

The United States National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism

A Resource Guide for NCJW Local Sections



Dear NCJW Section Leaders,

Attempts to harm, and even annihilate, the Jewish people are as ancient as Jews themselves. In the Hebrew Bible, Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites in Egypt and murdered their infants. Amalek attacked the most vulnerable of those recently liberated—elders, children—when they were wearily traversing the desert. Haman issued a genocidal decree because Mordechai wouldn't bow down to him—only to God. The stories go on and on. But just as we have fought back historically in every way that we could, so, too, do we today—and now we have support and solidarity from the highest ranks of our national leadership.

The Biden Administration recently released a sixty page report and action plan titled The US National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. This strategy is the product of months of research, analysis, meaningful dialogue, and input from more than a thousand stakeholders, including National Council of Jewish Women CEO Sheila Katz.

The meetings were sobering. Not only are American Jews victims in the majority of religiously motivated hate crimes, but acts of antisemitism are on the rise and, alarmingly, antisemitism has become increasingly normalized in American society.

But there is also much to feel good about: Despite the presence of deep and unrelenting antisemitism, Jewish achievement continues to grow, as does the sheer number and diversity of people who are deeply committed to combating antisemitism.

Overall, we are heartened by the actions outlined in this document and its “whole-of-society” approach, which calls on all Americans to counter and take action against antisemitism. This commitment, and the larger strategy, are important steps forward.

NCJW worked hard with partners to get to this point, but we know the real work starts now in our local communities and with allies, partners, family and friends. Together we must do our part to build communities and a country where Jews can live without fear.

We look forward to continuing this dialogue and working closely with you to learn from and support your local communities as we dive into this work together.

All our best,

Rachel Falulkner, Director of National Campaigns and Partnerships
Laila Hirschfeld, Director of Engagement and Leadership

The National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism

The National Strategy is a sixty page document, outlining the ways the Biden Administration plans to deploy the whole government to counter antisemitism in America. Here are some quick facts, and an “at-a-glance” of the plan.

What We Know About Hate

- **Hate is on the rise.** The United States has recently experienced an alarming increase in antisemitic incidents, among other acts of hatred.
- **Hate is intentional and targeted.** Despite accounting for less than 3% of the population, American Jews are the victims of 63% of reported religiously motivated hate crimes, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
- **Hate takes many forms.** In America today, Jews experience antisemitism in many forms, including online harassment, vandalism of Jewish spaces and cemeteries, bomb threats, and violent attacks against Jewish institutions and people.
- **Hate has been normalized.** According to a survey from AJC (the American Jewish Committee), 69% percent of American Jews noticed antisemitism online in 2022. One contributing factor to this reality: These views are far too often legitimized by public figures—making this language feel more acceptable for others in their daily lives and giving comfort to those who seek to engage in antisemitic acts, including violence.
- **Hate is driven by conspiracy.** The report notes that “while many American Jews identify as a vulnerable minority group, especially as antisemitism surges, Jews tend to be assailed for having too much privilege or too much power.”
- **Hate grants permission for more hatred.** For, “antisemitic conspiracy theories are often foundational to white supremacy as well as numerous other violent extremist ideologies.”

“While antisemitism most directly and intensely affects the American Jewish community, antisemitism also threatens the democracy, values, safety, and rights of all Americans. The hatred of Jews shares much in common with other forms of hate, such as racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny; it also has unique characteristics that require tailored responses and can manifest distinctively.”

Core Principles of the Plan

- **It has a 12-month timeline.** The strategy outlines more than one hundred new actions that executive branch agencies have committed to take in order to counter antisemitism—all of which are planned to be completed within a year.
- **It is both historic and comprehensive.** This strategy report represents the most ambitious and comprehensive U.S. government-led effort to fight antisemitism in American history.
- **It requires all of us, together.** The Strategy relies on all of society to combat antisemitism, including: actions coordinated across the Executive branch; best practices for addressing antisemitism as it manifests in individual acts of hate and systemically, at its roots; and calls to action for public officials, private sector leaders, and Americans from all walks of life.

