

2022-23  
GREATER PORTLAND  
JEWISH  
COMMUNITY STUDY



Jewish Federation<sup>®</sup>  
OF GREATER PORTLAND



Brandeis

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The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS), founded in 1980, is dedicated to providing independent, high-quality research on issues related to contemporary Jewish life.

The Cohen Center is also the home of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI). Established in 2005, SSRI uses innovative research methods to collect and analyze sociodemographic data on the Jewish community.

# JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER PORTLAND

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Demographic Snapshot

- The Greater Portland Jewish community numbers approximately 75,500 individuals, of whom 56,600 are Jewish. They reside in 31,100 households that include:
  - 45,100 Jewish adults
  - 11,500 Jewish children
  - 15,100 non-Jewish adults
  - 3,800 non-Jewish children
- The mean age of Jewish adults in Greater Portland is 48 and the median age is 46, slightly younger than the national median age of Jewish adults, 49. Both the mean and median ages of all Jewish individuals in Greater Portland, including children, are 42.
- Twenty-nine percent of all Jewish households in Greater Portland include at least one child under age 18.
- The individual intermarriage rate (i.e., the proportion of married Jewish adults with a non-Jewish spouse) in Greater Portland is 46%, slightly higher than the national average of 42%.
- Fifty-two percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland do not identify with any particular denomination of Judaism. Five percent identify as Orthodox, 8% as Conservative, 23% as Reform, and 12% identify with other denominations.
- Seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland identify as LGBTQ+. Similarly, 7% of Jewish adults are Israeli citizens, and 7% grew up in Russian-speaking households.
- Seven percent of Jewish individuals in Greater Portland, including 16% of Jewish children, identify as People of Color. Thirteen percent of Jewish individuals, including 26% of Jewish children, identify as Hispanic or with any racial group other than white.
- Twenty-four percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland reside in Northeast Portland. Nineteen percent live in the Western Suburbs, 17% in Southwest Washington and North Portland, 14% in Southeast Portland, 13% in Southwest Portland, 8% in Northwest Portland, and 5% in the Other Suburbs.
- Twenty-three percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland were raised in the region, including 13% who have lived there for their entire lives other than for college and/or graduate studies.
- Forty-nine percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland have lived in the region for 20 or more years, and another 17% of Jewish adults have resided in the area for 10-19 years. Thirty-four percent of Jewish adults moved to the area in the past decade, including 15% who have resided in the area for fewer than five years.
- Seventy-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland identify politically as very liberal or liberal. Another 13% describe themselves as moderate, and 10% reported that they are conservative or very conservative.

## Patterns of Jewish Engagement

- The Index of Jewish Engagement focuses on Jewish behaviors—the ways in which individuals occupy and involve themselves in Jewish life in Greater Portland—not on self-identification.
- Engagement groups include people of all ages and denominational identities.
- Demographic characteristics are related to membership in these five engagement groups.
- The Index can be used to identify opportunities to improve communal planning based on people’s different needs and interests.
- Five distinct patterns of behavior emerge from the data.
  - Minimally Involved (28% of Jewish adults): Characterized by minimal participation in Jewish life.
  - Cultural (32% of Jewish adults): Characterized by having high levels of participation in Jewish cultural activities, but little activity with Jewish organizations.
  - Ritual (12% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high levels of participation in Jewish ritual and religious activities.
  - Communal (17% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high rates of synagogue membership and participation in other Jewish organizations.
  - Immersed (11% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high involvement in all dimensions of Jewish life.

## Jewish Children

- Among the 15,300 children living in Jewish households in the Greater Portland Jewish community, 11,500 (75%) are being raised Jewish, either exclusively or with another religion.
- Among the 3,800 children not being raised Jewish, 1,800 are being raised in no religion, 300 are being raised exclusively in another religion, and 1,700 have parents who either have not yet determined how they will be raised or did not provide enough information to assess their Jewish identities.
- Nearly all (97%) children of two Jewish parents in Greater Portland are being raised Jewish. The remaining children of two Jewish parents are being raised in no religion or in another religion.
- Among children of intermarried parents in the Greater Portland Jewish community, 75% are being raised Jewish in some way.
- Twelve percent of Jewish children not yet enrolled in kindergarten were enrolled in a Jewish preschool or early childhood program during the 2022-23 school year.
- Seventeen percent of Jewish students in grades K-12 were enrolled in some form of Jewish school during the 2022-23 school year. This share includes 4% in a Jewish day school and 13% in a part-time school. Ten percent of Jewish students in grades K-12 took private classes or were tutored in Jewish topics.
- Thirty-six percent of Jewish K-12 students attended a Jewish summer camp as a camper or staff member in 2022. This includes 16% who attended a day camp and 21% who attended an overnight camp. Thirty-three percent of Jewish K-12 students attended a non-Jewish camp of either variety.



- Thirty-five percent of age-eligible Jewish children have celebrated a bar, bat, or b' mitzvah ceremony, and another 9% plan to celebrate in the future. Of the children who have celebrated, 74% held a service through a synagogue, 6% held a service or activity without a synagogue but with a rabbi, 6% held a service or activity with neither a synagogue nor a rabbi, and 14% did not hold a service or activity.
- Nineteen percent of households in Greater Portland with age-eligible children receive books from PJ Library or PJ Our Way.

## Congregations and Ritual Life

- Twenty percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland belong to a synagogue or other Jewish congregation, lower than the national average of 35%. However, 12% of households belong to more than one congregation.
- Fifteen percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland previously belonged to a congregation at some point in their adult lives but do not currently belong, and 60% never belonged to a congregation. Among the Minimally Involved group, the vast majority have never belonged to a congregation (93%).
- Forty-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland attended Jewish religious services at least once in the past year, either in-person or online, including 31% who are not members of any Jewish congregation. Twelve percent of Jewish adults attended services at least once a month.
- During the 2022 High Holidays, 34% of Jewish adults in Greater Portland attended High Holiday services. Most attended in person, either with a congregation in Greater Portland (59%) or a congregation outside the area (5%). Twenty-two percent of Jewish adults attended High Holiday services online with a local congregation, and 20% attended High Holiday services online with a congregation outside Greater Portland.
- Half of Jewish adults in Greater Portland marked Shabbat in some way during the past year, including 19% who did so every week or nearly every week. The most common ways Jewish adults in Greater Portland mark Shabbat are by lighting candles on Friday night (40%), spending time with family and friends (36%), and having a special Shabbat meal (35%).
- Seventy-five percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland light Hanukkah candles in a typical year, and 58% attended a seder in 2022. Twenty-seven percent of Jewish adults fasted on Yom Kippur in 2022, and 25% keep any laws of kashrut.

## Organizations and Philanthropy

- Eight percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland belong to an informal or grassroots Jewish organization.
- Two percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland are members of the Mittleman Jewish Community Center.
- Thirty-three percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland attended at least one Jewish program in the past year. Twenty percent participated in programs sponsored by a Jewish congregation, and 10% participated in programs sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. Of Jewish adults younger than age 40, 16% participated in programs sponsored by a local Jewish student organization, and 10% participated in programs sponsored by a local Jewish young professional organization.

- Jewish adults in Greater Portland most commonly access information about local Jewish activities, news, and events from the Internet (42%) or friends and family (40%).
- Sixty-eight percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland expressed an opinion about how welcoming Jewish organizations in the area are to people like them. Thirty percent felt Jewish organizations are very welcoming, 27% somewhat welcoming, 10% not too welcoming, and 1% not at all welcoming.
- Many Jewish adults in Greater Portland participated in informal Jewish cultural activities in the past year, including 95% who talked about Jewish topics; 90% who ate Jewish foods; 87% who read books, watched movies or television shows, or listened to music that is Jewish-focused, and 74% who read publications from Jewish organizations. Half (50%) of Jewish adults in Greater Portland read or posted about Jewish life on social media, 45% studied Jewish texts, and 28% decorated the exterior of their homes for Jewish holidays.
- Nearly half (48%) of Jewish adults in Greater Portland have a mezuzah on an exterior door of their home.
- Seventeen percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland usually wear a Jewish symbol in public, such as Jewish-themed jewelry or a *kippah*, and 10% have visible body art with a Jewish theme, such as a Star of David or a Hebrew word.
- Forty-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland volunteered anywhere in the past year, including 19% who volunteered for or with a Jewish organization.
- Seventy-eight percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland made charitable donations in the past year, including 41% that donated to Jewish organizations. Five percent of Jewish households donated to the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

## Community Connections

- Ninety-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland feel at least some sense of belonging to the Jewish people, including 46% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Sixty-four percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland feel at least some connection to the local Jewish community, including 9% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Forty percent of Jewish adults feel at least some connection to an online Jewish community, including 7% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Forty-nine percent of Jewish adults say they have at least some close Jewish friends, including 13% who say most or all of their close friends are Jewish.
- The four most common barriers to participation in the Jewish community cited by Jewish adults in Greater Portland are a lack of activities of interest (30%), traffic or location making it difficult to attend (29%), not being confident in Jewish knowledge (21%), and expense (21%).
- Sixty-three percent of Jewish adults in are very concerned about antisemitism around the world, and 60% are very concerned about antisemitism in the United States. By contrast, only 32% are very concerned about antisemitism in Greater Portland.
- Eighteen percent of Jewish adults personally experienced one or more antisemitic incidents in the past year. For 31% of Jewish adults, a fear of antisemitism and their concern for their safety or comfort as a Jew has caused them to change their behavior in the past year.

## Connections to Israel

- A minority of Jewish adults in Greater Portland are emotionally attached to Israel, with 18% feeling very attached and 28% feeling somewhat attached. Taken together, this proportion (46%) is lower than among all US Jewish adults (58%).
- Fifty percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland have traveled to Israel. This share is similar to that of US Jews in general, of whom 45% have traveled to Israel.
- Thirty percent of age-eligible Jewish adults (younger than age 51) in Greater Portland have participated in a Birthright Israel trip.
- About half (48%) of Jewish adults in Greater Portland follow the news on Israel, with 12% following the news on Israel very closely and 36% somewhat closely.
- Twenty-six percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland self-identify as Zionists. Fifty-two percent do not identify as Zionists, and the remaining 22% either are not sure how they identify or prefer not to say.
- Ninety-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland consider it important for Israel to be a democratic state, and 65% consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state. Eighty-seven percent consider it important for Israel to exist for the Jewish people, now and in the future. Eighty-two percent believe Israel is under constant threat from hostile neighbors who seek its destruction, but only 43% believe Israel lives up to its values with respect to human rights.

## Financial Well-Being and Health Needs

- Twenty-eight percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland include at least one person who is limited in their work, school, or activities by some sort of health issue, special need, or disability. The most common health issues are mental or emotional health problems, faced by 18% of households, and chronic illnesses, experienced by 15% of households.
- Forty-two percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland require any of a variety of health services, whether they were received or not. The most commonly needed health service is mental health treatment, required by 34% of households.
- Among the 31,100 Jewish households in Greater Portland, 12% are serving as primary caregivers or managing care for a close relative or friend, separate from routine childcare.
- Sixty-six percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland have attained at least a bachelor's degree, a slightly higher proportion than in the national Jewish community.
- Close to two thirds (65%) of Jewish adults who are not in high school are working, including 50% working full-time in one job or position, 9% working part-time in one job or position, and 6% working in multiple positions. Sixteen percent of Jewish adults are retired.
- Twenty-six percent of Jewish households say either that they cannot make ends meet (4%) or are just managing to make ends meet (23%).
- While 16% of Jewish households in Greater Portland have an income of \$200,000 or more, the same proportion (16%) have an income of less than \$50,000.

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The *2022-23 Greater Portland Jewish Community Study*, conducted by the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) at Brandeis University and sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, employed innovative state-of-the-art methods to create a comprehensive portrait of the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of the present-day Jewish community in Greater Portland, defined as Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties in Oregon and Clark and Cowlitz Counties in Washington. Some of the issues explored in the study grew out of conversations surrounding the Pew Research Center's *A Portrait of Jewish Americans* (2013), which pointed to growing and shrinking US Jewish sub-populations, declining affiliation in traditional institutions, new forms of Jewish engagement, a rise of both secular and Orthodox Jews, and a relationship between intermarriage and community growth.<sup>1</sup> A new Pew study, *Jewish Americans in 2020* (2021), published shortly prior to this study's planning phase, reinforced many of the findings of the original Pew study and contributed new insights into the state and character of the American Jewish community. With the Pew studies and the related national discourse as a backdrop, the *2022-23 Greater Portland Jewish Community Study* seeks to describe the current dynamics of its population.

The principal goal of this study is to provide valid data about the Greater Portland Jewish community that can be used by communal organizations and their leadership to design programs and policies that support and enhance Jewish life. Valid data are essential to effective decision making, allocation of resources, strategic priorities, community support, robust participation, and outreach.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- Estimate the number of Jewish adults and children in the community and the number of non-Jewish adults and children who are part of those households
- Describe the community in terms of age and gender, geographic distribution, economic well-being, and other sociodemographic characteristics
- Measure participation in and attitudes toward community institutions, programs, and services
- Understand the multifaceted cultural, communal, and religious expressions of Judaism that constitute Jewish engagement
- Assess attitudes toward Israel and Judaism
- Gauge need and potential need for human services

The *2022-23 Greater Portland Jewish Community Study* provides a snapshot of today's Jewish population in Greater Portland and considers trends and developments that diverge from those of the past.

## History

The present study is at least the third population study about the Greater Portland Jewish community. The first study, conducted in 1971, identified approximately 7,750 Jews living in Greater



Portland.<sup>2</sup> The second study, conducted in 2009, initially reported an estimate of 47,500 Jewish individuals in Greater Portland, but that estimate was subsequently revised to 36,400.<sup>3</sup> The 2009 study can be found at the Berman Jewish Data Bank, <https://www.jewishdatabank.org/databank/local-studies>.<sup>4</sup>

## Methodology Overview

CMJS/SSRI community studies utilize scientific survey methods to collect information from selected members of the community and, from those responses, extrapolate information about the entire community. The *2022-23 Greater Portland Jewish Community Study* is based on data collected through telephone and internet surveys from October 2022 to January 2023 from a total of 2,560 Jewish households residing for at least part of the year in Greater Portland. The response rate for the primary sample was 22.8% (AAPOR RR4).

Households invited to participate in the survey were randomly selected from a combination of contact information provided by local community organizations and purchased lists of likely Jewish households. To ensure that the households were representative of the entire Jewish community, we used additional information to develop the estimates of population size and characteristics reported in this study.

We estimated the population size and basic demographic characteristics using an innovative enhancement of the traditional random digit dial (RDD) survey method. Instead of deriving information about the population from a single RDD phone survey of the local area, the enhanced RDD method relies on a synthesis of national surveys, conducted by government agencies and other organizations, that include information about religion. Using that combined data and information collected from Greater Portland residents, we were able to estimate the Jewish population in the region. See [ajpp.brandeis.edu](http://ajpp.brandeis.edu) for more information about this approach to Jewish population estimates.

In all studies of the Jewish community, more involved members are more motivated, and therefore more likely, to complete a survey than are less involved members. To minimize the bias that this introduces, we validated all results against known benchmarks of community participation and adjusted as needed. Examples of benchmarks are the total number of synagogue-member households and the total number of children enrolled in Jewish schools.

See Appendix A for more detail about the survey methods used for this study.

## How to Read This Report

The present survey of Jewish households is designed to represent the views of an entire community by interviewing a randomly selected sample of households from the community. In order to extrapolate respondent data to the entire community, the data are adjusted (i.e., “weighted”). Each individual respondent is assigned a weight so that their survey answers represent the proportion of the overall community that has similar demographic characteristics. The weighted respondent thus stands in for that segment of the population, and not only the household from which it was collected. (See Appendix A for more detail.) Unless otherwise specified, this report presents weighted survey data in the form of percentages or proportions. Accordingly, these data should be

read not as the percentage or proportion of respondents who answered each question in a given way, but as the percentage or proportion of the population that it is estimated would answer each question in that way had each member of the population been surveyed.

No estimate should be considered an exact measurement. The reported estimate for any value, known as a “point estimate,” is the most likely value for the variable in question for the entire population given available data, but it is possible that the true value is slightly lower or slightly higher. Because estimates are extrapolated from data collected from a representative sample of the population, there is a degree of uncertainty. The amount of uncertainty depends on multiple factors, the most important of which is the number of survey respondents who provided the data from which an estimate is derived. The uncertainty is quantified as a set of values that range from some percentage below the reported estimate to a similar percentage above it. This range is known as a “confidence interval.” By convention, the confidence interval is calculated to reflect 95% certainty that the true value for the population falls within the range defined by the confidence interval, but other confidence levels are used where appropriate. (See Appendix A for details about the magnitude of the confidence intervals around estimates in this study.)

## Reading Report Tables

Numeric data in this report are most often presented in tables, although bar graphs and pie charts are used in some cases to illustrate or amplify selected data. To interpret tables correctly, the title and/or first row of each table will indicate the denominator for any reported numbers. Some tables report a percentage of Jewish households, some a percentage of Jewish adults, and some report on a subset for whom the questions are relevant.

Some tables and figures that present proportions do not add up to 100%. In some cases, this was a result of respondents having the option to select more than one response to a question; in such cases, the text of the report indicates that multiple responses were possible. In most cases, however, the appearance that proportional estimates do not add up to 100% is a result of rounding.

Proportional estimates are rounded to the nearest whole number. When a percentage is between 0% and 0.5% and would otherwise round down to 0%, the number is denoted as < 1%. When there are insufficient respondents in a particular category for reporting reliable information, the estimate is shown as “-”.

In some tables, not all response options appear. For example, if the proportion of a group who participated in a Passover seder is noted, the proportion who did not participate will not be shown.

A statistically significant difference between subgroups in a table or figure means that observed differences between groups are likely to reflect real, systematic differences between groups rather than apparent differences that only occur at random. Following the standard practice of social science research, this report relies on a standard of 5% or less chance of random error (i.e.,  $p \leq .05$ ), which means we are 95% certain that findings of differences between groups for a particular variable are not the product of chance, but rather a result of real differences between groups.

When size estimates of subpopulations (e.g., Orthodox households) are provided, they are calculated as the weighted number of households or individuals for which the respondents provided sufficient

information to classify them as members of the subgroup. When data are missing, those respondents are counted as if they are not part of the subgroups for purposes of estimation. For this reason, all subpopulation estimates may undercount information on those least likely to complete the survey or answer particular questions. Missing information cannot reliably be imputed in many such cases because the other information that could serve as a basis to impute data is also missing. Refer to the codebook, included as Appendix D, for the actual number of responses to each question.

## Comparisons across Subgroups

In the majority of tables in this report, data are compared across a consistent set of subgroups that have been defined for purposes of this study. The structure of the table varies based on the content. This information is always provided in the first row of the table. The standard set of table categories is shown for the first time in this report in Table 5.2.

As indicated previously, numbers and percentages should not be understood as exact measurements, but as the most likely estimate within a range. It is particularly important to keep this in mind when comparing subgroups. Small differences between subgroups might be the result of random variation in the survey responses rather than actual differences in the population.

When there is a statistically significant difference among subgroups, we are 95% confident that at least some of the differences in estimates reflect actual differences and are not just the result of random chance. In the tables in this report, we designate these differences by shading them light gray. Findings that are not statistically significant are not shaded. Even in cases where there are statistically significant differences in a full set of responses, it is unlikely that there are statistically significant differences between every pair of numbers.

