



UNDER ONE ROOF

JF&CS
Jewish Family & Children's Service

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS 2025-2030

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO MOVE FROM VULNERABILITY TO STRENGTH.

About JF&CS

Jewish Family & Children’s Service (JF&CS) provides exceptional human services, from infancy to old age, guided by the Jewish traditions of social responsibility, compassion, and respect for all members of the community. JF&CS’s integrated services help people address mental health and well-being, economic insecurity, aging, parenting, and disability support.

Accessing support in the face of complex and bureaucratic systems is a daunting task, especially during times of stress. JF&CS strives to make it easy. We meet those who come to us with warmth, respect, and know-how, offering exceptional care that is recognized throughout the community.

JF&CS is known for our holistic and comprehensive approach. Since most of life’s challenges impact us in multiple ways, JF&CS integrates expertise across many services under one roof. We address pressing needs, root cause issues, and related repercussions—all in one place. Our integrated approach positions us as the go-to place for people to call when they need help, especially for issues impacting the Jewish community.

JF&CS proudly serves people of all faiths and backgrounds. With a staff of over 250 professionals and 2,200 volunteers, JF&CS serves more than 15,000 people each year throughout Eastern Massachusetts.



▶ Responding to a Changing World

In the five years since JF&CS's last strategic plan, our community has been through a global pandemic, experienced a nationwide increase in mental health needs, witnessed the atrocities of the October 7 attack on Israel, and felt rising antisemitism at home. Amidst these major events, JF&CS has responded to community needs by creating new services, enhancing existing ones, and building strong partnerships across the community. We created a new Mental Health Connect helpline, expanded our Family Table food pantry, launched services to combat the youth mental health crisis, helped displaced Israeli families, and more.

As we look toward the next five years, we must address the demographic and societal shifts that are changing people's lives, including an affordability crisis in Massachusetts leaving people at risk of hunger and homelessness, major growth in the number of young people with disabilities aging out of services provided by school systems, and an aging population which will result in one in every five people in the state being over 65 by 2030. These stressors and shifts are hardest for those who are most vulnerable, and even harder for those who face multiple challenges.

Together, we will meet these challenges with resilience, compassion, and innovation. Our five strategic priorities will guide our efforts to help as many people as possible move from vulnerability to strength:

- Expanding Services to Meet Growing Mental Health Needs
- Strengthening Early Parent-Child Relationships
- Advancing Independence for People with Disabilities
- Helping People Age with Dignity
- Caring for the Jewish Community

"I felt so held.
They were compassionate.
They listened. They were just
a light in the darkness."

—Former client

THE JF&CS STRATEGIC PLANNING METHODOLOGY

This plan is the result of work driven by a committee of JF&CS board members and executives that engaged nearly 1,000 people—community leaders, social service experts, clients, staff, board members, donors, and volunteers—to develop a comprehensive view of JF&CS. We gathered input and feedback about community needs, current JF&CS services, and opportunities for greater impact through:

700
survey
respondents

75
one-on-one
interviews

150
focus groups participants

Values and Who We Serve

JF&CS's work is rooted in our core Jewish values of charity and justice (*tzedakah*), loving-kindness (*chesed*), repairing the world (*tikkun olam*), and welcoming the stranger (*hachnasat orchim*). The many volunteers who serve JF&CS come here to live out these values and, often, to pass them on to their children.



JF&CS plays a unique role serving the Jewish community. Our Schechter Holocaust Services program serves over 400 Holocaust survivors and is the only program of its kind in Greater Boston. Our group homes for adults with disabilities are the only ones in the area that offer kosher food and Jewish holiday celebrations. Family Table provides kosher food to families in need and traditional food for Jewish holidays. Approximately half of our clients across all JF&CS programs are Jewish, and our goal is that every Jewish person in Greater Boston understands that JF&CS is here to help them when they need us.

Because of our Jewish values, JF&CS proudly serves all people in need, regardless of faith or background. The concept of “welcoming the stranger” means that JF&CS aims to create a sense of belonging for all, with sensitivity to people who have experienced discrimination or marginalization. JF&CS clients come from all religious backgrounds and represent a wide range of races, ethnicities, neighborhoods, and income levels. JF&CS sometimes provides the first meaningful interaction with the Jewish community for our non-Jewish clients—a positive way to proudly live our values. This work builds bridges across communities, and in doing so, serves as a powerful deterrent to antisemitism. JF&CS has a particular opportunity to build partnerships in our home base of Waltham, a community with significant needs.