The Four-Pillar Strategy

1. To increase awareness and understanding of antisemitism — including its threat to America — and broaden appreciation of Jewish American heritage.

“Without awareness of antisemitism and education about the threat it poses, Americans across society cannot identify and address antisemitism.”

2. To improve safety and security for Jewish communities.

“We need a more holistic approach to improve safety and security for Jewish and other communities—one that prevents violence against Jewish communities and results in accountability, deterrence, and an effective response.”

3. To reverse the normalization of antisemitism and counter antisemitic discrimination.

“This Administration is committed to reversing the tide of normalized antisemitism by mobilizing a diverse and broad chorus of stakeholders to speak out and act against antisemitism at the national and local levels.”

4. To build cross-community solidarity and collective action to counter hate.

“Antisemitism and other forms of hate do not operate in isolation from each other; nor should the communities they target.”

Turning Strategy into Action

The plan does an excellent job of outlining specific opportunities for communities and local governments to come together to combat antisemitism. This is why it is especially crucial that NCJW's voice helped to build the strategy from its inception, and why we must also continue to shape the discourse and implement the tactics contained within the document. Below you'll find specific opportunities for action, as well as reflection questions to help you turn the strategy document into a plan for action.

Opportunities for Action

Pillar 1: To increase awareness and understanding of antisemitism, including its threat to America, and broaden appreciation of Jewish American heritage.

- Intellectual framework: Read [“Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism”](#) by Eric Ward and “Why Do White Supremacists
- Ask employers and other institutions (universities, etc.) to review their diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) programs to ensure full inclusion of antisemitism analysis, understanding and training.
- Hold employers accountable for best practices to prevent religious discrimination and to honor workplace religious accommodation requirements—especially in light of the recent Supreme Court ruling (*Groff v. DeJoy*) strengthening religious freedom protections for workers.
- Write op-eds or letters to the editor in your local paper about key Jewish American milestone moments; to educate about the insidious and subtle nature of antisemitism; and/or to educate about Christian hegemony (for example, about the cultural alienation non-Christian children often experience in December.)
- Push your local municipality to host a Jewish Cultural Festival, and/or to ensure that Jewish representation at any cross-cultural arts, food, literary, etc. festival. (And ensure that Jewish cultural representation isn't only Ashkenazi!)
- Increase community Holocaust education through local/regional Holocaust education centers and museums, with an emphasis on upstanders.
- Advocate for your state to create a Governor's Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education.
- Call on state and local governments to include Jewish studies in ethnic studies and history curricula, including ensuring that public schools note the positive contributions Jewish Americans have made to our nation at the appropriate moments in learning.

Pillar 2: Improve safety and security for Jewish communities.

- Intellectual framework: [Watch](#) Dove Kent’s talk on “Breaking the Antisemitism Cycle Through Solidarity.”
- Disseminate information on how to report hate crimes locally.
- Strengthen relationships between Jewish communities and local leaders.
- Partner with local leaders to improve hate incident reporting, increase trust, and raise awareness about what constitutes a hate crime.
- Consider applying for a Nonprofit Security Grant, and encouraging your local synagogue, day school, Jewish community center, and other Jewish institutions to do so as well.
- Work with state and local leaders to implement community-based violence prevention programs.
- Work with local governments and businesses to strengthen support and provide assistance to communities that are victims of hate-fueled violence.

Pillar 3: Reverse the normalization of antisemitism and counter antisemitic discrimination.

