

A V O D A H
Sparkling Jewish Leaders, Igniting Social Change

Chicago Avodah Placements: COVID Responses and Needs

These organizations are on the front lines of the fight for dignity and safety for those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Read what they're doing and how you can contribute to this work.



Avodah Corps Member Esther Kaplan is communicating with participants and landlords about lease renewals or extension; assessing participants' urgent needs and providing referrals for food, financial assistance, housing issues and more; providing emotional support to participants over the phone; and helping with crisis management. Her placement, Heartland Human Care Services is advocating for policies that prioritize the populations they serve as the city's government makes decisions surrounding COVID-19.



Needs around housing, unemployment, food security, and other resources have increased and Avodah Corps Member Anna Levy is supporting Chicagoans by providing remote case management. Her placement, Inspiration Corporation is providing to-go meals and the housing and homeless outreach programs continue to go into the field when necessary, but meet needs remotely when possible.

Inspiration needs supplies for meals and for those clients living in supported housing. You can easily donate these goods by purchasing the items on this [Amazon wishlist](#).



Avodah Corps Member Kira Felsenfeld is working to pass legislation to improve conditions and keep seniors safe in Pilsen and South Shore. Her placement, Jane Addams Senior Caucus (JASC) continues to fight for housing, healthcare, and economic justice for seniors in Chicago. JASC just introduced the Senior Safety Ordinance which guarantees PPE for all staff in buildings, wellness checks for tenants, and frequent cleaning of spaces. **Seniors are among the most vulnerable population during COVID and JASC is fighting to make sure there are protections in place throughout the coming months, but they are in crucial need of donations. [Donate here](#).**



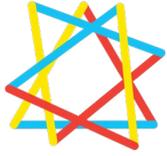
Avodah Corps Member Emma Kagan is planning field work and direct voter contact activities to help pass a fair graduated income tax in Illinois with the members of her placement, the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (JCUA). In addition, Emma is supporting membership development initiatives to grow the 2,000-strong member base of Chicagoland Jews organizing around justice issues. JCUA has shifted to take on organizing through Chicago's Right to Recovery Campaign. This is a campaign composed of 30+ grassroots groups lifting up a list of demands surrounding housing, decarceration, education, fair working conditions, and more. [Read more](#) about the campaign's platform. **If you live in the Chicagoland area, you can be added to JCUA's Right to Recovery Listserv by emailing emmakagan@jcua.org to be informed about opportunities to take action.**



Avodah Corps Member Caroline Creed continues to help her clients experiencing homelessness access Social Security disability benefits. Our other Avodah Corps Member, Zoe Harris, continues to support clients through intakes and related follow-up in addition to creating an organization-wide [Coronavirus Resources page](#) for staff, partners, and clients. Their placement, Legal Council for Health Justice forms medical-legal partnerships with homeless shelters around Chicago.



Avodah Corps Member Hannah Weitzman continues to build meaningful relationships and celebrate life with 32 elders in the Chicagoland area. In order to create some normalcy during the span of the pandemic and adapting to life after it, Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly has started the [WE CARE/ We're Careful Campaign](#). **Be a part of their new summer program, A Slice of Summer in a Bag! As a volunteer, you'll deliver a few snacks and activities and then follow up with the elders to do some of the activities together over phone. [Sign up here](#).**



A V O D A H
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DC Avodah Placements: COVID Responses and Needs

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Avodah Corps Members Becca Shofar and Emily Herzfield are responding to calls on the legal hotline at their placement, Bread for the City, by screening clients, connecting them with attorneys, providing information about their rights, and helping them find resources they need. They also each have a small public benefits case load and have been working to make sure that clients have the access to public benefits that they need during the pandemic. Bread for the City continues to provide clients with grocery deliveries and has partnered with DC mutual aid to distribute groceries and supplies to DC residents in need. Their medical clinic is offering COVID-19 testing to DC residents without requiring referrals, exposure, or symptoms. The legal clinic is working with other organizations in the area to give *Know Your Rights* presentations and lobby the city to pass legislation to protect the rights of vulnerable residents. **Bread for the City is taking financial donations and donations of PPE (masks and gowns) so that they can continue to find groceries and provide other services for their clients. If you'd like to donate PPE, email Becca at bshofar@breadforthecity.org. This [blog post](#) outlines a few different donation opportunities open to people looking to help.**



