



Understanding Jewish Community Relations Councils (JCRCs) & Jewish Federations' Government Affairs Policy Priorities

Overview of Jewish Federations

The Jewish Federation of Omaha is part of a system of 146 Jewish Federations and hundreds of Jewish communities. Our local leaders raise and distribute nearly 3.5 million dollars annually to build and sustain a thriving, safe, and welcoming Jewish community. Federations are the backbone of Jewish communal infrastructure, supporting the community through advocacy, funding, and services. The Jewish Federation of Omaha also plays a critical role in shaping public policy by engaging with government leaders at all levels, - promoting education, civic engagement, and fostering connections between American Jews, Israel, our greater communities and Jews everywhere.

What is a JCRC?

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) serves our Jewish Federation in matters of public policy, advocacy, and civic engagement. JCRCs are vital components of the Jewish Federations' efforts to advance the interests and values of our community by cultivating relationships with elected officials, government agencies, law enforcement, civic leaders, and coalition partners. JCRCs advocate for Jewish interests, combat antisemitism, promote interfaith dialogue, and protect the rights of all religious, -ethnic, and marginalized communities. JCRCs address key policy issues impacting the Jewish community and strengthen relationships with elected officials and civil society organizations. Key functions include:

- **Advocacy:** Representing Jewish concerns on public policy issues on the local, state, and national levels, including antisemitism, Israel, and religious freedoms in areas such-as education, local government, civil society, businesses, unions, and professional associations.

- **Community Engagement:** Serving as a bridge between Jewish and non-Jewish communities, strengthening relationships with a focus on fostering connections through interfaith groups and collaborative efforts.
- **Crisis Response and Prevention:** Coordinating efforts with the Federation security director and external partners to address threats to Jewish communities.

Key Government Affairs Policy Priorities

The Jewish Federation of Omaha advocates for a number of key issues including:

- **Combating Antisemitism:** Combating antisemitism demands urgent government action and a coordinated approach at all levels—federal, state, and local—through legislative efforts and executive actions that address this growing threat. JCRCs not only work with government officials to help forcefully combat antisemitism in their communities but also educate elected officials on the many manifestations of antisemitism and how it can (and must) be meaningfully addressed.
- **Supporting Israel:** Supporting Israel by working with local lawmakers to deepen ties between the US and Israel and push back against anti-Israel bias. This includes opposing the BDS movement and local efforts to divest from Israel, strongly advocating for the release of hostages, and ensuring Israel has the means to defend itself.
- **Supporting Holocaust Survivors:** Ensuring that Holocaust survivors, diverse older adult populations with a history of trauma, and their family caregivers receive support to live with greater dignity and an enhanced quality of life by promoting person-centered, trauma-informed care.
- **Safety & Security:** Protecting, expanding, and creating state-level Nonprofit Security Grant Programs to ensure Jewish communities and other threatened communities feel safe and are able to congregate amidst growing threats posed by antisemitism and extremism. Ensuring local nonprofits have the means to effectively secure their facilities.
- **Health Care, Services for Older Adults, People with Disabilities, & Others with Significant Needs:** Safeguarding long-term care and safety net support programs, including but not limited to protecting Medicaid and Medicare; advancing programs and services to enable people with disabilities to achieve maximum independence, community, and inclusion; strengthening access to mental health and healthcare, including supporting innovations that increase accessibility and fiscal responsibility; supporting reproductive health and the ability to follow personal religious beliefs; and supporting programs for older adults.
- **Charitable Protections:** Encouraging the efficient and responsible administration of tax policy to support and encourage philanthropic activity.