

Today. Tomorrow. Always.

SECURING WISCONSIN'S JEWISH COMMUNITY: OUR CASE FOR SUPPORT



MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION

The Jewish people are a people of hope and courage, with a belief in each other and in our shared ability to change the world. At a time when challenges seem to arise at every turn, these qualities enable supporters of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation to change countless lives in Wisconsin and around the globe. We are channeling our community's strength into a new security initiative: Establishing an endowment that will pay for our security needs today, tomorrow, and always.

NEED FOR INCREASED SECURITY

Antisemitism: As antisemitism rises, so does the need for security. Verified acts of antisemitism increased by 482% in Wisconsin since 2015. A major incident occurred on September 7, 2022, when antisemitic graffiti was found on sidewalks at UW-Madison on the first day of school. The graffiti named specific Jewish institutions on campus, as well as naming the executive director of Hillel in Madison.

Geographic expansion: In 2021 a specific synagogue was targeted for attack by nefarious actors on the dark web. The security team at Jewish Federations of North America suggested that this call to action could generate copycat activity at other synagogues in Wisconsin. As a result, the Milwaukee Jewish Federation expanded security services beyond the Greater Milwaukee area to every Jewish community in the state.

OUR SECURITY PROGRAM

The Milwaukee Jewish Federation has a multi-pronged approach to addressing the security needs in Jewish Wisconsin. Here are a few of our most impactful programs.

Security training: MJF's Director of Security provides training to Jewish community professionals on awareness and preparedness, management of an active shooter, response to mass casualties, cybersecurity, and more. From January through August 2022, we trained 1,567 individuals.



Director of Security Ari Friedman displays an antisemitic flyer while training Jewish communal professionals in Milwaukee in March 2022.

Federal security grants: Each year MJF assists Jewish organizations across the state in applying for federal security grants. Last year alone we helped 26 institutions secure \$3.4 million in funding, about half of the dollars distributed in Wisconsin. This influx of funding complements these organizations' reliance on philanthropic dollars.

Synagogue security guard grants: MJF enables all synagogues, including those with limited access to financial resources, to hire highly trained, professional security guards for the High Holidays and Shabbat. Since the program was established in 2019, \$377,000 in grants has been awarded.

Assessment and consultation: Preventing a security incident is at the forefront of our security program. We provide on-site assessments and consultation for all Jewish organizations. Often this includes a walk-through with law enforcement and experts in target hardening.

RESPONDING TO ANTISEMITISM AT UW-MADISON

In September 2022, on the first day of school at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, students were welcomed with antisemitic graffiti on sidewalks in the heart of campus. The statements said Jews “have blood on their hands,” and they described Zionism as “racism” and “genocide,” using Israel as a means of expressing antisemitic tropes.

Perhaps most chilling were statements identifying institutions where Jewish students and faculty congregate: “Here are Zionists at UW: Hillel, Chabad, Tamid, JStreet.” The UW Madison Students for Justice in Palestine issued a statement about the chalking. They mentioned by name Greg Steinberger, executive director of Hillel in Madison. They also mentioned that he was recognized at AIPAC.

Antisemitic graffiti at UW-Madison on the first day of school, September 7, 2022.



Photo contrast enhanced for clarity.

MJF is working with the top leaders at the university to address this incident. MJF's Director of Security is monitoring antisemitic activity, conducting after-hours inspections of the property, and providing additional security training for staff at Jewish organizations on campus.

Supporters of MJF make this response possible through the Annual Campaign, which funds Hillel in Madison, and through contributions to MJF's security fund.

Crisis response: MJF aids all Jewish organizations in responding to security incidents of any kind. Recent incidents have included bomb threats, a bullet shot at the entrance to a Jewish day school, and suspicious packages delivered to two synagogues. Depending on the nature of the incident, our security team is immediately dispatched to the site. We often take the lead in responding to the incident at the agency's request, and we always act as a liaison between the agency and law enforcement (local and national). We also provide crisis communication support to the agency's staff, members, and the media. This support allows the agency professionals to focus on their institution and the people they serve.

Actions to combat antisemitism: Countering antisemitism is a critical component of our security program. We are building bridges with other faith and civic groups and introducing innovative programs like Project Shema to help individuals understand the complexities of Israel and the region.

SECURITY FUNDING

MJF's security program is primarily funded by grants from a few generous individual donors and foundations, as well as the Annual Campaign and a federal security grant. **As the needs for security grow, Jewish Wisconsin needs consistent and dependable funding. MJF is establishing an endowment to fund these initiatives today, tomorrow, and always.**

Annual Security Cost: MJF's current cost of providing security services to Jewish Wisconsin is \$380,000. The minimum annual cost for a comprehensive security program will cost \$772,000. (The ideal program could cost \$1.9 million annually.)

Increased funds would enable us to provide full-time trained, vetted security guards to all Jewish organizations across the state including overnight camps, preschools, and Hillel on campus in Milwaukee and Madison. The increased budget will also provide for major upgrades in technology and physical "target hardening" measures.

JFNA Matching Funds: Jewish Federations of North America has launched LiveSecure, a program aimed at assisting federations in endowing their security needs. MJF is eligible for \$1,000,000 as a match for an increased local investment in security: \$750,000 for Milwaukee-area security needs and an additional \$250,000 for statewide security.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Milwaukee Jewish Federation President and CEO Miryam Rosenzweig to learn more about how you can support our security program. 414-390-5707.