Avodah Corps Members Rachel Tepper and Hannah King serve at CAIR Coalition where they work with detained individuals. This year, Rachel and Hannah have helped detained refugees win asylum and assisted LGBTQ individuals receive free legal representation and navigate the immigration system while detained. CAIR has several volunteer opportunities including staffing the Detention Hotline, making in-person jail visits, and translation and interpretation (no certification required). **Interested individuals can fill out a volunteer form [here](#). You can also help CAIR by taking part in the organization's #20for20 fundraising campaign to secure the provision of services to immigrants in detention despite COVID19. [Click here to chip in.](#)**



Each day, Avodah Corps Member Shelly Peskin has two telephonic DACA renewal appointments and answers the legal hotline calls to refer people to the services they need. She gave a presentation on Facebook Live about the different ways USCIS is functioning during this time. Her placement, CASA de Maryland set up a fund to provide financial assistance to immigrant families in need - those left out of federal relief efforts. They have already raised more than \$100,000 for the first round of disbursement to over 400+ families. **Donate to the [CASA's Solidarity Fund](#).**



Avodah Corps Member Sonya Jampel continues to work with insurance companies, patients, medical professionals, and care coordinators to help patients receive their medications, medical equipment, and home health aids. She also coordinates meal delivery for patients and works on the care coordination general resource queue for patients with COVID-19. At Community for Hope, Sonya's placement, only OB patients, sick patients, and acute care are being seen in the office and chronic care management is transitioning to telehealth appointments.



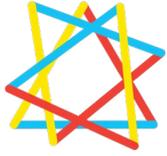
Through her placement at HIAS, Avodah Corps Member Hannah Sugarman provides referrals to community resources and continues to remain in contact with the clients that she helps. She also facilitates the continuation of the volunteer program and supports the staff attorneys. HIAS's international offices have pivoted their work according to the different conditions in each country.



Miriam's Kitchen moved its meal service outside and is now serving breakfast and dinner each weekday to people experiencing homelessness. The Outreach team is delivering to-go meals and doing public health outreach, while the Permanent Supportive Housing department is delivering groceries and meals to all housing clients. Lastly, the Advocacy department is working to ensure the city's COVID-19 response meets the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Avodah Corps Member Claire McMahon is helping run the outdoor meal service and working with the Case Management team to find creative ways to safely meet needs, like helping clients apply for benefits or their stimulus check and connecting clients with care providers. **Help Miriam's continue to support their guests during the pandemic by [donating](#). They are also always in need of hand sanitizer and PPE; please reach out to claire.fishman@miriamskitchen.org for more information.**



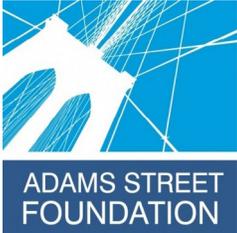
Pathways to Housing offers support recovery for people with complex health challenges through the mission of ending homelessness through housing first. Avodah Corps Member Anna Bergson is helping assist the 3,500 people that served through Pathways' programs each year. **If you're in the DC area and are able to donate supplies, phone cards, hand sanitizer, gloves, cleaning supplies, toilet paper, and non-perishable foods are being prioritized right now. Please reach out to 202-529-297 or info@pathwaysdc.org for more information.**



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NYC Avodah Placements: COVID Responses and Needs

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Avodah Corps Member Caroline Kravitz provides enrichment/college & career readiness support to students and families at the Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice while her placement, Adams Street Foundation (ASF), expands the list of resources/activities to connect students. By continuing to work closely with students remotely, they ensure engagement during the stay-at-home orders and over the summer, especially as so many programs have gone remote or canceled. **You can learn more about ASF, share remote enrichment opportunities that are happening over the summer (i.e. internships at your place of work), and donate at their [website](#).**



The Center for Court Innovation continues to offer all of their services except for providing clothing and other material goods for the safety of their participants. They are also compiling an extensive resource guide for NYC. Avodah Corps Member Naomi Schachter is assisting with referrals to social service providers, particularly housing and food resources.



