

Jewish Federation
OF ST. LOUIS
FUNDER. COMMUNICATOR. CONVENER.
For our community - now and in the future



A GUIDE TO THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF ST. LOUIS' PRIORITIES

Updated January 2022



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Guided by our Core Commitments, we explore community needs, we create plans to address the needs, we raise and invest (grant) financial resources, and we evaluate our impact.

INTRODUCTION	1
VIBRANT JEWISH COMMUNITY	3
WELL-BEING AND SAFETY	7
CONNECTION TO ISRAEL	11
INFRASTRUCTURE	16



INTRODUCTION

Jewish Federation of St. Louis' mission is to “mobilize the Jewish community and its human and financial resources to preserve and enhance Jewish life in St. Louis, Israel, and around the world.”

In 2017, our Board of Directors approved a new strategic plan outlining a fundamental change of process to bring greater focus to our work and enhance the impact of our work. The plan established our four Core Commitments.

CORE COMMITMENTS

Expand and strengthen an **engaged, vibrant, and flourishing** St. Louis Jewish community

Secure the **well-being and safety** of individuals within the St. Louis Jewish community

Strengthen our **connection to Israel** and the Jewish people worldwide

Develop the **financial & human resources** and **infrastructure** needed by our community





INTRODUCTION

In this document, you will find the strategic direction of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis explained through our four Core Commitments and corresponding priorities established by the Board of Directors. With these Core Commitments and priorities in place, we have a defined path toward fulfilling our mission.

These priorities will guide and inform Federation's needs assessments, plan development fundraising, community investments, and evaluation. Prioritization within each of the Core Commitments is a dynamic process and will evolve as the needs of the community change.

This booklet outlines prioritized areas for each Core Commitment and gives a brief description of each priority area. You will see that within each Core Commitment, a list of priorities has been organized into high, medium, and low. Higher priorities will receive more time, effort, and resources. Federation cares about all of these priorities. Please note that this guide is not a needs assessment.

Expand and strengthen an engaged, vibrant, and flourishing St. Louis Jewish community

FROM THE 2017 STRATEGIC PLAN

- **Promote a vibrant Jewish community** for us here and now, and into the future, because we find Jewish life – in all of its diversity – of value as part of our lives, well lived. Foster a Jewish community that is compelling, inclusive, and welcoming to every generation, family, and individual circumstance in all of its religious, geographic, and personal diversity. Promote valuing what it means to be Jewish in ways that lead to Jewish identity enduring among present and future members of our community.
- **Deepen and expand Jewish education.** Invest in, support, and/or create serious, deep, and attractive Jewish educational opportunities with trained educators and compelling speakers. Ensure that all approaches to Jewish life are developed, religious and non-religious.
- **Build and support Jewish community and social networks** to increase engagement. Invest in, support, and/or create community gatherings, events, and experiences that offer the potential to engage the widest cross-section of our community, whether together as a whole or through the cultivation of smaller groups having common interests. Meet people where they are.
- **Mobilize around Jewish values**, e.g., improving the world, caring for the needy, welcoming the stranger, and promoting social justice. Invest in, support, and/or create efforts to strengthen our region on the basis of Jewish values, recognizing that our community cannot thrive unless the entire region is strong. Expand engagement both within the Jewish community and with external groups, mobilizing our community to promote regional sustainability and economic growth where consistent with our overall mission.



This Core Commitment includes many of the ideas that we find central to our mission of strengthening the St. Louis Jewish community.

Needs assessments for these priorities will examine the social, cultural, and spiritual/religious needs of the prioritized populations.

Consideration will be given to formal and informal education, camps, youth groups, community-based events and programs, volunteer opportunities, recreational options, and engagement within and outside the organized Jewish community and in the grassroots communities.

A crucial part of an engaged, vibrant, and flourishing Jewish community is being welcoming. A welcoming community is inclusive, accessible, and pluralistic in the aggregate.