Financial Model

JF&CS's impact is built on an integrated and efficient service strategy, which lets us ensure that every dollar has maximum impact. JF&CS consistently receives a four-star Charity Navigator rating while balancing our budget each year. We intentionally keep our overhead rate low, in the range of 15%, an efficiency which is enabled in part by our breadth and scale.

Our diversified revenue model optimizes our income sources for maximum impact:

GOVERNMENT FUNDS
more than half of JF&CS funding

(56%)

Government funds offer a revenue foundation for much of our work, which enables our philanthropy to have the greatest impact.

PHILANTHROPY
engine for innovation and excellence

(28%)

Philanthropy enables us to innovate, offer the highest quality services, and create proofs of concept to secure future funding.

FEE-FOR-SERVICE
represents a growth opportunity

(13%)

Our fee-for-service structure ensures that individuals who have the means pay for our quality services and help fund access for those who cannot afford to pay.



"I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for my Hebrew Free Loan. As a single parent to three children, including one with autism, the loan provided much-needed support when I was unable to work. I am dedicated to giving back to the Jewish community that supported me during a time of need."

—Former client

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Over the next five years, JF&CS will strengthen our integrated service model, which recognizes the complex interactions among a range of life circumstances. This model enables us to function as a social service hub for the community, providing a starting point for people navigating life's challenges. Integrated services enable us to operate efficiently, leverage funding effectively, and provide the highest standard of care to our clients.

Within this strategy, we have selected five priority areas to intentionally hone our efforts and guide the high-quality services we provide to our community.



Strategic Priorities



Expand Services to Meet Growing Mental Health Needs

As in the rest of the country, mental health needs are at an all-time high in Greater Boston. In JF&CS's conversations with rabbis, Jewish communal leaders, and individual Jewish community members, mental health support is the top social service need expressed.

JF&CS has deep expertise in mental health, with dozens of social workers and services that help over 3,000 people a year address anxiety, social isolation, postpartum depression, bereavement, persistent mental illness, and many other issues.

STRATEGIES AND TARGET IMPACT

JF&CS will offer expertise, guidance, and partnership to help individuals and families address growing mental health needs.

Over the next five years, JF&CS will provide **high-impact services to support mental health needs across the lifespan**, while also partnering with individuals and families to help them most effectively access additional services as needed.

We will continue to innovate solutions to mental health needs by **piloting new approaches** and rigorously examining their impact.

We will offer **coaching, support, and intervention**, including to address the stressors that cause and exacerbate mental health challenges.

We will **offer guidance**, including helplines for information and support, expert consultation, and ongoing assistance through the complexities and hurdles families face when trying to access mental health care, helping at least 1,750 people each year navigate mental health needs.

"My emotional life, as well as my daily tasks of living, seem to move quickly, back and forth, between manageable and unmanageable. And I never know when I'm going to be struck one way or the other. Gratefully, I am on the other side of many of the problems and issues I used to have, and it is due to JF&CS."

—Client with persistent mental illness



Strengthen Early Parent-Child Relationships

Evidence shows that a child's early experiences, especially in the first five years, sets them on a life trajectory that can impact generations to come. JF&CS is a longtime leader in services that foster healthy early parent-child relationships, contribute to lifelong resilience and well-being, and reduce the chances of child abuse or neglect.

In the last five years, JF&CS has helped over 6,000 families nurture healthy beginnings. Our clinical, case management, and home visiting services provide particular impact to children born prematurely, with medical complexities, or exposed to substances, as well as to parents who experience poverty, postpartum depression, or who have a history of trauma, abuse, or mental illness.

STRATEGIES AND TARGET IMPACT

JF&CS will leverage and scale proven work to strengthen positive parent-child relationships that promote healthy child development during the critical early years.

To **support individual parents and caregivers and their young children**, we will offer services to help build bonds that form the core of healthy childhood development. These services will include support groups, one-on-one visitation and parenting support, and therapeutic models.

