

NECHAMA Annual Report

2025

About NECHAMA

NECHAMA: Jewish Response to Disaster, is the only Jewish organization to offer sustained direct services in the US in the aftermath of hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and other natural disasters.



NECHAMA emerged from the great Des Moines flood of 1993. Learning of 50 deaths and \$15 billion in damage to the Iowa capital city, Steve Lear, a Minneapolis financial planner, donated funds to the recovery but wanted to do more. He recruited three friends, borrowed a truck and tools, and headed south to Iowa. That experience started a grassroots movement to create an organization based on the Jewish ethical value of Tikkun Olam – repairing the world by helping others. NECHAMA has grown from a small group of friends and neighbors to a national organization and network of staff and volunteers.

Since its founding, NECHAMA has mobilized hundreds of times in all parts of the continental United States, relying on thousands of volunteers who have provided millions of dollars of labor to support relief and recovery.

Dear NECHAMA Community,

2025 was a strong year for NECHAMA and the communities we served. For 14 months, through November 2025, we were deployed to Western North Carolina responding to Hurricane Helene. With the help of more than 1,000 volunteers, many serving multiple shifts, we provided cleanup, mucking and gutting, mold mitigation, and rebuilding. Based at Camp Judaea in Hendersonville, we served clients across multiple counties. Our work with Miss Linda reflects the NECHAMA approach: she was a long-term client, from mucking and gutting through a partial rebuild, building close relationships with our staff and volunteers, and experiencing not only hard work but deep compassion and empathy in the face of loss.

Though our trucks returned to Minnesota in December, our presence in Western North Carolina continues. In 2025, we launched our Combatting Antisemitism Project in response to rising disaster-related antisemitism. This initiative builds relationships with local influencers through education and community engagement, while also diversifying our volunteer base. Notably, half of our worksite delegations were non-Jewish groups. In 2026, we will continue this work and deepen partnerships.

We also launched a Jewish education and engagement initiative, helping tell the story of why we are the only Jewish national disaster response organization. A highlight was our first Resilience Shabbat, convening more than 100 communities. This project will continue to connect Torah, holidays, and service-learning, guided by our clergy advisory committee.



While 2025 saw fewer major hurricanes, our work continues. We recently deployed to New Bern, following which, we will deploy to North Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia, and continue wildfire mitigation work in Los Angeles, utilizing community volunteers. Please sign up at nechama.org/volunteer to volunteer.

Financially, NECHAMA had a strong year. We received a \$300,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, ran a successful crowdfunding campaign to purchase two new vehicles, and saw excellent support through Rockers in Relief and our annual appeal. Thank you to our generous supporters.

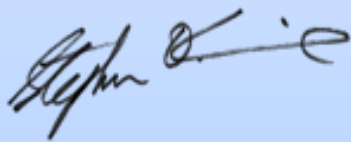
We also completed strategic planning for NECHAMA's next chapter, guided by our mission: "NECHAMA, rooted in the Jewish principle of Tikkun Olam, engages volunteers in disaster relief, rebuilds lives, provides comfort and hope, and represents the Jewish people and our values."

Our plans focus on expanding deployments, Jewish engagement, volunteerism, communications, and operations. If fully funded, these priorities will significantly increase our impact and grow our budget to an estimated \$4.0 million.

We are grateful to have just secured a \$500,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to support this growth. Additional support will be essential to realize this vision.

This work is guided by our dedicated board, led by Chair Steve Matloff, and carried out by our nine-person team across the country. I am deeply grateful for their commitment and care.

I welcome the opportunity to connect with you about NECHAMA's work and future. Please reach out at ceo@nechama.org, and thank you for being part of this journey.



Stephan Kline
Chief Executive Officer



Hurricane Helene

On September 26, 2024, Hurricane Helene made landfall as a Category 4 storm, bringing 140 MPH winds and catastrophic flooding from Florida through the Appalachian mountains. NECHAMA mobilized to Western North Carolina, coordinating with NVOAD and local partners. Operating across Henderson, Buncombe, McDowell, and Transylvania Counties, our response spanned 15 months, from October 2024 through December 2025.

What began as an urgent “muck and gut” operation evolved into a comprehensive recovery program, including debris removal, specialized chainsaw work, and a robust home rebuilding initiative.

