



Jewish Federation
of Greater Seattle

Community Leadership Mission to Israel

April 19–23, 2026

You Are Invited...

At this pivotal moment of rebuilding, we invite Seattle's Jewish leaders to a five-day journey that bridges memory, courage, and imagination. Designed for those who know Israel well yet are ready to experience it anew, the mission, taking place during Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut in Israel, offers up-close encounters and direct access to October 7 survivors, community builders, and thought leaders who are shaping Israel's path forward.

Since October 7, the Jewish Federations of North America's Israel Emergency Campaign has raised \$908 million, providing more than 4,200 grants to 877 NGO partners. On this mission, we will see firsthand how JFNA's Israel Emergency Campaign and Seattle's Israel and Overseas allocations are supporting recovery, rebuilding, and long-term resilience in the communities most affected by October 7. Participants will have the opportunity to connect with Israel in deeply human ways and embrace moments of Jewish joy, remembrance, and hope that underscore why rebuilding matters now more than ever.

This is more than a trip—it is a rare opportunity to connect with a network of Jewish leaders shaping Israel's future and strengthening the bonds between Israel and the diaspora at a defining moment in the country's history. By engaging with leaders and communities on the ground, participants will gain insights and ideas to bring home and help shape our work locally within the Seattle Jewish community.





Opening the Journey

We begin with an extraordinary welcome dinner—an evening where the vibrant fusion of Israeli cuisine reflects the rich tapestry of relationships at the heart of this journey. More than a meal, it is the opening chapter of a shared experience: a moment to align our intentions, deepen connections, and spark new friendships that will carry us through the days ahead.

Together, we step into a journey that will transform not only how we experience Israel, but how we return home—more connected, inspired, and ready to strengthen our Seattle community.





Israel & the American Jewish Community: *Federation's Philanthropic Response to October 7*

A full day in Israel's south, a region long connected to Seattle through enduring partnerships. Here, the needs of recovery are immediate and deeply personal. We meet leaders, volunteers, and families whose lives have been affected by October 7, and learn how NGOs and grassroots organizations—supported by the American philanthropic community through the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) and local partners—are helping communities rebuild and heal.

As evening falls and Yom HaZikaron begins, we gather for a reflective commemoration, holding space for grief, solidarity, and hope, witnessing how Israelis are turning tragedy into purpose, and experiencing firsthand the profound human impact of our collective support.





Remembering the Past and Building for the Future: *Yom HaZikaron & Yom Ha'atzmaut*

On Israel's most solemn day of remembrance, we stand in solidarity with Israelis, engaging directly with those on the frontlines of the October 7 attacks. We meet survivors, families of those held hostage, and civic leaders guiding communities through recovery. Together, we honor lives lost while witnessing the extraordinary courage and resilience emerging from tragedy.

As evening falls, we follow Israel's transition from grief to celebration. The night becomes an exuberant expression of Jewish joy—a shared moment of hope and renewal that carries us forward into Yom Ha'atzmaut and the future we are helping to build together.

Yom Ha'atzmaut begins with gratitude and fierce optimism. We meet visionaries rebuilding communities, innovators designing new models of civic life, and young leaders imagining a stronger, more inclusive, and interconnected Israel. Along the way, we experience the land's natural and cultural beauty—from the rolling Judean hills to the Jerusalem Forest—savor Israeli cuisine and regional wines, and celebrate with a traditional Yom Ha'atzmaut BBQ. We close the day along Israel's vibrant coastline—immersed in the restless, creative spirit that defines Israel today.





Israel in a Globalized World: *From Startup Nation to Global Actor*

On our final day, we broaden the lens to explore Israel's place in the world and its complex relationships with neighbors and the global community. We meet with programs building bridges between Arab and Jewish communities, as well as thought leaders shaping Israel's diplomatic, cultural, and technological ties.

