

LEADING FROM THE **HEARTLAND**

REGIONAL TOOLKITS TO
COMBAT ANTISEMITISM

JCRB | AJC Kansas City
COMBATING ANTISEMITISM & PURSUING JUSTICE

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ABOUT JCRB|AJC

Since 1944, the Jewish Community Relations Bureau | American Jewish Committee (JCRB|AJC) has been on the front lines in the fight against antisemitism and the pursuit of justice. Through education, community outreach, and advocacy, we work to address antisemitism and create a safer, more inclusive region for everyone.

Thank you for joining us as we work together to build stronger communities.

For additional information:

jcrbajc@jewishkc.org
913-327-8127

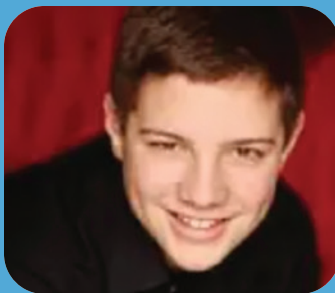
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INTRODUCTION

April 2024 marked 10 years since a gunman, driven by antisemitism, murdered three innocent civilians on the campus of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and at Village Shalom. Our community was left shaken and grief stricken. Meant to kill Jews, this targeted attack on Jewish communal institutions tragically killed three non-Jewish individuals — Dr. William Corporon, Reat Underwood, and Terri LaManno.



Dr. William Corporon
Of Blessed Memory



Reat Underwood
Of Blessed Memory



Terri LaManno
Of Blessed Memory

The Heartland region is no stranger to antisemitism — and, unfortunately, the hate that the Greater Kansas City metro has witnessed locally is reflected nationally. According to the American Jewish Committee (AJC)'s 2023 State of Antisemitism in America Report, more than nine in 10 Americans, Jewish and non-Jewish, believe: 1. Antisemitism is a problem that affects society as a whole, and 2. Everyone is responsible for combating it.¹ As antisemitism evolves and grows, Jews are facing a stark reality of hate-targeted rhetoric and violence around the world and here at home.

To commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the shooting at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and at Village Shalom, and to help the region better address antisemitism, which had risen 305% in the decade since (2014-2022)², JCRBIAJC hosted the region's first-ever summit on combating antisemitism, *Driving Out Darkness in the Heartland*.

Planned and conceptualized in large part before the Hamas terrorist attack in Israel on October 7, 2023, the Summit occurred during a time when antisemitism was surging at home and abroad. In the words of AJC CEO Ted Deutch, "If, before October 7, antisemitism was a slow-burning fire, it has now become a five-alarm emergency that requires all of us to douse its flames."

The October 7 massacre and ensuing war with Hamas has brought Jew-hatred to the surface of society once again, in levels that the Jewish community hoped to never again experience. The Anti-Defamation League recorded over 10,000 incidents in the year since October 7th (October 7, 2023 -September 24, 2024) — a number unheard of in recent memory.

In a time of uncertainty, anxiety, and isolation for the Jewish community, the summit brought hope and energy. Nearly 700 participants convened in Kansas City for the two-day event, JCRBIAJC is grateful for the multitude of partners who attended from across the region — including elected officials, interfaith clergy members, educational leaders, and longtime community partners. Combating antisemitism, and any hatred, cannot be done alone.

See sources on page 15.

DRIVING OUT DARKNESS IN THE HEARTLAND

SESSIONS

THE STATE OF ANTISEMITISM
IN AMERICA

MAKING SPACE FOR THE
JEWISH COMMUNITY
IN DEI FRAMEWORKS

FROM MEMES TO MANIFESTOS:
ANTISEMITISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT:
ZIONISM, ISRAEL,
AND ANTISEMITISM

FROM CHAOS TO CLARITY:
NAVIGATING DISINFORMATION
THROUGH MEDIA LITERACY

CREATING SAFER
SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

STRONGER TOGETHER:
COALITION-BUILDING IN A
POLARIZED SOCIETY

CLOSING KEYNOTE &
CONVERSATION:
THE PATH AHEAD

On the first day of the Summit, JCRBIAJC hosted a Unity Seder, which brought the community and interfaith partners together to share in the Jewish Passover seder rituals and served to reaffirm participants' commitments to the pursuit of justice and liberation. The following full-day Symposium convened community members and allies to learn about rising antisemitism and map out a plan of action to tackle antisemitism in the Heartland. JCRBIAJC was honored to host AJC CEO Ted Deutch and Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff as keynote speakers, as well as two dozen national and regional experts for breakout session conversations on antisemitism and establishing a path forward here in the Heartland.