Our sustained presence in the region was defined by the following impact:

<p>1,000+</p> <p>Dedicated Volunteers</p> <p>Including onsite and virtual volunteers who completed well over 1,000 calls to affected residents.</p>	<p>13,532</p> <p>Volunteer Hours</p> <p>Enabling a continuous presence for 272 work days in the field.</p>
<p>70</p> <p>Total Projects</p> <p>Ranging from emergency stabilization to long-term recovery.</p>	<p>52</p> <p>Completed Homes & Facilities</p> <p>Including 44 gutting and debris removal jobs and 8 full or partial rebuilds.</p>
<p>Community Infrastructure Support</p> <p>Debris removal for small businesses and critical work for four nonprofit partners.</p>	

This work was made possible through a diverse coalition of partners across many faiths and cultures. We extend special thanks to **Lutheran Disaster Services, Week of Compassion, SEWA International USA**, and the **Orthodox Union Relief Missions** for their mobilization efforts. Our volunteer base reflected a strong commitment to Tikkun Olam, with participants from **JDC Entwine, Moishe House, Temple Israel in Charlotte**, and student groups including **Elon College**, local **Hillels, Young Judaea**, and the **Latin School in Chicago**.

We are deeply grateful to the JCC of Asheville and Jewish Family Services of WNC for providing essential early office space and power. Our rebuilding efforts were anchored by the Housing Assistance Corporation and Habitat for Humanity of Transylvania, with WNC Team Rubicon members providing vital chainsaw training. We also thank Plain Compassion Crisis Relief, Fruitland Baptist Bible College, and Camp Judea for housing our staff and volunteers throughout this recovery.

Finally, we acknowledge the major support of local and national foundations, without whom our operations would have been significantly curtailed. Western North Carolina's recovery was strengthened by the generosity of:

- **The Community Foundation of Henderson County, NC**
- **The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina**
- **Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation**
- **Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation**
- **Jewish Federations of North America**
- **Klarman Family Foundation**
- **Leon Levine Foundation**
- **Russel Berrie Foundation**
- **S. Mark Taper Foundation**
- **Tzedek Social Justice Foundation**
- **UJA-Federation of New York**

Through the outpouring of support from these and other foundations, individuals, and many organizations, NECHAMA transformed a period of unprecedented destruction into a story of resilience and renewal. We conclude this chapter with profound gratitude for the communities of Western North Carolina that welcomed us and the donors who made it possible for us to remain on the ground until recovery was truly underway.

Click any of the below thumbnails to view snapshots of our Hurricane Helene response.



Jewish Education & Engagement

Resilience Shabbat

We launched our first Resilience Shabbat during the week of the biblical flood story (*Parshat Noach*). More than 100 congregations across the U.S. joined in! We provided toolkits and guides to help communities see the story of the flood not just as a disaster, but as a call to rebuild together. One rabbi noted that using the story of Noah helped their community process modern climate disasters through the Jewish value of *tikkun olam*.

Lights of Resilience

We kept that momentum going with our “Lights of Resilience” Hanukkah series. This digital program brought the spirit of Hanukkah to homes across the world. For eight nights, we shared videos featuring everyone from local community leaders in Asheville to our national Board members. These stories showed how our volunteers provide a steady light for those facing devastation. As one viewer said, the series turned the holiday into a “call to action.” It proved that our faith is more than just a comfort; it is a plan for recovery.

Combating Antisemitism Programs

NCCC Yom Hashoah Event

We co-hosted a meaningful Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) commemoration in partnership with the North Carolina Council of Churches, bringing together Jewish and Christian leaders in shared remembrance and solidarity.

We were deeply honored to welcome Holocaust survivor Renee Fink, who courageously shared her story as a child survivor, alongside remarks from former U.S. Representative Kathy Manning and clergy partners from across Western North Carolina. Together, the program fostered remembrance, education, and a collective commitment to stand against antisemitism and hatred in all its forms.



Renee Fink

Good Deeds Day

Last April, NECHAMA partnered with Agudas Israel Congregation for Good Deeds Day, where 48 volunteers contributed 150 hours to assemble 120 relief packages for Hurricane Helene survivors - neighbors still rebuilding and often feeling forgotten. The event brought together 10 partner organizations, demonstrating the strength of interfaith collaboration and community solidarity. Looking back, it remains a powerful example of compassion in action, with volunteers, local leaders, and partners working together to make a lasting impact.



Proclamations May & June 2025

NECHAMA's disaster relief work in Western North Carolina made a lasting impact, restoring homes, helping communities heal, and spreading positive Jewish values. In recognition, Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer proclaimed June 8 as NECHAMA Disaster Relief Recognition Day, honoring our volunteer deployments and interfaith initiatives, while Hendersonville Mayor Barbara Volk designated May as Jewish Heritage Month, celebrating our direct service and role in fostering dialogue and trust across diverse communities. These proclamations highlight how NECHAMA's work builds stronger, more connected, and resilient communities.