Through our Strategic Plan and Community Impact work, we have identified two strategies that we believe will help us achieve our Core Commitment of a vibrant Jewish community. These strategies could be implemented on their own or incorporated into an organization's existing work and will continue to be used in evaluating outcomes and impact:

STRATEGIES

Creating a welcoming and inclusive community

An inclusive environment is one in which members feel respected by and connected to one another, where all members contribute to the formation of the group's goals and to the realization of those goals. This strategy includes efforts to make our local Jewish organizations more inclusive to individuals who have not historically felt fully part of the local Jewish community, including people with disabilities, people of varied racial backgrounds, people who identify as LGBTQ+, immigrant populations, interfaith couples and families, and newcomers to St. Louis.

Promoting regional progress

This strategy includes investing in, supporting, and/or creating efforts to strengthen our region **on the basis of Jewish values**, recognizing that our community cannot thrive unless the entire region is strong. Through this work, we can expand engagement both within the Jewish community and with external groups, mobilizing our community to promote regional sustainability and economic growth where consistent with our overall mission.

PRIORITY AREAS – OVERVIEW



■ LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

High: Moderately engaged

Medium: Highly engaged

Low: Unengaged

■ LIFE STAGE

High Priorities

- Early childhood and families with young children
- Elementary, middle, and high school students and their parents
- Young adults

Low Priorities

- College students
- Empty-nesters
- Older adults

PRIORITY AREAS – EXPLANATION

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL

These refer to the level of engagement of a program or initiative's target audience.

■ **High: Moderately Engaged**

Those who are moderately engaged may belong to a congregation or support an organization but do not have as strong of a connection with the Jewish community. They are oriented toward the Jewish community to some degree but are intermittent participants in organized Jewish events.

■ **Medium: Highly Engaged**

Those who are highly engaged can be described as active members of organizations or congregations who identify strongly as Jewish, and participate regularly in cultural, social, and religious events.

■ **Low: Unengaged**

Those who are unengaged may identify as Jewish but have little other connection or involvement with the Jewish community.

LIFE STAGE

Life stage refers to the target population(s) of a program or initiative.

■ **High Priorities**

- Early childhood and families with young children
- Elementary, middle, and high school students and parents
- Young adults

■ **Low Priorities**

- College students
- Empty-nesters
- Older adults

Secure the **well-being and safety** of individuals within the **St. Louis Jewish community**

FROM THE 2017 STRATEGIC PLAN

- **Care for those in need.** Strive to ensure that the material and spiritual needs of those within our community are met in a manner permitting them to maintain their basic dignity. Invest in, support, and/or create efforts to meet the basic needs of our community members. Recognize the special obligations we have to meet – uniquely Jewish needs and our general obligations as Jews to anyone in need.
- **Foster communal safety.** Promote the safety of the St. Louis Jewish community through ongoing anti-bias education, security training, and other means. Invest in, support, and/or create programs that support our community's safety through physical infrastructure investment, coordinated safety practices, and sharing of information. Support the teaching of the lessons of our history to help combat individual and institutional bias wherever it exists.

STRATEGY

Access to Care

One strategy that will help us achieve the well-being and safety of individuals in the St. Louis Jewish community is access to care. The St. Louis Jewish community has access to a robust ecosystem of health and social services. However, not all members of the community have the knowledge or means to access such services. Increasing access would contribute to the overall well-being of our community.

This strategy crosses all priority areas and should be incorporated into needs assessments and planning.

PRIORITY AREAS – OVERVIEW



HIGH PRIORITIES

- Older Adults at risk
- Safety net for those living in or near poverty
- Safety and security
- Mental health

MEDIUM PRIORITIES

- Disabilities

LOW PRIORITIES

- Physical health
- Hospice/end-of-life care

PRIORITY AREAS - EXPLANATION

HIGH-LEVEL**■ Older Adults at Risk**

Older adults experience unique challenges related to social isolation, loneliness, transportation needs, changing financial situations, and declining health, among others. Also included in this priority are the family members caring for older adults. The pressures and risks of family caregiving: burnout, compromised health, depression, and depletion of financial resources are a reality of daily life for many families in our community.

