

Hello from JFCS

WINTER 2021-22



Stability & hope in tough times

Things are not normal

We hear this phrase a lot: “Life is returning to normal.”

It may be true for people in the middle- and upper-middle classes, but nothing could be further from the truth for our Emergency Aid clients. Rather, what we know to be true is, “Life is not normal.”

“For most of the folks we are working with, things are way more precarious now than they were one-and-a-half to two years ago,” said Caitlin DeBoer, LCSW, Emergency Aid program manager.

Many people indeed are returning to work. But with depleted savings, their bills continue to pile up. “I’ve seen an increase in clients returning to request additional assistance, and they ask for more than is available,” Caitlin said. “It’s heartbreaking.”

While challenging to field calls and emails from people in crises, it is wonderful that an increasing number of people know that JFCS is here to meet immediate needs. Word of mouth is powerful.

Last year alone we gave crucial resources to nearly 220 people, to the tune of \$180,000.

JFCS’ mission is to improve the quality of life and self-sufficiency of the Jewish and broader communities throughout the Portland metro area in accordance with Jewish values.



JFCS
Jewish Family & Child Service

Letter from our President

Dear Friends,

Providing stability and hope in tough times is the guiding theme of our Emergency Aid program. Story after story on the pages of this newsletter demonstrate how and for whom we offer stability and hope, as well as the reminder that we indeed are living in tough times.



During this last year alone, JFCS has helped hundreds of people from all faiths and backgrounds with basic needs such as rent, utility-bill payments and unexpected expenses. In all, JFCS has given \$180,000 to qualified recipients.

But don't take my word for it; take it from our clients'.

"I'm not sure what else we would have done this month."

- Member of a family that received rental assistance

"Thank you for the kindness you and the whole agency have shown us."

- A mother who lost her job at the start of the pandemic and then faced an unforeseen medical bill

"I am deeply thankful for your support."

- An elderly client whose medical expense we helped cover

Because we simply cannot help everyone, our Emergency Aid department also provides referrals to dozens of local agencies for needs we cannot meet. Likewise, numerous non-profits refer clients to us.

If you know of individuals and families in the greater Portland area who are experiencing tough times, tell them about us and suggest that they call us to see if we can help. JFCS is here for you and our entire community.

Warmly,

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Larry'.

Larry Holzman
Board President

“Things are not normal” *continued from p. 1*

One family suddenly was faced with an unexpected medical bill and -- like too many others -- had to choose between paying for a loved one's recovery and making rent. JFCS' Emergency Aid provided the funds to pay the family's rent.

Said a grateful and relieved member of that family, “I'm not sure what else we would have done this month.”



JFCS is here to help

Somedays, JFCS' Emergency Aid intake line receives three calls -- before noon. For the clients, it is hard to make that call. So many factors restrain people in need, such as the stigma against asking for help and the stress about the haste with which they need resources.

Rest assured: JFCS now has an intake coordinator who records every call received and passes the person in need to the right department, including Emergency Aid.

“So often when people call social services agencies they get stuck, unsure what to do and often don't get calls

back,” said Caitlin DeBoer, LCSW, Emergency Aid program manager. If their request is beyond JFCS' scope, we call them back and provide a comprehensive list of resources or referrals.

Turning tables, community partner organizations like synagogues, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program often refer people to us. Those cases are prioritized.

“We make it so our clients have few hoops to jump through,” Caitlin said. “We are here to help. We have the resources. Just call.”

For Rebecca and families like hers: JFCS provides **stability** and **hope**

Rebecca (not her real name) enjoyed her full-time job, which provided just enough for her family of four. Five years into her steady job, in spring 2020 the pandemic struck, and so did unemployment. Rebecca's husband remained employed, but his income was inadequate for the family. Pile on the couple's two school-age children suddenly needing to be at home around the clock, attending classes via Zoom.

Strapped, Rebecca didn't know where to turn, until a Jewish community partner organization recommended JFCS. Our Emergency Aid program provided her family rental assistance, as well as referrals to other local programs to help bridge the financial gap as additional rental and utility bills came due.

After JFCS helped the family through its initial crisis, Rebecca found part-time work and again they were self-sufficient. But on a razor-thin edge. Only a year after Rebecca's initial contact with our agency, one of her kids fell ill, requiring unforeseen medical expenses and her sudden need to take a leave from work -- unpaid.

This time, Rebecca knew whom to call, and Emergency Aid stepped in to help the family get back on its financial feet, where they remain today, thanks to resources we provided and those via our referral to the Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Rebecca's family had some savings prior to the pandemic, but after 18 months with an underemployed parent, the family faces an enduring shaky financial foundation.

“This family, and so many like them, are still living paycheck-to-paycheck and are just one unexpected expense away from not being able to pay their bills. We are so glad we can help, when and where it's most needed.”

- Caitlin DeBoer, LCSW,
Emergency Aid program manager

Grateful to JFCS, Rebecca said, “Thank you for the kindness you and the whole agency have shown us.”

