

## 2015 Israel Policy Priorities

The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) represents 151 Jewish Federations and over 300 independent Jewish communities. It is the largest grassroots organization representing the North American Jewish Community to the Government of Israel, Knesset Members and municipalities, as well as Israeli leaders in business, the military, academia, media and the religious community. JFNA's Global Operations: Israel and Overseas Department engages with Israeli leaders on issues of concern to the North American Jews. JFNA's annual Israel Policy Priorities for 2015 include the following issues.

### **Strengthening the Relationship between Israel and the North American Jewish Community**

The relationships built between Federations and Israeli leaders enable Federation leadership to engage with the Israeli government and other institutions on matters of importance to the American Jewish Community and help Israel remain resilient in times of crisis. JFNA's Israel Office works as a strategic bridge helping Israeli leadership understand the nature, work, institutions, developments and important trends within the North American Jewish community.

### **Fostering Social Service Innovation and Sustaining Services for At-Risk Populations**

Federations promote efforts to develop and enhance Israel's social services for the elderly; children and youth at-risk; new immigrants; people with disabilities; and the economically vulnerable. Through long-term partnerships with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency for Israel, as well as other organizations, Federations foster innovative human service initiatives and help ensure adequate funding for Israel's social service safety net.

### **Opposing the Delegitimization of Israel**

Federations advocate on behalf of Jewish communities to confront the delegitimization of Israel around the world. The Israel Action Network, a project of the Jewish Federations of North America and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, counters efforts to delegitimize Israel in North American communities, institutions and campuses.

### **Combating Anti-Semitism Globally and Ensuring the Safety of Jewish Communities**

With growing concerns for the safety of Jews worldwide, Federations, in partnership with local communities and other organizations and coordination with the Government of Israel, staunchly advocate for the protection of Jewish communities from anti-Semitic violence and discrimination, as well as any other threats to the well-being of members of these communities.

### **Promoting Religious Pluralism and Equality of Religious Expression**

Federations advocate for freedom of choice and religious diversity including equality of religious expression in Israel. Seeking to advance both democratic and Jewish values, JFNA supports an inclusive and open society which promotes a culture of mutual respect and tolerance bringing Israel and North American Jewry closer. In partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel and others, JFNA's Israel Office works with senior Israeli officials and leaders to ensure greater freedom of religious expression and acceptance of pluralist values and voices.

### **Bolstering Support to Israeli Nonprofit Organizations**

Federations drive enhancements to the national infrastructure supporting all of Israel's nonprofit organizations through Sheatufim, Strategies for Social Impact, the work of JDC in this field and participation in the Prime Minister's Roundtable for cross-sector collaboration. Federations convene Israeli nonprofits and leadership of the North American Jewish community together both virtually and in-person in Israel and North America. Grants provided by the UIA on behalf of American donors, federations and foundations are overseen by JFNA professional staff.

***Providing Transformative Israel Experiences for Young Adults***

Federations are a primary supporter of immersive Israel experience programs. Federations provide significant financial support for Birthright Israel and MASA Israel Journey programming. Together these programs have brought over 400,000 young Jewish adults to Israel over the past 13 years."

***Delivering Rapid and Effective Israel Emergency Relief***

JFNA leads the response of the Federation movement in times of crises in Israel. JFNA coordinates closely with Israeli authorities, the National Emergency Authority and partner organization to prepare for and effectively respond to emergencies in Israel. Federations have provided over \$450 million in emergency assistance for Israel since 2006, including nearly \$55 million during Operation Protective Edge, funding trauma relief programming, economic development and educational initiatives in areas impacted by conflict.

***Speaking Out for Minority Rights***

As a minority community within the North American landscape, Federations seek to advance democratic values, human rights and tolerance while opposing inequality and discrimination. JFNA builds understanding between the North American Jewish community and Israelis around the complex challenges of dealing with members of Israel's minority and migrant populations, promoting fair and compassionate solutions to address them.

**JFNA Israel Government Relations Staff:**

Rebecca Caspi, Senior Vice President, Global Operations: Israel and Overseas;

Director General, JFNA Israel

Dani Wassner, Managing Director, Government Relations

David Denker, Senior Associate, Government Relations