


A Mayor's Guide to Countering Antisemitism:
**Implementing the U.S. National
Strategy to Counter Antisemitism**



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The U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism outlines a whole-of-society effort to address anti-Jewish hate. *The Strategy stands on four pillars, each of which present opportunities for mayors who are often on the front line of combating antisemitism, protecting Jewish communities, and supporting American values. This guide provides suggestions for possible actions mayors could take to implement the four pillars.

*In many ways, [the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#) mirrors AJC's [Call to Action Against Antisemitism in America](#)¹, a guide for all sectors of society to understand, respond to, and prevent antisemitism, released in September 2022.

¹AJC.org/CallToAction

Pillar 1

Increase awareness and understanding of antisemitism, including its threat to America, and broaden appreciation of Jewish American heritage

The Strategy reaffirms the U.S. government's embrace of the non-legally binding 'working definition' of antisemitism adopted in 2016 by the 31-member states of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

ADOPT OR ENDORSE the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) [Working Definition of Antisemitism](#)², a proven, flexible tool embraced by more than half of [U.S. states and dozens of local municipalities](#)³.

UTILIZE THE IHRA WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM to deepen awareness amongst educators, members of law enforcement, prosecutors, and others. The U.S. Departments of Education and State have used the definition for years. [Here](#)⁴ is information on how several European agencies are [using the definition](#)⁵.

The Strategy calls on state and local governments to utilize materials published by Jewish organizations to help identify antisemitic tropes, words, and symbols that can hide in plain sight.

SHARE AJC'S TRANSLATE HATE GLOSSARY which helps identify and expose antisemitic tropes, words, and symbols. Mayors and departments of education can share [Translate Hate](#)⁶ on their websites for educators and constituents. Urge public libraries to offer copies.

The Strategy calls on state and local leaders to celebrate the positive contributions Jewish Americans have made, particularly by highlighting International Holocaust Remembrance Day and Jewish American Heritage Month.

PLAN FOR JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH, which occurs in May. AJC offers many resources specifically designed to help mayors celebrate [Jewish American Heritage Month](#)⁷, including talking points, customizable social media posts, and template press releases. AJC can also help plan community events in partnership with elected officials.

ACKNOWLEDGE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY, designated by the UN to take place annually on January 27. Mayors can issue [public statements](#)⁸, use the opportunity to encourage Holocaust education, and hold community events reaffirming the fundamental guiding lesson of the Holocaust: never again.

²[AJC.org/the-working-definition-of-antisemitism](#)

³[AJC.org/use-of-the-working-definition-in-the-us](#)

⁴[AJC.org/employing-the-working-definition](#)

⁵[AJC.org/employing-the-working-definition](#)

⁶[AJC.org/TranslateHate](#)

⁷[AJC.org/JewishAmericanHeritageMonth](#)

⁸[AJC.org/InternationalHolocaustRemembranceDay](#)

The Strategy calls on states and localities to offer trainings to help people understand Jewish communities, antisemitism, and ways to counter antisemitism in their neighborhoods.

PARTNER WITH AJC TO PLAN TRAININGS for elected officials, law enforcement, corporations, sports teams, higher education institutions, and nonprofits to help them recognize antisemitism, raise awareness, and address it using a variety of tools. To schedule a training, contact antisemitism@ajc.org.

The Strategy calls on state and local governments to strengthen education on Jewish history, antisemitism, and the Holocaust, by encouraging studies to assess how effectively school districts are teaching the Holocaust, and creating councils on Holocaust and genocide education.

SEE HOW YOUR STATE COMPARES. [Thirty-nine states](#)⁹ have some sort of Holocaust education and yet most Millennials and Gen Z lack basic knowledge. Short of mandatory Holocaust education, state and local governments can urge formal or informal educational opportunities. AJC's resource on Holocaust education highlights legislative guidelines and best practices for teaching [Holocaust education](#)¹⁰.

The Strategy affirms that ethnic studies and history curricula should include Jewish studies.

