

JEWISH AMERICAN

HERITAGE MONTH

AT A GLANCE

In 2006, Congress passed a bipartisan resolution "calling on State and local governments and the people of the United States to observe" a full month to celebrate the long history of Jewish contributions to the founding and success of our country. Every year since, the President of the United States has proclaimed May as Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM), and cities and states are following suit. Now, at this time of soaring antisemitism, mayors can have a transformative impact in strengthening their communities and fighting Jew-hatred by proclaiming and implementing JAHM at the municipal level.

From the sciences to the courtroom, the arts to the halls of government, Jewish Americans have made contributions that are profound, enduring, and woven into the fabric of American life. Jonas Salk gave the world the polio vaccine. Louis Brandeis became the first Jewish Justice of the Supreme Court and a towering champion of the American worker. Irving Berlin wrote the songs that became the soundtrack of a nation, including God Bless America. And Levi Strauss clothed that nation. And in cities across the country, Jewish mayors, council members, municipal leaders, and community builders helped build the institutions and public life that communities depend on today.

SIGNIFICANCE

The answer to antisemitism is not simply tolerance. It is knowledge, understanding, and a fuller appreciation of Jewish history, Jewish identity, and the profound contributions Jewish Americans have made to the fabric of the United States. That is the purpose of Jewish American Heritage Month. By helping communities see Jewish heritage as an integral part of the American story, JAHM becomes more than a commemoration. It is a proactive tool for building understanding, strengthening bonds, and countering the ignorance and distortion that so often fuel antisemitism.

The **Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM)** is a nonpartisan, global Jewish human rights movement uniting over 1,000 organizations and nearly seven million people, across all religions and faiths, to combat the world's oldest hatred.

If you would like to collaborate with CAM on this important initiative, please reach out to Lisa Katz at: lisa@combatantisemitism.org



"GIVE ME
YOUR TIRED,
YOUR POOR,
YOUR HUDDLED
MASSES
YEARNING TO
BREATHE FREE"

Emma Lazarus,
Jewish poet

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAYORS

- Officially recognize Jewish American Heritage Month through a formal city proclamation by hosting a ceremony at City Hall and sharing the proclamation.
- Organize a Jewish American Heritage Month program in your city. Invite and recognize community leaders, residents, and partners to highlight the importance of the month. Examples include:
 - A "Taste of Jewish Heritage Event" which could include a citywide bagel crawl or community bake-off featuring Jewish baked goods, or a talk from a Jewish chef or cookbook author;
 - A conversation highlighting how Jewish residents have shaped your city;
 - A family-friendly community movie night with screenings of *An American Tail* and/or *Hester Street*.
- Encourage your city's schools, libraries, and youth programs to participate through lessons, discussions, and initiatives that highlight the contributions of Jewish Americans to the United States.
- Share messages, stories, and historical JAHM highlights through city newsletters and social platforms.

DRAFT PROCLAMATION DECLARING MAY 2026 AS JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

WHEREAS, since their arrival on American shores as early as the 16th century, Jewish immigrants and their descendants have played a vital role in shaping the United States, contributing to the nation’s creation, growth, freedom, prosperity, and enduring strength;

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans have made profound and lasting contributions to every aspect of American life, including the arts, sciences, business, law, education, military and public service, entertainment, and culinary traditions, enriching the cultural fabric of our nation and helping define what it means to be American;

Optional Add: **WHEREAS**, the Jewish community of [NAME OF CITY] has contributed to our city through [INSERT EXAMPLES];

WHEREAS, for over four decades, Presidents of the United States have formally recognized the invaluable contributions of Jewish Americans to our country, and since 2006, the month of May has been officially designated as Jewish American Heritage Month through Presidential proclamation and bipartisan Congressional support;

WHEREAS, at a time of rising antisemitism, it is more important than ever to affirm the place of Jewish Americans in our national story and to reaffirm our commitment to their safety, dignity, and belonging.

NOW THEREFORE, I, [NAME], Mayor of the City of [NAME OF CITY], do hereby proclaim May 2026 as **Jewish American Heritage Month** in the City of [NAME OF CITY].

I call upon all residents to join in celebrating the remarkable history, heritage, and contributions of the Jewish community to our city and our nation. I further encourage:

- All city departments and agencies to commemorate this occasion through public announcements and the display of educational materials;
- Our local schools, colleges, and universities to offer programming that highlights Jewish American heritage and its impact on our shared municipal values;
- Museums, libraries, and cultural institutions throughout [NAME OF CITY] to host exhibitions and events that honor Jewish American history and achievements.

Let this month serve as a time to reflect, learn, and celebrate the resilience, creativity, and enduring contributions of Jewish Americans throughout our history.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the [NAME OF CITY] to be affixed this ___ day of _____, 2026.

[NAME]
[NAME OF CITY]