- Meet with local leaders to educate them on the insidious nature of antisemitism, on its relationship to white supremacy—even when some Jews are white, in that they receive the privileges of whiteness in America—and its relationship to Christian nationalism. Help them to understand what they might even be on the lookout for when it comes to antisemitism.
- Encourage local business, community, civic, and other leaders to speak out when antisemitism and other forms of hate occur in their communities.
- Work with local Christian denominational organizations on addressing antisemitism in theology and scripture, from supersessionism to anti-Jewish portrayals in, and readings of, the Christian Bible.
- Hold powerful and influential social actors to account for their association with individuals and entities that advance antisemitism, and demand meaningful, rather than superficial, amends and repair work.
- Ensure that schools and colleges have clear and transparent mechanisms to report hate incidents and acts of antisemitism, and to support students that are targeted for their identity.
- Hold schools and colleges accountable for treating antisemitism with the same seriousness as other forms of hate.
- Call on state and local leaders to work with Jewish and other religious communities to ensure that calendars for public schools and elections consider the major holidays of religious groups of all faiths, including Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Orthodox Christian, and Sikh communities.

Pillar 4: Build cross-community solidarity and collective action to counter hate.

- Support Jewish civic associations so they can intensify efforts to combat hate, discrimination, and bias faced by other communities.
- Encourage Jewish leaders to speak out publicly and collectively whenever anyone is attacked for their faith or religious identity. Also, a reminder that speaking out must include care for all impacted members of the Jewish community, and that anti-Asian attacks impact Asian Jews, transphobia impacts trans Jews, etc.

“An attack on one must be treated as an attack on all.”

- Encourage Jewish youth groups, day schools, Hillels, and other organizations focused on children and emerging adults to develop and incorporate multi-faith and intercultural programming and social events
- Build and strengthen partnerships with local organizations representing other marginalized groups, including speaking out against attacks on other communities, proactively showing up in solidarity with other communities, developing joint programming and activities, inviting non-Jewish partners into Jewish cultural and religious events, and cultivating personal relationships with local leaders.

Reflection Questions

1. What is your initial reaction to the strategy? What is the first thing that comes to your mind about how you might engage?
2. What would your message have been if you'd been invited in as a stakeholder to share your thoughts as this report was being compiled?
3. How do you see antisemitism play out, in large and small ways, in your work and in your communities? Should different types of antisemitism from across the political spectrum be treated differently? How do you think the report addresses this?
4. What are some useful ways that you have found to think and talk about antisemitism and Israel? What helps you to have a productive conversation with those who think differently from you on this topic?
5. “Antisemitism and other forms of hate do not operate in isolation from each other; nor should the communities they target.” What stories from our tradition relate to the idea of cross-community solidarity?
6. Where do you have influence in your own local community to contribute to this “whole-of-society” effort?
7. How can you talk about safety, security, fear and trauma in your community as you discuss the best way to allocate security resources? How might the idea of armed security be experienced by different members of your community, including by Jews of color?
8. As an NCJW section, what types of tactics and programs might you develop to counter antisemitism?
9. How might you incorporate your efforts countering antisemitism into your existing DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) work? How might you introduce the concept of fighting antisemitism with coalition partners?
10. What do you think is missing from the strategy? What gives you hope?

Additional Resources from NCJW

NCJW Definition of Antisemitism

Antisemitism is a form of oppression that is hostile toward Jewish people. It is systemic oppression that takes many forms, such as, stereotypes and myths about Jews, false conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial, religious intolerance, overt discrimination, physical violence, destruction of Jewish communal spaces and monuments, blaming societal problems on the Jewish people, and holding individual Jewish people accountable for governmental affairs, domestic or foreign.

NCJW believes in a world free from antisemitism in all its forms.

We know this work is messy, uncomfortable, and often difficult. It is with this reality that we offer the following resources to help understand antisemitism and its complex relationship to white supremacy. You'll also find guidance on how to prepare should the pain and violence of antisemitism ever touch any of your communities.