ENCOURAGE JEWISH REPRESENTATION IN ETHNIC STUDIES CURRICULA. Lessons should include [Jewish religion and culture](#)¹¹, Jewish history, and [contributions to America](#)¹², Jewish diversity, and contemporary [antisemitism](#)¹³. Because antisemitism presents in unique forms, teachers should be trained to teach about the topic accurately and to be alert to its presence in the classroom.

⁹AJC.org/NeverAgain

¹⁰AJC.org/NeverAgain

¹¹AJC.org/Culture

¹²AJC.org/JAHMTalkingPoints

¹³AJC.org/Issues/Antisemitism

Pillar 2

*Improve safety
and security
for Jewish
communities*



The Strategy calls for increased coordination among local government, law enforcement, and the Jewish community. It cites AJC's 2022 [State of Antisemitism in America](#) report¹⁴ that says 63% of American Jews believe law enforcement is effective in responding to the Jewish community's needs, a sharp drop from 81% in 2019.

ENSURE COLLABORATION. Ask your city's police chief to designate an appropriate senior official to be a central point of contact for local Jewish communities on security needs.

INVEST IN JEWISH COMMUNITY SECURITY. Encourage religiously affiliated institutions to apply for [nonprofit security grants](#)¹⁵ from the Department of Homeland Security to fund security training and physical security enhancements.

The Strategy calls on mayors, governors, and municipal leaders to convene diverse networks of community partners, including law enforcement, to discuss antisemitism and promote hate crime reporting. Year after year, Jews are the largest target of all religiously motivated hate crimes, despite accounting for just 2% of the U.S. population. Making matters worse, many hate crimes go unreported to law enforcement by victims.

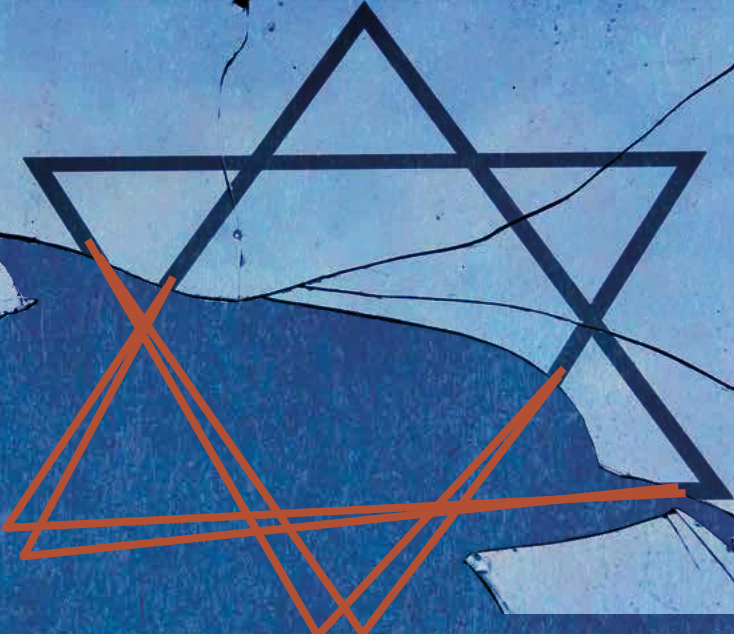
APPOINT A LIAISON. Designate a central coordinator for Jewish and other faith communities, especially as security needs arise. Many elected leaders have Jewish advisory groups or interfaith/interethnic taskforces. Using the National Strategy as a model, consider an action plan to outline a comprehensive city-wide strategy on antisemitism.

ENCOURAGE VICTIMS AND WITNESSES TO REPORT HATE CRIMES. Local governments can leverage Department of Justice (DOJ) resources for hate crimes bias training and hotlines.

ENCOURAGE LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORTING. Year after year, fewer and fewer law enforcement agencies share hate crimes data with the FBI. It is impossible to address hate crimes when we do not understand their extent. Elected leaders should work to ensure that all law enforcement agencies submit hate crimes data to the FBI for its annual report.

