

Jewish  
Women's  
Archive

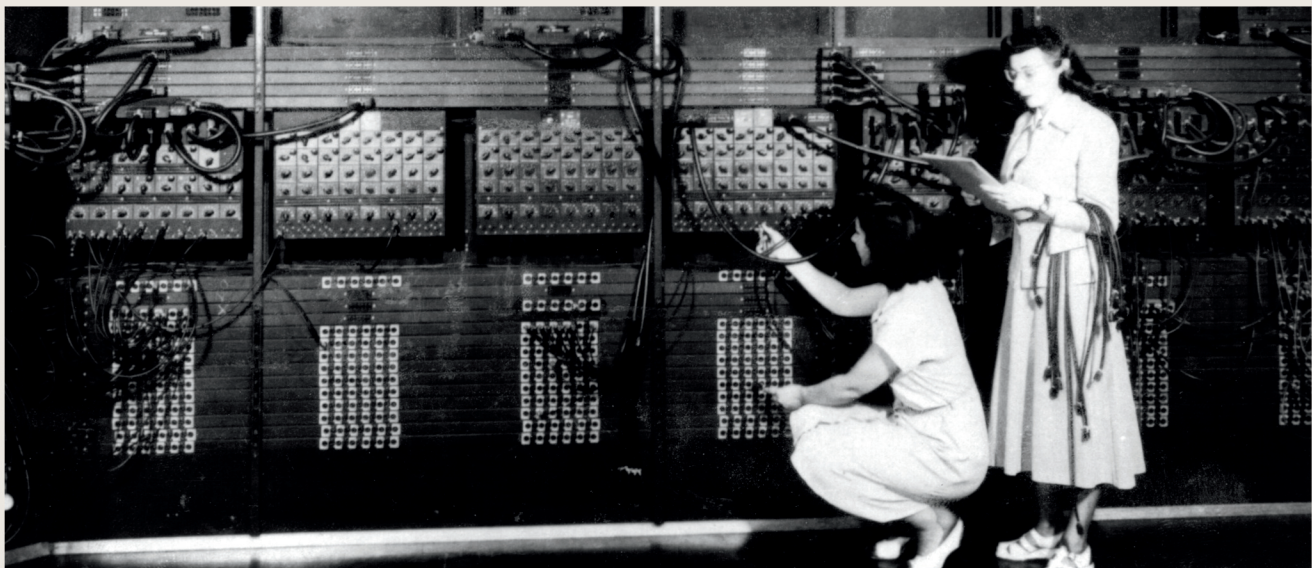


2026-2029

# STRATEGIC PLAN

# JWA: INNOVATIVE FROM THE START

Thirty years ago, when JWA's founders imagined an archive for the 21st century, they had a big vision: a digital platform that would restore Jewish women to their rightful place in history, make their stories accessible to anyone with an internet connection, and render it impossible for Jewish women's voices to go unheard and their contributions unnoticed. Their dream, put plainly, was to **transform history**—both our understanding of the past and the possibilities of the future.



Despite their prescience about the promise of digital technology, JWA's founders could not have imagined JWA's success in **bringing the stories of Jewish women and gender-expansive people, past and present, to millions around the world**, not only through our digital archive but also through new platforms such as social media and podcasts.

Marlyn Wescoff and Ruth Lichterman, two of the original six women operators of ENIAC. U.S. Army Photo, ARL Technical Library.

# FY25 IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**126,000**

Rising Voices  
Fellowship essay  
readers

**3.7M**

JWA.org visits

**336,000**

JWA blog readers

**10.2M**

Social media  
engagement

**93,000**

Uses of educational  
resources

**60,000**

Podcast downloads

**4,475**

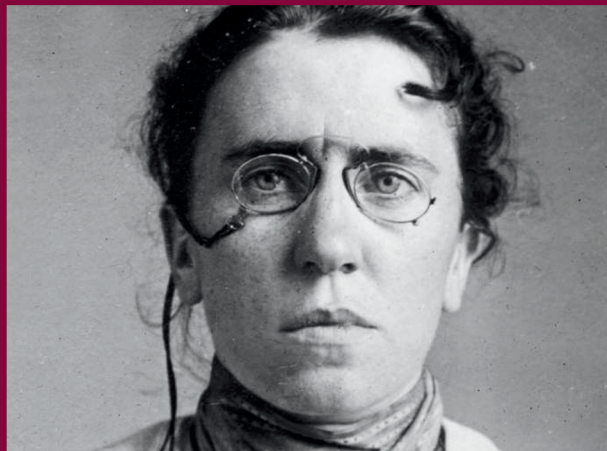
Virtual program  
participants  
from 15 countries

# THE URGENCY OF TODAY

Our founders also could not have imagined the world as it is today, including both the threats and opportunities posed by AI and contemporary attacks on history, democracy, women, and many other marginalized groups.

