

Fast Forward

Washington, D.C., Jewish federation will distribute \$180,000 to laid-off federal workers

More than 100,000 federal workers have been laid off

By [Grace Gilson](#) March 29, 2025



The "National Menorah," erected by Chabad-Lubavitch in front of the White House in Washington, Dec. 2, 2021. (Kerem Yucel/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

([JTA](#)) — Washington, D.C.'s Jewish federation is allocating \$180,000 to help laid-off federal workers, the latest way the Trump administration's slashing of the federal government is rippling out to Jewish organizations.

The sum is a multiple of 18, which signifies life in Judaism, and will be split: \$100,000 will be distributed via local synagogue rabbis, and \$80,000 will go to social service agencies that partner with the federation.

"Federation is stepping up to ensure that no one in our community has to navigate this hardship alone," Jewish Federation of Greater Washington CEO Gil Preuss said in a press release. "In moments of uncertainty, we must depend on the strength of our Jewish community to provide the foundation we need to rebuild."

More than 100,000 federal workers have been laid off in the government downsizing of President Donald Trump and Elon Musk's DOGE agency, [according to a CNN analysis](#). Approximately 20% of the federal workforce [lives in the D.C. area](#).

Preuss said in an interview that local rabbis could provide financial assistance of up to \$1,500 per family at their discretion to community members impacted by the layoffs, and that the federation's fund would reimburse them. "We trust them to make the decision," he said.

Trump and Musk's funding cuts have already put the Jewish organizational world on alert, impacting several of their priorities:

- Jewish groups across the country were [briefly thrown into crisis mode](#) when the administration announced a short-lived, sweeping freeze on federal funding in January.
- Cuts to USAID have [stopped the flow of government money](#) to Israeli-Palestinian peace-building efforts.
- Cuts to FEMA have [frozen federal funding for synagogue security](#).
- Trump also suspended funding for refugee resettlement, though that decision was recently blocked by a judge in a [lawsuit brought by several refugee aid groups](#), including the Jewish group HIAS.

Other Jewish institutions in the D.C. area, including day schools, are feeling the effects of the layoff spree. Half of the parents of students at the Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School in Washington, D.C. are employed in some capacity by the federal government, according to [Jewish Insider](#).