The Symposium was not only about learning. Crucially, attendees were charged with helping JCRBIAJC create a plan of action for our region, using the White House National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism as a model.

We recognized the value of bringing together hundreds of leaders from across the Heartland and harnessing their knowledge and expertise in working lunch sessions in which attendees engaged in small groups based on professional, volunteer, or community involvement. Together, they worked with colleagues in similar roles and spheres of influence to understand the specific role they could play in implementing the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, and create tangible plans for putting ideas into action. The National Strategy was released in May 2023 and came amid an environment of rising antisemitism, both at home and abroad.

"It represents the most ambitious and comprehensive U.S. government-led effort to fight antisemitism in American history. ... The Strategy outlines a whole-of-society effort to combat antisemitism, including unprecedented, coordinated, and bold actions that will be implemented across government agencies, as well as calls to action for public officials, private sector leaders, and Americans from every sector, industry, and walk of life. The Strategy — which reflects input from over 1,000 Jewish community stakeholders, faith and civil rights leaders, state and local officials, and more — also serves as a blueprint for tackling other forms of bigotry, hate, and bias that fuel toxic divisions in America."

It recognizes that "antisemitism threatens not only the Jewish community, but all Americans. People who peddle antisemitic conspiracy theories and fuel racial, ethnic, and religious hatred against Jews also target other communities — including Black and brown Americans, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders; LGBTQI+ individuals; Muslim Americans; women and girls; and so many others. [U.S.] intelligence agencies have determined that domestic terrorism rooted in white supremacy — including antisemitism — is the greatest terrorist threat to our country today."³ However, extremist movements from the fringes of both sides of the political spectrum present a clear and present danger to not just American Jews, but all of society.

The strategy advances a whole-of-society approach to countering antisemitism, resting on four pillars:

1. Increase Awareness and Understanding of Antisemitism, Including its Threat to America, and Broaden Appreciation of Jewish American Heritage
2. Improve Safety and Security for Jewish Communities
3. Reverse the Normalization of Antisemitism and Counter Antisemitic Discrimination
4. Build Cross-Community Solidarity and Collective Action to Counter Hate

During the working lunch, participants were also guided by the **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism**. We can't combat what we don't understand, and this helpful framework is used by the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Education, over half of U.S. states including Kansas and Missouri, 12 local municipalities in the Heartland, and more than a thousand global entities.⁴

The following recommendations and resources that comprise these Regional Toolkits to Combat Antisemitism are the culmination of the expertise, insight, and commitment of our Symposium attendees, reflecting their prioritized action items, additional comments, insights, and questions shared during the working lunch sessions. Overall, in their responses, attendees from across various sectors of society emphasized the need to increase awareness and understanding of the Jewish people and antisemitism and that, to further foster this, we all need to invest in connecting and engaging with the diverse communities with whom we share this region.

JCRBIAJC has been dedicated to building bridges across communities and providing education about the Jewish community and antisemitism for the past 80 years. As we look ahead to the next 80 years, we recognize the importance of community relations as a key approach to combating hate and discrimination in all its forms and ensuring safer communities for us all.

Antisemitism is not a problem the Jewish community started — and it's not one we alone can fix. To do that will require a whole-of-society approach to combating antisemitism. We will each have our own roles to play in stopping this hatred from spreading.