To scale our work and change the long-term trajectories of many more children's lives, we will **embed our expertise into partner daycare centers and preschools**, especially those serving children at the highest risk in communities impacted by poverty.

We will improve the mental health and parenting abilities of at least 5,000 adults to enhance the life trajectories of their children.

"I am so grateful I had the group when I was experiencing postpartum depression. I was very shocked to have it with my second child because I didn't have it with my first. I felt very lost until I found the group. Thank you for all you did for me and the other women."

—Support group participant



Advance Independence for People with Disabilities

We know that for thousands of families, caring for a loved one with a disability brings much joy, but it can also generate stress. Often, people with disabilities feel these same emotions as they face the challenges of finding support to live productive adult lives.

There is huge growth in the number of people with disabilities aging out of the school system. About 1,500 people with a significant intellectual or developmental disability in Massachusetts turn 22 every year, a number that has doubled over the last decade. Only 70% of young people who transitioned to adulthood in the last three years are receiving services, and as many as 5,000 people statewide are estimated not to be receiving the help they need.

JF&CS provides a broad range of services in this area, including a place to live; a way to spend meaningful days, whether at a job, by volunteering, or through education; a community; and, for some, a connection to Jewish traditions. We also help individuals and families navigate public benefits, advocate for special education resources, and plan for the future. All within one organization, under one roof, JF&CS clients can access all the elements of a full life.

STRATEGIES AND TARGET IMPACT

JF&CS will promote independence and community access for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as a significant number of individuals transition to adult services.

We will **emphasize growing our services for semi-independent individuals**, with a focus on building vocational and life skills while fostering community connections. Our approach will include supportive living programs that empower individuals to thrive in semi-independent apartments, along

with coaching for competitive employment, socialization, and the routines of daily life.

We will also **support families in navigating resources and planning through critical life stages**, most notably the school years, the transition out of school-based support at age 22, and the older years.

We will enable 2,400 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live with dignity, with the most appropriate living scenarios, day programs, and employment.

“We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for all your efforts to encourage and support our daughter this past year. Luckily for us, there was a space available for her in JF&CS housing when we needed it most. We felt very secure knowing that she was in a place where she was getting the help she needed to learn to better navigate her world.”

—Parents of a client with disabilities

Help People Age with Dignity

We all hope to live with dignity in our later years. Yet in time, many older adults face limited abilities, are forced to contend with difficult medical diagnoses, and see loved ones take on time-consuming caregiving roles.

By 2030, one in every five people in Massachusetts will be over 65. Already about 17% of all adults over the age of 18 provide unpaid care to an individual age 50 or older.

JF&CS is a statewide leader in supporting the growing number of older adults and their families through the challenges of aging. JF&CS's services span the gamut of needs. Our aging life care managers support older adults and their families in navigating medical care, finances, housing, family relationships, legal decision-making, and more. In addition, we offer a helpline, support groups, arts-based therapy, guardianship, and community education.

STRATEGIES AND TARGET IMPACT

JF&CS will empower individuals to age with dignity by supporting both older adults and their caregivers at a time of unprecedented growth for this population.

We will **provide in-depth expertise, guidance, and support** to enhance the quality of life for older adults and family members navigating the challenges of aging, including people who do not have family support.

We will expand and tailor our services to **address a range of needs and financial circumstances.**

We will also **pilot programs to coach caregivers**, educating them about effective ways to care for older adults as they age.

We will ensure that more than 5,000 individuals and families have guidance to navigate aging with dignity.

"When I was a Visiting Mom volunteer, I wasn't having any more children so I knew I wouldn't need its services. I volunteered at Family Table and I thought I would never be hungry. But there came a time when I needed JF&CS. My husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. We went to the JF&CS Memory Café every month. It was a room full of people who should not have had much hope. There's no cure for this disease. But for 90 minutes, we were all humans, enjoying the art and music."

—Longtime volunteer, donor, and client



Care for the Jewish Community

JF&CS has served the Jewish community since our founding over 160 years ago. While JF&CS has evolved into an organization that is respected for serving people of all faiths, we have not lost sight of our role in caring for the Jewish community.

