

18+ Jewish Organizations to Support (That are Not the Federations or JNF)

 jewschool.com/2017/11/80601/18-jewish-organizations-support-not-federations-jnf/

11/29/2017



During a time of year when many make charitable donations, it can be overwhelming to know what to support. And while the idea of “giving” comes from the capitalist and corporate idea of Christmas and Hanukkah presents, it does promote a more equitable sharing of wealth and enables non-profits to do crucial work.

There are thousands of organizations out there worth giving to, a fraction of which are Jewish. While it may be easy to donate to the Jewish Federations or the Jewish National Fund, both organizations have come under [important criticism](#) for [complicity](#) in the [Israeli Occupation](#), and the former has also dismayed many progressives for its [unwillingness to challenge](#) the [Trump administration](#). Instead, I would like to highlight a number of smaller Jewish organizations doing important work which I think it is worthwhile to support. These organizations’ work varies widely, as do their politics and and situation with regard to other parts of the Jewish world.

If you want to support loving, radical, and justice-oriented Jewish community, I encourage you to make a donation to any of the following organizations:

1. [Avodah](#) is a Jewish service corps and fellowship program that enables young people to live in community, work at a local non-profit fighting poverty, hunger, racism, and xenophobia, and learn how to fight systems of oppression.
2. [Shalva](#) is an agency serving Jewish women in the Chicago area facing domestic violence. Domestic violence

happens in all kinds of families- no race, religion, culture, or class status is immune to domestic violence in their communities. Don't feel connected to Chicago? Try contacting a synagogue or local Jewish organization in your community to find out if there's a Jewish domestic violence agency in your area.

3. Unfortunately, money is a big reason why many Jewish institutions are not challenging the status quo on Israel-Palestine. [IfNotNow](#) is a grassroots movement of Jewish young adults working to end our institutions' support for the Occupation through nonviolent direct actions, community building, song, and education. [Jewish Voice for Peace](#) is a Jewish-lead Palestinian solidarity organization fighting anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, and anti-Arab bigotry. [Open Hillel](#) is seeking to open up discourse around Israel/Palestine on college campuses by ending Hillel International's Standards of Partnership on Israel. Independent [Jewish Voices Canada](#) is a national human rights organization whose mandate is to promote a just resolution to the conflict in Israel and Palestine through the application of international law and respect for the human rights of all parties. (Suggestion from Cara Gold).
4. On a related note, [Achvat Amim](#), a 5 month program in Jerusalem for young adults who want to explore the Occupation and Israeli-Palestinian relations more deeply, was recently defunded by Masa. If you want to support more anti-occupation work happening on the ground, former IDF soldiers lead tours in the West Bank to expose the violence of the Occupation through [Breaking the Silence](#), and [B'Tselem](#) is working to change Israeli policy in Occupied territories.
5. There are a few Jewish organizations pursuing environmental justice through an educational lens. [Eden Village Camp](#) and [Eden Village West](#) are pluralistic, Jewish farm-to-table summer camps centered around a culture of kindness. Consider donating to their scholarship funds so that more kids can experience camp! [Hazon](#) is an umbrella Jewish environmental organization, located in Connecticut, New York, Colorado, Detroit that runs retreats, fellowships, and educational programs for people of all ages with an environmental focus. Some of their programs include
6. [The Ark](#) provides social services to low-income and working-class Jews in Chicago. It is a common misconception that all Jews have access to wealth.
7. [Footsteps](#) is an organization that assists people choosing to leave the Hasidic community by providing educational, career, and emotional support services.
8. [JOIN For Justice](#) facilitates in-person and virtual community organizing trainings through a Jewish lens.
9. [Workmen's Circle](#) provides educational programs, Yiddish classes, and social justice opportunities rooted in Yiddish socialist tradition.
10. There are several Jewish Podcasts that are inspiring and questioning Jewish thought in the 21st century. Check out [Judaism Unbound](#), [Treyf Podcast](#), and the selection on [Jewish Public Media](#).
11. Print (or written) media still exists too though! [Jewschool](#) is a progressive, volunteer-run blog, [Lilith](#) is a Jewish feminist magazine and blog, and [Tikkun](#) is a justice-based publication.
12. [The Jewish Emergent Network](#) is a forum of seven spiritual communities across the country that are experimenting with the ways Judaism can look like. They are all membership and/or dues optional, making them more accessible than the traditional synagogue model. Consider donating to one of the seven communities as well.
13. Traditional text study is for people of all ages and backgrounds, contrary to what one may think. Before you knew something, you didn't know it, so why not support radically traditional, queer Jewish learning at [Svara](#) or egalitarian yeshiva learning at [Yeshivat Hadar](#).
14. While it's true that Jews are highly concentration in major metropolises like New York, LA, DC, and Chicago, there are Jews all over the country and world. Consider donating to a small congregation in a rural area, or supporting the [Institute for Southern Jewish Life](#), the Jackson, Mississippi-based organization that supports Jewish communities throughout the South.