When there is a statistically significant difference among subgroups represented in a figure, we designate these differences by adding an asterisk (\*) to the figure title. Thus, for example, the asterisk added to the end of the title for Figure 3.2 (page 34) indicates that there are significant differences between engagement groups on the extent to which observing Jewish law is an important part of being Jewish. Where the differences between groups represented in a figure are not statistically significant, no asterisk will be added.

## Reporting Qualitative Data

The survey included a number of questions that called for open-text responses. These were used to elicit more information about respondents' opinions and experiences than could be provided in a check box format. All such responses were categorized, or "coded," to identify topics and themes that were mentioned by multiple respondents. Because a consistent set of responses was not offered to each respondent, and because in some cases there were very few responses, it would be misleading to report the weighted proportion of responses to these questions. Instead, we may report the total number of responses that mentioned a particular code or theme. This number may appear in text or in parentheses after the response without a percent sign, or in tables labeled as "n" or number of responses. In many cases, sample quotes are also reported, with identifying information removed and edited for clarity. In particular, quotes from responses to a question asking if there was anything else respondents would like us to know about the Greater Portland Jewish

community are interspersed throughout chapters 1-9.<sup>5</sup> These quotes were selected not to endorse the views expressed by respondents, but to represent the range of views on that particular topic.

## Comparisons across Surveys

Although comparisons across surveys are informative, because of methodological differences, they are less precise and reliable than assessments of the data from the present study alone. Because the last comprehensive Jewish community study of Greater Portland was conducted in 2009 and relied upon a very small number of cases to develop population estimates, very few comparisons are made to assess change over time. However, in several places throughout the report, data from Pew's 2020 study, *Jewish Americans in 2020*, are used to show how the Greater Portland Jewish community is similar to or different from the United States Jewish community.

## The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic, which first became a subject of public concern in the United States in February and March of 2020, has had a profound impact on every aspect of social, communal, and economic life. The Jewish community was not spared these impacts of the pandemic. Individual lives were disrupted at the same time that organizations and institutions were forced to close, restructure, or refocus their activities and programs. CMJS/SSRI research on the impact of the pandemic conducted in 10 communities around the United States during the summer of 2020, suggests that there may have been a small decline in organizational memberships caused by the pandemic, but people who participated in Jewish programming in person before the pandemic tended to continue participating in programs online during the pandemic. This research also found that the financial impacts were experienced most severely by those who had financial difficulties prior to the pandemic, and that the pandemic had a disproportionate impact on the mental health of young adults.<sup>6</sup>

Data collection for this study took place between October 25, 2022, and January 23, 2023. Consequently, the findings included in this report should be interpreted in the context of the late stages of the “emergency phase” of the pandemic.<sup>7</sup> To provide the Jewish community of Greater Portland with the most useful data possible, CMJS/SSRI modified some survey items to account for the impact of the pandemic. For example, many questions about participation in Jewish life included an option for participation online or asked about what people do in a typical year rather than in the past year. As a result, on different measures, participation might have been lower, higher, or about the same as in typical years.

Nevertheless, we believe that the data reported here should serve as a new baseline from which to understand community engagement. We heard from some organizations that membership, enrollment, or program attendance was depressed because of the pandemic. As more members of the community are vaccinated and boosted and any remaining COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, we recommend that the community track their numbers to see if they are returning to pre-pandemic levels or if the community will need to adjust to a “new normal.”



## Report Overview

This report presents key findings about the Greater Portland Jewish community. Beginning with a portrait of the community as a whole, the report continues with a more in-depth look at topics of interest to community members and leaders.

### **Chapter 2. Demographic Snapshot**

The report begins with an overview of the demographic composition of the Greater Portland Jewish community today.

### **Chapter 3. Patterns of Jewish Engagement**

This chapter describes the multifaceted ways in which the Jews of Greater Portland define and express their Jewish identity. A set of behavioral measures characterize Jewish engagement based on participation in Jewish life. A typology of Jewish engagement helps explain Jewish behaviors and attitudes. This chapter also reports on attitudes about the meaning and importance of Judaism to members of the Greater Portland Jewish community.

### **Chapter 4. Jewish Children**

This chapter discusses Jewish children and families as well as participation in Jewish education.

### **Chapter 5. Congregations and Ritual Life**

This chapter discusses membership in Jewish congregations and levels of participation in Jewish ritual life.

### **Chapter 6. Organizations and Philanthropy**

This chapter discusses membership and involvement in organizational, social, and personal Jewish life as well as volunteering and philanthropy.

### **Chapter 7. Community, Connections, and Concerns**

This chapter explores the connections of Jewish adults in Greater Portland to the Jewish community, barriers that limit their participation in the Jewish community, and the context of their concern about antisemitism.

### **Chapter 8. Connections to Israel**

This chapter describes the frequency and types of travel to Israel and other markers of Israel connection.

### **Chapter 9. Financial Well-Being and Health Needs**

This chapter examines the living conditions of Greater Portland Jewish households, in particular with regard to economic well-being, economic hardship, and health and social service concerns.

### **Chapter 10. In the Words of Community Members**

This chapter summarizes survey respondents' answers to an open-ended question at the end of the survey about the community's strengths and weaknesses.

## **Chapter 11. Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter summarizes some key findings from the study and makes recommendations, based on the data, to strengthen the Greater Portland Jewish community.

## **Report Appendices**

The appendices, available in a separate document, include:

### **Appendix A. Methodological Appendix**

Details of data collection and analysis

### **Appendix B. Comparison Charts**

Description of detailed cross-tabulations of all survey data for key subgroups of the population

### **Appendix C. Latent Class Analysis**

Details of the latent class analysis method that was used to develop the Index of Jewish Engagement

### **Appendix D. Survey Instrument and Codebook**

Details of survey questions and conditions, along with the original weighted responses

### **Appendix E. Study Documentation**

Copies of the recruitment materials and training documents used with the call center

### **Appendix F. Maps**

Choropleth maps of key findings from the survey

# CHAPTER 2. DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

## Chapter Highlights

This chapter focuses on the size and basic demographic characteristics of the Jewish community of Greater Portland.

- The Greater Portland Jewish community numbers approximately 75,500 individuals, of whom 56,600 are Jewish. They reside in 31,100 households that include:
  - 45,100 Jewish adults
  - 11,500 Jewish children
  - 15,100 non-Jewish adults
  - 3,800 non-Jewish children
- The mean age of Jewish adults in Greater Portland is 48 and the median age is 46, slightly younger than the national median age of Jewish adults, 49. Both the mean and median ages of all Jewish individuals in Greater Portland, including children, are 42.
- Twenty-nine percent of all Jewish households in Greater Portland include at least one child under age 18.
- The individual intermarriage rate (i.e., the proportion of married Jewish adults with a non-Jewish spouse) in Greater Portland is 46%, slightly higher than the national average of 42%.
- Fifty-two percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland do not identify with any particular denomination of Judaism. Five percent identify as Orthodox, 8% as Conservative, 23% as Reform, and 12% identify with other denominations.
- Seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland identify as LGBTQ+. Similarly, 7% of Jewish adults are Israeli citizens, and 7% grew up in Russian-speaking households.
- Seven percent of Jewish individuals in Greater Portland, including 16% of Jewish children, identify as People of Color. Thirteen percent of Jewish individuals, including 26% of Jewish children, identify as Hispanic or with any racial group other than white.
- Twenty-four percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland reside in Northeast Portland. Nineteen percent live in the Western Suburbs, 17% in Southwest Washington and North Portland, 14% in Southeast Portland, 13% in Southwest Portland, 8% in Northwest Portland, and 5% in the Other Suburbs.
- Twenty-three percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland were raised in the region, including 13% who have lived there for their entire lives other than for college and/or graduate studies.
- Forty-nine percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland have lived in the region for 20 or more years, and another 17% of Jewish adults have resided in the area for 10-19 years. Thirty-four percent of Jewish adults moved to the area in the past decade, including 15% who have resided in the area for fewer than five years.
- Seventy-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland identify politically as very liberal or liberal. Another 13% described themselves as moderate, and 10% reported that they are conservative or very conservative.

## Jewish Population Estimate

There are approximately 31,100 Jewish households in the Greater Portland area (Table 2.1). These households include 75,500 individuals, of whom 56,600 are Jewish (see page 16 for definitions).

The Jewish population comprises 2.3% of the total number of individuals in Greater Portland.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 2.1. Greater Portland Jewish Community Population Estimates, 2022**

Total people in Jewish households	75,500
Total Jewish households	31,100
Total Jews	56,600
Adults (ages 18+)	60,200
Jewish	45,100
Non-Jewish	15,100
Children (under age 18)	15,300
Jewish	11,500
Non-Jewish or unknown religion	3,800

*The community has grown tremendously since I moved to Oregon [about 50 years ago] and has certainly changed. – male, 75, Southeast Portland<sup>9</sup>*

*It surprises people from elsewhere that Portland has such a deep, established Jewish community. – female, 68, Southwest Portland*

## People in Jewish Households

Estimates of the size of the Jewish community rest on a set of fundamental questions about who is Jewish for the purposes of the study. Recent studies, such as the Pew Research Center’s 2013 and 2020 national studies of the US Jewish community, classify respondents according to their responses to a series of screening questions:

- What is your religion, if any?
- Do you consider yourself to be Jewish aside from religion?
- Were either of your parents Jewish?
- Were you raised Jewish?

Based on the answers to these questions, Jewish adults have been categorized as “Jewish by religion” (JBR) if they respond to a question about religion by stating that they are solely Jewish, or “Jews of no religion” (JNR) if they do not adhere to any religion, but they consider themselves Jewish through some other means. Jews by religion tend to be more engaged with Judaism than Jews of no religion, but many JBRs and JNRs look similar in terms of Jewish behaviors and attitudes. For the purposes of this study and to ensure that the Greater Portland Jewish community could be compared to the population nationwide, a variant of Pew’s scheme was employed, supplemented by several other measures of identity. Also included in the Jewish population are those adults who indicate they are both Jewish and another religion; we refer to this category as “Jews of multiple religions” (JMR).

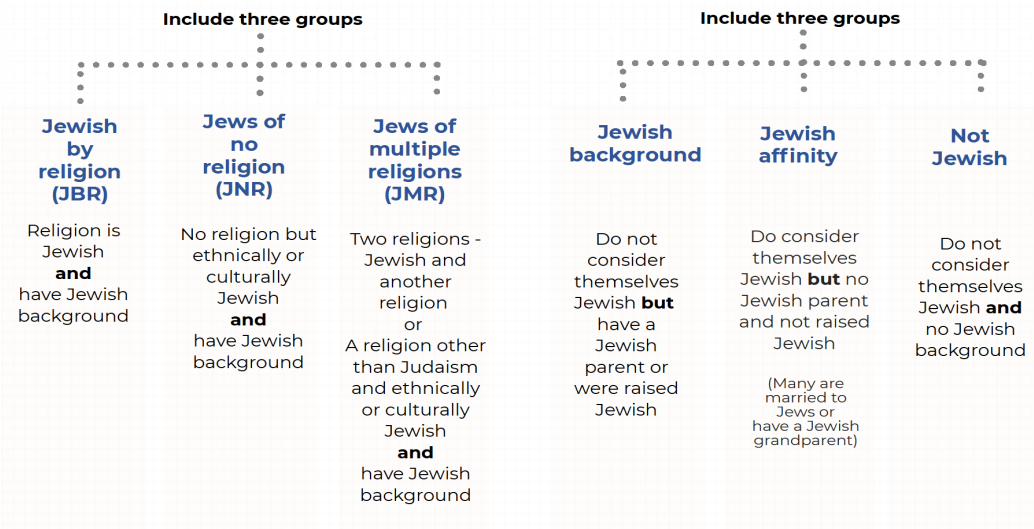



*It's open to families like mine, who weren't born Jewish, but who participate in community activities. — female, age 35-49, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

*The Orthodox community has become more visible, while the secular Jews are often unaffiliated and invisible. — female, 64, Other Suburbs*

# Definitions: Who is a Jew?

		
<b>Jewish adults</b>	<b>Jewish households</b>	<b>Non-Jewish adults</b>
Identify as Jewish <b>and</b> have Jewish background: either at least one Jewish parent, raised Jewish, or converted to Judaism	Households that include at least one Jewish adult	

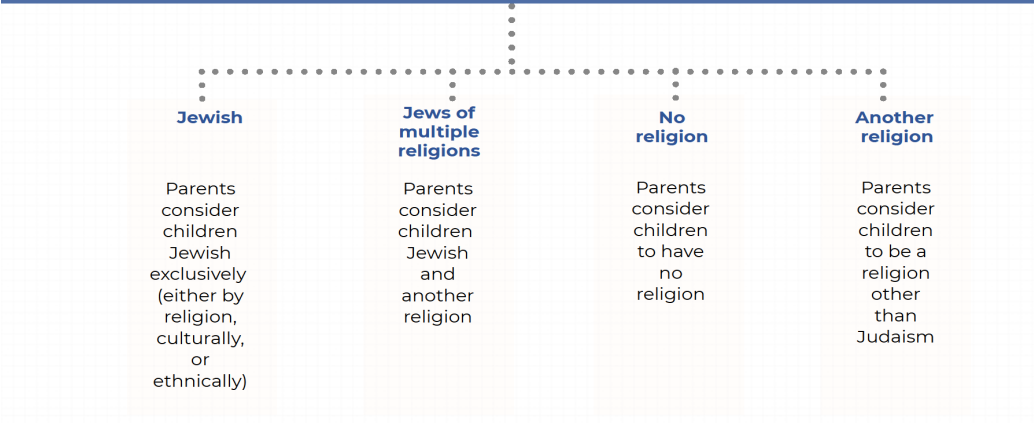




## Children

Are classified based on whether their parents consider them to be Jewish

Children include four groups



Among Jewish adults in Greater Portland, 71% (32,000 individuals) identify as JBR (Table 2.2). This proportion is similar to the proportion within the overall US Jewish population as reported by Pew (73%).<sup>10</sup> Of the remaining Jewish adults, 22% identify as JNR (9,800 individuals), and 7% identify as JMR (3,200 individuals).

For more on children in Jewish households, see Chapter 4.

**Table 2.2. Jewish population of Greater Portland, detail (rounded to nearest 100)**

Jewish adults	45,100
JBR adults	32,000
JNR adults	9,800
JMR adults	3,200
Non-Jewish adults in Jewish households	15,100
Jewish children in Jewish households	11,500
Exclusively Jewish	8,900
Jewish and something else	2,600
Non-Jewish children in Jewish households	3,800
No religion	1,800
Exclusively another religion	300
Undetermined or parents undecided	1,700

## Age and Gender Composition

The Greater Portland Jewish community is aged similarly to the broader area population, but skews younger than the national Jewish population (Table 2.3).

The mean age of Jewish adults in Greater Portland is 48, and the median age is 46; in comparison, the national median age of Jewish adults is 49.<sup>11</sup> Including children in the analysis lowers the mean and median ages. Both the mean and median ages of all Jewish individuals in the Greater Portland area are 42. For the overall Greater Portland region, including both Jews and non-Jews, the median age is between 35 and 39.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 2.3. Age of Jewish adults in Greater Portland compared to all area residents and US Jews**

	Jewish Greater Portland (%)	Greater Portland (ACS 2021; %)	US Jews (Pew; %)
18-34	31	29	28
35-49	23	28	23
50-64	22	23	20
65-74	15	13	17
75+	9	7	13
Total	100	100	100

Overall, the Greater Portland Jewish community is 49% male, 50% female, and 1% non-binary or another gender identity.

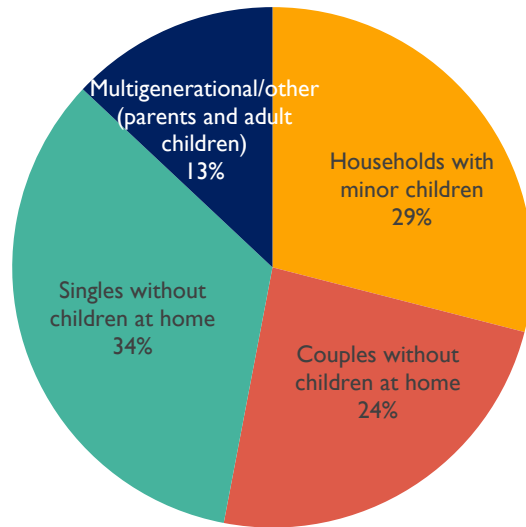
## Household Composition

Households with children under age 18 (including single-parent, two-parent, or multigenerational households) make up 29% of Jewish households in Greater Portland (Figure 2.1). The mean

household size is 2.4 individuals. Among households with children, the mean number of children ages 0-17 is 1.7.

Couples without minor children (ages 0-17) constitute 24% of households. Multigenerational households, defined as parents and adult children of any age living together, constitute 13% of households. This category can include adults, typically in their 70s or 80s, who have moved in with their adult children, or adults, typically in their 20s, 30s, or 40s, who live in their parents' homes.

Figure 2.1. Household composition



Among Jewish adults ages 35 and older, 23% have an adult child who lives in another Greater Portland household, and 29% have an adult child living outside of the area. Among all of those with adult children, 20% have a grandchild living in Greater Portland, and 23% have a grandchild living elsewhere.

## Inmarriage and Inter marriage

Among all Jewish households in Greater Portland, 58% include a couple who is married, engaged, or partnered. Of these couples, 37% are inmarried, and 63% are intermarried.

The individual intermarriage rate (i.e., the proportion of Jewish adults with a non-Jewish spouse) is 46%, slightly higher than the national average (42%; Table 2.4).<sup>13</sup>

# Definitions: Inmarriage and Inter marriage

"Couples" and "marriages" include married and cohabiting couples. "Spouse" refers to marital spouses and partners.

**Inmarried:** two partners who are currently Jewish (JBR, JNR, JMR), regardless of whether they were born Jewish or converted

**Intermarried:** one partner currently Jewish and one partner not Jewish

**Household intermarriage rate** percentage of couples that include a Jewish and non-Jewish partner

**Individual intermarriage rate** percentage of married/partnered Jewish adults with a partner who is not Jewish

## Understanding Intermarriage Rates

### Example

#### Jewish household 1: Intermarried



#### Jewish household 2: Inmarried



- ▶ **Household intermarriage rate is 50%** because half of the couples (1 out of 2) are intermarried
- ▶ **Individual intermarriage rate is 33%** because one of the three Jewish individuals is intermarried

Table 2.4. Individual marital status by age (includes partners who live together)

	All Jewish adults (%)	Ages 18-34 (%)	Ages 35-49 (%)	Ages 50-64 (%)	Ages 65-74 (%)	Ages 75+ (%)
Married/partnered Jewish adults	66	51	82	71	68	59
Of married/partnered:						
Inmarried	54	52	45	52	59	89
Intermarried	46	48	55	48	41	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

## Jewish Denominations

Denominational affiliation has historically been one of the primary indicators of Jewish identity and practice. In Greater Portland, however, the largest denominational grouping, representing 52% of Jewish adults, is those who do not identify with any particular denomination. The share in this category is considerably higher than the national average (Table 2.5).<sup>14</sup> Of Jewish adults who do identify with a denomination, the Reform movement claims the largest share, 23%, though this is smaller than the national average. Greater Portland also has a smaller-than-average share of Orthodox Jews (comprising 5% of Jewish adults in the area compared to 9% nationally). Another 8% of Jewish adults identify as Conservative, and 12% identify with another denomination.