Emergency Aid BY THE NUMBERS, FY20-21

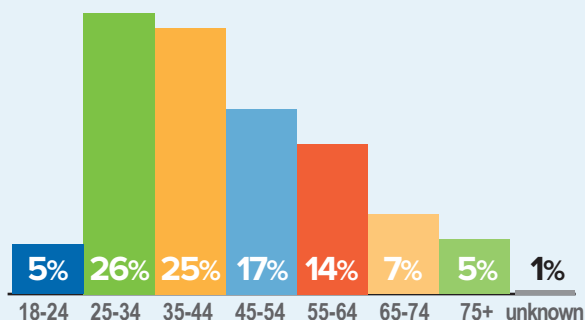
\$180,000

distributed

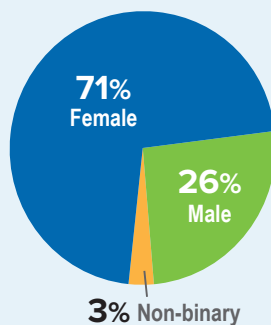
214

clients served

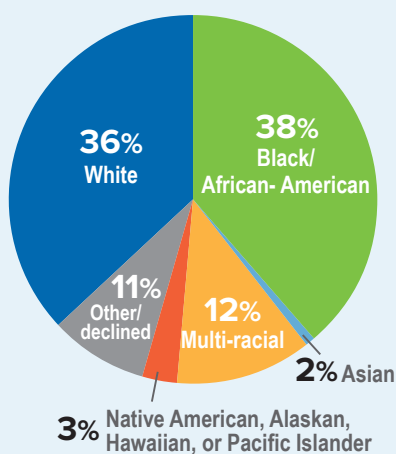
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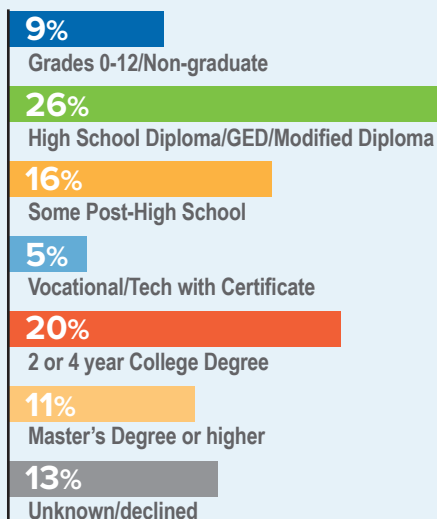
GENDER



DEMOGRAPHICS



EDUCATION



JFCS' UPCOMING EVENTS

Thanksgiving Food Boxes

Sunday, November 21

JFCS is providing Thanksgiving meals for families in need - more than 150 boxes, which means a holiday meal for about 600 individuals. Each box includes food items collected by community partners and a Fred Meyer gift card so families can add their own favorites to their holiday meal. Volunteers pack and deliver the boxes - brimming with a turkey, potatoes, broth, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie and more - to those in need. To learn more about how you can help, visit www.jfcs-portland.org/holiday-giving-2021/



Family-to-Family Gift Giving

As we look to the 2021 holiday season, we know that joy can be hard to come by. JFCS has an antidote, continuing our 20-year tradition of brightening the holiday season for families and individuals of all ages experiencing hard times and for greater Portland's Holocaust Survivors. Through Family-to-Family (previously Adopt-a-Family), JFCS adds joy to Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and other celebrations by providing Fred Meyer gift cards to our clients so they can meet their own needs, most often by purchasing household items, clothing and toys for children. Last year we offered gift cards valued at more more than \$6,000 to more than 60 individuals and families. To donate, visit www.jfcs-portland.org/holiday-giving-2021/

Volunteer for JFCS

Volunteering is an integral part of supporting JFCS. Our volunteers reach every corner of the community, and, thus, the hearts of our clients. We are so grateful to those who give JFCS their time and energy, especially during the ongoing pandemic. This is all part of JFCS' commitment to the values of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, and *tzedakah*, selfless giving. To learn more about how you can help, contact Sammy Monk, our volunteer coordinator, at volunteer@jfcs-portland.org.



JFCS' ONGOING EVENTS

Weekly Community Zoom

Every Friday, 10am

Join us for our weekly community group open to the entire community and moderated by our clinical director. This group meets on Zoom **every Friday at 10am** and allows participants to share their struggles and anxieties around living through a pandemic and its impact on our daily lives. Not a psychotherapy group, this is a space to chat, to laugh, to listen, to vent and to learn from those around you in a Zoom setting. Visit www.jfcs-portland.org for the Zoom link.

TIKVAH Social Group

This is a virtual meet-up group for TIKVAH, a social group for people with disabilities ages 18 and up. If interested in joining, please email Janet Menashe at janetmenashe@jfcs-portland.org.

Coming Together:

Parenting Children and Adults with Disabilities

During times of uncertainty, parents whose children (of any age) have physical or developmental disabilities feel more isolated and alone than ever. We provide a supportive environment in which to share your thoughts and feelings; join us. Email Shayna Sigman at ssigman@jfcs-portland.org for more information, or to register.

Grief Processing Group

JFCS is facilitating a 6-week grief-processing group for adults. In our virtual sessions, group members share experiences with grief, connect with others and learn strategies for moving through loss. While this current session is full, stay tuned for details on a new session to begin in spring 2022.

Jewish Family & Child Service prioritizes its clients, volunteers and staff members' health and care. Due to the highly transmissible Delta variant of COVID-19, JFCS recently determined being vaccinated is a condition of employment and of volunteering for the social-services non-profit.

Follow JFCS on social media



www.facebook.com/JFCSPortland



www.instagram.com/jfcs.portland/

With your help, JFCS provides stability and hope in these uncertain times

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Access for all abilities



384

interactions with our Disability
Support Services clients

EMERGENCY AID

Stability and hope in tough times



\$180,000

distributed from
Emergency Aid

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR SERVICES

Surrounding our community with care



11,000

hot meals served to the door of
our Holocaust Survivors

COUNSELING SERVICES

Meeting you where you are



4,200

Counseling
visits



JFCS

Jewish Family & Child Service



Jewish Federation
OF GREATER PORTLAND



HERE
FOR
YOU

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