Reverse Tashlich with MountainTrue

This past September, NECHAMA partnered with [MountainTrue](#), whose mission is to champion resilient forests, clean waters, and healthy communities throughout the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains, to join thousands worldwide in the [Reverse Tashlich initiative](#). Our volunteers rolled up their sleeves and removed nearly a ton - 1,830 pounds - of trash and debris from the Swannanoa River, transforming the centuries-old ritual of casting away sins into a powerful act of repair. By linking Jewish tradition with hands-on environmental stewardship, we brought the value of tikkun olam to life, strengthening both our community and the world around us.

SNAP Food Response with IAM

When SNAP benefits were paused, impacting more than 600,000 households across North Carolina, NECHAMA mobilized quickly as part of the National Day of Jewish Service, in partnership with Repair the World. Working alongside Interfaith Assistance Ministry (IAM), Asheville JCC, and Agudas Israel Congregation, we collected 245 pounds of food and packed 120 holiday meal boxes - a full pallet! Additionally, our staff spent over 20 volunteer hours assisting families shopping for essentials and organizing clothing donations. Our community also raised \$680 to support IAM's SNAP response and holiday meal drive, demonstrating the power of coordinated Jewish service in meeting urgent local needs.



Rockers in Relief

\$150,000+ Raised!

Music and mission took center stage on November 13 at Irving Plaza. Our annual Real Estate Rockers in Relief concert, held in collaboration with Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP, brought together hundreds of leaders from the real estate finance industry to support NECHAMA's life-changing relief work. The night featured four hours of soulful, high-energy performances from seven sponsoring bands, all playing to ensure we can respond when disaster strikes. This evening wouldn't have been possible without the steadfast support of Hunton, our musicians, and our tireless staff. See you at Irving Plaza on November, 12 2026!



Crowdfunding

\$175,000+ Raised

530+ Donations

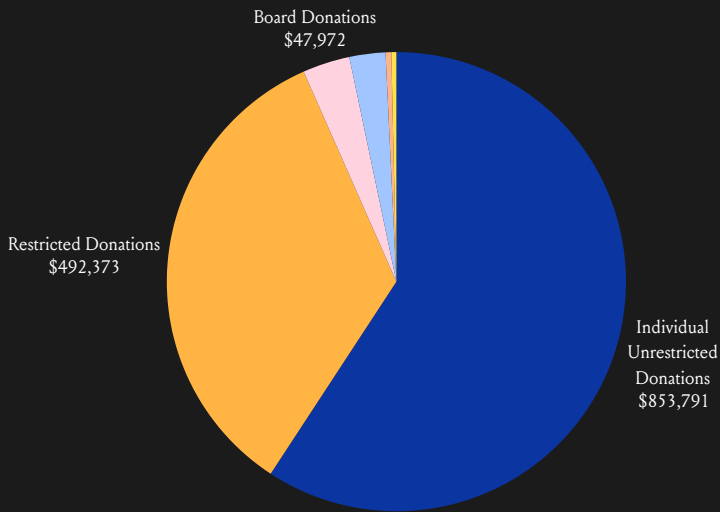
40 Ambassadors

For the first time in our history, NECHAMA launched a high-energy, 2.5-day crowdfunding blitz. Running from March 23rd to 25th, the campaign was the result of months of intensive preparation. More than 40 dedicated ambassadors including staff, Board members, and volunteers mobilized to share our mission with the world. On Sunday evening, we gathered in Asheville for "Hope After Helene: Celebrating NECHAMA's Impact," an event dedicated to the supporters who make our work possible. This record-breaking effort raised over \$175,000 and successfully funded an all-new fleet of vehicles to carry our relief work forward. We are profoundly grateful to the donors and advocates who turned this vision into a reality.