Table 2.5. Denomination of Jewish adults in Greater Portland and the United States

	Greater Portland 2022 (%)	US Jews 2020 (%)
Orthodox	5	9
Conservative	8	17
Reform	23	37
Other denomination	12	4
Traditional	4	n/a
Reconstructionist	3	n/a
Humanist	2	n/a
Renewal	1	n/a
Sephardic	1	n/a
Other	1	n/a
No denomination	52	32

## Subpopulations

Seventy-nine percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland identify as Ashkenazi (i.e., predominantly of Eastern or Central European descent; Table 2.6). Nine percent of Jewish adults have Sephardi heritage (i.e., descended from Spanish or Portuguese Jews), and 1% identify as Mizrahi (i.e., of Middle Eastern Jewish ancestry, such as Persian, Iraqi, or Yemenite Jews). Less than 1% percent identify with some other ancestry, and the remainder identify with either no particular Jewish ethnicity (8%) or say they do not know their Jewish ethnicity (9%).



**Table 2.6. Jewish ethnicity**

	Jewish adults (%)	Jewish households (%)
Ashkenazi	79	78
Sephardi	9	8
Mizrachi	1	1
Other	<1	1
None	8	14
Don't know	9	10

Note: Totals may add up to more than 100% because some respondents or their households identify with multiple categories.

Seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland identify as LGBTQ+, and 11% of Jewish households include someone, Jewish or not Jewish, who is LGBTQ+ (Table 2.7). Seven percent of Jewish adults are Israeli citizens, while 7% of Jewish households include an Israeli citizen. Additionally, 7% of adults were raised in a Russian-speaking home (but not necessarily in Russia or the former Soviet Union).

**Table 2.7. Demographic subgroups**

	Jewish adults (%)	Jewish households (%)
LGBTQ+	7	11
Israeli citizens	7	7
Russian-speaking	7	7

Eighty-seven percent of Jewish individuals in Greater Portland identify solely as white and non-Hispanic (Table 2.8). However, although 13% of Jewish individuals identify with a racial identity other than white (i.e., Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or another racial origin) or as Hispanic, only 7% identify as a Person of Color. Notably, the proportion of Jewish individuals who identify with a racial identity other than white is higher among children (16%) than adults (4%), indicating that the Jewish community may be becoming more diverse racially.

**Table 2.8. Race and ethnicity**

	All individuals in Jewish households (%)	Jewish individuals (%)	Jewish adults (%)	Jewish children (%)
Self-identifies as Person of Color	6	7	4	16
White only, non-Hispanic	86	87	90	74
White only, Hispanic	2	2	2	3
Non-white, non-Hispanic	9	8	5	19
Non-white, Hispanic	3	3	3	3

## Geographic Distribution

The Jewish community of Greater Portland can be divided by regions based on county and ZIP code (Figure 2.2). A detailed breakdown of how respondents were classified into regions can be found in the methodological appendix (Appendix A).

Figure 2.2a. Geographic distribution of the Greater Portland Jewish community, full view of region (1 dot = 50 households)

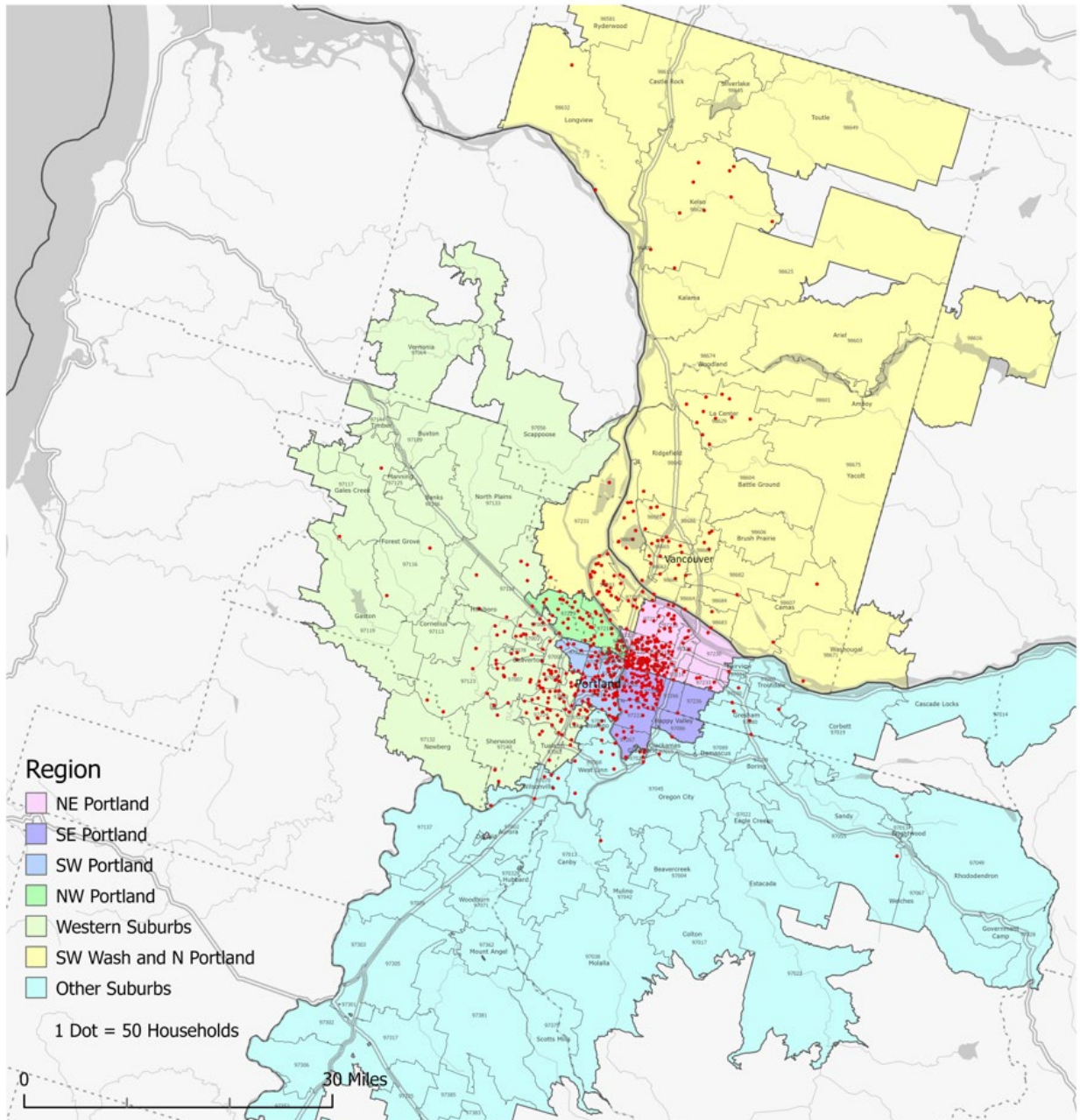
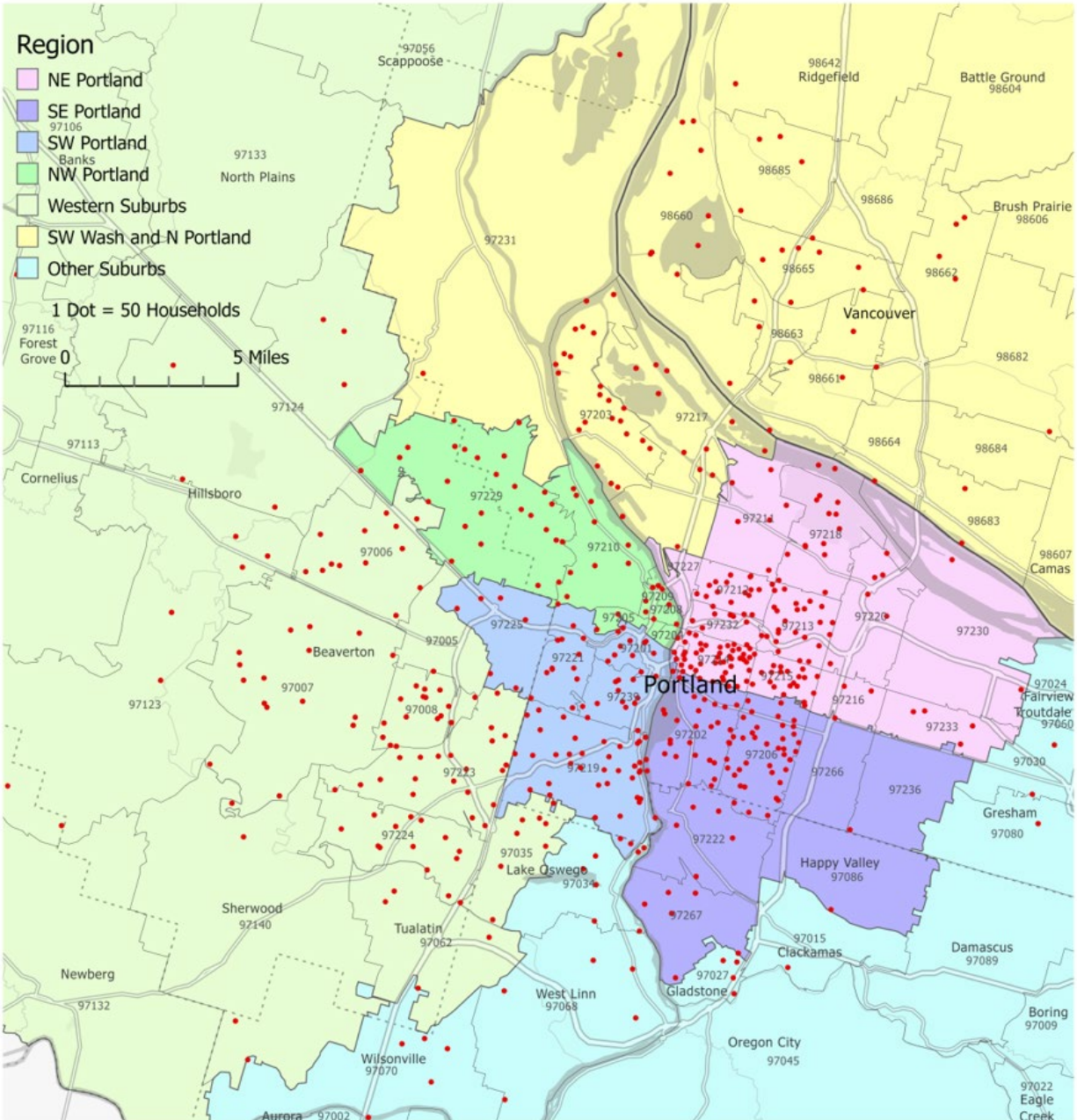


Figure 2.2b. Geographic distribution of the Greater Portland Jewish community, zoomed in view (1 dot = 50 households)



About one quarter (24%) of Jewish households are in Northeast Portland, and 19% are in the Western Suburbs (Table 2.9). Southwestern Washington and North Portland are home to 17% of Jewish households, and similar shares live in Southeast (14%) and Southwest (13%) Portland. Eight percent of Jewish households are in Northwest Portland, and the remaining 5% are in the Other Suburbs.

Table 2.9. Distribution of Jewish households across geographic regions

	Jewish households (%)
NE Portland	24
SE Portland	14
SW Portland	13
NW Portland	8
Western Suburbs	19
SW Wash and N Portland	17
Other Suburbs	5
Total	100

*The highest concentration of [organized] Jewish life is in SW Portland. It seems like such a pleasant surprise to meet other Jewish families in NE Portland. It would be nice to have convenient ways, outside of synagogue, to meet Jewish families who live nearby. – female, 35, Northeast Portland*

There are also differences in the geographic distribution of the population by age (Table 2.10). The largest share of children, 27%, reside in the Western Suburbs, which is also home to the largest proportion (36%) of Jewish adults ages 65-74. Between one quarter and one third of Jewish children and adults in all age groups younger than 65 live in Northeast Portland, compared to 15% of Jewish adults ages 65-74 and older and 7% of Jewish adults ages 75 and older.

Table 2.10. Age distribution of Jewish individuals by geographic regions

	All Jewish individuals (%)	Ages 0-17 (%)	Ages 18-34 (%)	Ages 35-49 (%)	Ages 50-64 (%)	Ages 65-74 (%)	Ages 75+ (%)
NE Portland	23	23	26	32	26	15	7
SE Portland	13	12	15	10	18	7	20
SW Portland	14	21	16	8	10	15	8
NW Portland	8	6	5	9	8	10	9
Western Suburbs	23	27	18	18	21	36	25
SW Wash and N Portland	13	8	10	20	13	10	21
Other Suburbs	6	3	9	4	5	7	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

## Length of Residence and Mobility

Many Jewish adults in Greater Portland have longstanding ties to the area. Nearly one quarter (23%) were raised in the area, including 13% who have lived in the area for their entire lives, other than for college and/or graduate studies. Another two thirds of Jewish adults were raised elsewhere in the United States, and 10% were raised in another country.

Nearly half of Jewish adults (49%) in Greater Portland have lived in the area for 20 years or longer, and another 17% have lived in the area between 10-19 years (Table 2.11). However, there are also many newcomers; about one third of Jewish adults have moved to Greater Portland within the past decade, including 15% who have resided in the area for fewer than five years.



Table 2.11. Length of residence

	All Jewish adults (%)
0-4 years	15
5-9 years	19
10-19 years	17
20+ years	49
Total	100

About half of Jewish adults ages 18-34 (54%) and 35-49 (47%) moved to Greater Portland within the past decade (Table 2.12). By contrast, just 15-17% of Jewish adults ages 50 and older are relative newcomers to the area. New arrivals of the past decade comprise 62% of the Jewish adult population of Southwestern Washington and North Portland, compared to 16% in the Other Suburbs (Table 2.13).

Table 2.12. Age of Jewish adults by length of residence

	Ages 18-34 (%)	Ages 35-49 (%)	Ages 50-64 (%)	Ages 65-74 (%)	Ages 75+ (%)
0-9 years	54	47	16	17	15
10-19 years	16	23	21	10	5
20+ years	30	30	63	73	80
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2.13. Geography of Jewish adults by length of residence

	NE Portland (%)	SE Portland (%)	SW Portland (%)	NW Portland (%)	Western Suburbs (%)	SW Wash and N Portland (%)	Other Suburbs (%)
0-9 years	26	35	31	34	33	62	16
10-19 years	31	12	15	12	17	6	9
20+ years	43	53	54	54	50	32	75
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Nine percent of Jewish adults plan to move away from Greater Portland in the next two years. Of those planning a move, nearly half are relocating because of weather or for a job or school (Table 2.14). The cost of living was cited by 40% of those planning to leave Greater Portland, and the quality of Jewish life was cited by 28%.

Table 2.14. Primary reasons for planned relocation

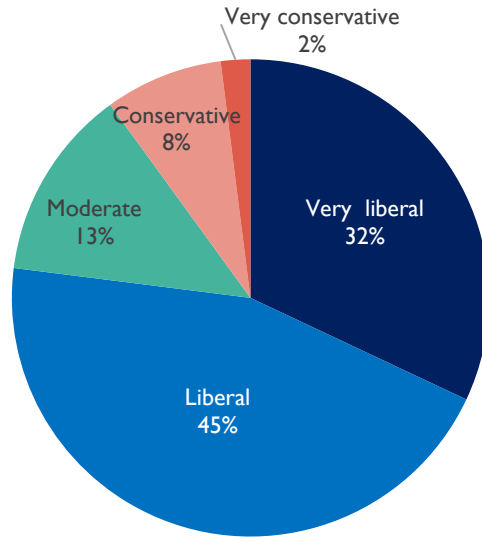
	Jewish adults considering leaving (%)
Weather/climate	47
For a job, career, or school	45
Cost of living	40
To be close to family	30
Quality of Jewish life	28
Other	32

Note: Totals add up to more than 100% because some respondents or their households identify with multiple categories.

## Political Views

The majority of Jewish adults in Greater Portland described their political viewpoints as “very liberal” (32%) or “liberal” (45%; Figure 2.3). Thirteen percent identified as “moderate,” 8% as “conservative,” and 2% reported being “very conservative.”<sup>15</sup>

Figure 2.3. Political leanings of Jewish adults in Greater Portland



*As everywhere else, [politically] liberal and conservative Jews are extremely divided groups in Portland...We are the same tribe and should be united. — female, 65, Southwest Portland*



# CHAPTER 3. PATTERNS OF JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

## Chapter Highlights

Members of the Jewish community of Greater Portland exhibit a variety of types of Jewish identification and means of engagement in Jewish life. Examining the ways that Jewish adults not only view, but also enact their Jewish identities is necessary to understand the population and the ways in which Jewish life in the region can be enhanced. This chapter introduces and discusses an “Index of Jewish Engagement,” created uniquely for the Greater Portland Jewish community.

In this chapter, we recommend that readers focus on the behaviors and attitudes typical of each engagement group. Later chapters and Appendix C will provide details regarding how these groups differ across various survey items. One difference between the groups, however, merits special attention here. The largest engagement group, representing 32% of Jewish adults in Greater Portland, has at most only periodic engagement with Jewish organizations. Members of this group may nevertheless participate in a wide variety of Jewish activities on their own or with close friends and family. The second-largest group, however, representing 28% of Jewish adults in the region, has virtually no contact with Jewish organizations and engages in few Jewish activities on their own. Members of the other three engagement groups, which together represent 40% of Jewish adults in Greater Portland, are far more commonly present in Jewish communal spaces, but not necessarily in the same ways. This dynamic, which has profound effects on the Greater Portland Jewish community, is explored throughout this report.

- The Index of Jewish Engagement focuses on Jewish behaviors—the ways in which individuals occupy and involve themselves in Jewish life in Greater Portland—not on self-identification.
- Engagement groups include people of all ages and denominational identities.
- Demographic characteristics are related to membership in these five engagement groups.
- The Index can be used to identify opportunities to improve communal planning based on people’s different needs and interests.
- Five distinct patterns of behavior emerge from the data.
  - Minimally Involved (28% of Jewish adults): Characterized by minimal participation in Jewish life.
  - Cultural (32% of Jewish adults): Characterized by having high levels of participation in Jewish cultural activities, but little activity with Jewish organizations.
  - Ritual (12% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high levels of participation in Jewish ritual and religious activities.
  - Communal (17% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high rates of synagogue membership and participation in other Jewish organizations.
  - Immersed (11% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high involvement in all dimensions of Jewish life.

## Index of Jewish Engagement

One of the purposes of the Index of Jewish Engagement is to demonstrate the extent and types of participation in Jewish life in Greater Portland. Throughout the remainder of this report, we present data about individual measures of Jewish engagement, such as synagogue membership, program participation, and altruistic behaviors. One subgroup of the population, such as parents with children, may have high levels of participation in one type of Jewish behavior (e.g., lighting Shabbat candles) but lower participation in another (e.g., donating to Jewish organizations), and another subgroup, such as young adults, may have the opposite pattern. By identifying the patterns that develop around measures of Jewish engagement, we can better understand the unique ways Jewish individuals express their Jewish identities and the potential constituencies that exist for different types of Jewish connections.

In Greater Portland, we identified five predominant categories of Jewish engagement that describe distinct patterns of participation in Jewish life. This chapter explains how we created these categories and describes the most prevalent Jewish behaviors and attitudes that characterize each grouping.

## Background: Classifications of Jewish Engagement

The best-known system for categorizing Jewish identity is denominational affiliation. In the past, Jewish denominational categories closely correlated with measures of Jewish engagement, including behavior and attitudes. However, because these labels are self-assigned, their meaning varies from one individual to another. In addition, an increasing number of Jews do not affiliate with any particular denomination—including, as noted in Chapter 2, 52% of Jewish adults in Greater Portland. Thus, denominational labels are limited in their utility to convey descriptions of behavior and attitudes.

