

Safeguarding our nation's fiscal health while protecting the most vulnerable—JFNA understands that all solutions to the debt crisis require shared sacrifice and should be balanced while promoting economic growth, reducing the budget deficit, and creating jobs. Spending cuts should not unfairly target the most vulnerable. JFNA promotes reasonable changes to ensure that Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security remain solvent, but Medicaid must not be turned into a block grant or a capped entitlement. Any reform of the tax code should not reduce the charitable tax deduction and other giving incentives. JFNA believes that new state fiscal relief and access to public funding for non-profit infrastructure projects will spur economic recovery.

Protecting Medicaid, Medicare, and the health safety net—JFNA advocates for improving the quality and delivery of Medicaid and Medicare, in part by rebalancing them to promote greater access to home- and community-based services and more care coordination between social service programs and health care providers that treat patients with chronic conditions. JFNA supports enhanced access to healthcare for the uninsured, pragmatic long-term care financing solutions, and additional health information technology funding for non-profits.

Empowering older adults to live healthier, more independent, & more engaged lives—JFNA supports initiatives that effectively serve older adults such as: reauthorization of the Older Americans Act with a preference for specialized (including kosher) food; innovative home- and community-based services and the Community Innovation for Aging in Place Program; access to quality transportation and affordable housing for older adults; new support systems for Holocaust survivors; secure Baby Boomer retirement policies; and increased relief and services for family caregivers.

Maximizing incentives for charitable giving and supporting interests of nonprofits—JFNA protects the charitable contribution deduction and supports making the IRA Charitable Rollover permanent. JFNA opposes restrictions on the definition of what constitutes a charity, burdensome new tax requirements, limitations on nonprofits advocacy, and impediments to nonprofit operations, particularly those relating to Donor Advised Funds and Supporting Organizations.

Promoting the international interests of the Jewish federations—JFNA works to promote a strong, vibrant Israel and robust US-Israel relations, in part by combating the assault on Israel's legitimacy and sovereignty. JFNA advocates preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. In addition, JFNA works to support and protect Jewish communities around the world.

Safeguarding the Jewish community from terrorism—JFNA developed and champions the Department of Homeland Security's Nonprofit Security Grant Program and the integration of nonprofits into the overall homeland security infrastructure.

Securing federal funding for community programs—JFNA garners federal support for innovative and transparent Member-directed projects such as Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities supportive service programs (NORCs), the Family Caregiver Access Network (FCAN), and other community-based human service initiatives.

Advocating on behalf of persons with disabilities—JFNA advocates for individuals with disabilities, including affordable and accessible supportive housing, job training and employment opportunities, transportation programs, and respite care for caregivers. JFNA supports full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and the Community First Choice Option. JFNA promotes adequate research and funding to understand Alzheimer's disease and developmental disabilities, particularly Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Speaking out for children and families—JFNA raises awareness on a range of children and family issues, including day school and early childhood education, after-school programs, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, and nutrition to promote wellness. JFNA works to combat domestic violence and elder abuse. JFNA promotes mental health services and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Block Grant.

Sustaining community services to alleviate poverty—JFNA advocates for assistance for economically vulnerable Jews and others in need, supporting critical programs such as the Social Services, Community Services, Community Development Block Grants, promotion of affordable housing, the Workforce Investment Act, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. JFNA promotes efforts to combat domestic hunger, stock kosher food banks and soup kitchens, and strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. As a founding member of the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, JFNA is the advocacy leader in obtaining short-term emergency assistance for individuals and families.

Coordinating rapid and effective disaster and emergency relief—JFNA leads an extensive network of service providers who can quickly mobilize, coordinate, and deliver funds, personnel, and counseling to combat disasters. JFNA works with government agencies and community service organizations to ensure disaster relief is appropriately targeted.

Assisting immigrants and refugees—JFNA works with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society to advocate for the needs of refugees.

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