■ Safety Net for Those Living In or Near Poverty

We consider households that earn under 150% of the Federal poverty level to be poor. We consider households that earn between 150%-250% of Federal poverty level to be near poor. Poor/near poor households in the Jewish community face many challenges, including food insecurity and barriers to accessing Jewish life. Economic development and economic empowerment are strategies for helping people out of and preventing poverty. It is also important to provide a *safety net* for people experiencing temporary hardship due to either unanticipated crises or unexpected life challenges.

■ Safety and Security

Hate crimes in the U.S. are on the rise. Jews in America are the target of 58 percent of all religiously motivated hate crimes in the U.S. despite constituting a mere two percent of the population, newly released FBI statistics for 2020 have shown. The data shows that Jews constitute the third largest target of hate crimes out of all minorities in the entire country, more than Hispanics, Muslims, Asians, and virtually all other groups. As Jews continue to be the most targeted population for domestic terror attacks, the threat of cyber-terrorism is continuing to grow. The safety of our community depends on establishing and maintaining protective infrastructure and combating antisemitism.

■ Mental Health

Mental health includes a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. This priority includes prevention and treatment for individuals experiencing mental illness and often encompasses addiction and abuse.

PRIORITY AREAS – EXPLANATION

MEDIUM-LEVEL

■ **Disabilities**

Disability is an umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. There are many types of disabilities including cognitive, developmental, intellectual, mental, physical, and sensory or some combination.