## Measures of Jewish Engagement

We specifically designed the Index of Jewish Engagement to identify opportunities for better measurement of engagement for groups with different needs and interests. The Index focuses on behaviors—the ways in which individuals spend their time and involve themselves in Jewish life. Such behaviors are concrete and measurable expressions of Jewish identity. Behaviors, in many cases, correlate with demographic characteristics, backgrounds, and attitudes, but also cut across them. Jewish adults' decisions to take part in activities may reflect the value and meaning they find in these activities, the priority they place on them, the level of skill and resources that enable them to participate, and the opportunities available and known to them.

To develop the Index, we selected a range of Jewish behaviors that were included in the survey instrument. The set of Jewish behaviors used to develop this typology is inclusive of a variety of ways—public and private—that contemporary Jews engage with Jewish life. Some of the activities are located primarily within institutions (e.g., synagogue membership), while others are home-based (e.g., Passover seders). These behaviors are classified into four dimensions of Jewish life: holiday behaviors, ritual behaviors, organizational behaviors, and individual behaviors. The behavioral measures include:

- Holiday behaviors: Holiday celebrations, such as attending or hosting a Passover seder, fasting for Yom Kippur, and lighting Hanukkah candles, are practiced by many US Jews for

religious and other reasons (e.g., social, familial, cultural, and ethnic). In contrast to High Holiday services, these activities can be practiced at home, without institutional affiliation or association.

- Ritual behaviors: Lighting Shabbat candles or having special meals on Shabbat, attending religious services, attending High Holiday services, keeping any kosher rules.
- Organizational behaviors: Belonging to a synagogue, belonging to Jewish organizations, belonging to informal Jewish groups, participating in Jewish programs in the past year, volunteering for Jewish organizations in the past year, donating to Jewish organizations in the past year.
- Individual behaviors: Eating Jewish foods often, studying Jewish texts sometimes or often, reading Jewish publications sometimes or often, engaging with Jewish-focused culture sometimes or often, following news about Israel very closely.

We employed a statistical tool, latent class analysis (LCA), to cluster similar patterns of behavior based on respondents' answers to survey questions. LCA identifies groups of behaviors that "cluster" together by analyzing patterns of responses. The result of the LCA analysis was the identification of five unique patterns of Jewish engagement.

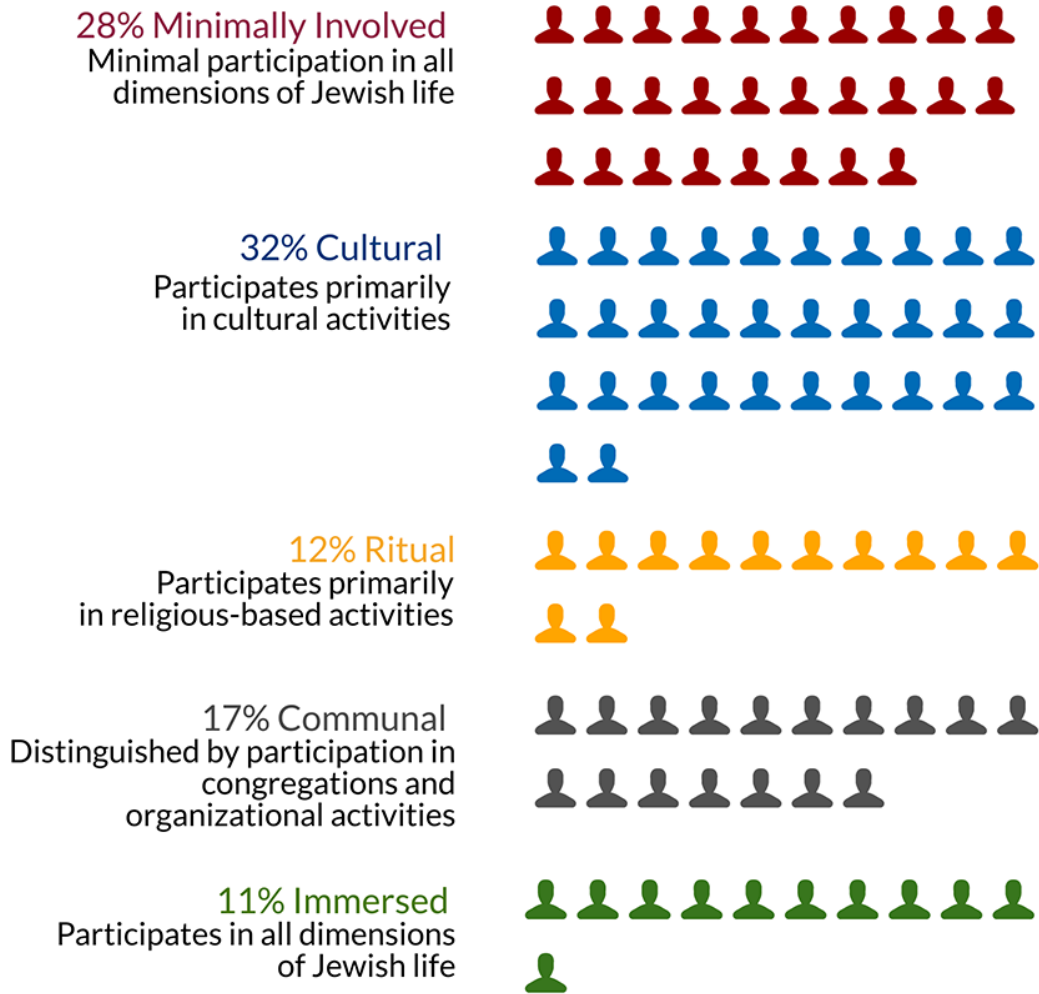
#### **How we developed these categories**

Survey respondents answered questions about their Jewish behaviors; based on their responses, we identified the five primary patterns of behavior that are presented here. Survey respondents were **not** asked to assign themselves to the groups.

The LCA analysis presented here is unique to the Greater Portland Jewish community. Both the set of classifications and their names are derived directly from data collected for this study.

Using LCA, each Jewish adult in the community was classified into one of the five engagement groups according to the pattern that most closely matches the individual's participation in different types of Jewish behaviors. For purposes of this report, the names of the engagement groups will be used to refer to the groups of Jewish adults who most closely adhere to each pattern. The names of the groups are intended to highlight the behaviors that distinguish each group from the others.

Figure 3.1. Jewish engagement



## Jewish Behaviors and Jewish Engagement

The five patterns differ in degree and types of engagement with a broad set of Jewish behaviors. As shown in Table 3.1, the Jewish behaviors across the engagement patterns vary widely, but all patterns include at least some behaviors that represent a connection to Jewish life. Table 3.1 shows the proportion of people in each engagement group that engages in the listed behavior. In this table, the darker the box, the higher the proportion of people that engages in that behavior.

The “**Minimally Involved**” group, comprised of 28% of Greater Portland Jewish adults, marginally engages in Jewish activities, holidays, or institutional Judaism. Their frequent Jewish behaviors include sometimes or often discussing Jewish topics (62%) or eating Jewish foods (39%). Nearly one third of Jewish adults, the largest share in Greater Portland, fall into the “**Cultural**” group. They tend to connect with Judaism primarily through home-based practices and individual behaviors. Half participated in a Passover seder in 2022 and 78% celebrate Hanukkah in a typical year. Their frequent Jewish behaviors include sometimes or often discussing Jewish topics (88%), eating Jewish

foods (77%), and engaging with Jewish-focused culture (65%). The **“Ritual”** group, which consists of 12% of the Jewish adults in Greater Portland, exhibit high participation in religious-based activities. All members of this group attended services at least once in the past year, and 90% attended High Holiday services in 2022.

The remaining Jewish adult population is split between the **“Communal”** group (17%) and the **“Immersed”** group (11%). The Communal group primarily participates in congregational and organizational activities. Half (48%) volunteered for or with a Jewish organization, and 75% donated to a Jewish organization in the past year. The Immersed group engages frequently in all aspects of Jewish life, from celebrating Hanukkah in a typical year (100%) and marking Shabbat weekly (93%) to participating in Jewish organizational programming in the past year (89%). Nearly all members of the group sometimes or often eat Jewish foods (98%), read Jewish publications (98%), and engage with Jewish-focused culture (98%; Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Jewish behaviors

	Minimally Involved	Cultural	Ritual	Communal	Immersed
<b>Holiday Behaviors</b>					
Seder, 2022	9	44	88	86	92
Hanukkah, typical year	35	78	96	97	100
Fast on Yom Kippur, 2022	4	10	42	53	87
<b>Ritual Behaviors</b>					
Mark Shabbat in past year, ever	3	53	84	83	100
Every week/Almost every week	0	8	29	18	93
Services in past year, ever	0	27	100	96	100
Monthly or more	0	0	23	10	84
High Holiday services, 2022	0	0	90	83	99
Kosher at home	0	3	2	6	42
<b>Organization Behaviors</b>					
Congregation member	0	7	47	57	85
Informal group member	0	6	15	25	45
Participate in program, past year	0	22	40	69	89
Volunteer for Jewish org.	0	6	19	48	68
Donated to Jewish org.	3	39	34	75	97
<b>Individual Behaviors</b>					
Study Jewish texts (sometimes/often)	0	12	17	41	95
Eat Jewish foods (sometimes/often)	39	77	61	90	98
Read Jewish publications (sometimes/often)	0	46	13	96	98
Discuss Jewish topics (sometimes/often)	62	88	89	99	100
Engage with Jewish-focused culture (sometimes/often)	34	65	29	94	98
Follow news about Israel (somewhat/very closely)	20	61	25	77	87

Legend	0-19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-100%
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## Demographics and Jewish Engagement

Age is correlated to Jewish engagement. While about one third of Jewish adults (31%) in Greater Portland are younger than age 35, nearly half of the Ritual and Immersed engagement groups are young adults (Table 3.2).



Table 3.2. Age by Jewish engagement

	18-34	35-49	50-64	65-74	75 +	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	31	23	22	15	9	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>						
Minimally Involved	29	26	14	13	17	100
Cultural	26	18	27	18	11	100
Ritual	48	26	16	6	4	100
Communal	17	30	31	18	5	100
Immersed	46	13	19	17	4	100

As illustrated in Table 3.3, marital status is also related to Jewish engagement. Inmarried adults make up the majority (71%) of the Immersed group, while intermarried adults comprise 6% of the group. Intermarried adults make up half (49%) of the Minimally Involved group. There is not a strong relationship between Jewish engagement group and having a minor child at home.

Table 3.3. Household structure by Jewish engagement

	Inmarried	Intermarried	Not married	Total	Parent
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	35	30	35	100	22
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	17	49	35	100	13
Cultural	33	30	36	100	20
Ritual	31	20	49	100	26
Communal	54	18	28	100	31
Immersed	71	6	23	100	40

Patterns of Jewish engagement vary across the regions of Greater Portland (Table 3.4). Jewish adults in Northeast Portland make up large portions of the Cultural (28%), Ritual (33%), and Communal (29%) groups, while only representing a small share (9%) in the Immersed group. On the other hand, those in the Western Suburbs region represent 40% of the Immersed group, despite comprising 22% of all Jewish adults in Greater Portland.

Table 3.4. Region by Jewish engagement

	NE Portland	SE Portland	SW Portland	NW Portland	Western Suburbs	SW Wash and N Portland	Other Suburbs	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	23	13	12	8	22	15	7	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>								
Minimally Involved	15	21	5	5	22	27	5	100
Cultural	28	12	11	7	21	11	11	100
Ritual	33	15	22	10	12	6	3	100
Communal	29	10	13	10	24	7	6	100
Immersed	9	3	25	12	40	5	6	100

As seen in Table 3.5, Jewish adults in Greater Portland tend to identify as liberal (46%) or very liberal (32%). The Minimally Involved, Cultural, and Ritual groups skew more liberal than the Immersed group, which has the highest shares of conservatives (36%). While the Communal group is also mostly comprised of Jewish adults who identify as liberal or very liberal (35% and 34% respectively), they have a significant share of moderates (19%) as well.

**Table 3.5. Political views by Jewish engagement**

	Very liberal	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Very conservative	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	32	46	13	8	2	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>						
Minimally Involved	33	55	7	2	3	100
Cultural	32	49	12	5	3	100
Ritual	30	53	13	3	< 1	100
Communal	34	35	19	8	3	100
Immersed	23	15	21	36	4	100

## Jewish Background and Jewish Engagement

The following tables describe the Jewish identity and Jewish backgrounds of those in each Jewish engagement category. Jewish denomination is related to Jewish engagement but is not identical (Table 3.6). Adults of nearly all denominations are represented in each of the engagement groups, with the exception that no Orthodox Jews are in the Minimally Involved or Ritual groups. Conservative Jews comprise a larger share of the Immersed (21%) and Communal (13%) groups than is their share of the population (8%). Reform Jews are the largest segment of the Ritual (39%) and Communal (31%) groups. Those without a denomination make up three quarters (77%) of the Minimally Involved group and 61% of the Cultural group, but also represent significant proportions of each of the other groups as well.

**Table 3.6. Jewish engagement by denomination**

	Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Other denom.	No denom.	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	5	8	23	12	52	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>						
Minimally Involved	0	7	12	4	77	100
Cultural	1	4	26	8	61	100
Ritual	0	7	39	20	34	100
Communal	7	13	31	23	26	100
Immersed	37	21	10	17	16	100

Although two thirds of Jewish adults in Greater Portland were raised by two Jewish parents, about half of the Minimally Involved engagement group were (Table 3.7). Notably, the Immersed group has the largest share of those who became Jewish later in life (i.e., raised by no Jewish parents; 7%).

Table 3.7. Jewish parentage by Jewish engagement

	No Jewish parents (converted)	One Jewish parent	Two Jewish parents	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	4	30	66	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>				
Minimally Involved	1	48	51	100
Cultural	4	32	65	100
Ritual	6	28	66	100
Communal	3	20	78	100
Immersed	7	20	72	100

Childhood Jewish education is correlated to Jewish engagement in adulthood. Larger shares of those in the Ritual, Communal, and Immersed groups attended Jewish overnight and day camps as children than did those in the Minimally Involved or Cultural groups (Table 3.8). Two to three times as many Jewish adults in the Immersed group attended Jewish day school as adults in any other engagement group.

Table 3.8. Childhood Jewish education by Jewish engagement

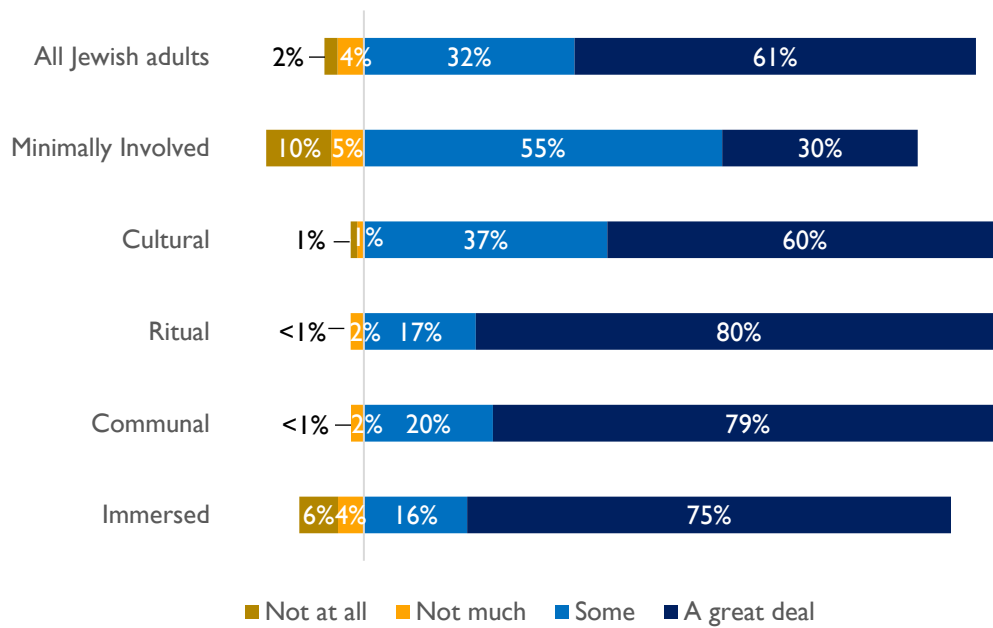
	Any childhood Jewish education	Jewish supplementary school	Jewish overnight camp	Jewish youth group	Jewish day camp	Jewish day school	Peer Israel trip
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	72	57	33	30	21	16	14
<b>Jewish engagement</b>							
Minimally Involved	58	45	15	17	5	10	9
Cultural	67	55	32	29	16	10	13
Ritual	75	62	43	33	28	18	21
Communal	76	57	40	39	32	18	17
Immersed	81	46	43	23	45	39	19

*There are more of us than we think, but we are not organized. I don't join groups or take advantage of opportunities to connect with other Jews because I'm self-conscious about my lack of knowledge around Jewish religion and culture. – female, 44, Northeast Portland*

## Attitudes about Meaning of Judaism and Jewish Engagement

Figure 3.2 illustrates that for the majority of Jewish adults in Greater Portland, being Jewish is a matter of culture. Ten percent of the Minimally Involved group feel that being Jewish is “not at all” a matter of culture, more than any other engagement group.

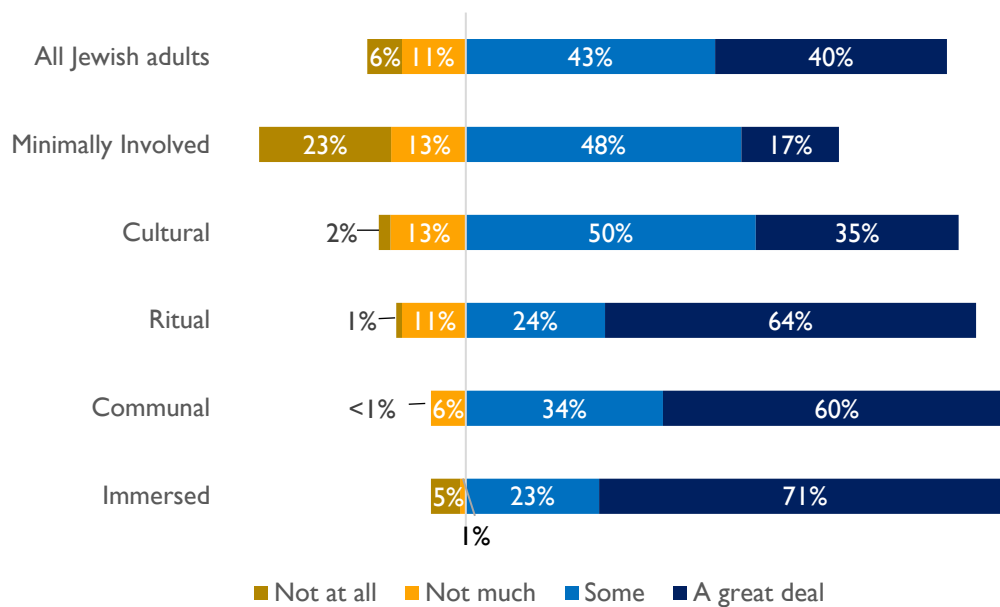
Figure 3.2. Being Jewish as a matter of culture\*



*I am interested in Jewish activities focused on welcoming those of us who identify as culturally Jewish but didn't grow up with Jewish education. – female, 33, Northeast Portland*

Figure 3.3 shows less consensus across engagement groups when it comes to whether being Jewish is a matter of community. One quarter of the Minimally Involved (23%) group believes that being Jewish is “not at all” a matter of community, compared to few of the remaining Jewish adults in Greater Portland.