THE FOLLOWING TOOLKITS TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM WILL INCLUDE:

1. The U.S. National Strategy Whole-of-Society Call to Action items, prioritized by Symposium attendees
2. Relevant suggested action items from AJC's Call to Action Against Antisemitism in America^{5,6,7,8,9}
3. Additional JCRBIAJC guidance and resources to help you **LEAD FROM THE HEARTLAND**

Please note that the recommendations and resources shared in this document are not exhaustive. There is always more that can be done.



For AJC's 2023 State of Antisemitism Report, scan this code or visit ajc.org/AntisemitismReport2023



For the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, scan this code or visit whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf



To access the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, scan this code or visit holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism



To access AJC's Call to Action Against Antisemitism in America, scan this code or visit ajc.org/call-to-action

TOOLKIT FOR

LOCAL/STATE ELECTED AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY CALL TO ACTION

We call on states and localities to offer trainings to help people understand Jewish communities, antisemitism, and ways to counter antisemitism in their neighborhoods. ... These programs give law enforcement, military personnel, and judges the opportunity to learn about antisemitism and reflect on their own roles in a democratic society today. The Administration urges states and localities to adapt such trainings for their communities.

ACTION: PROMOTE A STANDARD DEFINITION

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism is globally recognized as the authoritative definition. It is a proven, flexible tool embraced by more than half of U.S. states and dozens of local municipalities. Utilize the IHRA Working Definition to deepen awareness among educators, members of law enforcement, prosecutors, and others.

ACTION: TRAIN STAFF

The staff of elected officials should be trained to identify and respond to antisemitism in their communities. Local Jewish community representatives should be present during this training to demonstrate the priority placed on the issue and to localize the specific forms of antisemitism they are facing. If they are to be effective, trainings cannot ignore antisemitism masked as anti-Zionism, despite any concern or hesitation about veering into political matters. Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel is textbook antisemitism.

ACTION: OFFER TARGETED ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON PREVENTION

State and local governments should leverage resources provided by federal agencies to strengthen community-based violence prevention efforts and expand trainings with state and local partners to prevent violence motivated by hateful ideologies. For example, the Department of Homeland Security's Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grant program and the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) Regional Prevention Coordinator program can work with Jewish communities to address concerns, build trust, and ensure accessibility. The Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice can provide awareness raising training and conflict mediation in hot spots around the country.

U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY CALL TO ACTION

We call on state and local governments to include Jewish studies in ethnic studies and history curricula. Lessons should include Jewish history, as well as curricula on positive Jewish contributions to America, Jewish diversity, and manifestations of contemporary antisemitism.

ACTION: STRENGTHEN EDUCATION ON JEWS, ANTISEMITISM, AND THE HOLOCAUST

Thirty-nine states have taken some sort of action on Holocaust education and yet a Claims Conference study found most Millennials and Gen Z lack basic knowledge of the Holocaust. Short of mandatory Holocaust education, state and local governments can urge responsible formal or informal educational opportunities to educate youth about the Holocaust. Additionally, educational curricula should include Jewish history and the contributions of Jews to America.

ACTION: INCLUDE JEWS IN ETHNIC STUDIES CURRICULA

As states consider ethnic studies curricula, lessons should include Jews, Jewish history and contributions to America, Jewish diversity, and contemporary antisemitism. Because antisemitism presents itself in unique forms, teachers should be trained both to teach about the topic accurately and to be alert to its presence in the classroom.

ACTION: EDUCATE TO PREVENT ANTISEMITISM

State and local elected officials should ensure they are marking and hosting educational opportunities and events around key dates, including International Holocaust Remembrance Day designated by the United Nations to take place annually on January 27. Elected officials should issue public statements, use the opportunity to encourage Holocaust education, and hold community events reaffirming the fundamental guiding lesson of the Holocaust: *never again*. Commemorating the Holocaust should also focus on contemporary forms of antisemitism, including Holocaust denial and distortion.

