

———— JCPA TOOLKIT ON ————
STRENGTHENING JEWISH COMMUNAL
ENGAGEMENT WITH BLACK COMMUNITIES



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INTRODUCTION

“Somehow we’ve weathered and witnessed a nation that isn’t broken but simply unfinished.”

— Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate, “The Hill We Climb”

We continue to believe in American ideals of justice and equality for all. Our Jewish principles, history, and lived experiences call us to confront all forms of injustice and inequity, and respond to the plight of Black Americans in the 21st Century. The most consequential national racial justice movement seen in decades has emerged from the grievous killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and countless other Black Americans, as well as from the health, economic and other disparities laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of this modern civil rights movement is to achieve racial justice by ending systemic racism and building communities that ensure safety, security, and social equity for all Americans

Based on the Jewish values of *B’tselem Elohim*, that all people are created in the image of G-d, JCPA believes that the Jewish community relations network, to achieve its goals of social equity and justice for all, should fully engage in this 21st Century movement to support civil rights and combat systemic racism and its related impact on physical and economic health, including affordable housing, food security, education, workforce development, access to technology, and voting rights.

We are proud of the Jewish community’s history of fighting discrimination, and we build upon this legacy by mobilizing to end today’s injustices. JCPA has a long-standing commitment to the advancement of civil rights for people of color, with a long history of working with our partners in Black communities. This is demonstrated most recently through the Criminal Justice Initiative launched in 2016; the racial justice resolution passed in 2018; the restorative justice resolution in 2020; and the 2020 pledge to end systemic racism in law enforcement.

JCPA believes that to successfully combat both antisemitism and racism and to achieve these goals requires us to engage in racial justice work with the courage of our convictions. Indeed, absenting ourselves from tables with problematic voices or groups may hurt, not help, the fight against antisemitism.

The Jewish people are a global people who share a rich mosaic of racial, ethnic and cultural diversity. We commit to leading the Jewish community relations field in doing the internal work to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within our own organizations and communities so that we can effectuate social change for American society as a whole.

The resources in this toolkit are intended as guides to help the community relations field navigate the many challenges and opportunities that meaningful engagement in the new phase of the Civil Rights Movement presents. They are a compilation of resources that have been prepared by JCPA to support the network during the most recent Black Lives Matter movement. It has been prepared by the JCPA Task Force on Jewish Communal Engagement with Black Communities co-chaired by JCPA Board Members Leslie Dannin Rosenthal and Lois Frank and Melanie Roth Gorelick, JCPA Senior Vice President.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The following JCPA values and principles were prepared by the JCPA Task Force on Strengthening Jewish Communal Engagement with Black Communities and was adopted by the JCPA Board of Directors. They frame out how we envision our work and hope that they will be useful to other community relations organizations.

Today's civil rights movement (known as "Black Lives Matter") has become one of the most consequential social movements in decades. It is a movement focused on improving the safety and well-being of Black people in the U.S., achieving racial justice, and ending racial disparities in all areas of our society, the next phase of the civil rights movement. JCPA believes that to live out our Jewish values of equity and justice for all, it requires the Jewish community to fully engage in this movement.

JCPA believes that we should engage in civil rights work with the courage of our convictions. We recognize that there may be some individuals among those leading or supporting the fight for racial justice in this country with whom we may disagree; but they should not derail our participation. We should engage with organizations as long as there is agreement on values and principles about hate, bigotry, racism and antisemitism. Only by participating in building relationships and being a partner in this movement can we effectively share our concerns about antisemitism, the BDS movement, or any other issues that might arise.

People from all different generations, racial, ethnic, and faith groups have come together as part of the movement. In our own community, we have Jews from diverse backgrounds who should be partners in leading us forward. We believe that it is the unique responsibility of Jewish community relations agencies (locally and nationally) to work on issues of equity, justice and fairness for all.

Principles

- Despite our commitment to ending racial injustice and the progress that has been made, racism and inequality in the United States persist. It exists throughout our society, including in our economic, health, housing, education, voting, and criminal justice systems—and just about every other aspect of our lives.
- In the current polarized climate, the JCPA Board reaffirms and recommits to its work in ending systemic racism and achieving racial equity and justice. We recognize that this pursuit is not just a matter of conscience or relations with other communities. It requires attention to understanding racism in our society and working for full inclusion of Black Jews and other Jews of Color in our own community.
- Both antisemitism and racism need to be confronted, and we commit to fighting both. Antisemitism and racism sometimes function differently and often require different strategies to combat. We must fight racism -- the systemic marginalization of people of color, which is so deeply rooted in American history and society -- as an exclusive cause and not make it transactional with fighting antisemitism.
- The relationship between Blacks and Jews has evolved over the years and is in a different place now than it was during the civil right movement of the 60s. It is imperative that we

allow ourselves and our allies to learn about the current environment, be willing to take risks and make mistakes, grow together and grapple with challenges as they arise.

- The partners and coalitions with whom we work in the current civil rights movement share our goals around racial equity, however they may include organizations and individuals that could hold views with which we may disagree (e.g. Israel, LGBTQ, reproductive rights et al.). Nonetheless, it is important that we stay at the table and remain focused on our common agenda around racial equity. The community relations responsibility is not to only engage with the people who agree with us, but with people who also disagree and in doing so to build bridges of understanding on that which unites us and that which divide us.
- We continue to reiterate the community relations field's support for Israel as a democratic Jewish state; a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security for both; and human rights for both peoples.

THE STATE OF BLACK AMERICA

(From a May 2020 Op-ed by Melanie Roth Gorelick, JCPA Senior Vice President)

I am sure you are as outraged as I am over the murder of [George Floyd during a violent arrest](#) by police in Minneapolis. This brutality took place on the heels of the murder of Ahmaud Arbery, who was chased and gunned down by armed white men while on a jog in Georgia, and the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor, after police stormed her home and shot her while she was asleep in her bed.

These deaths did not take place in a vacuum. They bring into full view deeply entrenched systemic racism. What's more, they took place amid staggering racial disparities during the COVID-19 pandemic and in our prison system. It is no wonder that the grief-stricken black community is raging in anger and pain.

This is a pivotal moment in our history. As we reboot the Jewish community in the post pandemic world, we must ask ourselves what kind of world we hope to live in and what can we do to safeguard a society that works for justice for all people. We cannot ignore what we [witnessed in these videos](#) and go on with business as usual.

The American Jewish community has a distinguished history of addressing the injustices in our nation. We are proud of our role during the Civil Rights era and our legacy of social action. However, resources for Jewish advocacy on civil rights issues have diminished over the past two decades. I hope that these recent incidents will serve as a call to action.

How can we use our influence and support to further the cause of justice? To answer this question, we must first reckon with the plight of the black community in America and the scale of the injustice and the grim statistics.

- Black Americans are [three times](#) more likely to be killed by police than White Americans. Over the past few years, more than 12 cases have received national attention. The criminal justice system and the “war on drugs” has disproportionately harmed black communities and has brought four decades of mass incarceration upon the nation.
- Black Americans make up only 13% of the U.S. population, yet they [make up 33%](#) of the nation's prison population and are imprisoned five times the rate as white Americans.
- In 2018, more black Americans were uninsured compared to white Americans, 9.7% [compared to 5.4% among whites](#) and reported higher rates of discrimination, when seeking medical care. Those same inequities and pre-existing conditions are also part of the reason the black community is [disproportionately harmed](#) by COVID-19. In 2016, the [average income](#) of white American households was \$171,000, which is 10 times more than black American household's income of \$17,100.