Figure 3.3. Being Jewish as a matter of community\*



Although there are no significant differences between engagement groups on whether being Jewish is a matter of ethnicity (Figure 3.4), there is greater variability between groups on whether being Jewish is a matter of religion (Figure 3.5). Half of the Minimally Involved group state that being Jewish is either “not at all” (22%) or “not much” (29%) a matter of religion, compared to a minority of the Immersed group (2% and 11% percent, respectively).

Figure 3.4. Being Jewish as a matter of ethnicity

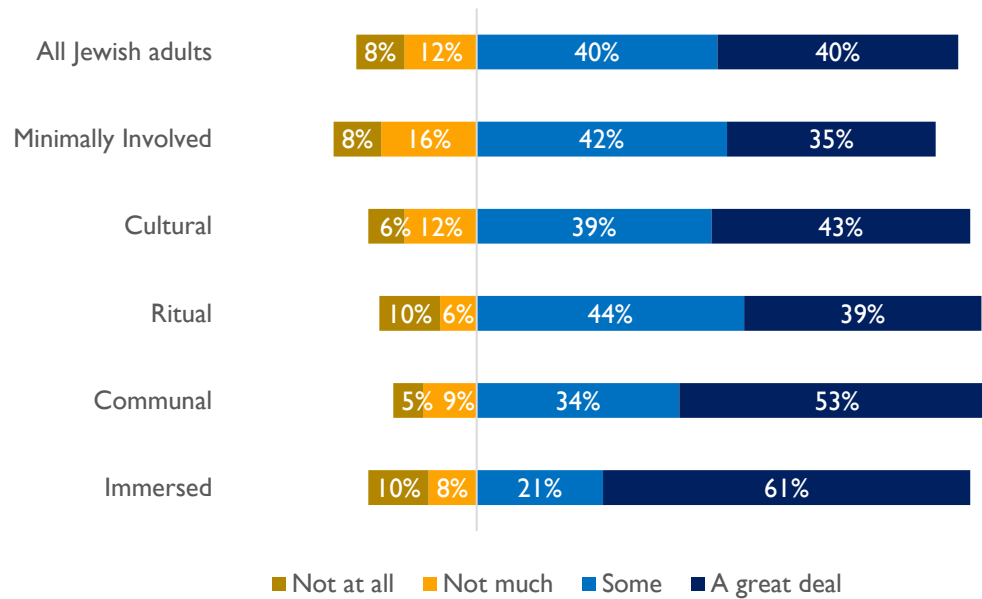
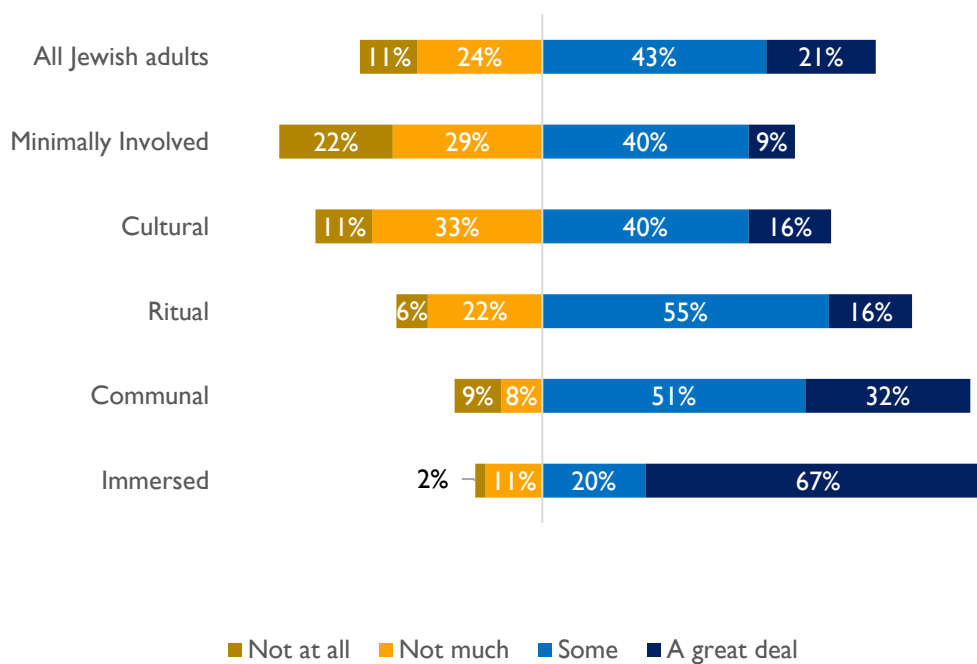
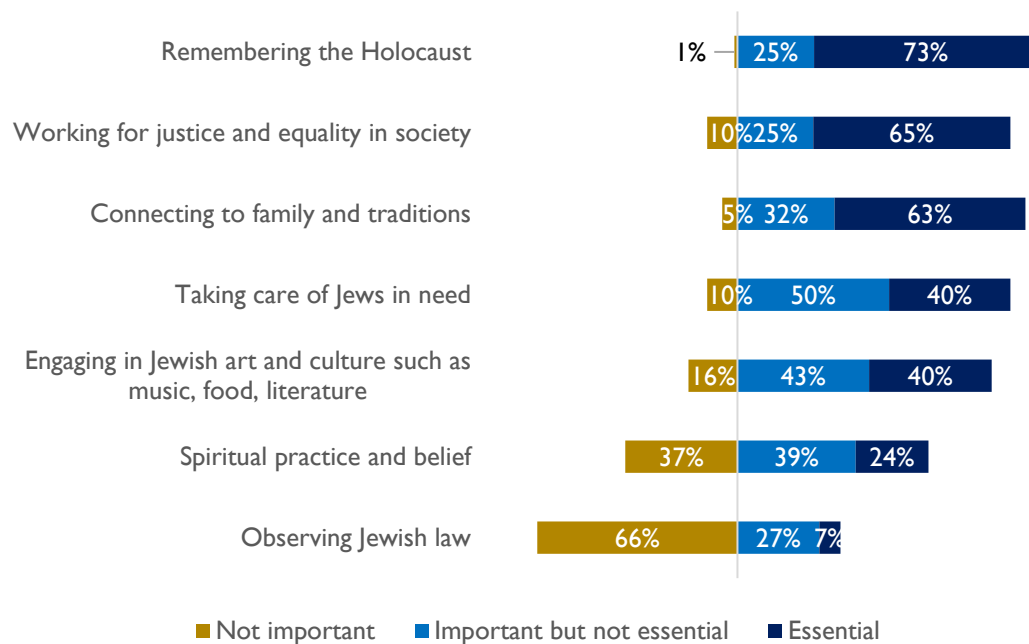


Figure 3.5. Being Jewish as a matter of religion\*



The majority of Jewish adults in Greater Portland believe that remembering the Holocaust, working for justice and equality in society, and connecting to family and traditions are essential to being Jewish (Figure 3.6). Although fewer than half believe that taking care of Jews in need, engaging in Jewish art and culture such as music, food, and literature, or spiritual practice and belief are essential to being Jewish, majorities believe each is at least important. Only 34% of Jewish adults believe that observing Jewish law is essential or important to being Jewish.

**Figure 3.6. Essential to being Jewish (% of Jewish adults)**



All engagement groups are similar in the degree to which their members believe remembering the Holocaust and working for justice and equality are essential to being Jewish (Figure 3.7). There is less consensus, however, on other aspects of being Jewish (Figure 3.8). Family and traditions are essential to being Jewish to 36% of the Minimally Involved group and half (53%) of the Cultural group, compared to 82% of the Communal group, 83% of the Ritual group, and 95% of the Immersed group. Taking care of Jews in need is essential to being Jewish to 19% of the Minimally Involved group, but three quarters (74%) of the Immersed group.

Spiritual practice and belief is essential to being Jewish to 58% of the Immersed group and 35% of the Communal group, but smaller shares of the remaining engagement groups (Figure 3.9). Illustrating that religious observance is not synonymous with being part of the Immersed group, only one third of the Immersed group (32%) believe that observing Jewish law is essential to being Jewish. However, less than 10% of each of the other engagement groups believe observing Jewish law is essential to being Jewish.



Figure 3.7. Justice and equality and remembering the Holocaust as essential to being Jewish

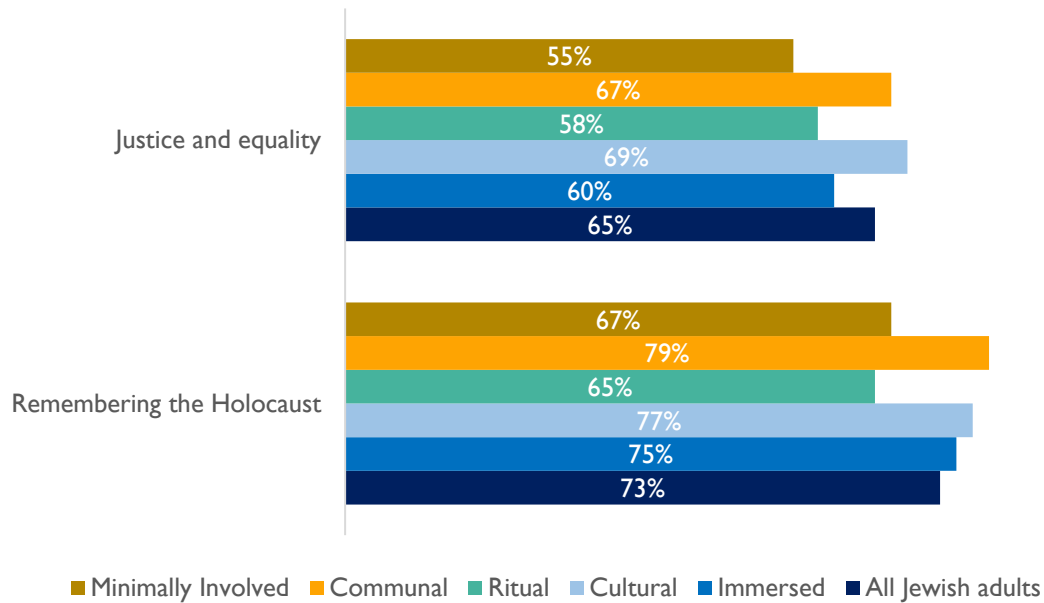


Figure 3.8. Taking care of Jews in need, art and culture, and family and traditions as essential to being Jewish\*

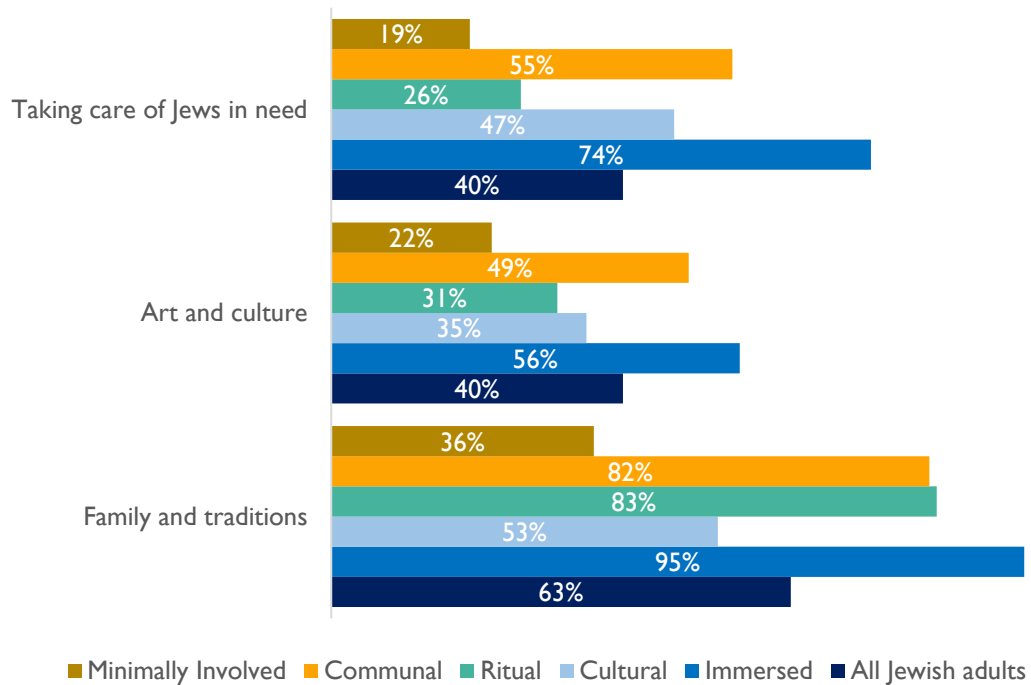
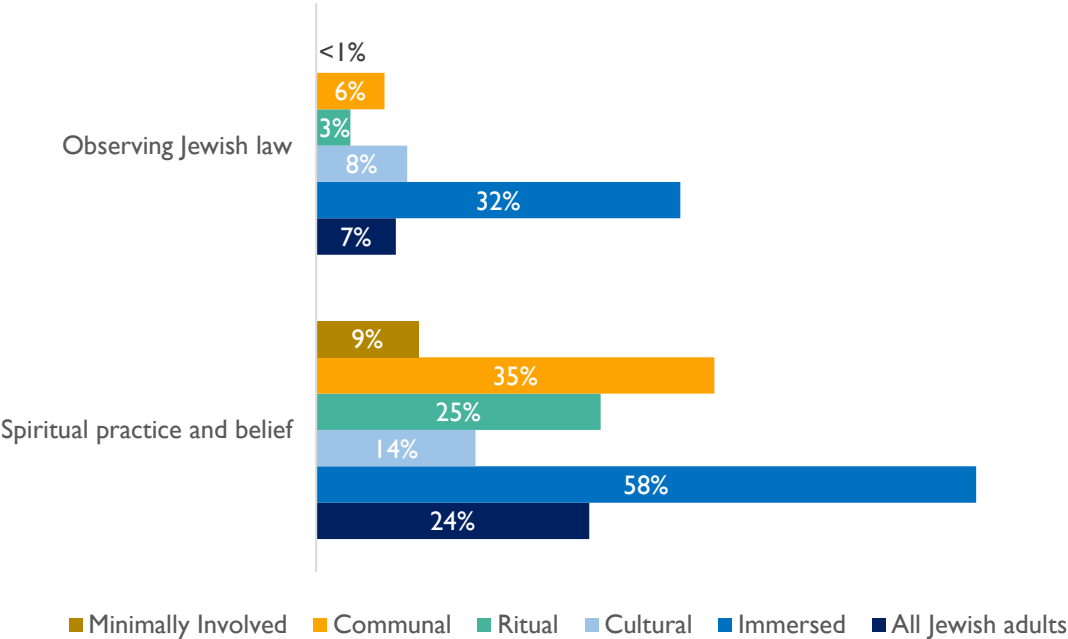


Figure 3.9 Observing Jewish law and spiritual practice and belief as essential to being Jewish\*



# CHAPTER 4. JEWISH CHILDREN

## Chapter Highlights

This chapter focuses on some of the choices parents make about how to raise their children and how they take advantage—or not—of Jewish educational opportunities available in Greater Portland. The chapter describes the landscape of and degree of participation in Greater Portland’s educational offerings, including Jewish preschools; formal Jewish education programs, both part-time and full-time; and informal educational programs, including camp and youth groups.

- Among the 15,300 children living in Jewish households in the Greater Portland Jewish community, 11,500 (75%) are being raised Jewish, either exclusively or with another religion.
- Among the 3,800 children not being raised Jewish, 1,800 are being raised in no religion, 300 are being raised exclusively in another religion, and 1,700 have parents who either have not yet determined how they will be raised or did not provide enough information to assess their Jewish identities.
- Nearly all children (97%) of two Jewish parents in Greater Portland are being raised Jewish. The remaining children of two Jewish parents are being raised in no religion or in another religion.
- Among children of intermarried parents in the Greater Portland Jewish community, 75% are being raised Jewish in some way.
- Twelve percent of Jewish children not yet enrolled in kindergarten were enrolled in a Jewish preschool or early childhood program during the 2022-23 school year.
- Seventeen percent of Jewish students in grades K-12 were enrolled in some form of Jewish school during the 2022-23 school year. This share includes 4% in a Jewish day school and 13% in a part-time school. Ten percent of Jewish students in grades K-12 took private classes or were tutored in Jewish topics.
- Thirty-six percent of Jewish K-12 students attended a Jewish summer camp as a camper or staff member in 2022. This share includes 16% who attended a day camp and 21% who attended an overnight camp. Thirty-three percent of Jewish K-12 students attended a non-Jewish camp of either variety.
- Thirty-five percent of age-eligible Jewish children have celebrated a bar, bat, or b’ mitzvah ceremony, and another 9% plan to celebrate in the future. Of the children who have celebrated a bar, bat, or b’ mitzvah, 74% held a service through a synagogue, 6% held a service or activity without a synagogue but with a rabbi, 6% held a service or activity with neither a synagogue nor a rabbi, and 14% did not hold a service or activity.
- Nineteen percent of households in Greater Portland with age-eligible children receive books from PJ Library or PJ Our Way.

## Children in Jewish Households

Of the 15,300 children living in Jewish households in the Greater Portland Jewish community, there are 11,500 (75% of all children) who are Jewish in some way (Table 4.1). These children are considered by their parents to be exclusively Jewish (8,900, or 58% of all children) or Jewish and another religion (2,600, or 17% of all children).

The remaining 3,800 children who are not considered Jewish by their parents either have no religion (12% of all children), are being raised in another religion (2% of all children), or their parents have not determined yet how they will be raised or did not provide enough information to assess their Jewish identities (11% of all children).

**Table 4.1. Children in Jewish households**

	Number	All children (%)
<b>Jewish children</b>	<b>11,500</b>	<b>75%</b>
Jewish	8,900	58%
Jewish and another religion	2,600	17%
<b>Not Jewish</b>	<b>3,800</b>	<b>26%</b>
No religion	1,800	12%
Another religion	300	2%
Undetermined	1,700	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,300</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* The remainder of the chapter does not include the children with undetermined Jewish identity in analysis.

The largest share of Jewish children (41%) are between the ages of 13-17 (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2. Ages of Jewish children**

	All Jewish children (%)
0-5	24
6-12	35
13-17	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Children whose ages are unknown are excluded from the analysis.

Table 4.3 shows the proportion of children in Greater Portland Jewish households whose parents consider them to be Jewish, broken down by engagement group, region, and marital status. Nearly all children of inmarried parents and single parents are considered Jewish, compared to three quarters of children of intermarried parents.

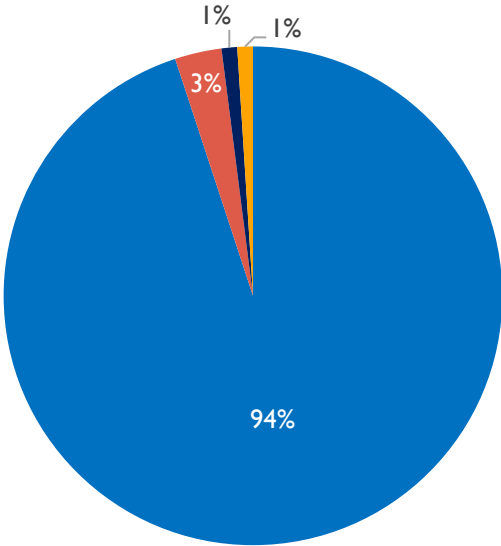
Table 4.3. Jewish children by household characteristics, among children with known identities

	Considered Jewish (%)
Children in Jewish households	84
<b>Engagement group</b>	
Minimally Involved	--
Cultural	87
Ritual	97
Communal	93
Immersed	99
<b>Region</b>	
NE Portland	85
SE Portland	86
SW Portland	99
NW Portland	--
Western Suburbs	89
SW Wash and N Portland	--
Other Suburbs	--
<b>Marital status</b>	
Inmarried	97
Intermarried	75
Not married	91

Among all Jewish children, 37% have inmarried parents, 50% have intermarried parents, and 13% have single parents.