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- We encourage regional leaders to join the 12 regional municipalities that have adopted the IHRA Definition: Kansas City, Missouri; North Kansas City, Missouri; Johnson County Government; Leawood, Kansas; Overland Park, Kansas; Prairie Village, Kansas; Fairway, Kansas; Mission, Kansas; Roeland Park, Kansas; Westwood Hills, Kansas; Olathe, Kansas; and Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City.
- Bring in JCRBJAJC staff to deliver a training for elected officials, staff, law enforcement, or community members.
- Utilize JCRBJAJC as a resource when preparing public statements in response to antisemitic incidents and/or when commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27) or Jewish American Heritage Month (May).
- Connect with JCRBJAJC to consult and connect with subject matter experts on antisemitism, the Holocaust, and Judaism, and to hear from Jewish constituents.

TOOLKIT FOR WORKPLACES

U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY CALL TO ACTION

We call on employers — including states, cities, K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, private companies, and non-profits — to review their own diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) programs to ensure full inclusion of antisemitism awareness and training as well as workplace religious accommodation requirements and best practices to prevent religious discrimination.

ACTION: INCREASE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF WHO JEWS ARE

Successful incorporation of Jews and antisemitism within company training (including DEI) must recognize the diversity of the Jewish people. In order to ensure Jewish inclusion, companies must acknowledge Jewish peoplehood. Jews reflect diverse racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds and express their identity in a variety of religious and cultural ways. The majority practice Judaism, or at least are culturally associated with Jewish traditions, but others are not. Many Jews are secular or atheist, but they are still Jews. At a time when antisemitism against Jews, including violence, is soaring, it is recommended that employers focus specifically on antisemitism in their education and communication as opposed to only including it within broader conversations about religious or interfaith understanding.

ACTION: ADDRESS HARASSMENT

The EEOC's fact sheet, "What To Do If You Face Antisemitism At Work," outlines Title VII requirements from the 1964 Civil Rights Act for religious accommodation and outlines prohibition of disparate treatment, segregation, harassment, and retaliation toward Jewish employees. Policies and training are necessary, but they are not sufficient. For cultural and legal reasons, management generally must respond to anti-Jewish harassment — even if there is no complaint or objection — if management sees, hears, or otherwise becomes aware of it, even if it was intended as a "joke." If an internal antisemitic incident or series of anti-Jewish attacks occurs, the company should publish a statement or resolution condemning antisemitism, at the very least internally, to the same degree that other forms of hate are called out. For a template, please see the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) resolution.



Scan this code for the EEOC fact sheet or visit [eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination](https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination)

ACTION: CREATE CLEAR POLICIES AND PRACTICES ON NONDISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

As more companies engage in social justice issues, they need a firm policy that elucidates the company's zero tolerance stance toward antisemitism. When providing examples of harassment in company policy and training, also include obvious and more subtle examples of anti-Jewish harassment. When providing training on conscious and implicit bias, include examples involving Jews. Such actions not only will help minimize legal exposure but will help assure Jewish employees that their workplace is a safe space to express their full identity and that anti-Jewish bias has no place in the company.

U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY CALL TO ACTION

We call on employers to leverage DEIA efforts to share information with employees about American Jewish heritage, culture, and history, and provide resources on countering antisemitism. For example, employers can acknowledge Jewish holidays and other important days and events to the Jewish community, such as International Holocaust Remembrance Day or Jewish American Heritage Month, and invite Jewish employees to share their family stories and Jewish identities.

ACTION: STRENGTHEN EDUCATION ON JEWS AND ANTISEMITISM

Companies should hold trainings on antisemitism for their employees. These trainings and educational programs can also proactively address antisemitism by generating an improved understanding of Jewish history, identity, and heritage.

ACTION: INCLUDE JEWISH HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS ON COMPANY CALENDARS

Acknowledge Jewish holidays and other important days and events to the Jewish community, such as Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27) and Jewish American Heritage Month which occurs every May. Invite Jewish employees to share their stories in the same way other groups are invited to do so. Accommodate Jewish religious beliefs, practices, and observances where reasonable and without an undue hardship. That is a legal duty. Bottom line: include Jewish employees in the rich mosaic of diversity.

ACTION: LISTEN TO JEWISH EMPLOYEES

Regularly connect with Jewish employees and seek their opinions and recommendations to create a culture of inclusion and respond to antisemitism. As with others raising concerns about bias, treat Jewish individuals alleging anti-Jewish bias with respect, take their complaints seriously, and investigate and take corrective action as appropriate. Support Jewish employees by promoting employee resource groups, including one for Jewish staff.