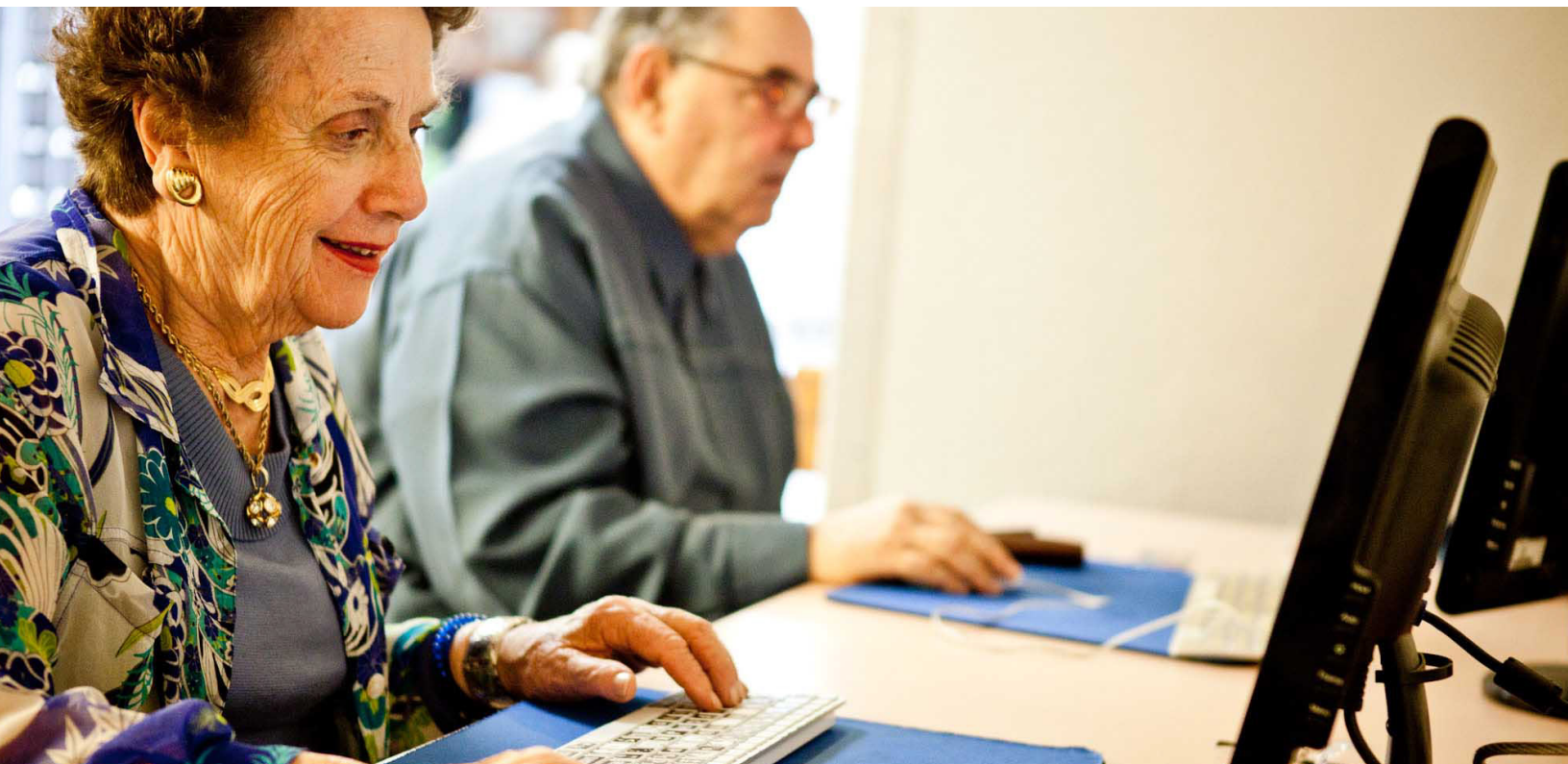
LOW-LEVEL

■ **Physical Health and Wellness**

Physical health and wellness is a broad category encompassing activity, nutrition, and disease that disproportionately affects Jews.

■ **Hospice/End-of-Life Care**

The Jewish community has specific responses to and needs around end-of-life care, death, burial, and mourning. When a Jewish individual is in hospice, it is helpful for staff to be knowledgeable and sensitive to Jewish religious and cultural preferences.



Strengthen our **connection** to **Israel** and the Jewish people worldwide

FROM THE 2017 STRATEGIC PLAN

- **Express support for Israel** in terms reflected in its own aspirational Declaration of Independence: as a refuge for all Jews and defense against antisemitism; as a source of flourishing for the Jewish People; and in a manner consistent with human rights and justice for all. Encourage and model respectful and inclusive dialogue of a wide range of views. Support economic growth in both Israel and our region through investment and policy advocacy. Promote Israel advocacy through a broad-tent approach.
- **Strive to ensure that Israel remains a vibrant, democratic homeland** for the Jewish people. Invest in strengthening its core institutions to preserve its democratic civil society and pluralistic character.
- **Recognize our collective responsibility as Jews** to invest in, support, and/or create efforts to connect with the Jewish People globally, through service, education, and cultural and economic exchange.



PRIORITY AREAS - OVERVIEW



HIGH PRIORITIES

- Israeli civil society
- Social welfare
- Israel education and engagement

MEDIUM PRIORITIES

- Trips for influencers

LOW PRIORITIES

- Palestinian/Jewish co-existence
- Urban development in the Israeli periphery
- Economic development/ combating BDS

PRIORITY AREAS - EXPLANATION

HIGH-LEVEL

■ Israeli Civil Society

This priority encompasses both Jewish pluralism and Arab-Israeli/Jewish-Israeli shared society:

Jewish Pluralism: The duality of civil and religious legal systems in Israel has far-reaching ramifications, especially in terms of the personal status of Jews in Israel related to issues of conversion, marriage, divorce, and the status of women as well as the status of various denominations of Judaism in Israel. We also recognize the importance of supporting diversity in practice and observance and the ability for Israeli Jews to choose how they want to express and observe Judaism.