Here are some ideas for what the Jewish community can do to reduce racial inequality and systematic injustice:

We can speak out against racism and killings of black citizens by police and others. The Jewish community has an important role to play with law enforcement, as we have built relationships

with them in securing our own community. We can heal the divide between law enforcement and the black community. At the same time, we can hold law enforcement accountable for the necessary cultural and systemic change.

We can recommit to building a just society by ending racism and racist policies and supporting equal opportunity for all people regardless of their race, religion or color of their skin. We must recognize that these disparities exist along racial lines and not pretend to be colorblind.

We must also advocate on issues of priority to the Black communities. We can play an important role in finding a solution to mass incarceration and several disparities in our criminal justice system. Philanthropies should invest in Jewish advocacy and anti-discrimination work.

We must nurture relationships with emerging leaders of both communities and prioritize the voices of Black Jewish leaders. We must acknowledge that there are Jewish people of all races and make sure that Jews of Color feel fully supported within the Jewish community. Black Jews may feel less welcome in spaces with increased police presence.

Finally, we must educate the Jewish Community about the challenges faced by the black community, so we become motivated to act.

Melanie Roth Gorelick, Senior Vice President, Jewish Council for Public Affairs

ABOUT BLACK LIVES MATTER

Distinguishing Between the Organization(s), the Movement, and the Ubiquitous Phrase:

Today's Black Lives Matter movement has become one of the most prolific social movements in decades. It is a movement focused on improving the safety and well-being of Black people in the U.S., achieving racial justice, and ending racial disparities in all areas of our society. When Jews are asked to march with or just assert "Black lives matter," we are not being asked to "check" our love of Israel at the door or embrace an antisemitic agenda. To most invoking the phrase, Black Lives Matter is an inspiring rallying cry, a slogan, and a demand for racial justice. That fight for racial justice is also a fight for our own multiracial, multiethnic Jewish community.

The phrase "Black Lives Matter" was coined as the Twitter "hashtag" #BlackLivesMatter in response to George Zimmerman's 2013 acquittal in 17-year-old Trayvon Martin's murder. Both his death and Zimmerman's acquittal sparked large-scale protests across the country. The originators of the hashtag, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi went on to found the [Black Lives Matter Network](#) as an organizing platform for activists that emphasizes local over national leadership. The Black Lives Matter network now has 16 chapters.

There are at least two other national groups with Black Lives Matter Network in their titles. Not surprisingly, the overall BLM movement is a decentralized network of activists with no formal hierarchy.

In response to the high-profile police killings of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Tamir Rice in 2015, about 1500 activists, including those with the Black Lives Matter Network, gathered at Cleveland State University to discuss the movement. Out of this meeting, the [Movement for Black Lives \(M4BL\)](#) emerged as a loose coalition of 150 groups, including the Black Lives Matter Network.

In 2017, separately, the Black Lives Matter Foundation was launched, though it is [not affiliated with the movement and it is unclear where donations are going](#).

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) Network and the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) are often mistaken for the other or as one and the same. That is why many Jews mistakenly assert the M4BL platform and its hyperlinks to anti-Israel "resource" materials belong to the BLM network.

[M4BL's 2016 platform](#) has three layers: five macro issues each supported by six or so specific policies that are supplemented with multiple hyperlinked additional "resources." None of those layers – macro position, specific policy steps or additional resources hyperlinks – mentions or is called "Israel" or "Palestine."

Where then does "Israel" emerge? The ["Invest-Divest"](#) platform calls for defunding U.S. prisons and police and instead investing in health and education for Black Americans. None of its six specific policy steps mentions Israel. One of the six hyperlinked additional resources (["cut military expenditures"](#)) deals – hyper-critically – with Israel. (Thus, from the M4BL homepage, if you know precisely where to look, you can still find the mention of Israel.)

[That same “cut military expenditures” document also calls for the U.S. to pay reparations to Somalia, Iraq, Libya, and Honduras, and excoriates U.S. policies on Mali, Chad, Guinea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Niger, Seychelles, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, and Burkina Faso.]

However, the updated and much expanded M4BL [2020 platform](#) – its preamble, 13 platform issues, “demands,” linked resources, and federal, state and local legislative agenda – constituting hundreds of pages, omits Israel.

Meanwhile, [BLM’s 14 Guiding Principles](#) (page 7) and its 2020 goals and focus – indeed, its entire website – makes no mention of Israel, and neither does its platform or its 2020 legislative agenda.

There are, invariably, some Israel critics, even anti-semites, among those leading or supporting the fight for racial justice in this country, as there are among any comparably large group of people. But this fact should not preclude participation in the fight for equality in the U.S. JCPA believes that to counter antisemitism and to live out our Jewish values of equity and justice for all, that the Jewish community should not abandon the largest movement for racial justice in decades because of fear of a position, even one as objectionable as that included in the M4BL platform in 2016, taken by a small faction also participating in that fight. Only by participating in BLM we can effectively share our concerns about antisemitism, the existing call to end military aid to Israel, or any other issues that get thrown in the mix going forward. These positions do not represent the entire movement, only a small group. Supporting this movement does not necessarily entail joining an organization or supporting a specific agenda.

A [June 2020 Pew Study found](#) that majorities across American racial and ethnic groups support the Black Lives Matter movement, and other surveys show rapidly increasing support. In addition, overwhelming majorities view Black Lives Matter as a movement and/or a phrase, NOT a specific organization. People from all different generations, racial, ethnic, and faith (groups have come together as part of the movement. We encourage the Jewish community to work towards civil rights, equity, and justice and actively support the Black Lives Matter movement.

Talking Points on Antisemitism and Black Lives Matter

In June 2020, JCPA prepared the following Talking Points to assist community relations leaders to address Jewish engagement in the Black Lives Matter social protests and the ongoing racial justice movement.

- Racism and antisemitism are not oppositional but rather must be fought together. According to the President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin: “Antisemitism and racism are two sides of the same coin, and we must fight them wherever they appear.”
- The pandemic followed by the Black Lives Matter civil rights movement came directly on the heels of the Jewish community experiencing a rash of antisemitic violence and vandalism. The Tree of Life shootings in Pittsburgh, the shooting in Poway, the murders in Monsey, the killings in Jersey City and the violent attacks in New York, sent shockwaves throughout the Jewish community. Many in the Jewish community are rightly focused on the growing threat of antisemitism and may be slow to pivot to the current focus on Black Lives Matter.
- The pandemic, combined with the killing of George Floyd and other recent incidents of African Americans killed by police action, has highlighted the intense racial disparities in our country in healthcare, policing, criminal justice, etc. This has ignited the largest social movement in our country since the 1960s. This new civil rights movement--called Black Lives Matter--advocates for both policy and culture change on issues of equity and reimagining of public safety. It asks Americans to understand the experience of Black people in America, and to work toward an inclusive vision of America.
- Black Lives Matter should be understood as the new civil rights movement in America, not as a particular set of policies or organizations. The Jewish community is proud of its strong solidarity and participation in the civil rights movement of the past and should be equally eager to engage in the present.
- Many national organizations, and millennials have taken the mantle of Black Lives Matter. However, some in the Jewish community believe that it is antisemitic. Rumors persisting in some segments of our community have spread like wildfire without being based in fact. Black Lives Matter has been accused of being antisemitic, Marxist, a dangerous ideology, creating a tsunami against Jews and Israel and more. What are they referring to? A wedge is being forced between the Jewish and black communities, a wedge of fear. Every movement has its radicals. However, it is unfair, untrue and inimical to our own best interests to characterize the movement as antisemitic.
- One subset of the movement, the Movement for Black Lives, opposes US military aid toward Israel and labeled Israel an apartheid state in its 2016 platform. This is not the consensus position of the entire movement. The Black Lives Matter movement is diffuse and diverse. The majority of action and policy positions, on such issues as poverty, policing, healthcare, food security, and education are determined locally.
- In 2016, the Movement for Black Lives issued a charter that leveled ugly accusations against Israel. We agree that should this issue creep back into Black Lives Matter movement, the Jewish community relations field should strongly oppose it. But we don't believe that such an occurrence should cause us to abandon the civil rights movement of our time.