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- Utilize JCRBIAJC as a resource that workplace leadership and HR or DEIB professionals can turn to for content, training, and information on antisemitism, Jewish history, diversity, and allyship.



JCRBIAJC's **Making Space** program is designed to support workplace efforts to ensure that Jewish individuals feel understood, included, and supported. Scan this code or visit jcrbajc.org/what-we-do/education/making-space.html to learn more about how we can best provide resources and support.

- Consult JCRBIAJC's annually distributed Calendar of Jewish Holidays (*see page 14*) to avoid scheduling events and meetings on major Jewish holidays. Assess workplace policies and practices to ensure that Jewish employees are not only appropriately accommodated, but that they feel supported in their decision to take off work to observe holidays, such as exploring instituting "floating holidays" for employees of diverse faiths and backgrounds or a policy of not hosting meetings on major Jewish holidays (and major holidays of other faiths).

TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY CALL TO ACTION

We call on schools and colleges to issue clear and unwavering statements condemning all forms of hate, including antisemitism, especially in the wake of antisemitic incidents.

ACTION: CONDEMN UNEQUIVOCALLY

It is essential that university and secondary school administrations issue clear and unwavering statements condemning antisemitism when incidents occur if they regularly issue statements on external events. Normalization occurs when antisemitism is ignored, downplayed, or diluted and when authority figures fail to specifically name and condemn antisemitism. These statements should specifically name antisemitism and avoid performatively adding reference to other forms of hatred and bigotry. Such language diminishes the seriousness with which fighting antisemitism should be addressed.

ACTION: HAVE A CLEAR POLICY ABOUT ANTISEMITISM

Using the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism as a guide, ensure clarity as to what is considered antisemitism on campus. In particular, it is critical to differentiate between legitimate criticism of the State of Israel and antisemitic rhetoric and exclusion measures. Institutions should be aware of the ramifications of campus initiatives and events that create a hostile environment for Jewish and pro-Israel students, such as inflammatory and violent rhetoric on “apartheid walls” or that “Zionism is white supremacy,” when the majority of Jews say Israel is important to what being Jewish means to them, among other examples. It should be made clear that it is antisemitic to exclude Jewish students or groups from campus social justice spaces because of their support for Israel, particularly when no other ethnic or religious group is asked about their connections to another country.

ACTION: MODEL AND PROMOTE ALLYSHIP

- Model “tone at the top” attention and concern for Jewish students’ rights and needs with those of other groups.
- Issue clear unequivocal statements condemning antisemitic incidents when they occur.
- Show up in person at Jewish student events and celebrations.
- Ensure that cultural and religious sensitivity policies also include areas of concern for Jewish students and families — for example, not scheduling important programs on major Jewish holidays, providing alternative food options for those who follow kosher dietary laws, and including schoolwide programming during Jewish American Heritage Month as a complement to other multicultural programming in the school or campus community.

U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY CALL TO ACTION

We call on schools and colleges to ensure that efforts to prevent and address antisemitism are integrated into their DEIA programs, including into mandatory trainings on discrimination and harassment.

ACTION: CONVENE MANDATORY TRAINING FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND FACULTY ON DISCUSSING THE ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT AND ANTISEMITISM

Implement mandatory antisemitism education programs for school administrators; teachers; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) professionals. Antisemitism shares commonalities with other forms of hate but also exhibits distinct manifestations. A comprehensive understanding of antisemitism among school leadership is vital for

effectively addressing this issue. Similarly, offer training to faculty members on how to approach discussions related to the Israel-Palestinian conflict in the classroom that promote balanced and respectful dialogue.