15. Addiction is another issue that we'd like to think does not exist in Jewish communities, but we're only lying to ourselves and further stigmatizing those struggling with addiction when we say that. [Beit T'Shuva](#) is a Jewish addiction treatment center and congregation in Los Angeles.
16. Jewish day school is expensive and stereotyped as only being a place for white and wealthy Jews. Make Jewish day schools more accessible to people of all class backgrounds by donating to the scholarship fund at a Jewish day school in your community.
17. [Keshet](#) and [Eshel](#) both provide resources and support for full inclusion and autonomy of LGBTQIA folks in Jewish communities. Eshel specifically works in Orthodox communities.
18. The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, aka [The RAC](#), lobbies our legislators on a variety of issues and trains young people on fighting for justice using Reform Jewish values.
19. [Jews for Racial and Economic Justice](#) (NYC), [Jews United for Justice](#) (DC), [Detroit Jews for Justice](#), [Jewish Community Action](#) (Twin Cities) and the [Jewish Council on Urban Affairs](#) (Chicago) are all organizing locally to pursue justice through campaigns and partnerships that impact oppressed people in their cities. (Thank you Elizabeth Heyman for adding DJFJ and JCA).
20. [Operation Understanding DC](#) conducts dialogue between Black and Jewish high school students in the DC while building a new generation of compassionate leaders, justice seekers, and change agents. All new donations are being matched until the end of the year. (Thank you Emmy Cohen for the contribution).
21. [The American Jewish World Service](#) is combating global poverty and promoting international development throughout the world through several programs both domestically and abroad. (Suggestion from Jason Pollens).
22. [Mazon](#) is the primary Jewish voice in the anti-hunger advocacy world. (Suggestion from Ana Mendelson).
23. [Americans for Peace Now](#) is the sister movement to Israel's peace movement, Shalom Achshav (peace now), and educates and persuades the American public and its leadership to support and adopt policies that will lead to comprehensive, durable, Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab peace, based on a two-state solution. In Washington, D.C., they share an office with the [New Israel Fund](#), which promotes a just and pluralistic society in Israel-Palestine.
24. [T'ruah](#), the rabbinic call for human rights, organizes rabbis to fight for justice domestically, and in Israel, including fighting the Occupation.
25. The [National Council for Jewish Women](#) works on several justice issues. Currently their priorities include reproductive rights, federal courts, civic engagement, and gender equality in Israel. Another great feminist organization is [Jewish Women International](#), some of whose work overlaps with NCJW, and is currently focusing on violence against women, women's health, and economic security.
26. [DOROT](#) is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to alleviate social isolation and provide concrete services to older adults. DOROT's diverse set of programs, as well as our focus on providing intergenerational connections to seniors, has ensured that DOROT's clients have access to the resources they need to age with dignity, independence, and grace. (Suggestion by Lauren Kranson).
27. [Hashomer Hatzair](#) and [Habonim Dror](#) are Zionist Socialist youth movements that empower people to take on leadership roles in their community from a young age.

Rachel