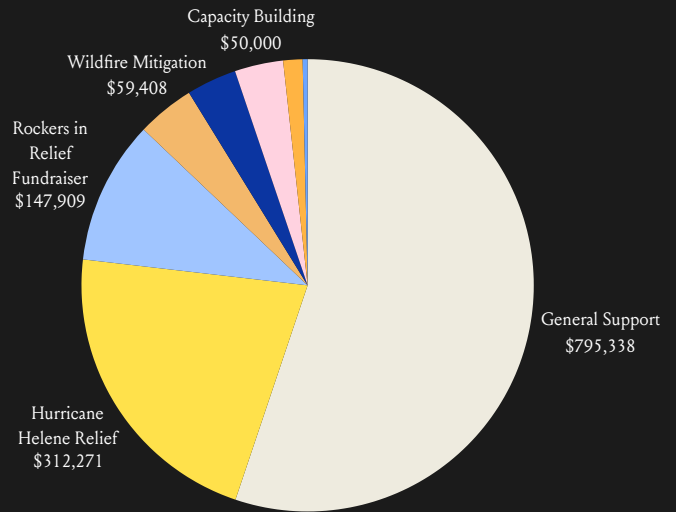


FY2025 Revenue

Income by Account



Income by Class



Income by Account	Total
Individual Unrestricted Donations	\$853,791
Restricted Donations	\$492,373
Board Donations	\$47,972
Miscellaneous Income	\$36,584
In-Kind Contributions	\$5,806
Passthrough Funds	\$5,076
Total Income	\$1,441,602

Income by Class	Total
General Support	\$795,338
Hurricane Helene Relief	\$312,271
Rockers in Relief Fundraiser	\$147,909
Wildfire Mitigation	\$59,408
Capacity Building	\$50,000
Combating Antisemitism	\$5,806
General Disaster Relief	\$5,076
Passthrough Support	\$5,076
Total Income	\$1,441,602

FY2025 Expenses

Expenses by Account	Total
Personnel	\$914,220
Program Operating Expenses	\$115,004
Program Expenses	\$103,104
Travel	\$56,934
Consultants	\$46,160
Fees	\$43,415
Insurance	\$38,406
Professional Services	\$31,418
Software & Website	\$29,115
Vehicle Expenses	\$20,887
In-Kind Expenses	\$14,598
Professional Development Goals	\$8,418
Passthrough	\$5,060
Total Expenses	\$1,426,739

NECHAMA in the News

Click the thumbnails below to read more about NECHAMA's work.



[NECHAMA Jewish Response to Disaster aids WNC communities with hope and rebuilding.](#)

ABC Asheville, 1/1/2025



[After flood of antisemitism post-Hurricane Helene, relief group Nechama adds program to combat disaster-related Jew hatred](#)

eJewishPhilanthropy, 1/24/25



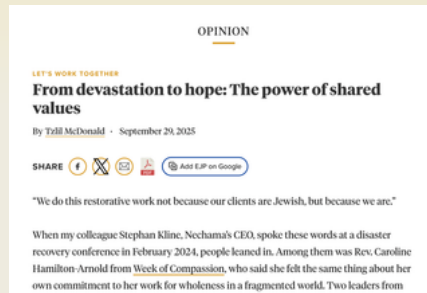
[Around the Clock: What Happens Before, During & After a Disaster](#)

Duke Today, 2/25/25



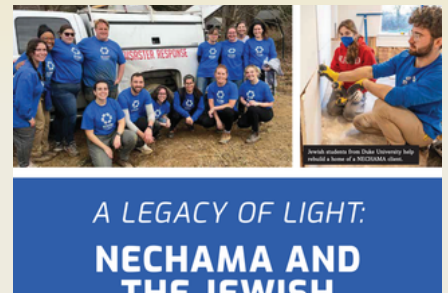
[Baltimore Hebrew Members Visit NC to Assist in Hurricane Helene Relief](#)

Baltimore Jewish Times, 4/11/25



[From devastation to hope: The power of shared values](#)

eJewishPhilanthropy, 9/29/25



[A Legacy of Light: NECHAMA and the Jewish Spirit of Service](#)

The Jewish American Warrior, Winter 2025

Board & Staff

Board

Stephen Matloff (President) – Los Angeles, CA
Tracy Figueroa (Secretary) – New York, NY
Aaron Bloom (Treasurer) – Baltimore, MD
Richard Biller – Chicago, IL
David Golder – Chicago, IL
Jonah Lowenfeld – New York, NY
Michelle Labgold, Miami, FL
Howie Milstein – Minneapolis, MN
Wendy Morris – Minneapolis, MN
Edward Queen – Atlanta, GA
Kari Saratovsky, Bethesda, MD
Rabbi Beau Shapiro – Los Angeles, CA
Jeremy Wolf – Los Angeles, CA