ACTION: INCLUDE JEWS AND ANTISEMITISM IN ETHNIC STUDIES AND DEI CURRICULA

Increase understanding of antisemitism by explicitly naming it and including it as an essential element of your institution's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

Programming in DEI spaces can and should productively address the distinctive histories of minority communities and the particular obstacles and hatreds they have faced, in ways that encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect, allyship, and dialogue. Jews have an important place in those conversations. General programs designed to combat racism and intolerance provide an important framework, especially for diverse and multicultural societies. However, if educational efforts to combat antisemitism are to succeed, special attention must be paid to the specificity of the problem. Particularly on the heels of October 7, 2023, and these past months' surge in antisemitism, educational institutions must begin to integrate antisemitism as a focus within DEI and in student trainings related to DEI, including first-year and transfer students' orientations. As antisemitism presents itself in unique forms, teachers should be trained both to teach about the topic accurately and to be alert to its presence in the classroom. Anti-Israel animus can be a form of antisemitism, and students should have a nuanced and balanced understanding of the State of Israel and the people who live there.

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- Utilize JCRBIAJC as a resource for administrators, staff, and students:

JCRBIAJC's Prepare to Respond, Educate to Prevent program ensures that students, families, administrators, and staff are empowered to combat antisemitism. JCRBIAJC cultivates relationships with schools and educational leaders around our region. We serve as a resource for addressing antisemitic incidents or questions relating to religious observance, and proactively provide training and resources so that educators are equipped to recognize and address antisemitism when it occurs and more accurately teach about the Holocaust, Israel, and Judaism in their classrooms.



Scan this code or visit jcrbajc.org/what-we-do/education/schools-and-students/ for more information on the **Prepare to Respond, Educate to Prevent** program.

JCRBIAJC's Campus Initiative takes a multifaceted approach to address antisemitism on college campuses by informing and activating students, faculty, and administrators through a combination of education, engagement, and empowerment. The program aims to educate college students and administrators on manifestations of antisemitism on campus and best practices to ensure student safety; cultivate new relationships with campus administrators, Jewish students, and on-campus student services (Jewish and not) to address antisemitism; and provide students and staff with the skills and resources to effectively speak out about antisemitism, engage campus staff, respond to or report incidents, and take proactive measures in response to antisemitism.

- Ensure that administrators and staff consult JCRBIAJC's Calendar of Jewish Holidays to avoid scheduling events, meetings, extracurricular activities, and major assignments and tests on major Jewish holidays.
- Utilize vetted resources for educators, students, and families from organizations like the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education, Institute for Curriculum Services, and Anti-Defamation League. Find a collection of resources for students, families, and educators at jcrbajc.org.

TOOLKIT FOR INTERFAITH AND INTERGROUP ALLIES

U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY CALL TO ACTION

We encourage non-Jewish faith leaders to educate their communities about both antisemitism and Jewish heritage, history, and culture, as well as the core American principle that people of all faiths have equal rights to religious liberty.

ACTION: RECOGNIZE ANTISEMITIC TROPES, STEREOTYPES, AND TERMS

American Jewish Committee (AJC) created Translate Hate, a visual glossary to help identify different sources of antisemitism and expose antisemitic tropes, words, and symbols that often hide in plain sight. Part of being a strong ally is constant education. Translate Hate is a useful tool for new and longtime allies of the Jewish community. In fact, it inspired AJC's Chinese-American partners, the C100, to make their own glossary of anti-Asian hate words, language, and tropes.



Scan this code or visit ajc.org/translatehateglossary for AJC's visual glossary, Translate Hate

ACTION: LEARN MORE ABOUT JEWISH PEOPLE

When someone knows a Jew, they are far more likely to understand antisemitism.¹⁰ It is important for intergroup and interfaith partners to learn about who Jews are, in the same way it is important for the Jewish community to learn about other minorities. Many people think Jews are just a religious group, yet Jews reflect diverse racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds and express their identity in a variety of religious and cultural ways. The majority practice Judaism, or at least are culturally associated with Jewish traditions, but others are not. Many Jews are secular or atheist, but they are still Jews.

ACTION: ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ANTISEMITISM IS NOT JUST A PROBLEM FOR JEWS

When an antisemitic incident occurs, voices beyond the Jewish community need to raise awareness that antisemitism is not just a Jewish problem but an assault on the core values of pluralism, freedom, and democracy that Americans hold dear.