Avodah Corps Member Arielle Schwartz provides educational support to Footsteps members (those who have left or are interested in leaving their insular ultra-orthodox communities), conducts emergency relief funding intake interviews, processes applicants, and has launched the annual scholarship application for members. Also, has assisted in the launch of the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund—a cash assistance program for members who have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Footsteps is currently working on the creation of a similar fund for members in need of financial assistance for mental health care in addition to moving all of their programming and services online. **You can support Footsteps by contributing to the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund. [Make a donation](#) to support our members in crisis. Every dollar helps.**



Avodah Corps Member Maya Sol Levy is assisting her placement, the Hebrew Free Loan Society, in shifting their operations online and coordinating with fellow loan officers to develop a streamlined system for processing loans remotely -- an unprecedented move for the 128-year-old organization. Maya has conducted over 60 loan interviews since NYC's lockdown, directly resulting in the distribution of over \$200,000 in interest-free loans to low-and moderate-income New Yorkers who have been financially impacted by COVID-19. The Hebrew Free Loan Society launched the multi-million dollar Coronavirus Financial Impact Loan Program on March 9th. These interest-free loans offer up to \$5,000 for New Yorkers facing financial challenges caused by the coronavirus outbreak. To date, HFLS has received 214 loan applications totalling nearly \$1 million dollars in requested loans. HFLS is also managing a \$20 million loan fund provided by UJA-Federation of New York for affiliated nonprofit human services organizations, and has launched a coronavirus grant program for students affiliated with CUNY Hillels. [Learn more](#). **HFLS needs your help in these two ways: 1) Spread the word. Please tell you friends, family, networks, etc. about HFLS and this loan program. We have the capital and we want to help as many people as we can. 2) [Donate](#). Every \$1 contributed to HFLS mobilizes \$10 in interest-free loans.**



Avodah Corps Member Gabriel Renneisen is delivering food to seniors and others who are food insecure for his placement, Met Council. **You can sign up to participate in their [food packaging shifts in Greenpoint, Brooklyn](#) where each day 500-2,000 boxes will be delivered by UberEats to the homes of NY's most vulnerable, seniors and Holocaust survivors. **Met Council is also in need of people with cars to do no-contact home deliveries from their Manhattan Fulfillment Center in Murray Hill and volunteers who speak multiple languages, especially Russian, to help translate letters and help with their U.S. Census initiative. For more volunteer opportunities, email Alana at AMantel@metcouncil.org.****



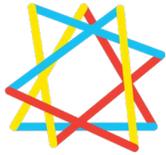
Avodah Corps Member Miriam Chesterman is assisting those still looking for housing, connecting members with food distribution services throughout NYC, helping them access the stimulus package/ file their taxes remotely, and providing much needed emotional support. Her placement, Neighbors Together serves lunches in to-go boxes Monday-Friday and hands out mail once a week to members who use the office as their mailing address while they continue to help members access housing and various social services. **Neighbors Together is in need of assistance connecting homebound seniors with free food/groceries, food deliveries, volunteers, supplies, and more. Please visit the [Neighbors Together COVID help page](#) for more information.**



Avodah Corps Member Hayley Rein is advocating for client's rights to public health insurance and health care benefits, explaining how the state of emergency in NY has impacted Medicaid eligibility to clients, handling intakes through voicemail callbacks, and assisting with Webinars about changes in regulations/ policy. NYLAG has a COVID-19 hotline as well as [information on their website](#) available in a variety of language options for the following areas- healthcare, public benefits, financial counseling, etc.



