

Jewish Community Statement Calling for Expanded Access to Nutrition Assistance Due to Coronavirus Crisis

March 18, 2020

The coronavirus crisis is not only a national health pandemic, but a time of urgent concern for those who are most vulnerable in our country; those at economic risk are facing dire consequences right now. On behalf of the undersigned Jewish clergy and organizations, we call on the Administration and Congress to work together to increase and expand access to federal nutrition assistance for food insecure Americans in the wake of the coronavirus crisis (COVID-19). Our Jewish texts and traditions command us again and again to feed the hungry, care for the poor, and safeguard those who are most vulnerable — to not "harden [our] heart[s] or shut [our] hand[s] against [our] poor brethren" in need (Deuteronomy 15:7). This has never been more important than now.

As the coronavirus forces school closures around the country, millions of children will not only lose vital instructional time; they will also lose critically needed food that they receive through school nutrition programs. Nearly 22 million students each day depend on free or reduced-price school lunch as a key source of their daily nutrition. We know that eating regularly and well is a vital prerequisite for keeping children healthy and during this national health crisis, and support to make this possible is critical.

We must make it easier to feed children during COVID-19-related school closures.

Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that all households stockpile two weeks of food, but families living in poverty, as well as those hardworking families living paycheck-to-paycheck, are unlikely to be able to afford to buy that much food. The federal government must take the initiative to adopt measures that **prioritize the needs of low-income Americans** to prevent further hunger and hardship. Additionally, older adults who are at an elevated risk of contracting the disease will no longer be able to participate in congregate meal programs, and must instead have access to home-delivered meals and other sources of nutrition.

We are pleased to see the Administration approving state requests for flexibility to serve free meals to children affected by school closures. But this is not enough. We urge you to do everything in your power to **increase and expand access to nutrition assistance** including:

- create a nationwide waiver authority, which allows school officials to distribute food in various settings across all nutrition programs;
- provide states the option to extend Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to households with children affected by school closures; and

- temporarily increase benefits and enable flexibility on alternative food delivery systems for federal nutrition assistance programs like SNAP and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and
- enable meal providers to move funds allocated to support congregate nutrition sites to support expanded home-delivery meal programs.

We believe that a democratic society must provide for the needs of those unable to provide for themselves. And, while many of our organizations work directly with people who are struggling in our communities, we know that we cannot do this work alone. Nearly 40 million Americans struggle to put food on the table on a regular basis, and COVID-19 has real potential to exacerbate their struggles. While charitable organizations will continue to play a vital role in addressing hunger and poverty, we know that the overwhelming majority of food assistance in this country has historically come from — and must continue to come from — federal programs.

Jewish tradition is based in the understanding that each person is made in the image of God. Everyone has the right to live with dignity, provide for their family, and fully participate in society. And no matter a person's circumstance, no one deserves to be hungry.

Signed,

National Organizations:

ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal
 Ameinu
 American Conference of Cantors
 Avodah
 Awakened Heart Project
 Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
 The Blue Card
 Cantors Assembly
 The Center for Jewish Ethics
 Challah for Hunger
 Habonim Dror North America
 Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
 Jewish Center for Justice
 Jewish Council for Public Affairs
 The Jewish Federations of North America
 Jewish Labor Committee
 Jewish Women International
 Jewish World Watch
 Keshet
 MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
 Men of Reform Judaism
 National Council of Jewish Women
 Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies

Rabbinical Assembly
Reconstructing Judaism
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Repair the World
Righteous Persons Foundation
Society for Humanistic Judaism
Swipe Out Hunger
Tivnu: Building Justice
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Union for Reform Judaism
Uri L'Tzedek: Orthodox Social Justice
Women of Reform Judaism
Women's Rabbinic Network