U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY CALL TO ACTION

We encourage youth groups from a diverse range of religious communities to develop and incorporate multi-faith social activities, service events, and educational programming into their curricula.

ACTION: CELEBRATE EACH OTHER'S CULTURES

Proactively reach out to partners to acknowledge important dates, holidays, and anniversaries for their community. Be especially mindful of events that reinforce your communities' ties with the partners you are reaching out to. Each May marks Jewish American Heritage Month, which, by broadening appreciation of Jewish American heritage, serves as a mechanism to counter antisemitism. Partners can help the Jewish community celebrate this month, and Jews should seek to engage with faith partners within diverse communities during Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, and so on.

ACTION: BUILD PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

We must work to prevent antisemitism by rebuilding relationships and strengthening trust between all groups. AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2023 Report found that 82% of those who know someone Jewish say they have heard the term "antisemitism" and know what it means, compared with 48% who do not know someone who is Jewish. Regular and sustained engagement is essential to build a foundation of goodwill. The following recommendations can help build personal relationships:

- Visit a synagogue and invite Jews to visit and speak at your house of worship. Attending a service or touring a house of worship fosters understanding of a religious community's ritual and practice in a practical, tangible way.
- Learn about each other. Leaders should not assume that there is universal knowledge and understanding of other communities. Teaching the basic "anatomy" of partners (e.g., titles of religious leaders, respectful protocol) can be helpful.
- Facilitate reciprocal training opportunities. Jews and Jewish organizations should offer or connect partners with trainings, tools, and best practices to help them understand how Jew-hatred, scapegoating, and conspiracies are part and parcel of other forms of hate and prejudice. We all need to be open to learning about other communities' sensitivities and experiences with hate, discrimination, and bias.

ACTION: RAISE AWARENESS

Civil society is one of the most important factors in lowering the levels of antisemitism in the U.S. Non-Jewish voices have a unique ability to be heard when explaining what antisemitism is and why it is a societal problem. We are more likely to accept information when it comes from someone we know and trust. Further, if civil society, including faith and ethnic leaders, decries all forms of antisemitism, does not ignore or minimize it, and pushes antisemites to the fringes of society, America will be a safer place not only for Jews, but for everyone.

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- Bring in a Jewish speaker or visit local Jewish institutions. JCRBIAJC is happy to facilitate connections with Jewish speakers, local synagogues, and community leaders.
- Attend JCRBIAJC's biennial **Unity Seder**, which brings community and interfaith partners together to share in the Jewish Passover seder ritual in order to further build bridges and foster greater understanding between different communities by reaffirming our shared commitments to the pursuit of justice and liberation.
- JCRBIAJC is proud to support **Strangers No More**. This interfaith women's dialogue program began after the tragic murders at the Jewish Community Campus and Village Shalom in April 2014. It is co-convened by JCRBIAJC and the United Methodist Women of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection. The group meets twice a month for "Coffee & Conversation," hosts an annual educational series, and engages in a volunteer service project each year. For more information, email rsvpjcrbajc@jewishkc.org, or visit **Strangers No More on Facebook**.
- Along with our annual Calendar of Jewish Holidays, we also share an Islamic Holidays and Events Calendar, made possible through our partnership with the Muslim community. We encourage interfaith leaders to raise awareness of major holidays celebrated by other communities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HEARTLAND

CALENDAR OF JEWISH HOLIDAYS

Each year, JCRBIAJC sends out a calendar of Jewish holidays so that schools and other community groups, organizations, the media, government officials, and businesses can avoid major conflicts while scheduling for the upcoming year. We hope that the calendar is helpful to you in understanding and accommodating the holidays and religious practices of Jewish community members. As always, JCRBIAJC is here to answer any questions regarding potential conflicts, and to help you navigate incidents of antisemitism when they occur.



Scan this code or visit jcrbajc.org/resources/religious-calendars.html to access the calendar and sign up to receive our annual calendar email, typically sent out each spring.



