

Senior Housing and Advocacy

B'nai B'rith has long recognized the desperate need for safe, affordable housing for low-income seniors. Since 1971, B'nai B'rith has been a leader in senior housing and aging issues. As aging experts, our advice and counsel is sought on the global level. We have transformed the knowledge we have gleaned from our senior housing efforts and applied it to the legislative arena, keeping regular oversight on legislation that may impact the unique situation of the elderly in the United States and around the world.

We also bring our expertise on aging matters directly to the managers and residents of our senior housing facilities, teaching classes on such topics as fraud prevention and hosting anti-bullying campaigns.

Seniors: Housing

Starting with senior housing and branching out to all aspects of aging and aging issues, B'nai B'rith sees the big picture.

B'nai B'rith is the largest national Jewish sponsor of low-income housing for seniors in the United States, with 42 buildings in 26 communities. We also sponsor six buildings located in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, Canada, as well as additional facilities around the world. In the United States, with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), we provide safe, affordable housing for more than 8,000 seniors of limited income without regard to race, national origin or religion. In order to fulfill our mission and standards of operations for each building, B'nai B'rith staff provides ongoing training, troubleshooting, programming and advocacy outreach for the entire housing network. B'nai B'rith volunteers provide guidance to each local building within a framework that reflects the needs of each local community.

Our Center for Senior Services continues its partnership with Bank of the West. This year, we received grants to fund two programs: Tutor Tech, developed by B'nai B'rith staff, to help our senior housing residents learn how to use their smart phones and tablets; and How to Avoid Scams/Financial Exploitation, using Bank of the West fraud investigators along with other experts in the field to educate residents on how to avoid being a victim of scams.

This year the annual Senior Services Managers/Service Coordinators training meeting was held June 8-10 in Portland, Ore. Bank of the West provided funding to train staff of the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Housing Network, as well as local nonprofits in the city of Portland. on how to create programming for residents on how to avoid being a victim of scams, as well as training staff to recognize a scam and assist a resident who may have been the victim of a scam. Additionally, sessions included a video chat with residents of B'nai B'rith Homecrest House in Maryland about the Residents Association, Department of Housing and Urban Development technical training and creating community partnerships.



Senior services managers and service coordinators gathered in Houston for the annual training meeting





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Senior Services will also oversee the longstanding B'nai B'rith Project H.O.P.E. (Help Our People Everywhere) at the B'nai B'rith House in the Bronx, New York. This program provides kosher-for-Passover meals for residents who may not otherwise be able to afford the special foods needed to celebrate the holiday, or may not be mobile enough to physically get the needed items.

Seniors: Advocacy

Our senior housing program is intertwined with our advocacy on issues important to seniors. In Congress, we strongly advocate for housing funds, aiming to stop further cuts to a program vital to so many of our nation's seniors for its ability to provide safe and affordable homes.

By becoming experts in senior housing, and learning the unique issues seniors face, we saw the need to expand into all areas of senior advocacy. We have developed and cultivated our expertise in such policy arenas as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, aging in place and so much more.

This vital link helps make B'nai B'rith a prominent voice on so many of the most important issues facing seniors today.

B'nai B'rith continues to serve as the co-chair of the income security committee for the Leadership Council for Aging Organizations (LCAO). B'nai B'rith was asked to co-chair a committee that covers social security and retirement issues for the group. LCAO is a coalition of 72 national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's seniors and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena.

B'nai B'rith submitted platform input to both the Republican National Convention and the Democratic National convention on issues about seniors.