State and Local Jewish Organizations and Clergy

Cantor Neil Schwartz - Dothan, AL
Arizona Jews for Justice
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Phoenix - Phoenix, AZ
Rabbi Tracee Rosen - Phoenix, AZ
Rabbi Nicole Berne - Scottsdale, AZ
National Council of Jewish Women AZ State Policy Advocacy Chair
Rabbi Tracee Rosen - Sun City West, AZ
Rabbi Irwin Wiener, D.D. - Sun Lakes, Arizona
University of Arizona Hillel Foundation - Tuscon, AZ
Rabbi Dorothy Richman - Albany, CA
Cantor Pamela Sawyer - Berkeley, CA
Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller - Berkeley, CA
Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay - Berkeley, CA
Rabbi Paul Kipnes - Calabasas, CA
Coastal Roots Farm - Encinitas, CA
Leichtag - Encinitas, CA
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Rabbi Arnold Rachlis - Irvine, CA
Rabbi Jim Simon - Long Beach, CA
Rabbi Amy Eilberg - Los Altos, CA
Bet Tzedek Legal Services - Los Angeles, CA
Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles - Los Angeles, CA
Jewish Labor Committee Western Region - Los Angeles, CA
The Shtibl Minyan - Los Angeles, CA
Rabbi Rachel Adler - Los Angeles, CA
Rabbi Sharon Brous - Los Angeles, CA
IKAR - Los Angeles, CA
Jewish Family Service LA - Los Angeles, CA

JPAC - Los Angeles, CA
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley - Los Gatos, CA
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Rabbi Joshua Katzan - Los Angeles, CA
Chazan Danny Maseng - Los Angeles, CA
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The Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation - Los Angeles, CA
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Rabbi Sara Goodman - Santa Monica, CA
Rabbi Robin Foonberg, Congregation B'nai Israel - Tustin, CA
Rabbi Mark Hyman - Manhattan Beach, CA
Rabbi David Azen, Congregation B'nai Harim - Grass Valley, CA
National Council of Jewish Women Saddleback Section - Laguna Woods, CA
National Council of Jewish Women Long Beach Section - Long Beach, CA
Rabbi David White - Mill Valley, CA
Rabbi Andrew Straus - Oakland, CA
Jewish Family Services of the Desert - Palm Springs, CA
Rabbi Aimee Gerace - Pasadena, CA
Rabbi Meredith Cahn - Petaluma, CA
Rabbi Brian Schuldenfrei - Rancho Palos Verdes, CA
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Cantor Vera Broekhuysen - Sacramento, CA
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Jewish Family Service - San Diego, CA
Jewish Federation of San Diego County - San Diego, CA
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Alameda, Contra Costa Counties - San Francisco, CA
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Rabbi Jonathan Singer, Congregation Emanu-El - San Francisco, CA
Rabbi Suzanne Singer - Riverside, CA
Edward Zerlin - San Francisco, CA
Rabbi Ruth Adar - San Leandro, CA
Jewish Federation of the Desert - Rancho Mirage, CA
Hazzan Miriam Haselkorn - Tarzana, CA
Rabbi Susan Leider - Tiburon, CA
Rabbi Elie Spitz - Tustin, CA
Rabbi Deborah Ruth Bronstein - Boulder, CO
Rabbi Fred Greene - Boulder, CO
Rabbi Nadya Gross - Boulder, CO
Rabbi Jamie Korngold - Boulder, CO
Colorado Jewish Community Relations Council - Denver, CO

National Council of Jewish Women Colorado Section - Denver, CO
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Rabbi Debra Cantor - Bloomfield, CT
Rabbi Marci Bellows - Chester, CT
Rabbi Jordie Gerson - Greenwich, CT
Rabbi Brian Immerman - Hamden, CT
Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut - Hartford, CT
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater New Haven - New Haven, CT
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Rabbi Jeremy Wiederhorn - Westport, CT
Rabbi Jeremy Schwartz - Willimantic, CT
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Rabbi Hannah Spiro - Washington, DC
Rabbi Ilana Zietman - Washington, DC
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Hadassah Chaya Evolve - GA
Congregation Or Hadash - Atlanta, GA
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Jewish Home Life Communities - Atlanta, GA
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Rabbi Joshua Heller - Atlanta, GA
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Rabbi Bradley Levenberg - Atlanta, GA

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Rabbi Laurence Rosenthal - Atlanta, GA
Rabbi Don Seeman, New Toco Shul - Atlanta, GA
Rabbi Mark Zimmerman - Atlanta, GA
Rabbi Ellen Nemhauser, Faith Alliance of Metro Atlanta - Atlanta, GA
Rabbi Mark Zimmerman - Atlanta, GA
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Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council - Indianapolis, IN

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Jewish Family & Career Services - Louisville, KY
Jews for Justice in Immigration - Louisville, KY
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National Council of Jewish Women KY State Policy Advocacy Chair
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Rabbi Lynn Liberman - St. Paul, MN
Minnesota Rabbinic Association
Jewish Community Relations Council of St Louis - St. Louis, MO
Jewish Federation of St. Louis - St. Louis, MO