As JWA begins its fourth decade, **our work is more critical than ever.** We affirm the continued relevance and urgency of our founders' vision, and we reassert the necessity of a diverse, nuanced, and expansive history in order to create flourishing communities for Jews, women, and people of all backgrounds and genders.

Today, history is contested; communities and opinions are increasingly polarized; conversations across differences and generations are rare; and technology is used and abused to spread misinformation rapidly.



Emma Goldman famously declared that **“the most violent element in society is ignorance.”** JWA provides a trusted resource to counteract the forces of disinformation. Jewish women and gender-expansive people have always been and will always be history-makers.

Bolstered by three decades of growth and success, a devoted global community, and unique expertise as a digital archive and public history organization, **JWA is ready to meet this moment** and lead in response to current challenges.

# OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

This new strategic plan, designed by JWA staff and Board, with input from other stakeholders, will protect and grow JWA's valuable assets, respond to the needs of this historic time, and expand our work to new audiences. In the process, we examined JWA's successes and challenges; delved into data about programs, audience, donors, budget, and endowment; and illuminated JWA's unique strengths and opportunities for our next chapter. We are ready to build on our strong foundation to ensure our work remains relevant, accessible, and ahead of our time.



We began by articulating JWA's deeply held organizational values, which shape and animate everything we do.

# JWA VALUES

1

WE AFFIRM THAT  
HISTORY MATTERS.

2

WE ARE INSPIRED AND  
INFORMED BY THE INSIGHTS  
OF FEMINISM.

3

WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER  
OF STORYTELLING.

4

WE ARE COMMITTED TO  
INCLUSIVITY, EQUITY,  
AND DIVERSITY.

5

WE ARE ROOTED IN JEWISH  
IDENTITY AND LEARNING.

## **1. WE AFFIRM THAT HISTORY MATTERS.**

- How we present the past directly impacts how we understand and live in the present and how we create the future.
- We view history as a rich resource for cultivating our humanity, holding ourselves responsible to those who preceded us and to those who will come after us.
- We are committed to public history—making high-quality scholarship relevant and accessible to the widest possible audience.

## **2. WE ARE INSPIRED AND INFORMED BY THE INSIGHTS OF FEMINISM.**

- We center women and gender-expansive people and amplify their voices, recognizing that their experiences are integral to every aspect of history.
- Feminist values and methodologies shape how we research, organize, share, lead, and create change.

## **3. WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF STORYTELLING.**

- Everyone has a story, and these personal stories are history.
- Storytelling is central to how we comprehend ourselves and the world, connect across differences and generations, and create change.
- Encountering a multiplicity of voices and stories transforms how we see and understand the world.

## **4. WE ARE COMMITTED TO INCLUSIVITY, EQUITY, AND DIVERSITY.**

- We value diverse perspectives, continually asking whose stories are missing and striving to bring them forward.
- We embrace broad and evolving conceptions of women, of Jewishness, and of gender, remaining open to new ways of understanding identity and experience.
- We work cross-culturally within the Jewish world and beyond, honoring complexity, nuance, and multiple perspectives.

## **5. WE ARE ROOTED IN JEWISH IDENTITY AND LEARNING.**

- Telling and listening to stories is a Jewish practice, connecting us to ancient traditions of bearing witness, cultivating belonging, and speaking truth.
- We create and maintain spaces for Jewish learning that honor and value tradition, questioning, and deep inquiry. We draw strength from our ancestors' resilience and foster learning across generations, recognizing that wisdom flows in all directions between young and old.

To reground ourselves in JWA's core work and extend our impact into the next era, we refined our organizational theory of change, which describes our approach to changing the world through a three-pronged investment in programs that **Empower, Engage, and Educate**.