Staff

Administration

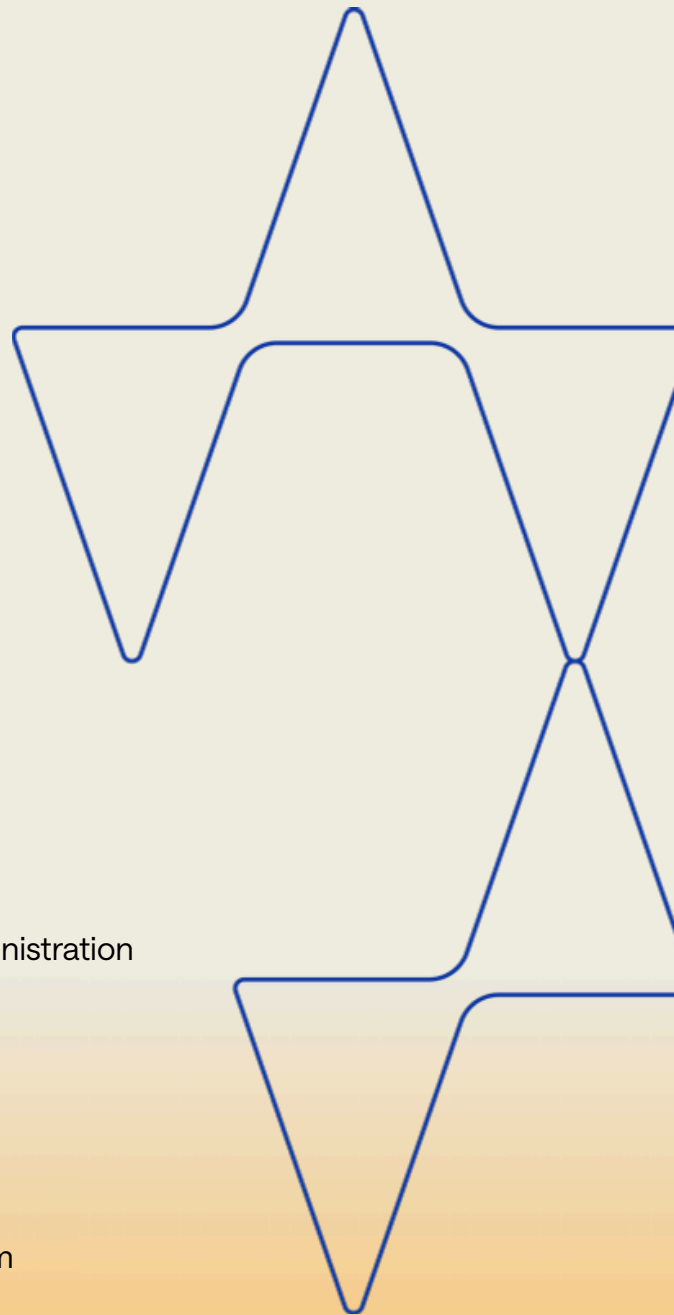
Stephan Kline – Chief Executive Officer
Elissa (Lis) Malter Schwartz – Director of Finance and Administration

Deployment Operations

Max Manasevit – Director of Operations
Markian Romanyshyn – Operations Manager

Program & Engagement

Tzliil McDonald – Project Director, Combatting Antisemitism
Robyn Waserman – Volunteer Engagement Coordinator
Rabbi Scott Klein – Jewish Education and Engagement Consultant



Thank You to Our Supporters

\$50,000 +

- Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
- David and Ilisa Lansey
- Lilly Endowment Foundation
- Posner Foundation of Pittsburgh

\$20,000 - \$49,000

- Alpha Epsilon Pi Foundation
- Beverly Foundation
- Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation
- Home Depot Foundation
- Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

\$10,000 - \$19,000

- Aaron Bloom
- Anonymous (4)
- De Jonge Turner Fund
- Deutsch Family Philanthropic Fund
- Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation
- Fingerhut Family Foundation
- Fred E. Kassner Family Foundation
- Glen E. Tullman Fund
- Harri Hoffman Family Foundation
- Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles
- Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana
- Jewish Federation of Greater Portland
- Jules and Gwen Knapp Charitable Foundation

\$10,000 - \$19,000

- Kenneth Koltun-Fromm
- Kushner Charitable Foundation
- Matloff Family Fund
- Morningstar Foundation
- Morton and Merle Kane Family Philanthropic Fund
- Richard and Eve Biller
- Robert and Toni Bader Charitable Foundation
- Sheri Lear and Steve Lear Charitable Fund

