

JEWISH COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
DRAFT RESOLUTION ON STRENGTHENING JEWISH
COMMUNAL RELATIONS WITH BLACK COMMUNITIES

Sponsored by the JCPA Task Force on Strengthening Jewish
Communal Engagement with Black Communities

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

3 — Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate, “The Hill We Climb”
4

5 We continue to believe in American ideals of justice and equality for all. Our
6 Jewish principles and experiences call us to confront racial injustice and work for
7 equity. As a response to the grievous killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor
8 and other Black Americans, the cry of ‘Black Lives Matter’ has energized the
9 most consequential national racial justice movement in decades. Its goal is to
10 achieve racial justice by ending systemic racism and building communities that
11 ensure safety, security, and equity of Black Americans.
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13 Based on the Jewish values of *B’tselem Elohim*, that all people are created in the
14 image of G-d, JCPA believes that the Jewish community relations network, to
15 achieve its goals of equity and justice for all, should fully engage in this
16 movement. We are proud of the Jewish community’s history of fighting
17 discrimination, and we build upon this legacy by mobilizing to end today’s
18 injustices. JCPA has a long-standing commitment to the advancement of civil
19 rights for Black Americans including, most recently, the Criminal Justice
20 Initiative launched in 2016; the racial justice resolution passed in 2018; the
21 restorative justice resolution in 2020; and the 2020 pledge to end systemic racism
22 in law enforcement.
23

24 JCPA believes that we must combat both antisemitism and racism and to achieve
25 these goals requires us to engage in racial justice work with the courage of our
26 convictions. Indeed, absenting ourselves from tables with problematic voices or
27 groups will hurt, not help, the fight against antisemitism. We also need to
28 recognize and educate about the ways in which antisemitism and racism are used

29 to divide marginalized groups. We must fight these forms of hate together. It is
30 incumbent upon the community relations field to pursue justice and equity across
31 lines of difference, even—or especially—when we may not share the same views
32 on other issues. We must not only engage with people who agree with us, but also
33 with people who disagree with us, building bridges of understanding on that
34 which unites us as well as that which could divide us. The Jewish community
35 itself includes racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. We commit to leading the
36 Jewish community relations field in doing the internal work to advance diversity,
37 equity and inclusivity within both our own community and in American society as
38 a whole.

39

40 **The Jewish Council for Public Affairs believes:**

41

- 42 1. Two hundred and forty-four years after the signing of the Declaration of
43 Independence, which states that all men are created equal and are endowed
44 with certain inalienable rights, the stain of racism and inequality continues
45 in the United States. We must say, unequivocally, that Black Lives Matter.
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- 47 2. We must address systemic disparities and discrimination across all aspects
48 of our society, including economic, health, housing, education, voting, and
49 criminal justice systems.
50
- 51 3. Continuous learning about racism and its impact on communities of Color
52 is essential. We recognize that this pursuit is not just a matter of
53 conscience or resting on historic relationships with other communities.
54
- 55 4. Antisemitism and racism each need to be confronted, and we must commit
56 to fighting both. We must fight racism and the systemic marginalization of
57 people of Color, which is so deeply rooted in American history and

society -- as its own unique issue and not make it transactional with fighting antisemitism.

5. Only by participating in building relationships and being a partner in this movement can we effectively share our concerns about antisemitism, delegitimization of Israel, or any other issues of importance to the Jewish community. While there may be some individuals or organizations participating in coalitions addressing racial justice with whom we have disagreements on various issues, this should not derail our participation. It is only by being an authentic partner in the racial justice movement that we can build relationships that will allow us to effectively share our concerns about antisemitism, delegitimization of Israel, or any other issues of importance to the Jewish community. We should engage in racial justice coalitions as long as the coalition itself does not espouse antisemitic statements or activities.

6. It is incumbent upon the community relations field to not only engage with people who agree but also with people who disagree with us, building bridges of understanding across differences to work on common goals. We encourage all efforts to heal rifts between communities, educate ourselves about each other's experiences, and move forward with joint advocacy on issues of common concern. We encourage Jewish communities to engage in the hard coalitional work of building agreements among their members that make space for the full participation of all those involved.

7. Jewish communal leadership and staff should reflect the full diversity of the Jewish community.

The community relations field should:

- 88 1. Pursue racial justice as a core component of the Jewish community
89 relations field, guided by the leadership of Jews of Color and communities
90 of Color.
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- 92 2. Build upon existing relationships and develop new, dynamic partnerships
93 committed to advocating for and achieving racial justice. These
94 relationships must remain flexible so that we can grapple with new
95 challenges as they arise.
96
- 97 3. Recognize that building bridges with communities of Color and at the
98 same time strengthening the relationship with Black Jews in our
99 community is necessary to address the challenges of racism interally and
100 externally.
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- 102 4. Cultivate leadership among Black Jews and other Jews of Color in Jewish
103 community councils and boards, as well as create structures that support
104 and foster participation among Black Jews and other Jews of Color.
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- 106 5. Cultivate meaningful relationships with Black-led organizations at the
107 national and local levels.
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- 109 6. Engage with partners at the local, state and national levels in achieving
110 racial justice and ending systemic racism in America. Specifically, we
111 should strengthen trusted relationships and engagement with Black
112 organizations and communities within and beyond the Jewish community,
113 learn about Black people's experiences, histories, and narratives, and work
114 in common cause to reimagine the safety and well-being of all
115 communities in our country.
116

- 117 7. While engaging in advocacy based upon existing policies relating to racial
118 justice, many of which are of long-standing, we should be open to
119 adopting new advocacy goals based upon issues identified by our Black
120 organizational partners. Specifically, the field should work with these
121 partners to map out policy concerns and racial disparities in local
122 communities, align public policy priorities, and work together to achieve
123 policy and cultural change priority issues and concerns.
124
- 125 8. Apply a racial equity lens alongside a Jewish lens to all public policy
126 adoption and advocacy, to ensure that our policy positions and advocacy
127 do not inadvertently harm communities of Color.
- 128 9. Educate and advise the Jewish community on the state of systemic racism
129 in America nationally and locally to ensure understanding of the
130 movement for racial justice and the importance of using the phrase “Black
131 Lives Matter.”
- 132 10. Recognizing that the Jewish community is one that contains much racial,
133 ethnic, and cultural diversity, organize opportunities for intra-Jewish
134 internal work on diversity, equity, and inclusivity.
- 135 11. Work toward achieving criminal justice reform and restorative justice as
136 framed in [JCPA’s 2020 Resolution on Rehabilitative and Restorative](#)
137 [Justice](#).
- 138 12. Leverage the Jewish community’s important and strong relationships with
139 the police and law enforcement to encourage them to confront their role in
140 perpetuating systemic racism: play a bridging role between police and
141 Black communities to develop trust and open dialogue.
- 142 13. Establish substantive public information campaigns to raise awareness and
143 visibility on the impact of systemic racism in America and the role that
144 Jewish partnership, allyship, and Black-Jewish engagement can play in
145 building a just and pluralistic America and combatting hate, bigotry,
146 racism and antisemitism.