- We should call out antisemitism when it arises in our coalitions and continue to educate about Israel. Experience has shown that we can have a far greater impact in deterring antisemitism if we are in relationship with leaders and organizations and do not create a vacuum by being absent from the table.
- As Jews, our tradition calls us to act for justice to support our neighbors. This can only happen by knowing our neighbors, understanding their trauma and history, building trust, and working together to reimagine a country that is safe for everyone. It is the same thing that Jews want.
- The Jewish community shares an overlapping agenda with the Black community. This is an asset we should build upon. This moment calls upon the Jewish community to lean in. As stated by NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson on a recent JCPA webinar, “you need to call-in before you can call out”. As stated by civil rights activist Eric Ward, “we must be part of the movement and fight antisemitism where it occurs. But let it not be an excuse for staying on the sidelines”.

How the Jewish Community Can Navigate the Current Political and Social Moment by Eric Ward

In June 2020, Eric Ward spoke to JCRC leaders on the importance of being involved in the new phase of today's civil rights movement and the wrestling and confusion within the Jewish community around what it should do in this moment and how it should lean. Below are some recommendations that resulted from the conversation.

Black Lives Matter is a big, very loose network of individuals and activists from around the country involving both individuals and organizations. People are often confusing hashtags with organizations and networks, and it's leading us to conclusions that could damage the work of building a 21st century Civil Rights movement that centers the Jewish and black community in the United States.

There is an opportunity that could be lost here. If we treat the Movement for Black Lives or Black Lives Matters as if they are David Duke and the Klan, if we treat the antisemitism that arises within that movement as if it's the same antisemitism that's arising from the White Nationalist movement, as if it has the same fervor, intensity and intention, we stand a chance of not only dividing the Jewish Community from the African-American community at a time we need to be tied to one another in common destiny, we could create an irreparable rift generationally within the Jewish community itself. It is important for us to understand that Black Lives Matters is the mantra for Civil Rights in the 21st century.

Black Lives Matter is simply a mantra that says if we lift up those who are most vulnerable in our society--who rate on every life scale in terms of health, education, employment, etc. on the bottom--that we lift all of ourselves up in this moment. Your role in this moment is not to be an ally but to find your own skin in the game, to be a co-conspirator and a partner, to be in partnership in the struggle for civil rights. Something very significant is happening in our country. That means entering into a courageous, curious conversation with one another that doesn't prevent us from finding ways forward.

What Can We Do?

Work in Coalitions - This moment is an opportunity to reconstruct the 20th century civil rights movement. Historically this didn't happen without Black and Jews. We need to work together in coalitions. When you work in coalitions with diverse people you need to know when to draw the lines and to have courageous and uncomfortable conversations. These can more easily take place when you have built relationships working together around common goals.

Advocate Together for Policy Change - In the current Black Lives Matter movement are there at least 1-3 policies that you can support and move on at the local and national level. Be in conversations and active in advancing these policies. When we support Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement we can also push back on antisemitism. Listen to Jews of Color and let them lead.

Build Relationships Especially among Our Younger Generations - Understand the narrative on how we talk about the current civil rights movement and who is leading it. This is a diffuse movement and relationships are really important. Get to know people in your own community. As important as it is to have critical relationships with NAACP and Urban League it is also important to empower younger Black and Jewish people to have relationships where they don't exist. The Black Lives Matter movement is a social one where young people are planting themselves – black, white, Jewish, diverse faiths, etc. When we attack Black Lives Matter, we ostracize ourselves from our own younger generations.

How to Respond to Antisemitism in the BLM When it Occurs?

If there comes a moment where we have a fundamental agreement, then it is important that we have courageous conversations. The current Black Lives Matter movement has no ideology that is the basis for antisemitism. However, the movement is diverse and diffuse and it reflects all levels of that diversity in America. Like sexism, racism it is for sure that antisemitism will be taped into unintentionally. This is an important moment where we most work against these prejudices together.

It is important that we do not hold Israel to another standard then we would hold other governments. People in America critique other governments all the time. However, if an unfair critique is made that makes you nervous and smacks of antisemitism then it is important to fight it where it appears.

The best way of doing this is:

- **Stay engaged.** Talking about antisemitism does get people to shift. It is important to explain that bringing antisemitism into BLM weakens the movement. We want a society where all people can live, love, and work without fear.
- **Educate how antisemitism is driving violence in our country.** There has been a large uptick in antisemitic violence and vandalism in the last 3 years, including violent murders in Jewish institutions such as the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and Poway. We must fight antisemitism and racism together as they interlinked.

Eric K. Ward is the Executive Director of the Western States Center. A Senior Fellow with Southern Poverty Law Center and Senior Advisor with Race Forward, Eric is a nationally recognized expert on the relationship between authoritarian movements, hate violence, and preserving inclusive democracy.

RACIAL JUSTICE POLICY 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 identity, 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, unabridged 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.

GUIDE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS ENGAGEMENT

JCPA and JCRCs around the country have condemned the grievous killing of George Floyd. We are standing with the communities around the country to advocate for equity and civil rights policy change and ending systemic racism in America. Today, we are at an important historical moment that calls upon the Jewish community to stand in solidarity with the Black community. We are currently living through what could be the most significant discussion on racism in the United States since the 1960s. We believe the community relations network has an important role to play.

Are You Ready to Act? Develop Your Game Plan?

For us to be relevant, we must move quickly, which requires Federations and JCRC leadership to join efforts with other civil rights leaders. We recognize that JCRCs around the country are at different stages in their relationships with the Black community and activism on advancing equity, civil rights and criminal justice reform. We have put together this short guide to help you jumpstart your work in this area.

Take Stock of Your JCRC's Relationships with the Black Community

Create a contact list of top influentials in the Black community

- Review who is on your list.
- Update the list so it includes:
 - Jews of Color, particularly Black Jews
 - Leaders of civil rights, Black and faith organizations
 - Legislators, Local black media outlets, and editors and reporters of those media outlets
- Track who you have relationships with and with whom your lay leaders have relationships

Map out the Black community organizations and leaders in your community.

- What issue (s) does each one work on?
- What are their community and legislative priorities?
- Are you in coalitions together working on issue-based advocacy in common cause?
- What are priorities and specific concerns of Jews of Color?
- Who are your “trusted partners” in Black leadership, those whom you would basically do anything for, find a way to get to yes to because of the trust you have developed. Knowing who those folks are in your own community is a key part of having a process for action.

Prepare to Advocate Together on Reform

- Do your homework. Inform yourself and lay leaders about the policy priorities of the Black community in your local area and state
- Vet the legislative agenda with your JCRC (and Federation) leadership.

- Educate them about the priorities, rationale, and experience of Black organizations and leaders.
- Bring in guest speakers and share articles.
- Discuss where there is synergy and overlap of priorities and where there might be differences.
- Be sure to look through a racial justice lens that is needed to erode systemic racism and advocate in partnership with the black community.
- Build consensus to support this work
- Write op-eds for your Jewish paper.
- Educate and mobilize the Jewish community: bring local speakers, experts, and government officials to educate the community. Speakers can include impacted people who are advocates to share testimony. Include a call to action.