## EDUCATE

We provide access to high quality, diverse stories of Jewish women and gender-expansive people to combat stereotypes of women and Jews.

## ENGAGE

We bring a Jewish gender lens to conversations, experiences, and relationships in the Jewish community and beyond.

## EMPOWER

We empower Jewish women and gender-expansive people to become active contributors to the Jewish story.

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029

JWA will pursue five strategic priorities through June 2029:

1

**SECURE AND GROW** THE ARCHIVE TO AMPLIFY THE HISTORY OF JEWISH WOMEN\* AND COUNTERACT EFFORTS TO ERASE THEIR STORIES.

2

**CAPTURE HISTORY AS IT UNFOLDS** BY DOCUMENTING THE STORIES OF CONTEMPORARY JEWISH WOMEN\*.

3

**EXPAND THE REACH AND IMPACT OF JWA PROGRAMS** TO SHAPE MORE INCLUSIVE NARRATIVES AND TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY AND BELONGING FOR JEWISH WOMEN\*.

4

**CULTIVATE JEWISH FEMINIST LEADERS** AND HELP THEM BUILD THEIR FIELD.

5

**ENSURE THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY** OF JWA'S FINANCES AND LEADERSHIP.

\*JWA embraces expansive understandings of Jewishness and gender. We include Jews from all backgrounds and those who are non-binary, genderqueer, or gender-questioning.

# PRIORITY 1

Secure and grow the archive to amplify the history of Jewish women\* and counteract efforts to erase their stories.



## Objectives

- Redesign website to enhance visibility and usability
- Develop policies and practices to respond to the impact of AI and changing technology on our primary assets
- Expand historical content with continued prioritization of underrepresented and marginalized voices

# RATIONALE

JWA is committed both to protecting our existing archive (of tens of thousands of stories about Jewish women and gender-expansive people) from current technological and political threats and to thinking proactively about how AI and other new technology can facilitate our work and enhance our constituents' experience of our archive.

We are also committed to growing our collection and expanding knowledge of Jewish women and gender-expansive people with rigorous and joyful inquiry. This work involves building infrastructure and human capacity and developing new content. As we engage with the promise and perils of AI, JWA will remain human centered, focused on stories as a deep and sustaining resource for humanity.

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## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Best-in-class website that serves as a growing, trusted digital repository and effectively conveys and provides access to the fullness of JWA content
- JWA, with guidance from a revamped Technology Advisory Council, is a recognized leader in the ethical application of AI to our field
- 2-3 new partnerships to grow oral history collection by at least 15%
- 25-30 new entries added to Encyclopedia each year, with continued prioritization of underrepresented voices

## PRIORITY 2

Capture history as it unfolds by documenting the stories of contemporary Jewish women\*.



### Objectives

- Enhance and evolve initiatives to collect stories relating to recent history and the current moment
- Prioritize documenting the current moment, through platforms such as social media, the podcast, the blog, and other appropriate outlets

# RATIONALE

As Rosa Sonneschein wrote in the first issue of *The American Jewess* in April 1895, **“Not what has happened but what is recorded makes history.”**

In these dramatic times of global upheaval, JWA will ensure that the experiences of Jewish women and gender-expansive people are recorded for historical posterity, so that their perspectives will inform our understanding of this historic moment, now and into the future.

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# WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Robust record of Jewish women’s leadership and creativity in recent history and the contemporary moment created through improved methods for story collecting and new partnerships, and distributed through diverse channels
- Public access to curated stories collected through JWA’s crowdsourced Story Aperture initiative

## PRIORITY 3

**Expand the reach and impact of JWA programs to shape more inclusive narratives and to enhance community and belonging for Jewish women\*.**



### Objectives

- Grow JWA's reach through increased investment in marketing, communications, and partnerships
- Clarify and strengthen JWA's educational focus on lifelong learners

# RATIONALE

At JWA, content and audience go hand in hand. In the same way that we continue to expand the narrative to include voices that have not yet been heard, we strive as well to expand our community of listeners and viewers. As a larger audience uses our resources, the two inform and enhance one another.

Over the next three years, we will devote new resources to marketing, communications, and partnerships, so that we can leverage JWA's strengths and our growth over the past 10 years, during which we have vastly expanded our learning communities and shifted our educational work from a focus on teachers to a focus on lifelong learners.