Arab-Israeli/Jewish-Israeli Shared Society: How Israel strikes a balance between being a Jewish State and a liberal democracy is the subject of much ongoing discussion and debate. Israeli law provides for equal rights for all citizens, regardless of religion. The history and reality of that guarantee has been a challenge since the State's founding. Arab-Israelis experience unequal educational and economic opportunities compared to Jewish Israelis.

■ Social Welfare

Promote social welfare projects within Israel and around the world. Our interest in social welfare extends beyond the local community. This priority includes work around the world.

Yokneam and Megiddo: The focus of Federation's social welfare work in Israel has been in our partnership city and region of Yokneam and Megiddo, which we share with the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. In Yokneam, social welfare strategies are targeted at uplifting and integrating Jewish residents of Ethiopian descent. Current work in Megiddo focuses on multiple moshavim in the region and is intended to support at-risk youth and their families.

Empowerment of People from Minority Populations and Disadvantaged Communities: Israel faces social and economic divides between larger urban centers and more rural and underserved parts of Israel. These divides affect access and quality of health care, access to social services, educational and professional opportunities, and earning capability. Recognizing that women often experience the most significant impact of social and economic inequality, targeted efforts are in place to provide support and services to women from all parts of Israeli society. Another area of interest is the educational and economic divide between Haredim (Ultra-Orthodox) and Arab Israelis and other sectors of Israeli society.

PRIORITY AREAS - EXPLANATION

HIGH-LEVEL (cont.)

■ Israel Education and Engagement

Israel Education and Engagement are often inextricably linked. We continue to believe in the importance of the local community having strong connections to Israel. We are committed to supporting education about Israel within St. Louis and local engagement activities and programs, including travel to Israel, to strengthen connection to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

A broad range of learning and engagement experiences can create fundamental pathways to inspiring individuals' knowledge and commitment to Israel and, in turn and by extension, a connection to the Jewish people. Data shows that travel to Israel can have a significant impact on Jewish identity and connection to Israel. Recognizing that many of our community members will not travel regularly to Israel, we also believe in the importance of investing in bringing Israelis and Israel Education to St. Louis.

Educational experiences that draw on Israel's richness and diversity, presented and shared by dynamic, informed, and sensitive educators and ambassadors, can be transformative. When internalized, substantive educational experiences can lead to the development of informed and meaningful relationships with Israel and an understanding of the ways in which Israel is a core part of Jewish identity.



PRIORITY AREAS – EXPLANATION

MEDIUM-LEVEL

■ **Trips for Influentials**

While most people in St. Louis will never have a chance to visit Israel first-hand, they can be impacted by others who do go. Influentials might include leaders in the arts, education, rabbis, interfaith clergy, and other local leaders with influence.

LOW-LEVEL

■ **Palestinian/Jewish Co-Existence**

Many believe that a commitment and path to co-existence is a prerequisite to bring to an end the long-standing conflict between the Israelis and their Palestinian neighbors.

■ **Urban Development in the Israeli Periphery**

Within Israel, there is a growing movement to reduce housing costs and encourage renewed urban development by focusing on those parts of the country outside of the urban core and providing models for integrated residential areas. These include multi-faith and multi-ethnic projects in the north, the south, and parts of the center of the country.

■ **Economic Development/Combating BDS**

The Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions Movement, also known as BDS, was started in 2005 by Palestinian non-governmental organizations to encourage divestment from and international action against Israel until Israel meets what the BDS Campaign describes as “Israel’s obligations under international law.” Supporters of BDS compare the movement to the anti-apartheid struggle and compare the situation in Israel to apartheid era South Africa. Critics of BDS reject the analogy of Israel to an apartheid state and reject the anti-Zionist tone and rhetoric of some of the BDS leaders and their efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel.