Are there major concerns of leadership in both the Federation and JCRC that would delay your ability to act? For certain stakeholders, it might be helpful to frame the issue in terms of Jewish interests and the need for engagement in a diversifying America. Think about how you can dispel fears, especially the concern that within these movements there are anti-Israel or antisemitic voices.

Stand in Solidarity with the Black Community

- Try to include Jews of Color in every stage of your efforts.
- Reach out to the Black leaders in the community for their guidance on what actions and partnerships would be the most helpful.
- When possible, show up with JCRC leaders to programs, protests, and actions organized by the Black community, especially during this critical moment.
- Strengthen relationships among both communities, with a special focus on emerging leaders and community leaders.
- Co-organize joint educational programs, actions and webinars
- Co-author op-eds with Black influentials.
- Actively participate in advocacy for equity and civil rights legislation and criminal justice reform at the local, state, and national level.

WHAT ARE THE RED LINES WHEN WORKING IN INTERGROUP SPACES—COALITIONS, EVENTS, ACTIONS?

The field of Jewish community relations was established to engage the Jewish community in building a just and pluralistic America working in common cause with diverse communities. Much of this work takes place in intergroup spaces and coalitions on specific policies and agendas at the local and national levels. By engaging with diverse partners, we not only pursue universal goals that shape the country we live in, but we also share Jewish values and create trusted relationships.

How Do We Define Red Lines?

While our intergroup work is core to our mission and purpose, there are times when we have to make difficult and challenging decisions. The question before us is: what are the agreed upon red lines for supporting an action, event, or coalition when there may be certain individuals or organizations participating with whom we disagree or even strongly object? In some of these cases, we may already be fully committed to the issue with many colleagues and allies also involved. While there is no universal answer to this dilemma, below are some guidelines to help the JCPA staff, Board and JCRC leadership to make these difficult decisions.

Setting Ground Rules

To preempt a “crises” from arising, we recommend the following ground rules when entering into coalitions and intergroup spaces:

It is important to:

- Differentiate between individual points of view versus the representative view of an organization and/or coalition. There are many examples where the result of staying at the table and building authentic relationships with non-Jewish allies on issues of primary concern to them have resulted in their standing in solidarity with us on our issues in our time of need.
- Actively build relationships that can heal rifts between diverse racial and religious organizations. Learn about each other’s histories and traumas and accept each other’s sincere apologies about past actions or statements in order to move forward with common agendas based on shared values.
- Work with event or coalition leadership to develop agreements among coalition members to a shared agenda that allows all members to be involved. This can include keeping controversial issues off the table. For example, many interfaith coalitions consider the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reproductive rights, et al., third rail issues that may not have consensus in those settings and will only get in the way of the coalitions work.
- Educate and raise awareness about the issues the event or coalition is aiming to address to inspire the Jewish community to value the intergroup work.

- Consider that by not “showing up” we might cede the floor to the extreme voices we are trying to isolate. Our action may have the exact opposite of the intended effect and strengthen the minority voice.
- There may, of course, be times when there are too many problematic voices and that such voices dominate the coalition. It also may be the case that the coalition leadership refuses to make it more welcoming for Jewish groups to participate.

Below is a Checklist to Help Guide Decision-making:

- What is the mission of the coalition, event, or action? Does it match your priorities, and does it provide an opportunity to fight hate and antisemitism and end systemic racism and racial disparities in your community or in the nation?
- How prominent or minor are the problematic voices within the coalition? Are they one of many or do they dominate the coalition membership? How severe are the statements of bigotry or hatred against Jews and other groups?
- When a person involved makes a remark that is considered antisemitic, have there been efforts to reach out and discuss the matter? If so, was the person open to a conversation? Is this a learning opportunity to raise awareness about the matter at hand?
- If there is an ongoing problem with a particular participant? Have you worked with leadership to take concerns “off-line” and try to resolve them through dialogue? (“Call in” is usually better than “call out.”)
- What is the harm that will come to your organization or community by staying involved compared with the damage it could do to your relationship with your allies and partners? How will your leaving be perceived? Is there a “third way”?
- If you decide to stay in the coalition, have you taken steps to inform the community about the work being done by the coalition and your role in it, so they understand your actions to stay at the table?

TEMPLATE FOR PROGRAMMING ON PARTICIPATION IN TODAY'S CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

We are living through an historic time with the COVID-19 pandemic, unprecedented political upheaval, and Black Lives Matter protests still sweeping the nation. This is an opportunity to provide an educational series to jumpstart your JCRC's engagement in solidarity with the Black civil rights community. JCPA has created a template for a multiple session series designed to educate and inspire the Jewish community to engage in today's civil rights movement. This series includes:

- Reviewing Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement of the '50s and '60s to set a common foundation for engagement today
- Learning the Black experience in the U.S., including Jews of Color
- Understanding racial disparities that continue to persist and their impact
- Developing relationships with Black leaders at the state and local level
- Setting a path forward for Jewish engagement on the current civil rights movement.

Each of these sessions can be held by Zoom meetings or webinars.

Throughout this programming, we encourage JCRCs to reiterate that the fight for racial justice is a fight for our own multiracial, multiethnic Jewish community, and it is important that we ensure that our programming and planning include and elevate diverse voices in our community.

Prior to the first session, we recommend that JCRCs circulate a resource list that attendees are encouraged to review, so they can come ready to be active participants.

Session 1: Jewish History in the Civil Rights Movement

This session should be designed to provide a framework and foundational knowledge base for today's Black Lives Matter movement and discussions on Jewish engagement. It should review Jewish involvement with the Black community during the civil rights movement and raise some questions about current and future engagement.

We recommend inviting a local Jewish activist or educator with expertise in the civil rights movement to lead this session. JCPA is also available to assist. Resources that you can build your program and discussion with include:

- [PowerPoint on Jews and the Civil Rights Movement](#)
- [JCPA Webinar: «Black-Jewish Relations: Then and Now» \(A JCPA Civil Rights Mission 2019 Primer\)](#)
- [Jewish Women's Archive: Living the Lesson Civil Rights Legacy](#)

- Movie – *Joachim Prinz: I Shall Not be Silent*, this movie is about Rabbi Prinz from New Jersey who was President of the American Jewish Congress,. Rabbi Prinz was a Jewish leader of the civil rights movement. Prinz worked to organize the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, declaring, «bigotry and hatred are the most urgent problem. There is a small fee for the movie. To access the movie contact Elisa Dell'Amico at edellamico@thejcpa.org. The producer of the movie, Rachel Fisher, is available to speak: <http://www.prinzdocumentary.org/new-blog/2018/2/25/mlk-day-2018>

Discussion Questions:

- Why did the Jewish community prioritize strong engagement in the civil rights movement? How has that experience shaped our community relations work?
- What are the different experiences of the civil rights movement in the diverse Jewish community? What was the role of your local Jewish community? What are you proud of?
- What were some of the challenges for engagement? Are there any similarities to today?
- What do we want our legacy during this moment to be?
- Do we have strong relationships with local Black civil rights leaders?

Session 2: Movie Screening and Discussion on “13th – From Slave to Criminal With One Amendment

Before engaging in today’s Black Lives Matter movement, as well as criminal justice reform efforts, it is imperative to first understand the Black experience in the U.S. from slavery to Jim Crow and the Black Codes to mass incarceration to Black Lives Matter.

- Screen the Netflix Movie “13th - From Slave to Criminal With One Amendment.”
- Moderate an organized discussion afterward. [Click here for suggested discussion questions for 13th](#) (Courtesy of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights).

