

# Advocacy

## Maryland Jewish

### DAY RECEPTION 2025



## BUDGET REQUESTS FOR THE BALTIMORE JEWISH COMMUNITY

### OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

#### **Increase Operating Funds for the Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Program from \$5 Million to \$10 Million**

The Protecting Against Hate Crimes grant in the Governor's budget was established in FY2020 because of the unfortunate rise in hate bias incidents in Maryland and throughout the country. These grants continue to be used for infrastructure upgrades and security personnel for institutions deemed at-risk for hate crimes or attacks. In 2023, SB840/HB1243 codified this budget language to ensure the \$5 million would always be in the budget to help provide funding for security enhancements. Additionally, the law explicitly set aside at least \$1 million each year specifically for faith-based institutions. During the past grant application cycle for FY25, the grant program saw an overwhelming increase in applications from 170 qualified organizations, which would have required \$22 million to fulfill. We are grateful that Governor Moore included this increase in his proposed budget, and are hopeful that the legislature will keep the funding at \$10 Million when the budget is passed.

### CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST

#### **Educational Enhancement and Overdue Long-Term Maintenance of Holocaust Memorial, Downtown Baltimore \$750,000 (Baltimore City, District 46)**

The Baltimore Jewish Council and The Associated launched an effort to build a Holocaust memorial in Baltimore in 1976, which was dedicated in November of 1980. The BJC and The Associated maintain the memorial site – cleaning, landscaping, snow removal, basic maintenance – from our budgets, with the support of some endowment funds. The site has faced many challenges over the years because of its location and orientation, with relatively few visitors and persistent criminal activity and homelessness. These have been compounded by the 15-year vacancy of the Baltimore City Community College building adjacent to the memorial. This building has recently been demolished and its vacant lot has been redeveloped for downtown green space. The Memorial site has some long overdue maintenance needs, and with the demolition of the college building, an opportunity has been created to make the site much more desirable for visits and learning by adding a substantial educational component – much like one might find at a National Park Service site or other historic location – that the memorial has never had. This initiative has received endorsement from the District 46 Delegation. Though this project was not funded in Governor Moore's proposed budget, we are hopeful that with the assistance of our legislators and understanding the importance of this project, we will be able to secure funds for the improvements.

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#### LEGISLATIVE BOND INITIATIVES

##### **The Pearlstone Center Fire Access Road - \$500,000 (Baltimore County, District 10)**

Pearlstone, which serves as the headquarters of Adamah (the largest Jewish environmental organization in North America), is well into the implementation of its masterplan. Part of this plan includes the Ben & Zelda Farm Village, which is fully funded and will feature six overnight bunkhouses, a fully-ADA compliant bathhouse, and wilderness meeting spaces. This project, which is roughly halfway through completion, recently came to an abrupt halt when the Baltimore County Fire Marshal flagged that to ensure emergency access for this newer developed part of campus, Pearlstone must provide access for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles with a paved-surface road. Pearlstone is able to divert \$200,000 of the masterplan funds to the fire road project, but these roads range from roughly \$859,000 to \$1,150,000. This fully funded Village expansion cannot proceed until funds are acquired for the fire road and paving has begun.

##### **Jewish Community Services - Alternative Living Units (ALU's) - \$300,000 (Baltimore County, District 11B)**

Jewish Community Services is seeking funding to renovate two Alternative Living Units (ALU's) in Baltimore County, with a total project cost of \$600,000. The ALUs provide secure homes and support services to low and moderate income developmentally disabled individuals, allowing them to live safely in the community. This funding will help the ALU's, which were built in the 1950's and 60's, with major renovations.