

Racial Justice Platform Topline Summaries

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) and its network have worked to advance civil rights, end racism, and build an inclusive, fair, and just society since the 1940s. Fighting against racial injustice and discriminatory policies is a cornerstone of Jewish community relations work. This flows from our values as a Jewish people, including the Torah's teaching of *B'Tselem Elohim*, that all human beings are created in G-d's image.

Systemic racism and inequality continue to persist in the United States, manifesting in every facet of our society. This platform, based on JCPA's existing policy resolutions, is intended to compile in one place JCPA's policies in support of racial justice, and seeking to dismantle systemic racism and combat its negative effects. While these policies have been developed individually, the current situation makes it clear that they must be pursued collectively in order to effectively combat systemic racism and inequality.

We acknowledge that this movement is and should be led by people of color and hereby declare our support for and solidarity with our partner organizations. The policies below align with the priorities of NAACP and Urban League. This platform is also intended to aid JCRCs in the pursuit of justice and equity in coalition and common cause with their local partners.

Below are topline summaries of the issues the platform will cover.

Criminal Justice

- The criminal legal system must reflect a rehabilitative and restorative justice approach to public safety to end mass incarceration and its disproportionate impact on people and communities of color. Building healthy, safe communities for all requires investing in noncarceral programs and social services, such as education, housing, employment, health care, and other public benefits that make communities safer and more equitable. This includes reimagining public safety and the role of police in our society.

Economic Opportunity

- Provide the necessary assistance to ensure that every person is able to sustain a basic standard of living. Any comprehensive strategy to combat poverty must include strengthening the assets—from home equity to savings to pensions and retirement accounts—of low-income families, particularly for people of color, historically denied the ability to accumulate wealth and assets.

Education

- Education is one of the most important determinants of lifetime earnings, social mobility, and health outcomes. In a society that prides itself on being the “land of opportunity,” race and poverty should not be the deciding factor in a child's prospects for the future. Ensuring equitable, quality public education, from early childhood education to robust after-school programs and extracurriculars to post-secondary education, is vital in reducing racial inequities and injustices.

Environmental and Climate Justice

- All people have the right to live, work, study, and play in environments free of dangerous air, water, or land pollution, which harms public health and quality of life. Low-income communities and communities of color, both in the U.S. and internationally, should not have to suffer the disproportionate burden of climate change, environmental destruction, and pollution.

Health

- Everyone living in the United States is entitled to quality, affordable, accessible health care, including mental health and addiction services. Race, gender, socioeconomic status, or employment should never be determinative of the quality, timeliness, or outcomes of medical care.

Housing

- Every individual, regardless of race or income, is entitled to a safe, affordable home. No one should have to choose between homelessness or forgoing medical care or going hungry. The fight for full housing is a fundamental aspect of the fight against racism.

Jobs

- Every American is entitled to a living wage with paid sick and family leave, the right to unionize and collectively bargain, and fair pay—and free from wage theft, which amounts to billions of dollars stolen annually, primarily from people of color, women, and young workers.

Voting Rights

- A strong, thriving democracy can only be achieved once all eligible citizens have equal access to the ballot box, unbridged by restrictions or suppressive measures that impede the ability of people of color or low-income people to cast their ballot and have their vote counted. Restoration and modernization of the Voting Rights Act is essential to achieve this goal.