Session 3: Understanding Structural Racism in America

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated the deep racial disparities and long-standing structural racism that exist in our country. This program should provide an explanation of structural racism and its impacts, and focus on how disparities impact the Black community in your local area and state by hearing firsthand from diverse Black leaders in your communities, who can address issues of local concern as well as current advocacy and legislative priorities that can lead to greater equity and justice.

- Organize a panel with diverse voices in the Black community, such as representatives from JCRC partner organizations like the NAACP or Urban League and local community nonprofits, young activists, Black Jews and other Jews of Color, and civil rights scholars and thought leaders from your state and local area.
- After the panel discussions, you may want to use the Q & A portion to discuss the Black Lives Matter movement and unpack myths and concerns about engaging in advocacy and courageous conversations.
- Post-meeting, we suggest asking people to watch the “Still I Vote” webinar with mothers of Black men murdered by police and their commitment to democracy and voter education. [Click here to view the webinar.](#)

Session 4: Mass Incarceration in Your City and State

Criminal justice reform is high on today's civil rights agenda. The U.S. has the world's highest incarceration rate; 2.3 million Americans are in prison today. Fueled by the "war on drugs," "tough on crime" mandatory sentencing policies, and "broken-windows policing," mass incarceration has a clear racial impact: 70 percent of people in U.S. prisons are non-White. There is significant momentum for reform across the political spectrum. This session should provide a user-friendly overview of the breadth, depth, and key elements of the criminal justice system.

Many in the Jewish community are already involved in the movement to end mass incarceration and find alternatives to ensuring public safety, and can be included in the conversation on what you can do on criminal justice reform in your state and local area.

- To prepare for this session, map out what the major issues on criminal justice reform are in your state and local area. What are current legislative priorities? Are there existing coalitions? Is the Jewish community involved?
- Organize a panel discussion that can both make the case for ending mass incarceration and focus on important policy changes on what needs to take place. Speaker One can give an overview of criminal justice in your local areas, Speaker Two can provide a personal story, and Speaker Three can focus on the opportunity for local advocacy, including the current COVID-19 emergency in prisons and jails.
- Suggested speakers include academics, policy advocates, a previously incarcerated advocate, and a representative from an organization focused on reform. It could be moderated by someone in your Jewish community who is involved in this issue.
- The webinar can be followed up by a discussion on what your JCRC can do.
 - o How do we work with the larger coalitions and advocates in our city and state? Below are some areas to consider:
 - o Advocate for releasing incarcerated people, especially those at risk for COVID-19, and for protections for those who remain. [Click here for recommendations for addressing COVID-19 in prisons and jails.](#)
 - o Help organize or support transportation and gift cards for those who have been released.
 - o Advocate for bail reform and expungement
 - o Make sure your voter education programs include information about candidates running for sheriffs, prosecutors, and District Attorneys, which can have far-reaching consequences across the system.
 - o Should a Jewish coalition be developed to educate the Jewish community on the issues, mobilize engagement, and elevate the Jewish voice supporting reform?

Session 5 - Facilitated Discussion on Today's Civil Rights Movement: A Jewish Call to Action

- What did we learn from the educational series?
- What have we been told is needed from us during this time?
- How can we use this information to be in solidarity with the Black community?
- Where can we make a difference and what compels us to act?
- Who can we partner with and what else do we need to know?
- How do we ensure that Jews of Color are included, and feel included, in all of our strategic planning and action?
- Create a plan of action.
- Share JCPA's civil rights platform aimed to align with Black organizations.

RESOURCES

Compilation of Resources on Racism and Racial Justice

This is a compilation of racial justice and equity resources across a variety of media—from curricula to podcasts—intended to help you educate yourself and your community. Please note that this is a work in progress, and we will continue to update it. Please send any additional resources you would like to see included to Tammy Gilden at tgilden@thejcpa.org.

Table of Contents

- Curricula
- Compilations
- Books
- Films
- Online Articles
- Webinars
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Curricula

- [Scaffolded Anti-Racist Resources](#) for wherever you are in the journey, a working document created by Anna Stamborski, Nikki Zimmermann, and Bailie Gregory
- [Racial Equity Tools](#)
- [Justice in June](#), a color-coded compilation by Autumn Gupta with Bryanna Wallace's oversight for the purpose of providing a starting place for individuals trying to become better allies.

Compilations

- [Racial Equity Tools](#)
- [Jewish Racial Justice Resources](#), compiled by the Jewish Social Justice Roundtable.
- Jewish Council for Public Affairs - Engaging the Jewish Community in Criminal Justice. Make sure to check out [our toolkit with a criminal justice 101](#), which includes a section on policing.
- Temple Beth El, Charlotte, NC – [Resources to Watch, Read, Listen & Notice](#)
- Medium – [Resource Guide: Prisons Policing and Punishment](#)
- Tema Smith - [Compendium of articles on racism and Black-Jewish relations](#)

Books

General

- [White Fragility](#) by Robin DiAngelo
- [How to be an Antiracist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi

- [So You Want to Talk About Race](#) by Ijeoma Oluo
- [The New Jim Crow](#) by Michelle Alexander
- [Me and White Supremacy](#) by Layla F. Saad

Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Reform

- [The End of Policing](#) by Alex S. Vitale (FREE ebook available)
- [Who Do You Serve, Who Do You Protect? Police Violence and Resistance in the United States](#) - Edited by Joe Macaré, Maya Schenwar, and Alana Yu-lan Price
- [Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II](#) by Douglas A. Blackmon
- [Just Mercy](#) by Bryan Stevenson
- [From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America](#) by Elizabeth Hinton

Education

- [Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together In the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race](#) by Beverly Daniel Tatum
- [Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School](#) by Monique W. Morris ([Check out the PBS film, too](#))

Housing and Homeownership

- [Race for Profit](#) by Keeanga-Yamatha Taylor
- [The Color of Law](#) by Richard Rothstein

Films

- [When They See Us](#)
- [Just Mercy](#)
- [13th](#)
- [Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School](#)

Articles

Specific to the Jewish Community

- JCRC of San Francisco - Jewish Diversity, with Ilana Kaufman of the Jews of Color Field Building Initiative - [Identity and Racial Justice in the Jewish Community](#)
- Union for Reform Judaism - [Ways Your Congregation Can Act Now for Racial Justice](#)
- The Forward: [Dear Jewish Community - Here's What to Do Now](#) by Jeremy Burton, Josh Sayles, Lindsey Mintz and Rori Picker Neiss
- The Forward: [My Fellow Jews: Get In the Fight](#) by Melanie Roth Gorelick
- The Forward: [The Jewish Community Is Facing Unprecedented Challenges Here's How We Move Forward](#) by Doug Kahn and Steve Windemueller

- Alma - [20 Books by Black Jewish Authors You Should Read](#) By Emily Burack
- Alma - [Stop Using Israel as an Excuse to Not Support Black Lives Matter](#) By Maayan Belding-Zidon
- Tablet - [Cops Don't Make All Jews Feel Safer](#) by Carly Pildis
- Tablet - [In Light of Rising Anti-Semitism, Rethinking Black-Jewish Relations](#) by Carly Pildis
- Tablet - [Our True Colors](#) By Marra B. Gad
- Jewish Telegraphic Agency - [I helped coin the term 'Jews of color.' It's time for a history lesson](#) by Shahanna McKinney Baldon
- Michael Twitty- on [the connection between Jewish Food and Soul Food as a Jew of Color](#)
- [Black Americans and Jews of color don't need another short-term ally](#) — we need you to join our fight - JTA
- ['Believe us': Black Jews respond to the George Floyd protests, in their own words](#) - JTA
- [Jews of Color and the Policing of White Space](#) - Jewish Currents
- [What White Jewish-led Institutions Can Do For Racial Justice Now](#) - eJewishPhilanthropy
- [transcendingjewishtrauma.com](#) - a powerful resource that we can use to tend to some of the trauma that often overshadows focus and work on racism, among white/Ashkenazi Jews
- [A Call to White People: It's Time to Live in the Answer](#) - The shift from «what's our strategy on this?» to culture change, starting with our own selves
- St. Louis Jewish Light – [No easy answers to systemic racism, but there is much you can do](#)