Rabbi James Bennett - St. Louis, MO
Rabbi Josef Davidson - St. Louis, MO
Rabbi Amy Feder - St. Louis, MO
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Rabbi Tracy Nathan - St. Louis, MO
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National Council of Jewish Women Bergen County Section - Bergenfield, NJ
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Rabbi Clifford B. Miller - Caldwell, NJ
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Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey - Paramus, NJ
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Jewish Federations of New Jersey - Scotch Plains, NJ
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Rabbi Joel Pitkowsky - Teaneck, NJ
Rabbi Steven Sirbu - Teaneck, NJ
Rabbi Marc Kline - Tinton Falls, NJ
Rabbi Andy Green - Vorhees, NJ
Rabbi Randall Mark - Wayne, NJ
Jewish Care Program - Albuquerque, NM
Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld - Albuquerque, NM
Rabbi Malcolm Cohen - Las Vegas, NV
UJA-Federation of New York
Jewish Family Services of Northeastern New York - Albany, NY
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Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell - Binghamton, NY
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Rabbi Susan Falk - Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Sam Levine - Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Valerie Lieber - Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Ellen Lippmann - Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Eliseo D. Rozenwasser - Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Thomas Gardner - Bronx, NY
Rabbi Katie Greenberg - Bronx, NY
Rabbi Joel Schwab - Bronx, NY
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National Council of Jewish Women Peninsula Section

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Jewish Family Service of Orange County - Middletown, NY
Rabbi Rachel Rubenstein - Middletown, NY
National Council of Jewish Women-Lakeville Section - New Hyde Park, NY
Rabbi Rena Blumenthal - New Paltz, NY
National Council of Jewish Women Rockland Section
Rabbi Guy Austrian - New York, New York
B'nai Jeshurun - New York, NY
Dobkin Family Foundation - New York, NY
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Rabbi Mick Fine - New York, NY
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Rabbi Felicia Sol - New York, NY
Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub - New York, NY
A Wider Bridge - New York, NY
Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz - New York, NY
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Walden, NY
Westchester Jewish Council - Westchester County, NY
Rabbi Mark Friedman - White Lake, NY
Hillels of Westchester - White Plains, NY
Rabbi Robert Tabak - White Plains, NY
Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Council - Cincinnati, OH

Rabbi Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi David Burstein, Congregation Beth Adam - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Sigma Faye Coran, Rockdale Temple -Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi George Barnard - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Benjamin Chaidell - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Noah Ferro - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Meredith Kahan - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Lewis Kamrass - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Margaret Meyer - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Jonathan K. Perlman - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Judith Spicehandler - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Elena Stein - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Miriam Terlinchamp - Cincinnati, OH
Rabbi Gary Phillip Zola - Cincinnati, OH
Jewish Federation of Cleveland - Cleveland, OH
National Council of Jewish Women Ohio State Policy Advocacy Chair - Cleveland, OH
Jewish Family Services - Columbus, OH
National Council of Jewish Women Cleveland Section - Cleveland, OH
Rabbi Jessica K. Shimberg - Columbus, OH
Rabbi Joshua Ginsberg - Dayton, OH
Jewish Federation of Greater Dayton - Dayton, OH
Rabbi Cary Kozberg - Springfield, OH
Jewish Family Services - Youngstown, OH
Rabbi Frank Muller - Youngstown, OH
Youngstown Area Jewish Federation - Youngstown, OH
Rabbi Eric Slaton, Beth Israel Synagogue - Hamilton, OH
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Youngstown Area Jewish Federation - Youngstown, OH
Rabbi Vered Harris - Oklahoma City, OK
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland - Portland, OR
Rabbi Daniel Isaak - Portland, OR
Rabbi David Kosak - Portland, OR
Rabbi Hannah Laner - Portland, OR
Rabbi Robert S. Leib - Abington, PA
Rabbi Ari Perten - Allentown, PA
Jewish Family Service of the Lehigh Valley - Allentown, PA
Rabbi Allen Juda - Bethlehem, PA
Rabbi Moshe Re'em - Allentown, PA
Rabbi Robert Leib, Old York Road Temple-Beth Am - Abington, PA
Rabbi Michael Singer - Bethlehem, PA
Rabbi Marjorie Berman - Clarks Summit, PA
Rabbi Adam Wohlberg - Drescher, PA
Rabbi Jon Cutler - Eagle, PA