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# WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Refreshed branding and new comprehensive marketing plan enable JWA to increase reach, engagement, and impact
- Continued expansion and engagement of virtual program audience, with attention to specific sub-audiences such as grandmothers, writers, Gen X, etc.
- Refinement of work with Jewish educators to inspire and ensure effective use of JWA resources

## PRIORITY 4

**Cultivate Jewish feminist leaders and help them build their field.**



### Objectives

- Expand and build structure for alumnae programming for the Rising Voices Fellowship and JWA interns
- Solidify funding and programmatic structure for Pomegranate Writing Fellowship for Jewish Women of Color
- Explore feasibility of creating additional Fellowship to leverage and support JWA's community of scholars

# RATIONALE

JWA's Fellowship programs—the "Empower" segment of our strategic approach—represent our direct work to build the field of Jewish feminist leadership. As we near 200 graduates of the flagship teen Rising Voices Fellowship and more than 100 graduates of JWA's internship program, we will continue to invest in this growing community through increased alumnae network offerings in response to their needs.

We are also committed to building a strong foundation for the promising new Pomegranate Writing Fellowship for Jewish Women of Color, to ensure that the Fellows' thought leadership can grow and flourish. Finally, we will consider the creation of a new fellowship that draws on JWA's deep academic network to support scholars in the fields of Jewish women's history and gender studies in the face of attacks on the humanities.

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## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Implemented ladder of engagement for JWA Fellowship and internship alumnae
- New and deepened relationships across Fellowship cohorts
- Expansion of Pomegranate Fellowship cohort and mentors
- Secured funding for 3–5 years of Pomegranate Fellowship

# PRIORITY 5

**Ensure the long-term sustainability of JWA's finances and leadership.**



## Objectives

- Expand JWA's donor base and strengthen fundraising infrastructure
- Build staff and Board leadership in alignment with mission and priorities

# RATIONALE

Though much has changed since Congresswoman Bella Abzug declared at the Fourth World Congress on Women in Beijing in 1995, “**Our struggle is about creating sustainable lives, and attainable dreams,**” that fundamental struggle remains true. JWA’s dreams, and the people who make them possible, cannot soar without strong infrastructure: tools, policies, funding, and leadership.

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## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Tripled membership in Legacy Circle planned giving program
- Upgraded development infrastructure and resources
- Structured major donor program yielding increased revenue
- Succession plans for executive and Board leadership
- Increased investment in professional development for staff and Board

# STEP INTO JWA'S NEXT ERA WITH US



From the beginning, JWA has been an innovative hub for education and social change. We believe in the power of stories to change the world, and we harness the values of expansive history, collaboration, and hope to propel us forward. As Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg reminded us, **“In our long struggle for a more just world, our memories are among our most powerful resources.”**

This strategic plan is an ambitious vision for JWA’s next era, ensuring that our in-depth and meaningful archive of stories is not just preserved but amplified and that our reach grows exponentially—impacting millions around the world and changing narratives to foster a brighter future.

We invite you to join us in this critical work of uplifting our communal histories, celebrating our accomplishments, and making space for the leaders of tomorrow.