Sanctuary for Families continues their direct service efforts. Avodah Corps Member Sadie Levy is applying for public benefits on behalf of clients, getting them funds for food and rent while providing emotional support, coordinating grocery deliveries, and putting clients in touch with legal advice and health care.



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New Orleans Avodah Placements: COVID Responses and Needs

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Avodah Corps Member Kira Appelman is continuing her Institutional Memory project to gather oral histories from the community about the Ashé Cultural Arts Center's past. ASHE has compiled a [list of community resources](#) for New Orleanians and is providing support to artists and culture bearers impacted by the pandemic through their own relief fund. **Donate to the [Artist Relief Fund](#).**



CrescentCare is leading in COVID-19 testing and tracking the virus in New Orleans. Avodah Corps Member Mar Ehrlich is working directly with clients on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic to connect them with resources to meet basic needs. **CrescentCare is in need of personal protective equipment (PPE) and financial donations. For more information call (504) 821-2601 or [donate here](#).**



Avodah Corps Member R.E. provides services to low-income communities in the Dental Unit at EXCELth Primary Health Care while EXCELth is working on setting up remote COVID-19 testing stations. **They are in need of volunteers who can speak Spanish or Arabic as well as volunteers to help with COVID-19 testing. Please call (504) 524-1210 for more information.**



Avodah Corps Member Juliana Matz is working to meet clients' basic needs through public benefits, especially through unemployment insurance. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, The First 72+ has been regularly delivering groceries to formerly incarcerated community members and their families, and they're committed to continuing this service as long as it's needed. In order to sustain this work, they are in need of local volunteers and financial support. **Donate to [The First 72+ Emergency Grocery Fund](#), volunteer to shop for and deliver groceries, or both (eg shopping and paying for the groceries at the store). Volunteering for the grocery delivery program would be about a 4 hour chunk of time, 1 time a week. For more information about volunteering please contact Juliana at juliana@first72plus.org.**



During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHA) is pushing for legislation like moratoriums on foreclosures and evictions, emergency rental assistance, and increased funding for homelessness services. Avodah Corps Member Jacob Friedman provides information around questions of rent, mortgages, and evictions for GNOFHA community members.



Avodah Corps Member Gwen Dilworth has shifted her work to direct services like public benefits applications and finding food, housing and work for community members. Her placement, the Innocence Project New Orleans (IPNO) provides research and data to a coalition fighting for safe conditions inside Louisiana's jails and prisons and early release of incarcerated people. **Soliciting donations for cloth masks to be used inside prisons with a goal of 8,000 masks. [Donate on their website.](#)**



The Promise of Justice Initiative is leading litigation efforts to stop the transfer of COVID-infected incarcerated people to Angola, and ensure on-time release of inmates. Avodah Corps Member Ariel Moyal has maintained contact with incarcerated people to document conditions and needs. **Call or email Governor John Bell Edwards to ask what he's doing to ensure safety of inmates and guarantee on-time release - AskJBE@la.gov, (225) 342-7015.**



UNITY has led the push to find shelter and safety for New Orleans' population with housing insecurity. Avodah Corps Member Jacob Finkelman provides direct outreach to people experiencing homelessness and coordinates volunteers for meal delivery. **UNITY currently needs volunteers to deliver meals. Email jfinkelman@unitygno.org for more information.**



Avodah Corps Member Lian Lucansky is developing a system for collecting data about prison conditions to use in litigation pushing for decarceration around COVID-19. Her placement, VOTE is working in coalition with groups like IP-NO and PJI to pressure the governor and the Department of Corrections to release as many inmates as possible and enact safety measures inside jail and prisons. **Call or email Governor John Bell Edwards to ask what he's doing to ensure safety of inmates and guarantee on-time release - AskJBE@la.gov, (225) 342-7015.**