¹⁴[AJC.org/AntisemitismReport2022](https://www.ajc.org/AntisemitismReport2022)

¹⁵www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/nonprofit-security



Pillar 3

Reverse the normalization of antisemitism and counter antisemitic discrimination

The Strategy calls on elected leaders at all levels to speak out against antisemitism and to recognize and celebrate those in their communities who speak out against antisemitism.

ISSUE UNEQUIVOCAL CONDEMNATIONS. As with all hate crimes, when an incident occurs, elected officials should speak out loudly and clearly using their broad reach, affirming that antisemitism is not just a Jewish problem, but an assault on American values.

DEPOLITICIZE THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTISEMITISM. Bipartisanship is critical to American success in countering hatred of Jews in the U.S. and abroad. Politicians must call out hatred within their party, before pointing fingers across the aisle.

The Strategy calls on state and local leaders to work with Jewish and other religious communities to ensure that calendars for public schools and elections consider the major holidays of religious groups of all faith communities and that appropriate religious accommodations are made.

ENCOURAGE OFFICIAL CALENDARS (schools, elections, etc.) to **consider major Jewish holidays**¹⁶.

The Strategy calls on states, cities, and school districts to expand media literacy education to address online misinformation and disinformation related to antisemitism.

ENCOURAGE MEDIA LITERACY. A number of attacks against Jews originated on social media. State and local governments should promote media and digital literacy and critical thinking, especially among educators.

¹⁶AJC.org/Culture

Pillar 4

Build cross-community solidarity and collective action to counter hate

The Strategy states it is imperative that non-Jewish and Jewish communities work together and stand up for each other in order to counter antisemitism and other forms of hate. A diversity of voices and actors signals that antisemitism is not just a problem for Jews, but for all.

ENGAGE LEADERS IN COMMUNITY COALITIONS.

Elected officials should join in and lift up exemplary cross-community partnerships like AJC's [Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council](#)¹⁷, [Latino Jewish Leadership Council](#)¹⁸, and Christian-Jewish, Black/Jewish and other coalitions in solidarity and action against antisemitism.

CREATE PREVENTION NETWORKS.

Consider implementing a program like Tackle!, a customized curriculum to empower public officials to develop local prevention frameworks to protect their communities from threats motivated by extremism or bigotry. Funded in part by a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant, Tackle! is a partnership between [Muflehun](#)¹⁹, a resource center, and AJC.

¹⁷AJC.org/MJAC

¹⁸AJC.org/LJLC

¹⁹www.muflehun.org



The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM)

is the official non-partisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are more than 1,400 such cities in the country today. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor.

For decades, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has had policy opposing antisemitism and all forms of hate and bigotry in American cities. Mayors are on the frontlines of the fight against antisemitism, serving as a leading voice against hate crimes in their communities and directing their local police departments to collect and report all hate crimes. In 2021, USCM and AJC established the [Mayors United Against Antisemitism](#)²⁰ initiative to unite leaders across the country in the fight against antisemitism. More than 500 mayors joined this effort, signing a statement declaring that antisemitism is incompatible with fundamental democratic values. Recently the Conference established a page dedicated to [Combating Antisemitism](#)²¹ on its website. The U.S. Conference of Mayors remains committed to combating antisemitism and all forms of hate in America's cities.

American Jewish Committee (AJC) is the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people. With headquarters in New York and more than 75 offices, institutes, and international Jewish community partnerships worldwide, AJC's mission is to enhance the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel, and to advance human rights and democratic values in the United States and around the world.

Following the historic unveiling of the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism by the White House, AJC CEO Ted Deutch announced the creation of the AJC Task Force to Implement the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. AJC's Task Force is designed to ensure the execution of the National Strategy, which includes dozens of AJC's recommendations closely resembling [AJC's Call to Action Against Antisemitism in America](#), in a meaningful and timely manner. For more information on AJC's Task Force visit [AJC.org/NationalStrategyNews](#).



THE UNITED STATES
CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

AJC American Jewish
Committee

²⁰[AJC.org/mayors](#)

²¹[www.usmayors.org/programs/mayors-and-business-leaders-center-for-compassionate-and-equitable-cities/combating-antisemitism](#)