Scan this code or visit ajc.org/news/a-short-guide-to-jewish-religion-and-culture to learn more about key terms, appropriate holiday greetings, life cycle events, and other useful information.

HOW TO REPORT ANTISEMITISM

We take the safety and well-being of our community seriously. JCRBIAJC works with government officials, schools, the media, law enforcement, and others to not only ensure that issues of importance to the Jewish community are heard and considered, but also to partner with them on behalf of our community when incidents of antisemitism and discrimination arise. If you experience an incident of antisemitism, or know of someone who has, please take a moment to complete an online incident report. In case of emergency, please call 911.



Scan this code or visit jcrbajc.org/resources/report-antisemitism/ to complete an online incident report. Your information will remain confidential.



Scan this code or visit [ajc.org/Reporting Antisemitism](https://ajc.org/ReportingAntisemitism) for a guide developed by AJC which advises potential victims of bias-motivated discrimination or hate on how to file complaints and/or report hate crimes through official channels.

RESOURCES AND ACTION STEPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- **Advocate** | Write to your elected representatives, school administrators, or workplace leaders to share your concerns about rising antisemitism and encourage leaders to actively take steps to combat antisemitism. Don't forget to send them this toolkit! (See page 15 to access the digital version.)
- **Educate** | Education is both our biggest challenge and our biggest opportunity in combating antisemitism. There is so much misinformation and lack of understanding about what is and isn't antisemitism — and before that, who Jews really are and what our community looks like. Please continue to seek out reliable, accurate information to better understand the Jewish people, antisemitism, and Israel.



A great place to start is JCRBIAJC's Resources on Antisemitism and Israel page. Scan this code or visit jcrbajc.org/resources/

- **Connect** | Engage in individual bridge-building efforts such as attending a Shabbat dinner, becoming more aware of and acknowledging Jewish holidays, and reaching out to Jewish friends to check in and offer support when antisemitic incidents occur.

LEADING FROM THE HEARTLAND STARTS HERE: STAYING ENGAGED AND INVOLVED

This work is just the beginning.

The Heartland continues to be a special place — a home where people care for one another, lift each other up, and work together to build the community and world we, collectively, wish to see. Engaging with and applying this toolkit — in your school, workplace, community group, or government institution — is the first step.

In the coming weeks and months we implore you to:

- **Engage with us** | Stay up to date with JCRBJAJC by subscribing to our newsletter, follow us on Facebook/Instagram, or email us at jcrbajc@jewishkc.org.



Scan this code or visit jcrbajc.org/contact-us/newsletter-sign-up.html to receive our newsletter.

Follow us on social media:  facebook.com/jcrbajc  instagram.com/jcrbajc/

- **Educate yourself** | Learn more about antisemitism and the Jewish people and teach others what you know. We can all play a role in combating antisemitism.
- **Empower others** | Stand up against anti-Jewish hate when you see it and inspire others to do the same.

Together we are modeling what a community can look like when it is collectively committed to disrupting hate. It starts with us.

With appreciation for your work, dedication, and partnership as we work to build a more welcoming and caring Kansas City,

Neta Meltzer, Interim Executive Director

Hillary Thomas, Director, Strategy and Development

Sarah Markowitz Schreiber, Director, Education and Programs

Rachel Kaseff, Programs and Development Coordinator

Demi Levitch, Operations Manager

Sources:

- 1 <https://www.ajc.org/AntisemitismReport2023/GeneralPublic>
- 2 <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2022>
- 3 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf>
- 4 <https://www.ajc.org/media/the-working-definition-of-antisemitism-pdf>
- 5 <https://www.ajc.org/call-to-action>
- 6 <https://www.ajc.org/call-to-action/local-state-government>
- 7 <https://www.ajc.org/call-to-action/corporate>
- 8 <https://www.ajc.org/call-to-action/educational-institutions>
- 9 <https://www.ajc.org/call-to-action/partners>
- 10 <https://ajc.org/AntisemitismReport2023>



Scan this code or visit jcrbajc.org/leading-from-the-heartland-regional-toolkits-to-combat-antisemitism.html to access the digital version of this document.

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