



CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Jim Lopez, Deputy City Manager for External Affairs
Erika Mascorro, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Manager
Daniel Lazo, Senior Community Engagement Coordinator

Date: April 14, 2026

Subject: **2026 Jewish American Heritage Month**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Mayor, on behalf of the City Council, proclaims May 2026 as “Jewish American Heritage Month” in Kirkland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- 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.
- This proclamation aligns with Kirkland’s City values and strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB).
- This proclamation is part of the City Council’s adopted 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 country’s total population. 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). Approximately two-thirds of the entire Jewish population of Europe were murdered during the Holocaust

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 Jews, 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 have built thriving communities.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

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 & Observances¹
- Library of Congress Jewish American Heritage Month Webpage²
- Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle³
- Washington State Jewish Historical Society⁴
- University of Washington Civil Rights and Labor History Project⁵

This proclamation aligns with Kirkland's City values and strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB). Council has adopted legislation supporting these values, including:

- **Resolution R-5240** (2017) declaring Kirkland a safe, inclusive, welcoming community for all people;
- **Resolution R-5434** (2020) expressing commitments to improving the safety and respect of Black people and approving the framework to create a community committed to examining and dismantling interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism in Kirkland;
- **Resolution R-5548** (2022) adopting the City's DEIB 5-Year Roadmap;
- **Resolution R-5686** (2025) declaring Kirkland as a welcoming, inclusive, and safe city for the Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people and recognizing their human rights and well-being; and
- **Resolution R-5693** (2025) reaffirming the City's commitment to being a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community where all people belong.

NEXT STEPS:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – 2026 Jewish American Heritage Month Proclamation

¹ https://www.ajc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2024-09/AJC-CEA-5-Year-Calendar_2024-2029_0.pdf

² <https://www.jewishheritagemonth.gov/>

³ <https://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/>

⁴ <https://www.wsjhs.org/>

⁵ https://depts.washington.edu/depress/anti_semitism_jewish_transcript_seattle.shtml



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Jewish American Heritage Month May 2026

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, we celebrate the resilience of Jewish people and recognize their profound impact on American history, education, science, medicine, business, art and culture; 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 2026 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 5th day of May, 2026

Kelli Curtis, Mayor