General

- [Walking While Black](#) (Garnette Cadogan)
- Audre Lorde's [The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism](#)
- Rachel Elizabeth Cargle's [When Feminism is White Supremacy in Heels](#)
- Ta-Nehisi Coates's [The Case for Reparations](#)
- [Why Seeing Yourself Represented on Screen Is So Important](#) (Kimberley Lawson)
- [75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice](#)
- [Resources for White People to Learn and Talk About Race and Racism](#)

Webinars

- Jewish Council for Public Affairs: [JCPA Webinar Series on Equity and Civil Rights](#)
- ["Black-Jewish Relations: Then and Now" -- a Jewish Council for Public Affairs Civil Rights Mission 2019 Primer](#) with Rabbi Shai Held
- JCPA2020 National Conference: [Changing Communities: Black-Jewish Relations in a Time of Growing Antisemitism & Racism](#) with Rabbi Robert Kaplan, JCRC-NY; Carly Pildis, Activist; Rabbi Shais Rishon, Kehilat Ir Chadash
- [We Must Sweep Away the Racism Along with the Broken Glass](#) Featuring Rabbi Adam Kligfeld of Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles, who wrote a [powerful piece](#) of the same name in the Jewish Journal

Podcasts

- [NPR episode about Whistling Vivaldi](#)
- [Side Effects of White Women](#) Podcast Episode with Amanda Seales
- Smartest Person in the Room's episode on [Well Meaning White People](#)
- Code Switch podcast [A Decade on Watching Black People Die](#)
- Still Processing episode on [Kaepernick](#)
- [White Lies](#) (NPR)
- [The 1619 Project](#) by the New York Times
- [Uncivil](#) by Gimlet Media
- [The Witness Podcast Network](#) - Pass the Mic

Jews of Color Organizations and Media

Organizations

- **Be'chol Lashon** – <https://globaljews.org/>
Marcella White Campbell, ED; Lindsey Newman, Dir. of Comm. Engagement
Strengthens Jewish identity by raising awareness about the ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of Jewish people and experience.
- **Dimensions Educational Consulting** – <https://www.dimensionsedc.com>
Yavilah McCoy, CEO and Executive Director
A women and people of color led nonprofit that provides training and consultancy in diversity, equity and inclusion.
- **Jews in All Hues** – <https://www.facebook.com/JewsinALLHues/>
Jared Jackson, Founder and Executive Director
An advocacy and education organization that supports Jews of Color and multi-heritage Jews. To build a future for the Jewish people where intersectional diversity and dignity are normative.
- **Jews of Color Initiative** – <https://jewsofcolorinitiative.org/>
Ilana Kaufman, Executive Director
A national effort focused on building and advancing the professional, organizational and communal field for Jews of Color through grantmaking, research and community education.
- **Jewish Multiracial Network** – <https://www.jewishmultiracialnetwork.org/>
Contact: info@Jewishmultiracialnetwork.org
To nurture and enhance Jewish diversity throughout the community via capacity development, community development, community empowerment, and social capital.
- **Jewish Social Justice Roundtable** - <https://www.jewishsocialjustice.org/>
Abby Levine, Executive Director
The Framework is a tool to help build the capacities of Jewish organizations to be more racially and ethnically diverse, inclusive, equitable.
- **Joyous Justice** – <https://joyousjustice.com>
April Baskin, Founder and CEO
A Black Jewish woman-led, multiracial community-powered social justice and spiritual transformation organization that seeds and leads systemic change and healing.

Selected Articles and Blog Posts

- Armana Ariel, “17 “Things Black Jews are Tired of Hearing,” <https://blavity.com/17-things-black-jews-are-tired-of-hearing/>
- “In Jewish Color,” ongoing series in The Forward, <https://forward.com/tag/injewishcolor/>
- Gloster, Rob, “Jews of Color Stake Their Claim to Mainstream Leadership Roles,” <https://www.jweekly.com/2019/01/25/rising-up-jews-of-color-ascend-to-mainstream-leadership-roles/>

- Green, Ginna “**How to Honor the Legacy of the Jewish and Black Activists Murdered 55 Years Ago**”, <https://forward.com/opinion/426276/how-to-honor-the-legacy-of-the-jewish-and-black-activists-murdered-55/>
- Lawson, Rabbi Sandra and Cephas, Donna “**Racism in the Jewish Community**,” <http://evolve.reconstructingjudaism.org/racism-in-the-jewish-community>
- Lev, Raphael, “**For the Sin of Prejudice: Growing up Jewish as a Person of Color**,” <https://reformjudaism.org/blog/sin-prejudice-growing-jewish-person-color>
- Talve, Rabbi Susan, and Barasch-Hagans, Sarah, “**10 Rules for Engagement for White Jews Joining the #BlackLivesMatter Movement**,” <https://www.truah.org/resources/10-rules-for-engagement-for-white-jews-joining-the-blacklivesmatter-movement/>
- Warnick-Buchdahl, Rabbi Angela, “**Kimchee on the Seder Plate**,” <https://www.bjpa.org/search-results/publication/6466>

Additional Resource Guides/Frameworks

- **Avodah Racial Justice Guide**, https://avodah.net/cms/assets/uploads/2020/08/Avodah_Racial_Justice_Guide.pdf
A 15-page resource guide for nonprofit organizations. including a spreadsheet with suggested consultants and trainers—
- **Jews of Color Initiative Research**, https://jewsofcolorfieldbuilding.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/IOC_bro_052119.pdf and <https://jewsofcolorfieldbuilding.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Counting-Inconsistencies-052119.pdf>

Selected Books

- Alexander, Michelle, **The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness**
- D’Angelo, Robin, **White Fragility**
- Gad, Marra B. **The Color of Love: A Story of a Mixed Race Jewish Girl**
- Goldstein, Eric L. **The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity**
- Kaye, Kantrowitz, Melanie, **The Colors of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diasporism**
- Kendi, Ibraim X., **How to Be an Antiracist**
- Kendi Ibraim X. and Blain, Keisha **Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019**
- Kivel, Paul, **Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice**, (revised and expanded 3rd edition)
- Khazzoom, Loolwa, **The Flying Camel: Essays on Identity by Women of North African and Middle Eastern Jewish Heritage**
- Madden, T Kirra, **Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls**
- MaNishtana (Rabbi Shais Rishon), **Thoughts from a Unicorn: 100% Black, 100% Jewish, 0% Safe**

- Primack, Karen ed., **Under One Canopy: Readings on Jewish Diversity**
- Stavans, Ilan, **Return to Centro Histórico: A Mexican Jew Looks for His Roots**
- Tobin, Diane, Tobin, Gary, Rubin, Scott. **In Every Tongue: The Racial & Ethnic Diversity of the Jewish People**
- Walker, Rebecca. **Black, White and Jewish**
- Wilkerson, Isabel. **Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent**

Videos

- Allie B., “**What Not to Say to Jews of Color**”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xwgzp2DKics>
- Ilana Kaufman, “**Who Counts? Race and the Jewish Future**”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTD6ze1JWcQ>
- Abby Knopp, “**Dignity of Difference: A Place for Everyone at the Shabbat Table**”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMgPBXd1sgA>
- MaNishtana (Rabbi Shais Rishon), “**What Makes This Jew Different Than All Other Jews? Race, Difference, and Safety in Jewish Spaces**”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dZid5Trb5U>
- Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein, “**Passing the Mic**”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Si7U9SC7jmY&t=1s>
- Lacey Schwartz, “**Jews of Color and the American Jewish Community**”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NW1-qu-AUxs>

JCRC Programs: A Snapshot

JCPA has compiled a snapshot of the education, advocacy, partnerships, and diversity, equity, and inclusion programs that Jewish community relations councils around the country are organizing and providing to their local communities and Jewish institutions.

