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St. Paul, Minnesota - April 17, 2026.

NECHAMA - Jewish Response to Disaster is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. through its initiative, Hope After the Storm: Capacity Building for Faith-Based Disaster Relief Organizations. NECHAMA is the nation's only Jewish organization that focuses exclusively on natural disaster response and recovery within the United States.

During 2025, NECHAMA engaged in comprehensive strategic planning to envision how the organization could substantially increase its overall operational capacity. The priorities that emerged from this process include:

- Expanding NECHAMA's deployment footprint to double the size of its operations team, providing organizational capacity to mount two significant deployments simultaneously. NECHAMA will also launch disaster mitigation projects during blue sky periods - those with few natural disasters.
- Becoming much better known in the Jewish and general communities and being directly associated with the linkage between Jewish and "disaster relief."
- Substantially increasing the number of organizational volunteers by elevating the recruitment, identity-building and education of Jewish volunteers, while continuing to be a welcoming destination for non-Jewish volunteers.
- Combating antisemitism through community relations, public affairs connected to disaster relief, and relationship building in the communities where NECHAMA deploys.
- Significantly expanding overall financial resources development to actualize NECHAMA's expanded capacity.

"Assuming that each of our priorities are funded and implemented holistically, collectively this capacity building will substantially expand NECHAMA's footprint, capabilities, and impact on clients and communities," said Stephan Kline, CEO of NECHAMA. *"This will allow NECHAMA to provide more disaster response, while serving as an important resource for the Jewish community."*



Successful implementation of these priorities will also lead to a more than doubling of NECHAMA's annual budget from the current \$1.6 million to an estimated \$4.0 million.

Buttressed by the new support from Lilly Endowment, NECHAMA will begin its expansion by creating new positions of Senior Team Lead and Senior Director for Development. The new member of the operations team will serve as the on-site team leader during deployments and will also focus on mitigation projects and enhancing local and national relationships in the VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster) community. NECHAMA's new development professional will lead a comprehensive fundraising strategy to support NECHAMA's mission and long-term sustainability. This will include all aspects of development – i.e., major gifts, annual campaigns, grants, events, and donor stewardship – while fostering a culture of philanthropy for NECHAMA rooted in Jewish values and community.

“NECHAMA's entire board and staff are incredibly grateful to Lilly Endowment for creating the Hope After Storm initiative and providing such substantial support to NECHAMA for capacity building,” said Stephen Matloff, NECHAMA's Board Chair. *“This keystone grant will enable NECHAMA to substantially increase the number of vulnerable clients we serve whose lives have been devastated by natural disasters, while also supporting Jewish continuity.”*

The grant to NECHAMA is one of 30 grants being awarded as part of Hope After the Storm, a new initiative of Lilly Endowment which aims to strengthen the capacity of faith-based organizations to provide aid to individuals and families affected by disasters in communities throughout the United States. Lilly Endowment recognizes that faith-based organizations play a key role in providing disaster relief services in the United States. They also serve as important vehicles through which individuals and religious communities live out their faith and serve others by volunteering and giving funds and other resources to address the immediate needs of their neighbors.



About NECHAMA - Jewish Response to Disaster

NECHAMA is the only national Jewish organization that offers sustained direct recovery services to respond to damage caused by hurricanes, tornados, floods, and other natural disasters within the United States. Rooted and guided by Jewish values, NECHAMA has three overarching priorities: humanizing Jews and representing Jewish ideals in communities severely impacted by natural disasters; providing a platform for volunteers to explore their identities and purpose; and spreading comfort and hope and providing disaster relief to people and communities in desperate need for assistance. Founded in 1993 as a local and regional organization in Minnesota to ensure a Jewish presence at disaster sites, NECHAMA became a national organization 20 years ago following multiple deployments to New Orleans' Ninth Ward in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It has now provided service in 35 states.

About Lilly Endowment

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly, Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although the gifts of stock remain a financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion. The Endowment funds programs throughout the United States, especially in the field of religion, and maintains a special commitment to its founders' hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.



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