The myth that poverty does not exist in the Jewish community is among the most pervasive, and one that we actively seek to dispel. We serve hundreds of Jewish people in poverty each year, working to prevent homelessness and ensure that people's basic needs are met. JF&CS currently provides services to more than 400 Holocaust survivors, a number that has nearly tripled in the last ten years.

JF&CS weaves our care for the Jewish community into all our work, such as operating a kosher food pantry, organizing Jewish holiday celebrations in group homes for adults with disabilities, and offering culturally sensitive services to Jewish survivors of domestic violence. In addition, we apply a Jewish lens to challenging issues such as mental health, domestic violence, disabilities, poverty, parenting, and substance use. By creating a visible Jewish presence in these areas, we destigmatize areas of need, promote acceptance, and create an environment in which all members of the Jewish community can feel cared for and embraced.

STRATEGIES AND TARGET IMPACT

JF&CS will fulfill our unique role of caring for the social service needs of the Jewish community at a time of rising antisemitism, anxiety, and disconnection from traditional institutions.

Our goal is for our community to know we are here when need arises.

We will **increase our outreach to the Jewish community** through partnerships with synagogues and other Jewish organizations, including schools, community centers, retirement communities, and social organizations.

We will also **address unique Jewish social service needs.** We will enable all Jews—including those with disabilities, mental health challenges, or limited incomes—to live with dignity by providing kosher food, Jewish connections, and culturally sensitive

services. We will address end-of-life planning, grief, and emotional healing from a Jewish framework. We will also help the Jewish community build resiliency and mental wellness in the face of antisemitism.

We will **serve as a trusted resource to rabbis, synagogue communities, and other organizations**, guiding them to resources for mental health support, domestic violence, benefits navigation, aging, and the many other areas of JF&CS services.

We will **help people live out their Jewish values**, and pass them on to the next generation, by engaging 4,000 unique volunteers and building long-term commitment to improving the world, growing our connection to the Jewish values of *chesed* (loving-kindness) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).

“It’s like a security net being there for the community if needed. I was a person in need when my son was sick, and I was struggling financially. JF&CS was there to answer my questions for help and support.”

—Former client

Organizational Infrastructure

J F&CS's integrated service model is built on a cross-organizational foundation to support our staff, our operations, and our connection to the community. In the next five years, we have identified priorities for this foundation in four areas: people, technology and evaluation, marketing and communications, and physical spaces.

- To support our commitment to excellence, we will focus on the development, recruitment, and compensation of our 250 **staff** members—a group who are seen by the community as not only experienced and competent but also warm and resourceful.
- As we innovate, we must advance our **technology** to support our progress, including by building our analytics discipline to drive more highly informed decision-making.
- Many people in our community are unaware of the breadth of services JF&CS provides. It is essential that we expand our **marketing** and communication efforts to address this awareness gap.
- With gratitude to donors, JF&CS owns our headquarters building in Waltham. The hybrid work environment presents an opportunity to optimize our **physical space** to enhance productivity and to generate rental revenue from like-minded organizations.

“I want to emphasize how responsive and flexible the staff is. This is a wonderful staff. They are very open; they are seeking education for themselves. The staff advocates for my son. They’re not only serving him, but they are also very good at working together.”

—Mother of adult client with disabilities



► Conclusion

Today's demographic and societal shifts are combining to create profound communal need. The Jewish values upon which JF&CS was founded—compassion, justice, charity, welcoming the stranger, and improving the world—have never been more important.



By focusing on the strategic priorities defined in this plan, and building on our foundation of expertise, integration, and innovation, JF&CS can make an even bigger community-wide impact. Together, we will create a community where people are able to get the help they need, when they need it, and with compassion and dignity, all under one roof. In doing so, we will empower thousands of individuals to move from vulnerability to strength.

We are grateful for the hundreds of community members, staff, and social service experts who have participated in creating this roadmap for integrated services and look forward to helping our community to thrive. We invite everyone to join us in realizing our vision for a caring community.

Acknowledgements

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JF&CS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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UNDER ONE ROOF

FOR OUR CLIENTS FOR OUR COMMUNITY FOR OUR FUTURE