

# \$52 Million in Emergency Funding Helping New Yorkers One By One



## UJA Federation NEW YORK

This year, the Covid-19 pandemic has deeply disrupted how we traditionally observe the Jewish holidays. But with all the challenges, our tradition guides us to embrace these moments of sacred time to renew our spirit.

UJA is also using this opportunity to honor the altruism and kindness of our Jewish community, which has helped us sustain more than 200,000 New Yorkers who have been so negatively impacted these past six months.

From the moment the first case of Covid-19 was reported in New York, UJA and our unparalleled network of nonprofit partners went quickly to work, consulting, planning, and then ensuring the continuation of critical services in our community.

In total, UJA has so far allocated more than \$52 million in emergency funding - above and beyond our regular budgeted allocations - to help respond to the devastating impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

In the early days of the pandemic we knew parts of our community needed immediate and urgent support. Holocaust survivors are at increased risk for the virus, and for many, the lockdown and run on basic supplies resurfaced trauma from an early life in hiding and years of

food scarcity.

Quick action gave hope to survivors like 97-year-old Minna, who was no longer able to go to her local Jewish community center for meals or to the Friday Shabbat group that was the highlight of her week. Because of our support, Minna receives a hot kosher meal daily and daily phone calls to check on her well-being. Her beloved Shabbat group continues weekly by phone. Despite everything Minna has endured, she speaks with unflagging optimism:

“Hard times can really bring out the kindness in people. And perhaps this can be a lesson learned from the crisis and help make the world better.”

UJA has been providing emergency relief for so many like Minna during the darkest days of the crisis. For example, food scarcity has affected thousands. Since March, we dramatically increased our support to kosher food pantries inundated with requests from new clients. Two million pounds of food has been delivered through our partner Met Council during this time.

Individuals and families already on the precipice of poverty, such as single parents and low-income college students, have found themselves jobless and without a

safety net. We provided much needed cash assistance for essentials such as rent, childcare, food, and tuition.

Now six months in, we are still facing incredible challenges and hardships created by Covid-19, which are likely to continue for some time. UJA is creating brand new social service "hubs" that will offer job training, counseling, benefits enrollment, and more - all under one roof. Developed in conjunction with our partner Commonpoint Queens, the effort is anchored at a new headquarters in Queens that will even feature a state-of-the-art training kitchen to teach culinary job skills. Six satellite "hub" locations are planned for Brooklyn, Manhattan, Long Island, and Westchester that will function as a coordinated network of services stretching across our entire community.

We're also continuing to expand our groundbreaking digital food pantry system, which allows individuals to access food remotely - important during the pandemic - while promoting dignity and efficiency and at the same time incentivizing healthy options.

Mental health services will be critical to helping our community rebuild their lives. We recognize that so many are coping with

ongoing grief, fear, anxiety, and more. Like Alice, whose husband tested positive for Covid-19 and was admitted to a New York City hospital. Doctors told her to consider herself positive and quarantine but soon after, her husband died. She not only lost her partner and best friend of 31 years, she also couldn't access the traditional, comforting means of Jewish mourning.

Still quarantined, Alice found comfort in a UJA partner that provides New Yorkers with a range of health and human services. “They assigned a talented bereavement support counselor to work with me individually until a support group started,” Alice shares.

There are so many like Minna and Alice, and we plan to be there for them.

We recognize that there is a long and uncertain road still ahead, but we draw strength from an incredible New York community that lifts one another up. At this time of new beginnings, we hope and pray for a future filled with all the sweetness life can offer.

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