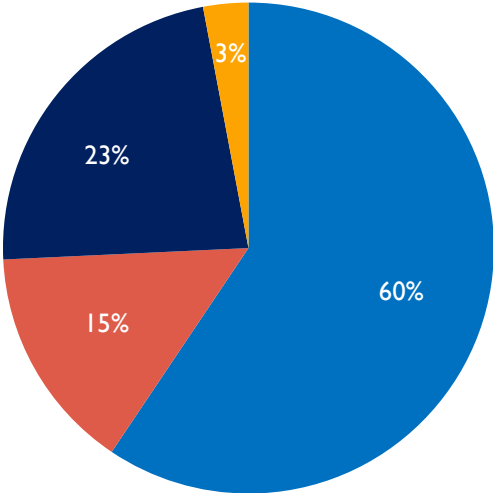
Among children of inmarried parents, 94% of them are Jewish alone, and 3% are Jewish and another religion (Figure 4.1). Among children of intermarried parents, 60% are Jewish alone, and 15% are Jewish and another religion (Figure 4.2). Twenty-three percent of children with intermarried parents have no religion. Nationally, 69% of the children of intermarried parents are being raised Jewish in some way, similar to Greater Portland.<sup>16</sup> Among children of Jewish single parents, 68% are Jewish alone, and 22% are Jewish and another religion (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.1. Children of inmarried parents



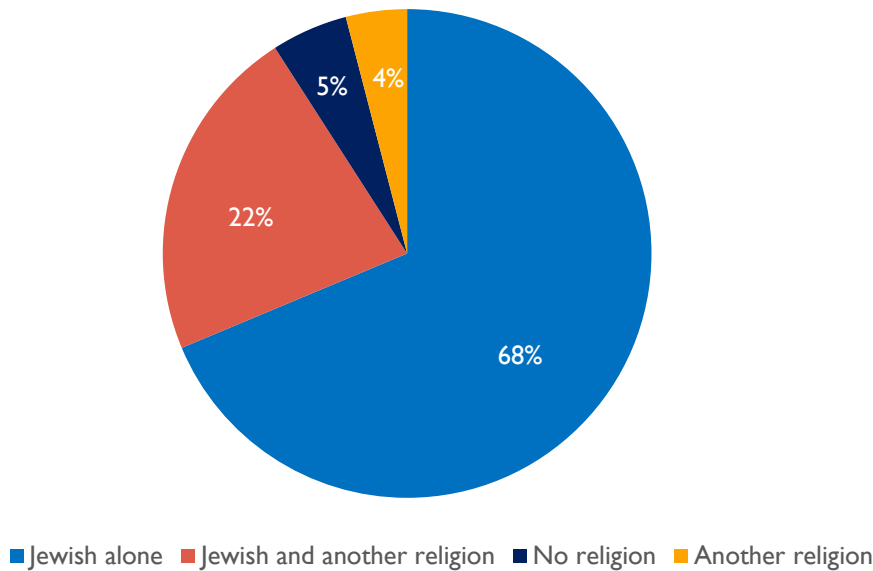
■ Jewish alone ■ Jewish + another religion ■ No religion ■ Another religion

Figure 4.2. Children of intermarried parents



■ Jewish alone ■ Jewish and another religion ■ No religion ■ Another religion

Figure 4.3. Children of single parents



## Jewish Schooling

Jewish education occurs in the context of Jewish preschools; formal classroom settings, such as day schools and part-time supplementary schools; and informal settings, including camps, youth groups, and peer trips to Israel.

Twelve percent of preschool-aged Jewish children were enrolled in Jewish early childhood programs during the 2022-23 school year.

*Vancouver Chabad has a fantastic preschool! – female, 42, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

*I am very pleased with my grandchildren's preschool at Portland Jewish Academy. – female, Southwest Portland*

Parents of preschool-aged children who were not enrolled in a Jewish early childhood program were asked about reasons why their preschool-aged children did not attend a Jewish early childhood program. Over half (56%) indicated that their children did not attend because there was no program in a convenient location or with adequate transportation (Table 4.4). Twenty-three percent of age-eligible households indicated a lack of interest, 20% do not believe available programs are a good fit for their preschool-aged children, and 17% indicated that the hours do not work with their schedule. Smaller proportions cited cost (9%), lack of spaces available (2%), concern about Jewish content and values (1%), or other reasons (3%). Notably, no one cited dissatisfaction with the quality of Jewish preschools and early childhood programs in Greater Portland.



**Table 4.4. Reasons for not enrolling in Jewish early childhood programs**

	Age-eligible households (%)
Location or transportation	56
Lack of interest	23
No good fit for child	20
Schedule	17
Cost	9
No spaces available	2
Jewish content and values	1
Not satisfied with quality	0
Other	3

Note: Totals add up to more than 100% because some respondents selected more than one reason.

Unlike the tables and figures earlier in this chapter, which focused only on children who are not yet age 18, analysis of K-12 Jewish education includes 18- and 19-year-old children who are still in high school. Because the vast majority of children in Jewish education are being raised Jewish in some way, the analysis below is restricted to those children.

Of Jewish children in grades K-12 during the 2022-23 school year, 17% were enrolled in a formal Jewish school (Table 4.5a). Part-time Jewish schools were attended by 13% of age-eligible Jewish children, and another 4% were enrolled in a full-time Jewish day school. Ten percent of Jewish K-12 students took private classes or were tutored in Jewish topics. Among Jewish students in grades 6-12, 9% participated in a Jewish youth group. In total, 24% of K-12 Jewish children participated in one or more of these forms of Jewish education during the 2022-23 school year.

**Table 4.5a. Enrollment in K-12 Jewish education, 2022-23**

	Jewish children in K-12 (%)
Formal Jewish schooling	17
Part-time school	13
Full-time school	4
Other Jewish programs	18
Private classes or tutoring	10
Jewish youth group (grades 6-12)	9
Any Jewish education	24

When broken down by other forms of education, 81% of Jewish children in grades K-12 were enrolled in public school during the 2022-23 school year (Table 4.5b). Nine percent were enrolled in a non-Jewish private school, 2% were enrolled in a charter school, and 4% were enrolled in some other type of school.

**Table 4.5b. Full-time K-12 Jewish education, 2022-23**

	Jewish children in K-12 (%)
Public school	81
Non-Jewish private school	9
Jewish day school	4
Charter school	2
Other type of school	4
Total	100

Parents of K-12 students whose children were not enrolled in a Jewish day school were asked about reasons why their children did not attend a Jewish day school. Forty percent indicated that enrolling

their children in a Jewish day school is not important to them (Table 4.6). Thirty-nine percent indicated cost as a reason for not enrolling their age-eligible children, 39% indicated they prefer a more diverse learning environment, and 33% indicated there was no Jewish day school in a convenient location or with adequate transportation. Twenty-one percent indicated that the Jewish education provided did not meet the family’s needs or interests. Smaller proportions cited insufficient support services (5%) or the quality of general education (4%) and reasons for not enrolling their children in a Jewish day school.

*Are there services to provide financial help for families to send their children to Jewish day schools? – male, 79, Western Suburbs*

**Table 4.6. Reasons for not enrolling in Jewish day school**

	Age-eligible households (%)
Not important	40
Cost	39
Prefer more diverse learning environment	39
Location or transportation	33
Jewish education didn’t meet family’s needs or interests	21
Insufficient support services	5
Quality of general education	4

Note: Totals add up to more than 100% because some respondents selected more than one reason.

## Jewish Camping and Teen Israel Programs

Thirty-six percent of Jewish K-12 students attended a Jewish summer camp as a camper or staff member in 2022 (Table 4.7). Sixteen percent attended a day camp, and 21% attended an overnight camp. One third (33%) of Jewish K-12 students attended a non-Jewish camp as a camper or staff member in 2022.

*Jewish summer and day camps are very expensive, and the application process for financial support is a bit confusing. I would like to see Jewish overnight camp be more accessible for all Portland-area families. – female, 52, Southeast Portland*

*Are there any day camps for teenagers during the summer? – female, 56, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

**Table 4.7. Enrollment in Jewish camps, summer 2022**

	Jewish children in K-12 (%)
Any Jewish camp	36
Day camp	16
Overnight camp	21
Any non-Jewish camp	33

One percent of Jewish children ages 12 and older have traveled to Israel on a peer trip.

## Lifecycle Celebrations

Thirty-five percent of age-eligible Jewish children have had a bar, bat, or b’ mitzvah ceremony, and an additional 9% will have one in the future. Among the children who have celebrated a bar, bat, or

b' mitzvah, 74% held a service through a synagogue, 6% held a service or activity without a synagogue but with a rabbi, 6% held a service with neither a synagogue nor a rabbi, and 14% did not hold a service or activity.

## Children's Programs

The PJ Library and PJ Our Way programs send Jewish books to households with at least one child age 12 or younger. Among eligible households, 19% received books.

*We love receiving the PJ Library/Our Way books for our [child]. They aren't focused on being Jewish, but instead have characters who are Jewish or show Jewish culture/traditions. – male, 51, Southeast Portland*

## Grandparents

Fifteen percent of Jewish adults ages 40 and older have a grandchild, with 4% having all their grandchildren residing in the Greater Portland area, 5% having all their grandchildren living elsewhere, and 5% having grandchildren both in the local area and elsewhere.

The majority of Jewish adults with grandchildren reported it is important for them to foster the Jewish identity of their grandchildren, with 29% indicating it is very important and 42% indicating it is somewhat important to them. Only 12% indicated it is not too important to foster the Jewish identity of their grandchildren, and 18% indicated it is not at all important to them.

Older Jewish adults support their grandchildren's Jewish identity in various ways. Among Jewish adults who say it is at least a little important to foster their grandchildren's Jewish identity, almost all (95%) support their grandchildren's Jewish identity through Jewish holiday celebrations (Table 4.8). Thirty-one percent participate with their grandchildren in Jewish activities, 26% organize Jewish life cycle events, and 20% provide financial assistance for Jewish activities, such as school and camp tuition or synagogue memberships.

**Table 4.8. Ways grandparents participate in Jewish life of their grandchildren**

	Grandparents* (%)
Jewish holiday celebrations	95
Participate with grandchildren in Jewish activities	31
Organize Jewish life-cycle events	26
Provide financial assistance for Jewish activities	20

\* Note: Limited to grandparents who say it is at least a little important to foster their grandchildren's Jewish identity.

# CHAPTER 5. CONGREGATIONS AND RITUAL LIFE

## Chapter Highlights

Congregational life has been a long-standing feature of the US Jewish community, and membership in a congregation is one important way Jews enact their Jewish identity. However, regardless of congregational membership status, many Jews participate in religious rituals on a regular or intermittent basis at home.

- Twenty percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland belong to a synagogue or other Jewish congregation, lower than the national average of 35%. However, 12% of households belong to more than one congregation.
- Fifteen percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland previously belonged to a congregation at some point in their adult lives but do not currently belong, and 60% never belonged to a congregation. Among the Minimally Involved group, the vast majority (93%) have never belonged to a congregation.
- Forty-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland attended Jewish religious services at least once in the past year, either in-person or online, including 31% who are not members of any Jewish congregation. Twelve percent of Jewish adults attended services at least once a month.
- During the 2022 High Holidays, 34% of Jewish adults in Greater Portland attended High Holiday services. Most attended in person, either with a congregation in Greater Portland (59%) or a congregation outside the area (5%). Twenty-two percent of Jewish adults attended High Holiday services online with a local congregation, and 20% attended High Holiday services online with a congregation outside Greater Portland.
- Half of Jewish adults in Greater Portland marked Shabbat in some way during the past year, including 19% who did so every week or nearly every week. The most common ways Jewish adults in Greater Portland mark Shabbat are by lighting candles on Friday night (40%), spending time with family and friends (36%), and having a special Shabbat meal (35%).
- Seventy-five percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland light Hanukkah candles in a typical year, and 58% attended a seder in 2022. Twenty-seven percent of Jewish adults fasted on Yom Kippur in 2022, and 25% keep any of the laws of kashrut.

## Congregation Membership

In Greater Portland, 20% of Jewish households belong to a Jewish congregation of some type, whether a synagogue, independent *minyán* or *chavurah*, Chabad, or other worship community (Table 5.1). A slightly smaller share, 17%, belong to a congregation located in Greater Portland. Nationally, 35% of Jewish households include a member of a Jewish congregation.<sup>17</sup>

Few households in the Minimally Involved and Cultural engagement groups belong to congregations, compared to about one third of the Ritual group, half of the Communal group, and 86% of the Immersed group.

Congregation membership is highest among Jewish households in Southwest Portland (32%), the Western Suburbs (29%), and Northwest Portland (26%).

*This community is pretty weird. We have plenty of Jews but seldom do you see Jews in shul. – male, 42, Northeast Portland*

**Table 5.1. Current Jewish congregational membership**

	Congregation member	Local congregation
<b>All Jewish households</b>	20	17
<b>Jewish engagement</b>		
Minimally Involved	<1	<1
Cultural	3	3
Ritual	32	25
Communal	53	48
Immersed	86	75
<b>Region</b>		
NE Portland	14	13
SE Portland	12	11
SW Portland	32	26
NW Portland	26	25
Western Suburbs	29	25
SW Wash and N Portland	13	12
Other Suburbs	16	16
<b>Age</b>		
18-34	16	11
35-49	23	22
50-64	21	19
65-74	20	18
75+	20	17

Of congregation members, 12% belong to multiple congregations located in Greater Portland (not shown in table).

In addition to current members, 15% of Jewish adults in Greater Portland belonged to a Jewish congregation at some point in their adult lives, while 60% of Jewish adults never belonged to a congregation (Table 5.2). Few in the Minimally Involved engagement group ever belonged to a congregation, while about one quarter of the Cultural group previously belonged to a congregation.

While close to two thirds of Jewish adults under age 50 have never belonged to a congregation as adults—perhaps expected, given their ages—a similar proportion of adults ages 75 and older have never belonged to a congregation as adults.

Among former congregation members, 28% last belonged to a Jewish congregation fewer than five years ago, 14% belonged between five to nine years ago, 31% belonged 10-19 years ago, and 28% last belonged more than 20 years ago (not shown in table).

**Table 5.2. History of membership in Jewish congregations in adulthood**

	Current member	Former member	Never member	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	25	15	60	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>				
Minimally Involved	<1	7	93	100
Cultural	7	26	67	100
Ritual	47	19	35	100
Communal	58	22	20	100
Immersed	85	3	11	100
<b>Region</b>				
NE Portland	21	23	56	100
SE Portland	9	13	78	100
SW Portland	45	20	35	100
NW Portland	43	16	41	100
Western Suburbs	34	20	46	100
SW Wash and N Portland	13	9	78	100
Other Suburbs	22	12	66	100
<b>Age</b>				
18-34	27	8	65	100
35-49	29	10	61	100
50-64	27	27	47	100
65-74	24	33	43	100
75+	17	16	66	100

Among those who are not currently members of congregations, the most commonly cited reason for not belonging is that it is not a priority (Table 5.3). For 24% of non-members, they have not found a good fit. Nineteen percent noted the cost, and 13% mentioned location. Not having children at home is cited as a reason by 11% of non-members.

*Since belonging to a synagogue is too expensive for me...[I] feel disconnected. – female, 69, Northeast Portland*

*It is usually uncomfortable as most services are in Hebrew; therefore, we understand nothing. – female, 57, Other Suburbs*

There are no significant differences by region regarding whether location is a factor in not belonging to a congregation, but there are differences by age. Among non-members who are ages 75 and older, 29% cited location, a far larger share than younger non-member households. Adults ages 18-34 cited not having children at home more often than older age groups, suggesting that they may be interested in joining if and when they have children of their own.

Former members cited cost and not having children at home in larger shares than those who never belonged to a congregation.

Table 5.3. Reasons for not belonging to a Jewish congregation

	Not a priority	No good fit	Cost	Location	No children at home
<b>Non-member households</b>	50	24	19	13	11
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	53	15	9	11	9
Cultural	56	23	19	6	10
Ritual	26	32	30	15	10
Communal	32	32	43	28	16
Immersed	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	45	30	20	7	11
SE Portland	42	14	15	9	6
SW Portland	36	26	21	5	10
NW Portland	34	33	15	4	10
Western Suburbs	47	26	32	13	16
SW Wash and N Portland	72	9	6	18	6
Other Suburbs	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	54	13	23	9	22
35-49	46	33	20	6	1
50-64	43	23	15	9	6
65-74	56	19	22	11	17
75+	65	25	12	29	11
<b>Former congregation member</b>					
No	50	23	15	9	5
Yes	43	29	29	17	23

## Congregation Types

**Synagogue:** Typically has its own building, a conventional dues/membership structure, professional clergy, and programs or amenities commonly available in synagogues (e.g., Hebrew school). Usually appeals to a relatively narrow range of the denominational spectrum.

**Independent *minyan* or *havurah*:** May lack its own building, conventional dues/membership structure, professional clergy, and/or amenities commonly available in synagogues.

**Chabad:** May have its own building, professional clergy, and programs or amenities commonly available in synagogues. Usually does not have a conventional dues/membership structure. Draws from across the denominational spectrum.



Ten percent of Jewish households pay dues to a congregation located within Greater Portland (Table 5.4). Aside from the question of dues payments, 14% of Jewish households belong to a local synagogue, 2% to a local Chabad, and less than 1% to a local independent *minyan* or *havurah*. One percent of households say they belong to some other organization or entity, such as a Hillel. Southwest Portland has the highest share of Jewish households paying dues to a congregation.

Table 5.4. Types of congregational membership

	Pays dues to any congregation	Local synagogue	Local Chabad	Local independent minyan/havurah	Other local congregation
<b>All Jewish households</b>	10	14	2	<1	1
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	<1	<1	0	0	0
Cultural	1	3	0	<1	0
Ritual	16	21	2	<1	1
Communal	30	35	5	2	1
Immersed	46	57	21	<1	1
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	7	9	3	1	<1
SE Portland	8	9	<1	1	1
SW Portland	20	25	1	<1	<1
NW Portland	15	17	7	1	0
Western Suburbs	11	15	5	<1	<1
SW Wash and N Portland	9	8	5	<1	1
Other Suburbs	13	14	2	<1	0
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	3	6	0	<1	<1
35-49	9	14	3	1	5
50-64	14	15	4	<1	<1
65-74	14	15	2	1	1
75+	12	16	1	0	1

## Religious Services

Participation in congregational life is not limited only to membership. Nearly half of Jewish adults (47%) attended a Jewish religious service at least once in the past year, either in person or online (Table 5.5). This includes 31% of Jewish adults who are not currently congregational members. Twelve percent of Jewish adults attended services at least once a month, and 34% attended on the High Holidays in 2022. The youngest Jews, those ages 18-34, have a higher share of those attending services on a monthly basis than do older Jews.