Here are things you can do proactively:

- Reach out to your local Anti-Defamation League (ADL) chapter; you can find your contact [here](#).
- Build and maintain a relationship with your local [Jewish Federation](#) or Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) representatives.
- Know who your contacts at your [local American Jewish Committee \(AJC\)](#) might be.
- Watch [NCJWebinar: Staying in the Fight for Racial Justice](#) featuring Yavilah McCoy, CEO of Dimensions Educational Consulting, and Eric Ward, Executive Director of the Western States Center.
- Watch [this 90-minute training featuring Cherie Brown the Founder and CEO of the National Coalition Building Institute](#) on responding to antisemitism from coalition partners.
- Read this short booklet from T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights: [A Very Brief Guide to Antisemitism](#)
- [Learn](#) what Jews have at stake in dismantling white supremacy, by Eric Ward.
- Check out April Rosenblum's [The Past Didn't Go Anywhere: Making Antisemitism a Part of All Our Movements](#)
- [Develop](#) a more nuanced analysis for calling out antisemitism.
- [Understand](#) why antisemitism and Jewish privilege are actually two sides of the same coin.
- [Dove Kent on Jewish trauma, community building, and how we can only defeat antisemitism in solidarity.](#)
- [An interview with Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg on antisemitism and conditional whiteness.](#)
- [Learn how](#) white supremacy functions in America, and how antisemitism factors in.
- Read the report from Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, [Understanding Antisemitism.](#)

NCJW affirms that:

- We are a multi-racial, multi-ethnic Jewish community, made up of individuals who have a range of relationships to power, privilege, and oppression. We strive to understand antisemitism in a broader analysis of structural power and white supremacy.
- The ways in which antisemitism manifests and functions today originated in medieval Christian Europe; then, as now, antisemitism in the United States and Europe often functions to uphold existing power dynamics by diverting blame for diseases, economic hardship, and other societal problems away from those in positions of power and instead place it onto the Jewish people.
- The Talmud teaches us that we are all responsible for one another (Talmud Shavuot 39a). Therefore, we have a responsibility to speak up when we witness antisemitism by Jews or non-Jews and to work on the ways in which we have, individually and communally, internalized antisemitic tropes and beliefs.
- Antisemitism must be eradicated in all its forms, be it from the left, right, or center, yet we understand the extreme urgency and threat of antisemitism coming from right-wing white nationalist movements at this moment. While we take seriously antisemitism from all political orientations, antisemitism from the far right in the United States causes more bodily harm and serious damage than other forms in the present moment.
- There is room for challenging conversation and debate around Israel; we hold true that criticism of Israel and anti-Zionism are not inherently antisemitic. We also acknowledge that criticism of Israel is sometimes weaponized as a cover for antisemitic beliefs and actions.
- We recognize that Jewish people are often held to different standards than their non-Jewish counterparts with regards to their relationships to and opinions on Israel, particularly in spaces that do not involve work on Israel. Holding Jews to political standards not otherwise required for non-Jewish people in the same space is deeply misinformed and damaging. We seek to build relationships, coalitions, and communities where Jewish people can fully participate as their authentic selves without fear of backlash due to real or perceived relationships to Israel. We also affirm the importance of building coalitions across lines of difference and know that asking that non-Jewish partners, or even Jewish partners, have the same relationships to Israel as we do can be counterproductive.
- Judaism believes that the commandment to love one's neighbor includes holding people accountable as a necessary part of relationships of love, care, and connection. We endeavor to try to remain in a relationship with coalition partners who are still learning and growing in their understanding of antisemitism, and commit to supporting their growth and learning where we are able and when it is appropriate. Like all obstacles that come with being in a relationship with other people, situations like this are often messy and unclear. We look to each other for support in determining the best course of action in any given situation.
- Fighting antisemitism is both a critical part of Jewish liberation and of the larger work of creating a world in which all people are free from oppression and hate. The Torah's assertion that all people are created in the divine image (Genesis 1:27) obligates us to work towards a world that reflects this essential truth.

We remain committed to holding all of these truths together, in all of their complexity.



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