St. Louis Jewish Community Relations Council: The St. Louis JCRC engages in a range of racial justice and equity programming, including education, advocacy, and statements, including semi-regular editorials in the local Jewish paper. The JCRC also maintains a Jewish Coalition on Racial Equity that advises on creating an inclusive and impactful approach for Jewish communal engagement on issues of racism and racial justice. They are currently partnering with local YWCAs on a program to encourage better understanding of race, power, privilege and leadership in a way that builds a habit of learning over 21 days. [Read more coverage here.](#)

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington: The Greater Washington JCRC has assembled an array of resources for getting involved in racial justice work that includes instructions for how to use the materials and engage with partners, along with guides for specific issues areas, such as criminal justice, housing, and health care. They also have information about how their institution can assist community members in this work. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council: The Indianapolis JCRC maintains [a list of racial justice and equity resources](#) for their local community and engages in federal and state advocacy aimed at furthering racial equity, including on policing. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Buffalo Jewish Community Relations Council: The Buffalo JCRC created an ever-changing page of resources to read, listen to, and watch on racial justice, followed by suggestions for how to act, which includes resources for Jews of Color and supporting local Black-owned businesses. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Council: Cincinnati has compiled a list of anti-racism resources and racial justice educational tools that lifts up the voices of Jews of Color for suggested reading, viewing, or listening, for people of all ages. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Colorado Jewish Community Relations Council: As part of its effort to educate the Jewish community on critical public policy issues, the Colorado JCRC is organizing a speaker series focused on issues surrounding systemic racism in many facets of our society—especially those that have been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Program topics included “Black Perspectives on Systemic Racism: An Evening of Personal Testimony,” “Diversity in the Jewish Community,” “Falling Behind: How COVID-19 Is Exacerbating Educational Disadvantages,” and more. Their next panel will be on reparations. [Click here to find out more and watch the recordings.](#)

Jewish Community Relations Council of Seattle: Seattle is creating a [consensus statement](#) on racial equity—a foundation for action that allows them to advocate, stand up, speak out, and build relationships on behalf of the organized Jewish community to the broader community. Seattle has also put together [educational resources on systemic racism](#) and the urgency of action, as well as [on diversity and inclusion in the Jewish community.](#)

Jewish Community Relations Council of Boston: The Boston JCRC is taking to the Massachusetts legislature to advocate for police reform in partnership with local Black leaders and elected officials. [Click here to find out which bills they are supporting.](#) [For their statements related to racial justice, click here.](#)

Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas: The JCRC of Minnesota and the Dakotas has spoken out against the police killings of George Floyd and Daunte Wright, and they are calling for accountability and justice. [Read the statements here.](#)

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater MetroWest: Through JCRC's newly formed Anti-Racism Task Force, they created a [series of educational webinars](#) to deepen our community's understanding of racism, social injustice, and the history of Black-Jewish alliances during the civil rights era, as well as a [curated list of reading material](#) for adults and children as part of an [18-Day Challenge](#). The JCRC has also created a five-part dialogue series for Jewish and Black teens on the history of racism and antisemitism in partnership with our Holocaust Council and our JTeen engagement initiative.

*Want to share your JCRC's programs on racial justice and equity?
Contact us at jcpainfo@thejcra.org.*

Policing

Resources for Understanding Policing

The call for equity and justice is not new for Jews and Jewish organizations. In recent years, JCPA and our constituent organizations have worked for civil rights in a variety of ways and supported policies at the local, state, and national level to address injustices and inequities in the criminal legal system.

At the JCPA2020 national conference in February, our national and local member agencies voted to adopt a [Resolution on Restorative and Rehabilitative Justice](#). The resolution highlights that reorienting our criminal justice system to reflect an approach to public safety that respects the humanity, dignity, and human rights of all people is essential to creating a just society. It recommends that the U.S. invest in noncarceral programs and social services, including additional resources for education, housing, employment, health care, and other public benefits, which will make our communities safer and more equitable.

The recent incidents of police brutality and the protests across the country highlight the critical need to reform policing. The criminal legal system, including law enforcement, suffers from “institutional” or “systemic” racism that often victimizes and traumatizes people of color in the U.S. This refers to racism built into the policies, practices, and cultures across systems or institutions that, *intentionally or not*, chronically advantage or disadvantage a racial group. Understanding that policing suffers from systemic racism is a useful framework because it forces us to examine root causes and long-term solutions. It is not that all individuals are racist—though some clearly are, it is that our systems are set up in ways that harm certain racial groups regardless of the intent of those working in them.

Transforming the role of law enforcement is not a simple task. Many in the Jewish community view the police as essential protection from antisemitic hate crimes and violence, which have increased significantly in the past few years. At the same time, we know that the criminal legal system has disproportionately harmed people of color in our country, including Jews of color. Our work, therefore, must seek to both advance security and reform.

It is important to remember that police and law enforcement agencies are governed by state and local laws and regulations, which means that the vast majority of reform efforts are also concentrated at the state and local level. This provides an opportunity for the Jewish community to engage with civil rights leaders on envisioning safer, healthier communities and advocating for local reforms in partnerships with diverse coalitions.

To help you understand some of the current thinking in the civil rights community and various reform paradigms, we have compiled the following articles, studies, and op-eds. Please note that JCPA does not necessarily endorse the positions set forth in these materials. [Click here for the resource list](#).

Priority Principles for Federal Legislation on Policing

Excerpts from the Statement of Vanita Gupta, President and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, to U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary Oversight Hearing on Policing Practices and Law Enforcement Accountability

[Click here to read the full testimony.](#)

This moment calls for a reckoning with how we have addressed public safety over the last several decades. [...] Now is the time to reimagine a more fair and just society in which all people are safe, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or socioeconomic status.

It is critically important that police departments across the country implement policies and practices that are fair, equitable, procedurally just, and increase transparency and accountability — values that build community trust, improve confidence, and ultimately heal wounds. At the same time, state and local leaders must engage and work with communities to develop solutions to the social and public health problems that for so long have fallen to police to answer.

While many of these changes must be centered at the state and local levels, success will require the leadership, support, and commitment of the federal government, including Congress. [...] Providing more federal resources to tackle issues such as homelessness, mental health, unemployment, disabilities, underfunded schools, disparities in health care and nutrition, and the lasting effects of redlining may be beyond the scope of today's hearing, but they will have a far greater and more lasting impact in making communities safer.

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and more than 400 civil rights organizations [including JCPA] sent a letter to Congress offering eight critical proposals that we believe would move us forward on the path to true transformation. The following recommendations to the Committee are areas where Congress can support local efforts through federal law.