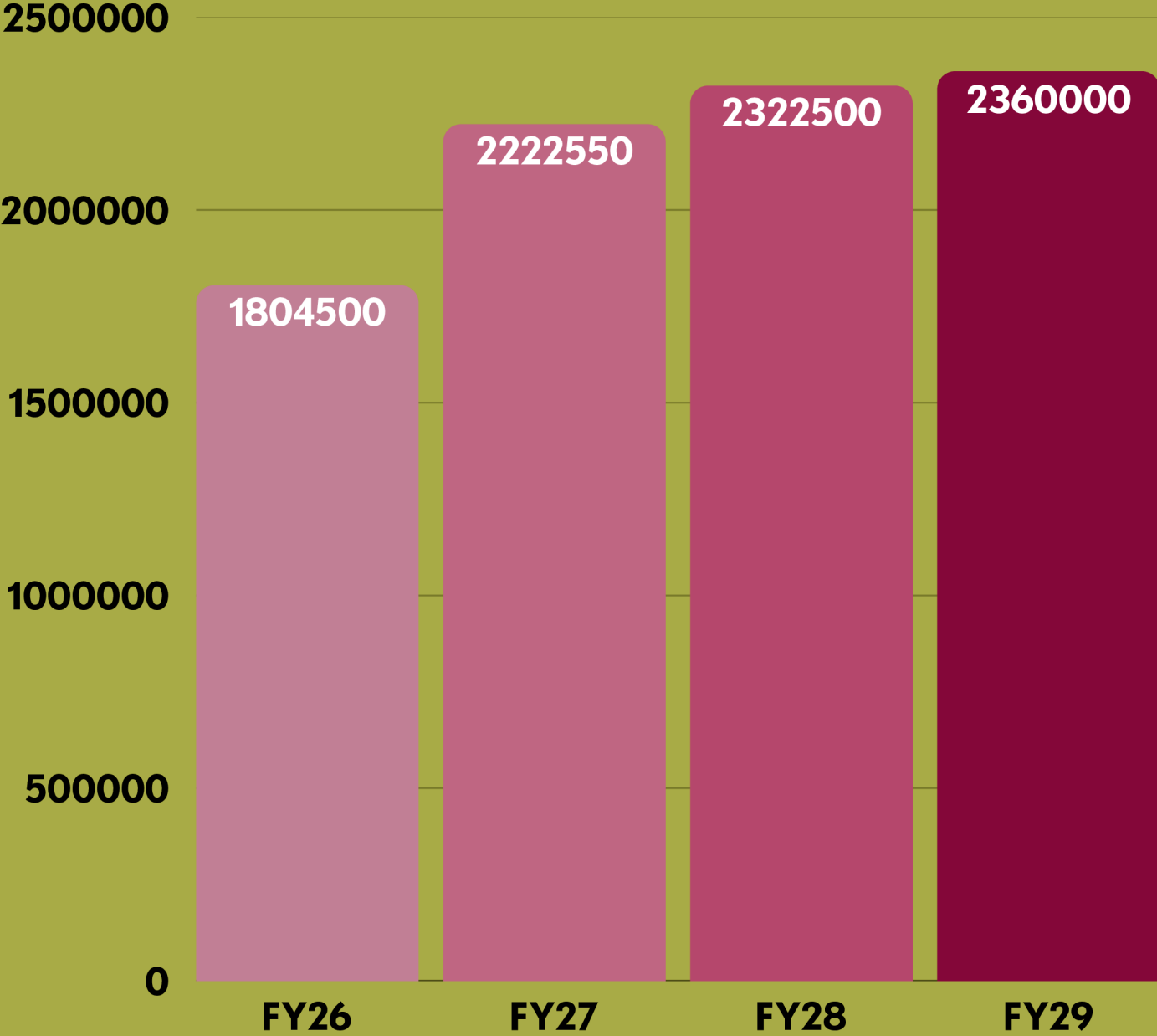
# INVESTMENT BY PRIORITY



Estimated direct cost of the strategic plan projects:

<b>FY 27</b>	<b>\$401,550</b>	<b>FY 28</b>	<b>\$466,550</b>	<b>FY 29</b>	<b>\$468,000</b>
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# ESTIMATED ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan reflects JWA's commitment to collaboration. We are grateful for the creativity, leadership, and insights of the partners listed below and for the greater JWA community, who make our work possible.

## Strategic Planning Leads

Judith Rosenbaum  
Mikki Pugh

The strategic planning process was facilitated by Dara Weinerman Steinberg of Steinberg Consulting. [www.darasteinbergconsulting.com](http://www.darasteinbergconsulting.com)

## Strategic Planning Task Force

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Lisa Mednick Owen	Mimi Zieman
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## Jewish Women's Archive Board of Directors

Rabbi Carole Balin, Board Chair  
Barbara B. Dobkin, Founding Chair  
Aliza Abusch-Magder  
Michelle Azar Aaron  
Rachel Barenbuam  
Rabbi Tiferet Berenbaum  
Dorrit Corwin  
Karla Goldman  
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Sarah Richmond, Treasurer  
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Terry Rosenberg  
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Rabbi Jen Schwarz  
Madisen Siegel  
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## Jewish Women's Archive Staff

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Hannah Altman, Digital Media Editor & Communications Manager  
Emma Breitman, Blog Editor  
Tom Cahill, Chief Financial Officer  
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Mikki Pugh, Chief of Staff  
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Jewish  
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