Develop the **financial & human resources** and **infrastructure** needed by our community

FROM THE 2017 STRATEGIC PLAN

- **Financial Resources:** Help identify and achieve donors' philanthropic goals by taking a donor-centric, advisory approach that aligns community needs with individual passions and interests and incorporates Jewish philanthropic values. Grow not only the Annual Campaign, but also targeted, legacy, and foundational giving. Report on and celebrate Federation's total fundraising impact on the community, including the Annual Campaign, targeted gifts to Federation, targeted gifts to other community organizations obtained with Federation assistance, grants, and legacy and foundational giving.
- **Human Resources:** Identify, recruit, train, and develop exceptional human resources, and support collaborative workplaces in the community that are recognized as great places to work. Create a leadership map and pipeline for lay and volunteer leadership, within Federation and the broader community, investing in best practices that will lead to organizational development.
- **Community Infrastructure:** Leverage space, technology, and communications infrastructure for the benefit of all who are served and to attract engagement in the community. Find opportunities to build shared services that increase efficiency and impact, and decrease duplication and overlap.



PRIORITY AREAS – OVERVIEW



■ HIGH PRIORITIES

- Recruit and develop lay leaders to serve the Jewish community
- Attract and retain high quality professional staff for Jewish organizations
- Promote and increase opportunities for collaboration among Jewish organizations and service agencies

■ MEDIUM PRIORITIES

- Strengthen the organizational capacity of Jewish organizations and service agencies
- Address need for effective marketing and communication efforts across Jewish organizations

■ LOW PRIORITIES

- Address physical building space needs in the Jewish community
- Financially support national organizations for their basic infrastructure and operations

PRIORITY AREAS - EXPLANATION

HIGH-LEVEL**■ Recruit and develop lay leaders to serve the Jewish community**

Developing lay leaders is essential to creating strong, sustainable organizations and a strong community. Many organizations depend on lay leadership to accomplish the missions of the organizations through their work and wisdom as well as their wealth.

■ Attract and retain high quality professional staff for Jewish organizations

Identifying, recruiting, training, and developing exceptional human resources are at the crux of this core commitment. We know that positive relationships with supervisors, making meaningful contributions to the work, and being paid competitive salaries are primary factors in worker retention. Providing opportunities for learning and growth also contribute to attracting and retaining staff.

■ Promote and increase opportunities for collaboration among Jewish organizations and service agencies

Imagine what could be accomplished if more of our Jewish organizations were working together, in ways both big and small. Increased collaboration may lead to more efficient service delivery, reduction in duplication of services, greater overall reach, and stronger organizations and staff. Collaboration may also lead to things like cooperative agreements or pooling around HR and benefits functions. Joint purchasing and shared services could also be a focus here.



PRIORITY AREAS – EXPLANATION

MEDIUM-LEVEL

■ **Strengthen the organizational capacity of Jewish organizations & service agencies**

Many organizations struggle with needed business functions. Sometimes this is because of leadership's lack of business knowledge and sometimes because the organization has a small staff or budget and cannot meet these needs effectively.

Other organizations perform well in this area but seek to continuously grow, enhance, or improve their work. Business functions that fall into this area, often referred to as “back office” functions, include human resources, accounting, data use, IT support, grant writing, development, and evaluation.

■ **Address need for effective marketing & communication efforts across Jewish organizations**

Both large and small organizations have expressed the need to expand their reach through broader marketing efforts. As a community, we need to make it easier for people to know where to get services and how to engage Jewishly.

LOW-LEVEL

■ **Address physical building space needs in the Jewish community**

Organizations must consider their physical space needs as their constituencies change in size or location, as buildings age, and as technology changes. Buildings also need to accommodate people of all abilities.

■ **Financially support national organizations for their basic infrastructure and operations**

This priority recognizes that many local groups have national affiliates, as does the Federation. National organizations, or parent organizations, can provide support to the local affiliates such as technical assistance, advocacy, and resources. National organizations depend on local communities to reach broader audiences and local communities depend on national efforts to help set priorities, leverage resources, create influence, and strengthen the fabric of the North American Jewish community.



Jewish Federation

OF ST. LOUIS

FUNDER. COMMUNICATOR. CONVENER.
For our community - now and in the future

JFedSTL.org

For more information, please reach out to
Mindee Fredman at MFredman@JFedSTL.org.