Rabbi Rebecca Einstein Schorr - Easton, PA
Rabbi Andrea Merow - Elkins Park, PA
Rabbi Deborah Waxman - Elkins Park, PA
Rabbi Maurice Harris - Glendale, PA
Rabbi Ari Kaiman - Glenside, PA
Rabbi Erin Hirsh - Glenside, PA
Jewish Federation of the Lehigh Valley - Lehigh Valley, PA
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Rabbi Robert Tabak - Melrose Park, PA
Rabbi Aaron Gaber - Newtown, PA
Rabbi David Ackerman - Penn Valley, PA
Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia - Philadelphia, PA
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Cantor Rick Lawrence - Philadelphia, PA
Hazzan Naomi Hirsch - Philadelphia, PA
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Rabbi Amber Powers - Wyncote, PA
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Rabbi Linda Potemken - Wynnewood, PA
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Rabbi Raysh Weiss - Yardley, PA
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Charleston Jewish Federation - Charleston, SC
Rabbi Harry Danziger - Germantown, TN
Knoxville Jewish Alliance - Knoxville, TN

Rabbi Bess Wohlner - Memphis, TN
Rabbi Jeremy Simons - Memphis, TN
Jewish Family Service of Nashville and Middle TN - Nashville, TN
National Council of Jewish Women TN State Policy Advocacy Chair
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Rabbi Amy Cohen - Austin, TX
Rabbi Heidi Coretz - Dallas, TX
Jewish Family Service of Dallas - Dallas, TX
National Council of Jewish Women Austin Section
National Council of Jewish Women Dallas Section
National Council of Jewish Women TX State Policy Advocacy Chairs
Rabbi Adam Roffman - Dallas, TX
Rabbi Seymour Rossel - Dallas, TX
Temple Emanu-El - Dallas, TX
Rabbi Ari Sunshine - Dallas, TX
Rabbi Shira Wallach - Dallas, TX
Rabbi Daniel Utley - Dallas, TX
Cantor Sheri Allen - Fort Worth, TX
Rabbi Ralph Mecklenburger - Fort Worth, TX
Rabbi Anne Belford - Houston, TX
Rabbi Daniel Horwitz - Houston, TX
Cantor Renee Waghalter - Houston, TX
National Council Jewish Women San Antonio Section- San Antonio, TX
Rabbi Samuel Stahl - San Antonio, TX
Rabbi Marina Yergin - San Antonio, TX
Cantor Wendy Elizabeth Bat-Sarah - Salt Lake City, UT
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Rabbi Steven Rein - Alexandria, VA
Cantor Jennifer Rueben - Norfolk, VA
Rabbi Michael Knopf - Richmond, VA
Rabbi Ellen Jaffe-Gill, Tidewater Chavurah - Virginia Beach, VA
Rabbi David Katz - Williamsburg, VA
Rabbi Shana Margolin - Montpelier, VT
Rabbi Sydney Danziger - Bellevue, WA
Hebrew Free Loan Association of Washington State - Mercer Island, WA
Rabbi Olivier BenHaim - Seattle, WA
Camp Solomon Schechter - Seattle, WA
Rabbi Avi Fine - Seattle, WA
Rabbi Suri Friedman - Seattle, WA
Rabbi Will Berkovitz, CEO of Jewish Family Service Seattle - Seattle, WA
Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle - Seattle, WA
Rabbi Jason Levine - Seattle, WA
Rabbi James Mirel - Seattle, WA

Rabbi Paula Rose - Seattle, WA
Seattle Hadassah - Seattle, WA
Rabbi Callie Schulman - Seattle, WA
Rabbi Daniel A. Weiner - Seattle, WA
Rabbi Zari M. Weiss - Seattle, WA
Rabbi Ruth A. Zlotnick - Seattle, WA
Rabbi Joel Alter - Glendale, WI
Wisconsin Jewish Conference - Madison, WI
Rabbi Jonathan Biatch, Temple Beth El - Madison, WI
Rabbi Bonnie Margulis - Madison, WI
National Council of Jewish Women, Wisconsin Section - Mequon, WI
National Council of Jewish Women Milwaukee - Milwaukee, WI
Tikkun Ha-Ir of Milwaukee - Milwaukee, WI
Rabbi Martyn Adelberg - Racine, WI
Rabbi Victor Urecki - Charleston, WV
Rabbi Joseph Hample - Morgantown, WV