- **Reduce the Use of Excessive Force:** Congress should a) impose a federal standard that use of force be applied only when necessary and only as a last resort after exhausting reasonable options, and incentivize states through federal funding mechanisms to implement this standard; b) require officers to use deescalation techniques, and establish a duty to intervene when witnessing the use of excessive force by others; c) ban the use of force as a punitive measure or as a means of retaliation against individuals who only verbally confront officers, or against individuals who pose a danger only to themselves; and, d) require all officers to accurately report all uses of force.
- **Prohibit Racial Profiling and Require Data Collection:** The equal treatment of all people, regardless of background, class, or characteristic, protects and preserves public safety and builds legitimacy in police. Discriminatory policing, which targets people of color more often than others, has serious consequences not only for individuals and communities but also for law enforcement and society, by fostering distrust in law enforcement. Police departments should prohibit profiling based on actual or perceived personal characteristics,

including race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, proficiency with the English language, immigration status, and housing status. *To this end, Congress should pass legislation that protects against profiling, including the End Racial and Religious Profiling Act of 2019. Through policy, training, and practice, law enforcement agencies can work to prevent and hold officers accountable for discriminatory policing and reduce and mitigate its disparate impact on marginalized communities.*

Ensuring the adequate collection and reporting of data on police-community encounters and law enforcement activities allows communities and departments to analyze the effects of policies and practices, and to change and advocate against them if they are ineffective or disproportionately affect particular communities or groups. It is vital that police departments have accurate data, as you cannot measure what you do not know. *Congress should pass legislation that mandates such data collection and reporting, including with respect to officer-involved shootings, use of force incidents, stops, searches, and arrests, and which ensures that data is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and other demographic factors.*

- **Ban the Use of Chokeholds and Other Restraint Maneuvers:** Prohibit all maneuvers that restrict the flow of blood or oxygen to the brain, including neck holds, chokeholds, and similar excessive force, deeming the use of such force a federal civil rights violation. Chokeholds are inherently dangerous, as we have seen in the horrific deaths of George Floyd and Eric Garner before. Recognizing the inherent danger of chokeholds and the threat they pose to human life, police departments in cities such as New York, Atlanta, and Miami prohibit them. Washington, D.C. also bans chokeholds but allows “strangleholds” in some situations.
- **End Militarization of Police:** During the protests following the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by a Ferguson police officer in 2014, law enforcement met protesters with a militarized response. The country watched as police used mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles (MRAPs), body armor, and gas masks to confront protesters, and placed snipers on top of tactical vehicles. These kinds of equipment and tactics are designed for combat zones. In response, President Obama issued an order directing a working group to review programs that supply military equipment to local law enforcement agencies. In 2015, the working group concluded that the heavily armed, militarized response was disproportionate to the threat posed by the protesters and had been deployed in a manner that intimidated the community. Its recommendations included prohibiting the acquisition of military equipment, such as tracked armored and weaponized vehicles, bayonets, grenade launchers, and high-caliber firearms and ammunition. But in 2017, the current administration rescinded the order and disavowed the recommendations that serve as a guide for police managing demonstrations. *Congress should end federal programs that provide military equipment such as the U.S. Department of Defense 1033 program and pass the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act.*

- **Prohibit the Use of No-Knock Warrants**, especially for drug searches. No-knock warrants are inherently dangerous and have not proven to be more effective than search warrants that preserve the Fourth Amendment rule of knock-and-announce. When police burst into people's houses, unannounced, occupants are more likely to use weapons to try to defend themselves — endangering both the public and officers. We saw this exact scenario play out with Breonna Taylor's death. Furthermore, the increased risk of death or injury to children, bystanders, or others caught in the crossfire counsels against the use of no-knock warrants. Indeed, two states already outlaw no-knock warrants. *Congress should pass legislation prohibiting their use no-knock warrants. Indeed, two states already outlaw no-knock warrants. Congress should likewise pass legislation prohibiting their use.*
- **Strengthen Federal Accountability Systems:** Accountability is central to fair, safe, and effective policing. It deters misconduct and heals communities when officers violate constitutional rights, laws, or policies. Indeed, it sends a message to communities that misconduct will not be tolerated; builds public trust and increases police legitimacy; and strengthens departments from within by letting officers know what is expected of them and that they will face swift discipline if they violate policy. Under 18 U.S.C. §242, the federal government can provide this accountability by prosecuting misconduct that violates a person's civil rights. But the statute sets too high a bar that deters many prosecutions, as it requires proof that an officer "willfully" deprived the person of their rights. *Congress should amend Section 242 to include a lower mens rea of "reckless negligence" to ensure accountability for civil rights violations that result from police misconduct. It should also restrict the qualified immunity defense to Section 1983 claims, as explained below.*
- **Create a National Police Misconduct Registry:** Congress should develop a national public database that includes all police agencies in the United States and its territories, similar to the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training's National Decertification Index. The database should compile the names of officers who have had their licenses revoked due to misconduct, as well as terminations and complaints against the officers.
- **End Qualified Immunity:** Congress should end qualified immunity in Section 1983 claims. Qualified immunity is a court-created rewriting of Section 1983, a Reconstruction-era civil rights law meant to allow enforcement of the 14th Amendment, that shields law enforcement officers from liability even when they violate people's constitutional rights. Under this doctrine, the Supreme Court has held that officers cannot be held accountable unless they violated "clearly established law." In other words, law enforcement agents may have violated a person's constitutional rights, but they escape liability if the unlawfulness of their acts was not sufficiently obvious. This doctrine has rendered the force of Section 1983, the federal civil rights statute that allows individuals to sue officers for violating their civil rights, meaningless.

The Need for Investment in Non-Police Responses to Crises and Community Needs

Many factors contribute to crises relating to disabilities and substance use disorders, such as inadequate social services and supports, high rates of poverty, income inequality, housing insecurity, and an ongoing opioid epidemic. Many of these same issues are generally the basis for police encounters that often escalate to the use of force or turn deadly. Society should aim for the least “police-involved” responses to crises and other acts of survival. By providing adequate prevention, support, and referral services, communities and departments can divert people with from the criminal-legal system. Indeed, these crises should be handled by professionals with expertise in mental health, developmental disability, and substance use disorders — not police officers. Law enforcement officials will tell you that they cannot fill the role of medical health professional no matter how much training they receive. Moreover, investing in community-based services, education, health care, housing, and other services, will improve the health of communities and reduce the criminalization of Black and Brown and low-income people.

The federal government should redirect grant money to public health responses to people with disabilities or who are in crisis, and invest in community services that better promote public safety. This includes creating crisis hotlines, walk-in centers, mobile crisis teams, peer crisis support services, and crisis stabilization units. By investing in community-based support systems to prevent crises and developing the services to respond to crises, Congress can reduce police interventions and reduce entry into the criminal legal system for people with unmet public health needs.

A New Policing Paradigm

Congress has the power to bring about transformative policing that benefits communities and officers alike. This moment of reckoning requires leaders, together with communities, to envision a new paradigm for public safety that respects the human rights of all people. That means not just changing policing practices, but shrinking the footprint of the criminal legal system, including police, in Black and Brown people’s lives. And it means shifting our approach to public safety away from exclusive investments in criminalization and policing, toward investments in economic opportunity, education, health care, and other public benefits. This paradigm not only furthers equity, but also constitutes effective policy: When we stop using criminal “justice” policy as social policy, we make communities safer and more prosperous. Now is the time for Congress to pass meaningful, lasting accountability and funding measures that protect communities of color from the systemic perils of over-policing, police brutality, misconduct, harassment, and outright murder. Public safety needs vary across communities large and small; urban, rural, and suburban; homogeneous and diverse. Nevertheless, the principles of fairness, equity, procedural justice, legitimacy, transparency, and accountability are, and must always remain, universal.

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