Table 5.5. Jewish religious services during past year

	Services during past year, ever	Services during past year, monthly or more	High Holidays, 2022
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	47	12	34
<b>Jewish engagement</b>			
Minimally Involved	<1	0	0
Cultural	28	<1	0
Ritual	100	23	90
Communal	95	9	78
Immersed	100	85	99
<b>Region</b>			
NE Portland	53	11	36
SE Portland	31	5	25
SW Portland	72	19	49
NW Portland	59	15	47
Western Suburbs	49	20	40
SW Wash and N Portland	28	5	15
Other Suburbs	39	8	23
<b>Age</b>			
18-34	53	21	40
35-49	49	8	32
50-64	50	10	36
65-74	44	11	34
75 +	26	5	14
<b>Congregation member</b>			
No	31	3	17
Yes	92	40	82

Among the 34% of Jewish adults who attended at least one High Holiday service in 2022, most did so in person (Table 5.6). Over half, 59%, attended a High Holiday service in person at a local congregation, and 5% attended a High Holiday service in-person at a congregation outside of Greater Portland. Many, however, also participated in High Holiday services online, with 22% doing so with a local congregation, and 20% doing so with a congregation based outside of Greater Portland.

Table 5.6. High Holiday Services, 2022

	Jewish adults who attended High Holiday services
In person in Greater Portland	59
Online with a congregation in Greater Portland	22
Online with a congregation outside of Greater Portland	20
In person outside of Greater Portland	5

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive. Respondents could select multiple venues for services.

## Shabbat, Holidays, and Rituals

Half of Jewish adults marked Shabbat in some way during the previous year, including 23% who did so less than once a month, 8% who did so at least once a month but less than weekly, and 19% who did so every week or almost every week (Table 5.7). Slightly larger shares of the Ritual engagement group mark Shabbat weekly or almost every week compared to the Communal group.

Ten percent of Jewish adults who do not belong to Jewish congregations mark Shabbat every week or almost every week.

Table 5.7. Frequency of marking Shabbat during past year

	Never	Less than once a month	Once a month or more	Every week or almost every week	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	50	23	8	19	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	97	2	1	0	100
Cultural	46	42	3	8	100
Ritual	16	40	15	29	100
Communal	17	41	24	18	100
Immersed	0	2	5	93	100
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	41	32	10	18	100
SE Portland	68	16	5	11	100
SW Portland	29	33	11	27	100
NW Portland	40	29	6	25	100
Western Suburbs	46	24	7	23	100
SW Wash and N Portland	72	15	6	7	100
Other Suburbs	30	47	3	20	100
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	36	29	9	26	100
35-49	46	30	10	14	100
50-64	47	29	8	15	100
65-74	56	23	4	17	100
75+	70	11	2	17	100
<b>Congregation member</b>					
No	60	25	5	10	100
Yes	13	30	14	42	100

The most common ways the Jews of Greater Portland mark Shabbat is by lighting candles (40%), spending time with family or friends (36%), and having a special meal (35%; Tables 5.8a, 5.8b). Although there are not major differences by age for frequency of marking Shabbat in any way (see Table 5.7, above), young adults ages 18-34 do tend to mark Shabbat more frequently than older adults in most of the specific ways measured in this study, including spending time with family or

friends, having a special meal, taking a break from work, taking a break from technology, Jewish learning or reading, and attending Shabbat programs other than services.

Table 5.8a Ways of marking Shabbat in past year

	Lit candles	Spent time with family or friends	Had a special meal	Took a break from work	Took a break from technology
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	40	36	35	18	15
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	2	1	1	<1	<1
Cultural	39	40	32	10	10
Ritual	68	65	64	21	29
Communal	64	54	58	28	15
Immersed	88	85	85	80	62
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	53	47	45	16	20
SE Portland	26	25	25	8	9
SW Portland	54	55	59	30	18
NW Portland	43	41	34	20	13
Western Suburbs	43	34	41	28	22
SW Wash and N Portland	23	23	19	9	5
Other Suburbs	38	51	16	4	3
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	48	56	48	29	31
35-49	45	40	40	17	11
50-64	42	36	35	18	8
65-74	36	27	29	11	10
75+	22	12	12	3	3
<b>Congregation member</b>					
No	32	30	28	11	11
Yes	69	63	62	37	28

Table 5.8b Ways of marking Shabbat in past year

	Attend religious services	Jewish learning or reading	Meditation or spiritual practice	Attend Shabbat programs other than services	Something else
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	14	12	13	7	3
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	0	<1	1	0	<1
Cultural	1	7	5	1	3
Ritual	29	16	11	16	7
Communal	22	11	21	10	4
Immersed	69	67	46	35	9
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	16	17	12	13	1
SE Portland	6	3	6	2	6
SW Portland	24	18	12	9	5
NW Portland	20	11	13	3	7
Western Suburbs	18	16	18	12	2
SW Wash and N Portland	5	5	6	2	<1
Other Suburbs	10	9	6	2	3
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	21	22	17	14	3
35-49	13	10	11	9	3
50-64	13	9	9	3	3
65-74	13	10	10	4	3
75+	4	3	2	2	8
<b>Congregation member</b>					
No	4	7	9	3	3
Yes	43	28	19	21	5

Most Jewish adults in Greater Portland celebrate Jewish holidays and observe at least some Jewish rituals (Table 5.9). Three quarters light Hanukkah candles in a typical year. Over half attended or held a seder in spring 2022, including 52% who did so in person, 4% who did so online, and 3% who did both. About one quarter (27%) fasted on Yom Kippur in 2022, and another quarter keeps any of the laws of kashrut.

Table 5.9. Holidays and rituals

	Lit Hanukkah candles, typical year	Attend/held seder, spring 2022	Fasted during Yom Kippur, fall 2022*	Keep kosher, any
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	75	58	27	25
<b>Jewish engagement</b>				
Minimally Involved	35	9	4	7
Cultural	78	54	10	18
Ritual	96	88	42	29
Communal	97	86	53	38
Immersed	100	92	87	83
<b>Region</b>				
NE Portland	79	65	30	30
SE Portland	54	53	12	13
SW Portland	85	81	40	28
NW Portland	84	55	31	26
Western Suburbs	86	53	34	31
SW Wash and N Portland	43	25	13	20
Other Suburbs	81	30	18	28
<b>Age</b>				
18-34	77	57	33	32
35-49	83	58	26	20
50-64	72	63	29	28
65-74	78	49	25	27
75+	40	25	8	15
<b>Congregation member</b>				
No	65	42	15	18
Yes	97	89	61	49

\* An additional 11% of Jewish adults did not fast for medical reasons.



# CHAPTER 6. ORGANIZATIONS AND PHILANTHROPY

## Chapter Highlights

The Greater Portland Jewish community offers a wide variety of opportunities for adults and families to engage in Jewish communal life. Jewish adults participate in cultural, educational, religious, and social events in person and online. They volunteer their time and donate their money to Jewish and non-Jewish causes.

This chapter describes the many ways in which Jews in Greater Portland interact and participate with their fellow community members and organizations.

- Eight percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland belong to an informal or grassroots Jewish organization.
- Two percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland are members of the Mittleman Jewish Community Center.
- Thirty-three percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland attended at least one Jewish program in the past year. Twenty percent participated in programs sponsored by a Jewish congregation, and 10% participated in programs sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. Of Jewish adults younger than age 40, 16% participated in programs sponsored by a local Jewish student organization, and 10% participated in programs sponsored by a local Jewish young professional organization.
- Jewish adults in Greater Portland most commonly access information about local Jewish activities, news, and events from the Internet (42%) or friends and family (40%).
- Sixty-eight percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland expressed an opinion about how welcoming Jewish organizations in the area are to people like them. Thirty percent felt Jewish organizations were very welcoming, 27% somewhat welcoming, 10% not too welcoming, and 1% not at all welcoming.
- Many Jewish adults in Greater Portland participated in informal Jewish cultural activities in the past year, including 95% who talked about Jewish topics; 90% who ate Jewish foods; 87% who read books, watched movies or television shows, or listened to music that is Jewish-focused; and 74% who read publications from Jewish organizations. Half of Jewish adults (50%) in Greater Portland read or posted about Jewish life on social media, 45% studied Jewish texts, and 28% decorated the exterior of their homes for Jewish holidays.
- Nearly half of Jewish adults (48%) in Greater Portland have a mezuzah on an exterior door of their home.
- Seventeen percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland usually wear a Jewish symbol in public, such as Jewish-themed jewelry or a *kippah*, and 10% have visible body art with a Jewish theme, such as a Star of David or a Hebrew word.
- Forty-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland volunteered anywhere in the past year, including 19% who volunteered for or with a Jewish organization.

- Seventy-eight percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland made charitable donations in the past year, including 41% that donated to Jewish organizations. Five percent of Jewish households donated to the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

## Jewish Organizations and Programs

The Greater Portland Jewish community participates in a wide range of organizations and activities. Eight percent of Jewish households reported they belong to an informal or grassroots group (e.g., a social club/chavurah, Jewish book club, etc.) in the area (Table 6.1). Significantly more households from the Immersed (29%) and Communal (20%) groups belong to these groups, compared to households from the Cultural (4%) and Ritual (9%) groups. More residents of Northeast Portland belonged to an informal or grassroots group (14%) than any other region in the Greater Portland area.

Two percent of all Jewish households belong to the Mittleman Jewish Community Center; the share is highest in Southwest Portland, where the building is located.

**Table 6.1. Membership in Jewish organizations**

	Informal or grassroots group	Mittleman Jewish Community Center
<b>All Jewish households</b>	8	2
<b>Jewish engagement</b>		
Minimally Involved	0	1
Cultural	4	2
Ritual	9	2
Communal	20	4
Immersed	29	4
<b>Region</b>		
NE Portland	14	<1
SE Portland	6	1
SW Portland	8	11
NW Portland	3	2
Western Suburbs	6	1
SW Wash and N Portland	4	<1
Other Suburbs	8	<1
<b>Age</b>		
18-34	10	1
35-49	10	3
50-64	8	2
65-74	5	2
75+	7	2

In the past year, 33% of Jewish adults participated in a program sponsored by a Jewish organization in the Greater Portland area, whether in person or online (Table 6.2). Among the Jewish engagement groups, the Cultural (22%) and Minimally Involved (<1%) groups have the smallest shares that participated; by contrast, 89% of the Immersed group and 69% of the Communal group participated in Jewish programs. Southwest Portland (47%), Northwest Portland (40%), and the Western Suburbs (39%) have the largest shares that participated in Jewish programs, while the Southeast Portland (22%) and Southwest Washington and North Portland (17%) regions have the smallest shares that participated.

Table 6.2. Participated in any Jewish program, past year

	Any Jewish program, past year
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Jewish engagement</b>	
Minimally Involved	<1
Cultural	22
Ritual	40
Communal	69
Immersed	89
<b>Region</b>	
NE Portland	34
SE Portland	22
SW Portland	47
NW Portland	40
Western Suburbs	39
SW Wash and N Portland	17
Other Suburbs	24
<b>Age</b>	
18-34	38
35-49	34
50-64	32
65-74	31
75+	17

Jewish adults participated in programs sponsored by many local organizations, some participated in person, some participated online only, and some participated both ways (Table 6.3). Twenty percent of Jewish adults from Greater Portland participated in a program sponsored by a local Jewish congregation, including 7% who participated both in person and online. Ten percent of Jewish adults participated in a program sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, including 4% who participated online only. Sixteen percent of Jewish adults under age 40 participated in a local student organization, including 9% who participated in person only.

*I have benefited tremendously from Moishe House and am very grateful for its presence in Portland. – male, 30, Northeast Portland*

*I'm pretty excited about the Eastside Jewish Commons. It seems to be a departure from the same old, same old of much of establishment Jewish Portland. – female, 60, Northeast Portland*

*Great synagogues, scholarly Judaic studies at Portland State University. – male, Southwest Portland*

*Just really love all of our Jewish organizations in Portland Metro. They're doing great work. – female, 42, Western Suburbs*

**Table 6.3. Jewish adults' program participation by sponsor, past year**

	In person only	Online only	Both in person and online	Did not participate	Total
Local Jewish congregation	9	4	7	80	100
A local Jewish student organization (age <40)	9	<1	6	84	100
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland	3	4	3	90	100
A Jewish young professional organization (age <40)	4	2	3	90	100
A local Chabad	5	1	3	91	100
Oregon Jewish Museum	4	3	1	91	100
Eastside Jewish Commons	6	1	1	92	100
Mittleman Jewish Community Center	6	1	1	93	100
PJ Library or PJ Our Way (HH has child < 13)	1	3	<1	96	100
Any Jewish overnight or day camp	3	<1	<1	97	100
Jewish Family and Child Services	1	2	<1	97	100
Portland Kollel	2	<1	1	97	100

Jewish adults have available a number of sources of information about local Jewish activities, news, and events, and the majority access this information through technological or social means (Table 6.4). Forty-two percent access information about local Jewish activities, news and events via the Internet, 40% via family or friends, and 22% via synagogues or rabbis.

**Table 6.4. Sources of information about Jewish activities and news**

	All Jewish adults (%)
Internet	42
Family or friends	40
Synagogue or rabbi	22
A Jewish community leader (e.g., <i>Marc's Remarks</i> )	12
Local Jewish periodical (e.g., <i>Jewish Review</i> )	11

Sixty-eight percent of Jewish adults expressed an opinion regarding how welcoming Jewish organizations in the Greater Portland are to people like them, with 30% believing Jewish organizations are very welcoming to people like them and 27% believing Jewish organizations are somewhat welcoming to people like them (Table 6.5). Members of the Ritual (54%) and Immersed (49%) engagement groups are most likely to say Jewish organizations are very welcoming to people like them. Of all the regions, Jewish adults from Southwest Portland (53%) are most likely to say Jewish organizations are very welcoming to people like them, while adults living in Southeast Portland (17%) and the Western Suburbs (17%) are most likely to say Jewish organizations are not too welcoming to people like them.

*The Intro to Judaism course offered by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland was a wonderful part of my conversion process and has helped me feel better connected to the Jewish community outside of my shul. – female, age 18-34, Northeast Portland*

*There is an astonishing sense of 'pay to play' where three or four intertwined 'old money' families seem to call all the shots and make the overall community far more conservative than the thriving city at large. – female, 43, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

Table 6.5. Perception of welcoming in Jewish organizations

	Not at all welcoming	Not too welcoming	Somewhat welcoming	Very welcoming	No opinion	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	1	10	27	30	32	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>						
Minimally Involved	<1	11	17	8	63	100
Cultural	1	14	26	23	37	100
Ritual	<1	6	29	54	11	100
Communal	4	10	32	46	8	100
Immersed	2	3	44	49	3	100
<b>Region</b>						
NE Portland	3	8	35	31	23	100
SE Portland	<1	17	21	16	46	100
SW Portland	1	8	22	53	16	100
NW Portland	2	4	33	31	30	100
Western Suburbs	2	17	28	32	21	100
SW Wash and N Portland	1	8	25	12	55	100
Other Suburbs	<1	1	8	24	66	100
<b>Age</b>						
18-34	0	4	22	39	35	100
35-49	3	13	25	24	35	100
50-64	2	17	28	27	26	100
65-74	1	10	30	28	31	100
75+	1	10	30	13	46	100

## Informal Cultural Activities and Displays of Jewish Identity

Informal cultural activities include those Jewish activities that are not necessarily sponsored or facilitated by Jewish organizations, such as discussing Jewish topics, eating Jewish foods, or reading Jewish books (Tables 6.6a and 6.6b). Of all Jewish adults, 95% discussed Jewish topics with family or friends in the past year, including 33% who did so often. Ninety percent of Jewish adults ate Jewish foods aside from Shabbat and holiday meals, including 21% who did so often. Nearly as many (87%), read books, watched movies or TV, or listened to music that is Jewish-focused, including 18% who did so often, and 74% read publications from Jewish organizations, including 12% who did so often.

*There are several unofficial social Jewish organizations that [are based] in Portland, some through meetup.com, etc. – male, 48, Northeast Portland*

About half of Jewish adults (50%) read or posted on social media about Jewish life and being Jewish, including 13% who did so often. Forty-five percent of Jewish adults studied or learned Jewish texts, including 8% who did so often. Finally, 28% of Jewish adults decorated the exterior of their homes for Jewish holidays, including 7% who did so often.

Members of the Minimally Involved group are least likely to engage in individual Jewish activities, whether often or at all. Significantly greater shares of Jewish adults ages 18-34 spoke about Jewish topics often (52%) compared to older adults (12%-40%). The Immersed group has the largest share that read or posted on social media about Jewish life often (34%). The Immersed group is also the

only group with a majority (53%) that studied Jewish texts often and the only group with a large minority (33%) that decorated the exterior of their homes for Jewish holidays often. The Western Suburbs region has the largest share of Jewish adults that decorated the exterior of their homes for Jewish holidays (51%).

Table 6.6a. Individual Jewish activities, past year

	Talk about Jewish topics		Eat Jewish foods		Read books, watch movies or TV, listen to music		Read Jewish publications	
	Ever	Often	Ever	Often	Ever	Often	Ever	Often
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	95	33	90	21	87	18	74	12
<b>Jewish engagement</b>								
Minimally Involved	87	17	82	<1	75	2	35	0
Cultural	97	31	95	13	92	17	85	7
Ritual	99	32	91	16	85	5	73	4
Communal	100	54	99	38	100	37	100	37
Immersed	100	91	100	63	100	53	100	50
<b>Region</b>								
NE Portland	98	42	95	15	89	16	73	11
SE Portland	99	35	97	15	91	32	56	6
SW Portland	97	38	91	34	87	25	78	32
NW Portland	88	38	86	18	79	21	91	25
Western Suburbs	91	31	93	23	89	16	80	10
SW Wash and N Portland	98	25	87	12	84	11	59	8
Other Suburbs	97	57	89	14	95	29	86	18
<b>Age</b>								
18-34	97	52	93	23	90	18	66	13
35-49	99	40	93	16	85	18	83	15
50-64	95	34	90	20	90	21	79	14
65-74	87	26	91	19	85	17	73	18
75+	94	12	96	10	93	35	60	9

Table 6.6b. Individual Jewish activities, past year

	Read or post on social media about Jewish life		Study Jewish texts		Decorated home for Jewish holidays	
	Ever	Often	Ever	Often	Ever	Often
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	50	13	45	8	28	7
<b>Jewish engagement</b>						
Minimally Involved	24	0	18	0	12	0
Cultural	56	11	34	2	24	3
Ritual	66	4	43	1	31	1
Communal	72	27	77	7	49	9
Immersed	69	34	99	53	64	33
<b>Region</b>						
NE Portland	52	9	54	6	29	3
SE Portland	50	18	45	2	21	1
SW Portland	52	12	46	10	23	6
NW Portland	46	7	43	7	29	3
Western Suburbs	56	16	47	11	51	14
SW Wash and N Portland	47	7	27	3	19	1
Other Suburbs	70	7	34	7	17	3
<b>Age</b>						
18-34	61	15	49	9	29	10
35-49	63	11	38	5	35	5
50-64	59	17	51	6	31	5
65-74	36	6	46	9	27	3
75+	12	2	24	4	15	2

Jewish adults also express their Jewish identity by means of other public displays and symbols (Table 6.7). Almost half of Jewish adults (48%) have a mezuzah on an exterior door of their home. Seventeen percent usually wear a specifically Jewish symbol in public, such as Jewish-themed jewelry or a *kipphah*, and 10% have visible body art with a Jewish theme, such as a Star of David or a Hebrew word.

Members of the Immersed group have the largest share of the engagement groups that display signs of Jewish identity, with nearly all (94%) having a mezuzah, over half (58%) wearing a Jewish symbol in public, and one quarter (26%) having visible Jewish body art. Southwest Portland has the highest share of Jewish adults displaying a mezuzah on an exterior door of their home (68%). Among the regions, the Other Suburbs has the highest share of Jewish adults who wear Jewish symbols in public (45%), and the Western Suburbs has the highest share of Jewish adults who have visible Jewish body art (26%). Significantly greater shares of Jewish adults ages 18-34 usually wear Jewish symbols in public (33%) compared to older adults (9-16%).



