

Jewish Federations of North America

2025 Survey of Jewish Life since October 7th

METHODOLOGICAL STATEMENT

The results presented in this memo are derived from a national cross-sectional survey conducted by Burson, formerly Benenson Strategy Group, on behalf of the Jewish Federations of North America. The survey was fielded March 5th to March 24th, 2025. Individuals were recruited via text messages to cell phone numbers which pushed them to a self-administered web survey. The survey sample was developed using a national database that utilized big data models to generate predictions of individual's demographics including religion. The sample was specifically designed to be representative of the general US population, while oversampling likely Jews to enable analysis of both populations. Additional oversamples were developed of likely Jewish young adults and financially vulnerable Jews. A total of 5,798 completed the survey, of which 1877 identified as Jewish.

Overall margin of error is $\pm 1.29\%$ for the general US population and $\pm 2.26\%$ for Jewish Adults. Data were weighted to ensure both the general population and the Jewish sample were representative.

Sample Design

Given the challenges of surveying a population representing 2% of the general US population, the survey sample was stratified in ways to maximize Jewish responses while also generating a representative sample of the general public.

The first stage of stratification sought to divide the country into groups based on the size of the Jewish population. The American Jewish Population Project's (AJPP) 2020 estimates were utilized to provide a Jewish population estimate at the county cluster level. This analysis is the most precise, methodologically rigorous, and consistent method when exploring Jewish populations across the country.

These geographic definitions are too large for sampling as Jewish population density is not consistent within counties. To achieve greater specificity, Jewish Federations of North America utilized data from a big data vendor that predicts an individual's likely religion. Their religion model utilizes big data and machine learning to estimate how likely someone is to identify with a standard list of religious affiliations. The number of individuals with a 40% or higher probability of being Jewish were calculated for each zip code overall and based on several demographic characteristics.

Zip codes are technically not geographically defined; single buildings can have their own zip codes, while others are just postal routes. A Zip Code to Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) was used to compare the religion model's zip code data to the AJPP county clusters. The zip code estimates by age were weighted to the AJPP age distribution numbers. This resulted in a Jewish population estimate at the ZCTA level.

In suburban areas, ZCTAs often resemble town/village borders. However, it is possible for an individual to travel to a neighboring town to engage in Jewish life. This makes ZCTA smaller than desired to explore the size of a local Jewish community. ESRI ArcGIS was utilized to calculate the Jewish population within a five-mile buffer of every zip code. This generated concentric circles ranging from areas with high levels of Jews to those with lower levels.

Using prior research on small Jewish communities by Dr. Matt Boxer, PhD, ZCTAs were stratified into six groups based on the estimated number of Jews within five miles:

1. Less than 100
2. 100 to less than 1,000
3. 1,000 to less than 5,000
4. 5,000 to less than 20,000
5. 20,000 to less than 95,000
6. 95,000+

An additional goal of the stratification process was to explore differences in experiences between Jews in larger communities and those in smaller communities. Recognizing that Jews in smaller communities make up a lower proportion of their local population than in large communities, the religion model was again utilized to stratify individuals by predicted Jewish score within strata. Four strata were developed at this level:

1. 0 to less than 5% probability
2. 5 to less than 40% probability
3. 40 to less than 70% probability
4. 70% or higher probability

The resulting stratification plan meant that any individual would fall in only one possible stratum so there would not be a potential for more than one chance of selection.

Data Collection

Individuals were recruited via SMS message pushed to a self-administered web survey. It was fielded March 5th to March 24th, 2025.

Approximately 1.1 million phone numbers were contacted. Outreach for the survey did not identify the topic of the survey or who was sponsoring it to reduce response bias. Given concerns in the Jewish community about nefarious actors, individuals who screened into the survey as Jewish were then informed of the sponsor.

This survey is being conducted by Opinion Research Institute for the Jewish Federations of North America representing over 146 local Jewish Federations. The survey explores how Jews in the US engage in Jewish life and what they want from their local Jewish community. It also asks some questions about you, your background, and some of the ways you think about yourself.

All of your responses will remain confidential and nothing you share will be attributed or linked directly to you. Your answers will be combined with answers from other survey respondents when the survey results are analyzed and reported.

You will not be asked for a donation in this survey, and the information you provide in this survey will not be used to contact you for a donation later.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at Research@JewishFederations.Org.

The initial invitation had an incentive of a chance to win a \$500 gift card for participation. Near the end of data collection, individuals who had screened in as Jewish but did not complete the survey received a follow-up text message with guaranteed financial incentive depending on their strata. The text message included similar information to the disclosure including the sponsor and purpose of the survey.

Weighting

Weights were developed to account for sample design and post stratify responses to the US Census and the Pew Research Center's 2020 study of Jewish Americans.

Initial weights were developed to account for the sample design, balancing the probability that someone is Jewish and the Jewish population density to account for different probabilities of selection and response. These were enhanced to account for the oversamples to balance the potential for multiple selections.

The results were then post-stratified based on demographic, religious, and political affiliation responses, responses to whether individuals are Jewish by Religion or Jews of no Religion, and the denominational breakdown within the Jewish community. With the new stratification, the Jewish community represents 2% of the general population.

Questions about methodology should be directed to Research@JewishFederations.org