



CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Lindsay Levine, AICP, Senior Planner
Erika Mascorro, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Manager

Date: May 1, 2025

Subject: Proclaiming May as Jewish American Heritage Month

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that Mayor Curtis, on behalf of the City Council, proclaims May 2025 as "Jewish American Heritage Month" in Kirkland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Staff recommends that the Mayor proclaims May 2025 as "Jewish American Heritage Month."
- This proclamation supports Kirkland being a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community for all people.
- This proclamation is part of the City Council's adopted 2025-2026 Proclamation Schedule.

BACKGROUND:

Jewish American Heritage Month is a national observance that celebrates the vibrant Jewish American experience. Events and activities during the month typically focus on the history, culture, and achievements of Jewish Americans.

Jewish American History Month was first celebrated in May 2006, after President George W. Bush issued a proclamation designating the month to honor the contributions of Jewish Americans to the United States.

According to the Pew Research Center, there are an estimated 7.5 million Jewish people living in the United States, approximately 2.4 percent of the total population. [00] Many of those who immigrated to the United States were fleeing antisemitism, violence, and discrimination. Persecution of Jews reached unfathomable heights in areas of Europe controlled by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945 during the Holocaust (known as the Shoah in Hebrew).

Antisemitism was a basic tenet of Nazi ideology, resulting in the institutional exclusion of Jews from economic, political, and cultural life; the murder of 6 million Jews¹; and the displacement of millions of others. After this unimaginably tragic time, Jews continued to experience violence in Europe and were pressured to emigrate to other countries.

Other notable periods of Jewish immigration to the United States occurred after the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the collapse of the former Soviet Union. Despite the adversity they faced, Jews built and contributed to thriving communities.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Recently, there has been a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents across the country, including Washington State, with 9,354 antisemitic incidents recorded in the United States in 2024, an increase of 344 percent over the past five years.²

Kirkland strives to be a safe, inclusive, and welcoming City. Antisemitism has no place in our community. Issuing this proclamation is one step in making that a reality.

The City encourages the Kirkland community to celebrate and honor Jewish American Heritage Month by learning about Jews and antisemitism through reading a book, watching a film, visiting a museum such as the Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle, attending a local cultural event, or volunteering with a Jewish philanthropic organization.

Below are a few resources and websites to learn more:

- A Short Guide to Jewish Religion & Culture and Holidays & Observances
https://www.ajc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2024-09/AJC-CEA-5-Year-Calendar_2024-2029_0.pdf
- Collaborative project of the Library of Congress and other federal agencies
<https://www.jewishheritagemonth.gov/>
- Holocaust Center for Humanity – a museum located in Seattle
<https://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/>
- Washington State Jewish Historical Society
<https://www.wsjhs.org/welcome.html>
- University of Washington Civil Rights and Labor History Project
https://depts.washington.edu/depress/anti_semitism_jewish_transcript_seattle.shtml

NEXT STEPS:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 - Jewish American Heritage Month Proclamation

¹ Approximately two-thirds of the entire Jewish population of Europe were murdered during the Holocaust.

² <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2024>



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Proclaiming May as Jewish American Heritage Month in Kirkland, Washington

WHEREAS, Jewish American Heritage Month is a national observance, celebrated since 2006, that celebrates the vibrant Jewish American experience and achievements; and

WHEREAS, Jewish people share traditions, culture, religion, language, and history that dates back over 3,000 years, and today Jewish people comprise approximately 2.4 percent of the U.S. population; and

WHEREAS, Jews have endured antisemitism for thousands of years, reaching a new height with the Holocaust from 1933-1945, which resulted in the institutional exclusion of Europe's 9.5 million Jews from economic, political, and cultural life; the murder of 6 million Jews; and the displacement of millions of others – many of whom immigrated to the United States; and

WHEREAS, there has been a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents across the United States, with 9,354 antisemitic incidents recorded in 2024, an increase of 344 percent over the past five years; and

WHEREAS, we celebrate the resilience of Jewish people and recognize their profound impact on American history and culture; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kirkland encourages our community members to honor Jewish American Heritage Month by learning about Jews and antisemitism through reading a book, watching a film, visiting a museum such as the Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle, or attending a local cultural event; and

WHEREAS, by celebrating Jewish American Heritage Month, we reaffirm our commitment to embracing diversity, fostering understanding and respect across communities, and ensuring that antisemitism has no place in our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, Mayor Kelli Curtis, on behalf of the City Council, proclaims May as Jewish American Heritage Month in Kirkland and encourages the community to celebrate the contributions of Jewish Americans to our community and the nation.

Signed this 20th day of May, 2025

Kelli Curtis, Mayor