



Working with Jewish museums
as essential resources and vital centers.

Council of American Jewish Museums and the Institute of Museum and Library Services Work in Partnership to Address Antisemitism

“Museums Respond” Summit Convened 100+ Leaders to Inform Nationwide Strategies

Washington, DC – March 7, 2024 - The Council of American Jewish Museums (CAJM) and the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) held a summit of leaders on March 5-6 in Washington, DC, called “Museums Respond: Strategies for Countering Antisemitism and Hate.” Federal officials and leaders from museums shared multiple perspectives on addressing antisemitism and hate, with the goals of showing museums, libraries, and archives as resources, and building new partnerships and strategies across communities. The summit was convened as part of IMLS’s and CAJM’s commitments under President Biden’s [National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#), released in May 2023.

The National Strategy includes more than 100 actions the Biden-Harris Administration is taking to address the rise of antisemitism in the U.S. The United States has experienced an alarming increase in antisemitic incidents and discriminatory acts in recent years, according to the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#). Though American Jews account for only 2.4% of the U.S. population, they are the victims of 63% of reported religiously motivated hate crimes.

The summit was a key action of the National Strategy. The two-day convening and related materials support the Strategy’s aims to increase awareness of antisemitism; expand knowledge of Jewish-American heritage in its breadth and variety, and create cross-community solidarity to counter multiple forms of hate threatening our shared society. CAJM’s work builds upon years of programming with its membership and allies.

Melissa Martens Yaverbaum, Executive Director of CAJM remarked, “We know that antisemitism threatens not only Jewish communities, but all communities. Museums build awareness and relationships informed by cultural fluency, artifacts, evidence, regional stories, and the breadth of history. It’s exciting to think what museums will do next to strengthen community commitments to a healthy and thriving democracy. CAJM has been so proud to partner with IMLS — an essential and exemplary government agency — in making museums and libraries visible as trusted public spaces that reflect and respond to community needs.”

More than 100 leaders attended the two-day event, including those from Jewish museums, other culturally specific museums, libraries, digital archives, and government agencies. Together they explored museum-based approaches, including:

- Evolving Narratives on Antisemitism in America
- Collections as Evidence / Collections for Engagement
- Convening Conversations with Communities
- Holocaust Memorials, Museums, and Addressing Antisemitism
- Communicating with Children
- Jewish Arts and Creative Expression
- Building and Sustaining Long-term Partnerships
- Re-Charting A Shared Future

Presenters included Eric K. Ward of Race Forward; Amy Spitalnick of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs; Dov Waxman of UCLA; Josh Perelman with the Weitzman Museum of American Jewish History; Devon Akmon of Michigan State University Museum; Felton Thomas of Cleveland Public Library; Annie Polland of Tenement Museum; Tsione Wolde-Michael of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities; Kendell Pinkney of The Workshop; Francesco Spagnola of the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life; Broadway actress Micaela Diamond; Carole Zawatsky of the Tree of Life Memorial Museum; Gretchen Skidmore of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Vedet Coleman-Robinson from the Association of African American Museums; and musicians Galeet Dardashti and Ben Gundersheimer. Convening conversations were supported by a skilled dialogic team, led by Sarah Pharaon.

Based on learnings from the summit, CAJM and IMLS will produce and distribute a toolkit of museum approaches for countering antisemitism and hate, to serve cultural organizations, educators, and communities across the nation.

CAJM acknowledges the steadfast support and cooperation of the White House Domestic Policy Council in increasing awareness and understanding of antisemitism, including its threat to America, and a broad appreciation of American Jewish history and heritage.

About the Council of American Jewish Museums (CAJM)

The leading forum for Jewish museums in the United States, CAJM is committed to enriching American and Jewish culture and enhancing the value of Jewish museums to multiple communities. The organization strengthens, positions, and advocates for America's Jewish museums as invaluable public resources. To learn more, visit cajm.net or contact communications@cajm.net.