\$5,000 - \$9,000

- Amy L. Weiss Donor Advised Fund
- Chicago Title Insurance Company
- David and Eileen Kohn Family Foundation
- David Golder
- Gene and Jane Borochoff
- Greystone Funding Company LLC
- Jana Paley
- Jeremy and Marlo Wolf Family Fund
- Jewish Federation of Greater Washington
- JPMorgan Chase
- Kevin and Deborah Berman Philanthropic Fund
- Lowenfeld/Mendelsohn Family Fund
- Manning Kaplan Fund of the Jewish Foundation of Greensboro
- Saxon Family Fund
- Sherri A. Mahne
- SKF Development LLC
- Skylight Real Estate Partners LLC
- Temple Beth El, Boca Raton

2025 Partners

NECHAMA experienced significant growth in 2025, in large part due to the support of our dedicated partners. These organizations fueled our expansion by deploying volunteer delegations, funding new initiatives, and providing expert disaster relief services.

We also appreciate those who worked alongside us to host impactful community events. Thank you for making our work possible!

- Adamah
- Agudas Israel Congregation (Hendersonville, NC)
- Alpha Epsilon Pi
- Asheville Green Works
- Asheville JCC
- Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
- Camp Judaea
- Carolina Jews for Justice
- Central Christian Church (Waco, TX)
- CGI Community Collaborations
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Virginia: Lynchburg, VA
- City of Asheville, NC
- City of Hendersonville, NC
- Disciples of Christ (Lynchburg, VA)
- Duke Hillel
- Elon University Kernodle Center for Civic Life
- Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina
- FI Service Corps
- First Christian Church (Greenville, SC)
- First Congregational Church (Ann Arbor, MI)
- Forvis Mazars
- Fruitland Baptist Church (Hendersonville, NC)
- Geist Christian Church (Indianapolis, IN)
- Global Mitzvah Maker Day
- Grace Episcopal Church (Kirkwood, MO)
- Grace Lutheran Church (Hendersonville, NC)
- Greater Miami Jewish Federation
- Henderson County (NC) Social Justice Network
- Hendersonville (NC) Woman's Club
- Holy Rosary Catholic Church (Detroit Lakes, MN)
- Housing Assistance Corporation (Hendersonville, NC)
- Immaculate Conception Catholic Church (NC)
- Indivisible Asheville
- Interfaith Assistance Ministry (Hendersonville, NC)
- JCC Association of North America
- JDC Entwine
- Jewish Communal Fund of New York
- Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles
- Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana
- Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte
- Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans
- Jewish Federation of Greater Washington DC
- Jewish Federation of Greensboro
- Jewish Federation of Los Angeles
- Jewish Federation of Portland
- Jewish Federations of North America
- Jewish Leadership Collaborative of Western North Carolina
- Kol Emeth Synagogue (Marietta, GA)
- Lake Magdalene Church (Tampa, FL)
- Latin School (Chicago, IL)
- Leo Baeck Temple (Los Angeles, CA)
- Lutheran Disaster Response

continued...

2025 Partners

- McChrystal Group
- Mem Global
- Minneapolis Jewish Federation
- Minnesota JCC
- Minnesota Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster [MNVOAD]
- Moishe House of Toco Hills (Atlanta, GA)
- MOMS-WNC
- MountainTrue
- Mt. Zion Temple (St. Paul, MN)
- National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster [NVOAD]
- North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster [NCVOAD]
- North Carolina Council of Churches
- North Carolina Hillel
- North Carolina Holocaust Speakers Bureau
- North Carolina Jewish Clergy Association
- Orthodox Union Relief Missions
- Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Loveland, OH)
- Pryor United Methodist Church (Pryor, OK)
- Repair The World
- Repair The World Atlanta
- St. Oscar Romero Parish (Canton, MA)
- St. Paul Jewish Federation
- St. Peter's UCC (Washington, MO)
- Stephen Wise Temple (Los Angeles, CA)
- Tapestry Church (Bargersville, IN)
- Temple Kol Tikvah of Lake Norman (Davidson, NC)
- Transylvania Habitat for Humanity
- Trinity Academy (Raleigh, NC)
- UJA-Federation of New York
- UNC APPLES Service-Learning
- Union Grove (NC) Missionary Baptist Church
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hendersonville, NC
- United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County
- URJ 6 Points Academy
- Week of Compassion
- Wilshire Boulevard Temple (Los Angeles, CA)
- Young Judaea

Learn more at
nechama.org



NECHAMA

JEWISH RESPONSE TO DISASTER