At the Knesset and institutions such as the Shalom Hartman Institute, Joint Jewish Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Jewish Agency For Israel (JAFI), we examine Israel's responsibilities on the global stage and the role of Jewish communities abroad in supporting and learning from this work.





Your Trip Leaders

The mission is led by senior Jewish Federation professionals: Solly Kane, President and CEO; Rabbi Samuel Klein, Director of Jewish Engagement; and Tori Schwartz, Director of Development. Guiding the trip as Co-Chairs are Nevet Basker and Gabe Scherzer, Federation Board Chair, and Karli and Josh Niehaus. Each brings deep knowledge of Israel and the local community, ensuring participants are supported and inspired throughout the journey.

With the expertise of Giant Leaps Tour Company and exceptional local guides, this leadership team provides an experience of Israel rich in insight, depth, and access to perspectives rarely available to the general visitor.



Solly Kane

President and CEO



Rabbi Samuel Klein

Director of Jewish Engagement



Tori Schwartz

Director of Development



Gabriel Scherzer

Federation Board Chair



Nebet Basker

Mission Co-Chair



Karli Niehaus

Mission Co-Chair



Josh Niehaus

Mission Co-Chair





FAQ

Community Leadership Mission to Israel

April 19 – 23, 2026

Join fellow Seattle leaders for a focused and meaningful journey to Israel during a pivotal time. This mission offers a unique opportunity to engage with Israeli society, government, and civil leadership, while exploring the evolving relationship between Israel and the Diaspora.

Program Highlights

- Visit communities in the South and hear directly from local leaders involved in recovery and renewal
- Experience Yom HaZikaron, Israel's national day of remembrance, through local ceremonies and shared reflection
- Celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, alongside Israelis—witnessing the nation's enduring spirit of resilience
- Meet with members of the Knesset and senior Israeli officials for briefings on current events and regional dynamics
- Explore the evolving relationship between Israel and global Jewish communities in the context of today's challenges and opportunities
- Reflect on the role of American Jewish leaders in Israel's recovery and long-term future

**All program elements are tentative and subject to change*



Trip Logistics

- The Mission is taking place from April 19 – April 23, and includes four nights of hotel at a 5-star hotel in Jerusalem (checking in on Sunday evening, April 19 and checking out on Thursday, April 23)
- Arrive to Israel on, or by, Sunday, April 19. We will begin with a welcome reception in the evening of April 19
- There will be four very full days of programming Monday, April 20 – Thursday, April 23. The Mission will conclude after dinner on Thursday, April 23, so that participants can take an overnight flight back to the United States
- If you would like to extend your stay with additional nights of hotel either on the front or back end, please be in touch with a Federation Professional to confirm pricing and availability

Pricing Details

- Final pricing is still in formation. Based on current estimates, we anticipate the costs will be approximately \$4,000 for double occupancy or \$5,000 for single occupancy. The final cost may be lower depending on the total number of participants
- The price includes four nights of hotel, all meals, touring and program, security, and gratuity for Israeli tour guides and drivers
- **The cost does not include flights. International airfare should be booked on your own, and we strongly suggest El Al as your carrier since many other airlines have cancelled flights at different times since October 7**
- Since we are not doing a group flight, the cost does not include ground transportation from the airport to the hotel. Taxis are readily available at Ben Gurion Airport, and, as the Mission nears, our Israeli Trip Provider can arrange private transportation as well for an additional fee



Cancellation

In the event the Mission is canceled, deposits will be refunded in full. Given the nature of the situation in Israel, and other regional security concerns, the Mission may be canceled at the discretion of the Israeli Tour Provider, the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, or at the direction of Israeli authorities.

Registration and Next Steps

Confirming your spot on the trip by filling out a [registration form](#) with a \$1,500 deposit, payable by credit card. The balance will be collected in the two weeks prior to the Mission start date. In the event that the Mission is canceled, the \$1,500 deposit will be refunded.

For more information, visit: jewishinseattle.org/communityisraeltrip2026