Table 6.7. Displays of Jewish identity

	Have mezuzah on exterior door of home	Usually wear Jewish symbol in public	Have visible Jewish body art
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	48	17	10
<b>Jewish engagement</b>			
Minimally Involved	13	<1	4
Cultural	43	17	7
Ritual	56	22	4
Communal	73	31	12
Immersed	94	58	26
<b>Region</b>			
NE Portland	39	20	9
SE Portland	43	4	2
SW Portland	68	24	5
NW Portland	52	14	5
Western Suburbs	56	25	26
SW Wash and N Portland	22	11	3
Other Suburbs	42	45	4
<b>Age</b>			
18-34	45	33	8
35-49	42	16	17
50-64	51	13	9
65-74	54	13	7
75+	38	9	4

## Volunteering and Philanthropy

In the Greater Portland Jewish community, almost half (47%) of Jewish adults volunteered somewhere in the past year, with 6% volunteering exclusively for or with Jewish organizations, 13% volunteering for or with both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, and 27% volunteering exclusively for or with non-Jewish organizations (Table 6.8).

The types and extent of participation in volunteer activities differed based on respondent characteristics. The Immersed group has the highest share of Jewish adults who volunteered exclusively with Jewish organizations (43%), the Communal group has the highest share who volunteered with both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations (37%), and the Minimally Involved group has the highest share who volunteered exclusively with non-Jewish organizations (36%). However, nearly two thirds of the Minimally Involved group did not volunteer at all, nor did half of the Cultural and Ritual groups.

Among the regions, Southeast Portland has the highest share of Jewish adults who volunteered exclusively with non-Jewish organizations. Jewish adults from households with minor children, compared to those without minor children at home, have larger shares of those who volunteered overall and for Jewish organizations.

Table 6.8. Volunteering in the past year

	Both Jewish and non-Jewish	Jewish only	Non-Jewish only	Did not volunteer	Don't know	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	13	6	27	49	4	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>						
Minimally Involved	<1	0	36	64	<1	100
Cultural	5	1	32	52	10	100
Ritual	17	2	27	52	2	100
Communal	37	11	16	34	2	100
Immersed	28	43	6	21	3	100
<b>Region</b>						
NE Portland	14	5	28	49	5	100
SE Portland	10	2	43	45	<1	100
SW Portland	27	13	17	42	1	100
NW Portland	12	5	29	53	0	100
Western Suburbs	10	10	22	55	3	100
SW Wash and N Portland	9	1	33	55	1	100
Other Suburbs	9	8	18	61	4	100
<b>Age</b>						
18-34	12	10	19	58	1	100
35-49	12	6	44	37	1	100
50-64	16	7	37	37	3	100
65-74	13	6	20	55	7	100
75+	7	2	12	79	<1	100
<b>Minor child in household</b>						
No	13	3	25	54	5	100
Yes	13	12	34	38	3	100
<b>Financial situation</b>						
Struggling	10	8	20	48	14	100
Enough	15	7	23	52	3	100
Extra	11	6	38	45	<1	100
Well-off	16	5	32	47	<1	100

Within the Jewish community, 78% of households reported making a charitable contribution in the past year (Table 6.9). Thirty-eight percent gave to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, 3% gave only to Jewish organizations, and 37% gave only to non-Jewish organizations.

Members of the Immersed (74%) and Communal (70%) groups have the highest shares of Jewish households that gave to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, and the Immersed group (24%) has the highest share who gave exclusively to Jewish organizations. About half of households with Jewish adults ages 18-34 (49%) donated to any organization (a significantly smaller share than older adults) and 31% donated exclusively to non-Jewish organizations. Despite having a smaller share than financially stable households that donated at all, financially struggling households had a similar proportion that donated to Jewish causes.

Five percent of Jewish households made a charitable contribution to the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. Southwest Portland has the largest share of Jewish households (12%) that donated

to the Federation. Jewish households with older adults have the largest share that donated to the Federation, with 9% of Jewish households ages 75 and over making a contribution to the Federation.

Table 6.9. Donations in the past year

	Both Jewish and non-Jewish	Jewish only	Non-Jewish only	Did not donate	Don't know	Total	Jewish Federation of Greater Portland
<b>All Jewish households</b>	38	3	37	19	3	100	5
<b>Jewish engagement</b>							
Minimally Involved	4	1	50	40	4	100	1
Cultural	39	1	45	12	3	100	3
Ritual	44	1	28	27	1	100	3
Communal	70	5	15	7	4	100	12
Immersed	74	24	<1	<1	1	100	19
<b>Region</b>							
NE Portland	31	1	45	20	3	100	3
SE Portland	46	2	38	11	3	100	3
SW Portland	46	8	17	26	2	100	12
NW Portland	33	6	29	31	1	100	6
Western Suburbs	44	3	36	15	1	100	7
SW Wash and N Portland	30	3	46	18	3	100	2
Other Suburbs	39	2	34	11	13	100	6
<b>Age</b>							
18-34	8	6	31	51	4	100	1
35-49	31	3	43	17	5	100	3
50-64	52	2	35	9	2	100	6
65-74	50	3	34	11	2	100	8
75+	49	4	31	11	5	100	9
<b>Financial situation</b>							
Struggling	33	3	25	34	6	100	2
Enough	37	3	41	16	3	100	4
Extra	38	2	44	13	2	100	7
Well-off	44	2	39	13	1	100	9

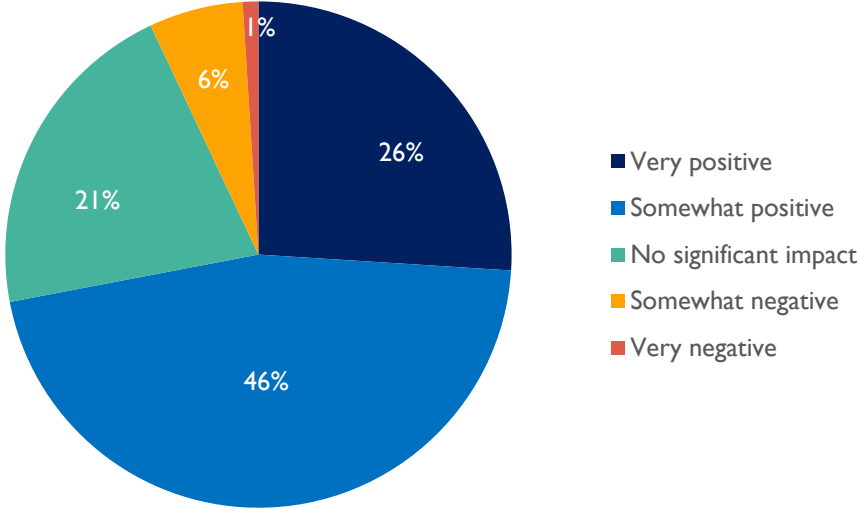
Half of Jewish adults (50%) in Greater Portland are familiar with the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. Of the adults who are familiar with the Jewish Federation, most rated the Jewish Federation's overall impact on the community positively (Figure 6.1). Twenty-six percent rated the Federation's impact as very positive, 46% rated the impact as somewhat positive, 21% reported that the Federation has no significant impact on the community, 6% rated the Federation's impact as somewhat negative, and 1% rated the impact as very negative.

*In general, a good, solid organization, with a caring leader, Marc. – female, 70, Southwest Portland*

*The Jewish Federation is a wonderful organization. – female, 50, Northeast Portland*

*Jewish Federation at times competes with other Jewish organizations, yet at times helps out other organizations. At times, [a] mixed message. – male, 63, Other Suburbs*

Figure 6.1. Rating of impact of Jewish Federation



# CHAPTER 7. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## Chapter Highlights

Jews in Greater Portland have many ways of expressing their sense of connection to the community. They feel connected to the Jewish people, their local community, and their Jewish friends. At times, however, they perceive barriers that prevent their desired participation in the Jewish community. They also share concerns about antisemitism in Greater Portland, the United States, and the wider world. This chapter explores connections to the Jewish community, perceived barriers to participation in the local Jewish community, and concerns about antisemitism.

- Ninety-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland feel at least some sense of belonging to the Jewish people, including 46% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Sixty-four percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland feel at least some connection to the local Jewish community, including 9% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Forty percent of Jewish adults feel at least some connection to an online Jewish community, including 7% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Forty-nine percent of Jewish adults reported they have at least some close Jewish friends, including 13% who reported most or all of their close friends are Jewish.
- The four most common barriers to participation in the Jewish community cited by Jewish adults in Greater Portland are a lack of activities of interest (30%), traffic or location making it difficult to attend (29%), not being confident in Jewish knowledge (21%), and expense (21%).
- Sixty-three percent of Jewish adults are very concerned about antisemitism around the world, and 60% are very concerned about antisemitism in the United States. By contrast, only 32% of Jewish adults are very concerned about antisemitism in Greater Portland.
- Eighteen percent of Jewish adults personally experienced one or more antisemitic incidents in the past year. For 31% of Jewish adults in Greater Portland, a fear of antisemitism and a concern for their safety or comfort as a Jew caused them to change their behavior in the past year.

## Feelings of Connection to the Jewish Community

Nearly all Jewish adults in Greater Portland (97%) feel any sense of belonging to the Jewish people, including nearly half (46%) who feel a great deal of connection (Table 7.1). By contrast, 64% of Jewish adults feel some sense of belonging to the Greater Portland Jewish community, including only nine percent who feel a great deal of belonging.

There is a relationship between geography and sense of belonging to the Greater Portland Jewish community. Southwest Portland and Northwest Portland have the largest shares of Jewish adults (23% and 18% respectively) who feel a great deal of belonging to the local community, compared to 9% of all Jews in Greater Portland.

Overall, 7% of Jewish adults feel a great deal of belonging to an online Jewish community; this includes one quarter of the Immersed engagement group.

*The community feels very divided by the river and the suburban/urban split with three clusters: southwest near the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, downtown where the synagogues are clustered, and then more creative but looser organized community on the East Side. – female, 32, Northeast Portland*

*As part of the Vancouver Jewish community, I do not feel connected to the Portland community, partly due to distance and travel time to [Mittleman Jewish] Community Center offerings. – male, 49, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

Table 7.1. Feeling a sense of belonging to...

	The Jewish people		The Greater Portland Jewish community		An online Jewish community	
	Any belonging	A great deal	Any belonging	A great deal	Any belonging	A great deal
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	97	46	64	9	40	7
<b>Jewish engagement</b>						
Minimally involved	93	19	26	2	18	0
Cultural	97	38	63	3	35	1
Ritual	100	56	90	12	57	1
Communal	99	74	91	18	70	11
Immersed	100	72	96	31	79	25
<b>Region</b>						
NE Portland	96	41	69	7	51	3
SE Portland	99	57	53	4	32	2
SW Portland	99	71	88	23	57	11
NW Portland	97	54	82	18	46	7
Western Suburbs	94	40	70	10	49	7
SW Wash and N Portland	95	22	38	2	23	2
Other Suburbs	99	28	43	4	32	3
<b>Age</b>						
18-34	99	39	64	11	48	9
35-49	99	44	59	6	45	2
50-64	89	55	68	9	43	4
65-74	89	39	68	11	39	5
75+	100	45	63	8	34	2

## Jewish Friends

Seventy-two percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland have at least some close Jewish friends, including 49% who indicated that some of their closest friends are Jewish and 10% who indicated that about half of their friends are Jewish (Table 7.2). Another 11% indicated that most of their close friends are Jewish, and for 2%, all of their close friends are Jewish (not shown in table). Nationally, 29% of Jewish adults say that most or all of their close friends are Jewish.<sup>18</sup>

Among engagement groups, the Immersed group is the only one in which a majority reported that most or all of their closest friends are Jewish. About one quarter of Jews in Southwest Portland (26%) and the Western suburbs (25%) indicated that most or all of their close friends were Jewish, while those Jewish adults living in Southeast Portland (54%) and the Other Suburbs (47%) have larger shares who indicated not having any close Jewish friends. Jewish adults over the age of 75 have the largest share among the age cohorts with few close Jewish friends, with half of this population (50%) stating that none of their close friends were Jewish.

**Table 7.2. Close Jewish friends**

	None of them	Some of them	About half	Most or all of them	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	28	49	10	13	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally involved	51	41	5	4	100
Cultural	25	62	7	6	100
Ritual	19	57	16	8	100
Communal	13	49	17	21	100
Immersed	11	22	11	57	100
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	21	61	12	6	100
SE Portland	54	28	14	5	100
SW Portland	11	52	11	26	100
NW Portland	13	56	17	14	100
Western Suburbs	25	44	5	25	100
SW Wash and N Portland	36	54	5	4	100
Other Suburbs	47	42	3	8	100
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	38	42	7	14	100
35-49	17	65	10	9	100
50-64	25	52	12	12	100
65-74	20	47	14	19	100
75+	50	30	6	14	100
<b>Minor child in household</b>					
No	34	47	10	10	100
Yes	14	58	9	18	100

## Limits to Participation

Seventy-one percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland indicated at least one condition that limits their participation in the Greater Portland Jewish community (Tables 7.3a and 7.3b). The most common limiting conditions are not finding Jewish activities of interest (30%) and traffic or location of programs (29%). Not being confident in Jewish knowledge is a limitation for 21% of Jewish adults, including 34% of the Cultural engagement group. Similarly, the costs of participation are a barrier for 21% of Jewish adults.

Safety and security concerns are a limiting factor for 8% of Jewish adults in Greater Portland overall, but a limiting factor for 34% in the Other Suburbs region. Lack of accommodation of accessibility needs is a limiting factor for 4% of Jewish adults overall, but a limiting factor for 21% of those over the age of 75. Sexual harassment, misconduct, or inappropriate behavior is a limiting factor for 1%.

*I wish I felt physically safe to go to Jewish places/ events. I go anyway, but it's on my mind. I tend not to go to public rallies that are Jewish or Israel-related because I feel unsafe. – female, 70, Southwest Portland*

*[The region] faces the same issues as other Jewish communities, but the problem is magnified here due to the lack of financial resources and most Jews not participating. – male, 58, Southeast Portland*

*I have wanted more information about joining a community, but time and distance and feeling like being an outsider have prevented any action on my part. – female, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

**Table 7.3a. Limits to participation in the Greater Portland Jewish community**

	Any limiting condition	Haven't found Jewish activities of interest	Traffic or location	Not confident in Jewish knowledge	Too expensive
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	71	30	29	21	21
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally involved	62	25	20	22	11
Cultural	75	34	20	34	24
Ritual	82	48	30	20	19
Communal	78	27	38	10	22
Immersed	50	21	30	4	19
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	75	37	19	16	18
SE Portland	56	21	34	22	28
SW Portland	61	33	10	12	14
NW Portland	64	37	13	19	13
Western Suburbs	78	32	40	26	27
SW Wash and N Portland	76	32	27	28	12
Other Suburbs	72	8	22	40	8
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	69	36	20	23	17
35-49	80	32	33	27	22
50-64	72	27	26	24	29
65-74	68	28	21	12	14
75+	59	23	29	22	5



Table 7.3b. Limits to participation in the Greater Portland Jewish community

	Views on Israel or politics unwelcome	Feel unwelcome	Safety or security concerns	Lack of accommodation of accessibility needs	Sexual harassment, misconduct, or inappropriate behavior	Something else
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	12	9	8	4	1	25
<b>Jewish engagement</b>						
Minimally involved	9	4	3	0	0	18
Cultural	11	11	12	3	<1	29
Ritual	3	7	10	1	<1	33
Communal	14	10	7	4	1	24
Immersed	16	17	18	13	2	13
<b>Region</b>						
NE Portland	14	9	5	3	1	32
SE Portland	8	6	4	3	<1	32
SW Portland	6	7	7	4	<1	15
NW Portland	7	8	8	1	1	19
Western Suburbs	16	13	14	5	4	11
SW Wash and N Portland	9	9	2	0	<1	21
Other Suburbs	1	1	34	2	0	50
<b>Age</b>						
18-34	15	9	15	6	3	25
35-49	11	11	8	2	1	30
50-64	7	9	6	2	1	32
65-74	8	10	5	2	0	16
75+	6	1	7	21	0	8

Twelve percent of Jewish adults limit their participation in the Greater Portland Jewish community because they feel their views on Israel or politics are unwelcome (Table 7.4). This factor was cited by 18% of Jewish adults who self-identify as very liberal.

*I feel that Israel is a very divisive topic in Portland for reasons that I think are well-known. It makes it difficult to support Israel, and difficult to criticize Israel. I feel more trips like Hillel's Fact Finders trip will allow for education and allow individuals to form educated opinions, and in turn, discuss those opinions with peers. – male, 25, Western Suburbs*

*We need more support for Israel! – male, 49, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

*Many of my friends are Jews and do volunteer organizing with fellow Jews here in Portland. ALL have either no connection with the synagogue-based Jewish communities or have ambivalent feelings towards those communities. Often that ambivalence is related to the relationship to Israel, sometimes for other reasons. We all have a very strong sense of*

*Jewish identity and have found at best only an equivocal sense of belonging from the synagogue-based Jewish communities here in Portland. – male, 64, Northeast Portland*

As would be expected, the expense of participation in Jewish life is a more prevalent limiting factor for those who are struggling financially (35%) than for those who consider themselves well-off (7%; Table 7.5).

*It feels one has to be upper middle class or higher to be able to afford being Jewish! Why do the synagogue membership fees have to be so much, then add on top of it Hebrew/ Religious school costs for any and all children! Don't get me started on the costs of hosting a b'nai mitzvah and the peer pressure associated with it! My family would LOVE to join the Mittleman Jewish Community Center (MJCC), but the cost to join is so MUCH MORE than the public Southwest Community Center just down the road from MJCC. – female, 47, Southwest Portland*

**Table 7.4. Views on Israel or politics as barrier**

Views on Israel or politics unwelcome	
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	12
<b>Political views</b>	
Very liberal	18
Liberal	5
Moderate	4
Conservative or very conservative <sup>19</sup>	13
Prefer not to answer	14

**Table 7.5. Expense as barrier**

Too expensive	
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	21
<b>Financial situation</b>	
Struggling	35
Enough	15
Extra	19
Well-off	7

## Concerns about and Experiences with Antisemitism

Most Jewish adults in Greater Portland are very concerned about antisemitism around the world (63%) and in the United States (60%; Table 7.6). They are less concerned about antisemitism in Greater Portland (32% very concerned).

Deep concern about antisemitism in the United States is highest among those Jewish adults in the Communal (75%) and Cultural (70%) engagement groups, and lowest amongst those in the Ritual engagement group (37%). However, concern about antisemitism in Greater Portland is highest among those in the Communal (50%) and Immersed (40%) groups, and lowest among the Ritual engagement group (20%).

Those who are struggling economically have large shares of Jewish adults who are very concerned about antisemitism compared to those in better economic situations.

*My [child] attended the local high school in [neighborhood] and was continually faced with antisemitic remarks, graffiti, and sentiment. – female, 50, Southwest Portland*

*I'm very worried and angry about the growing number of hate crimes against Jewish and Muslim community centers. – female, 51, Northeast Portland*

**Table 7.6. How concerned are you about antisemitism...**

	Very concerned, around the world	Very concerned, in the United States	Very concerned, in Greater Portland
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	63	60	32
<b>Jewish engagement</b>			
Minimally involved	53	52	24
Cultural	69	70	36
Ritual	49	37	20
Communal	77	75	50
Immersed	69	56	40
<b>Region</b>			
NE Portland	54	58	27
SE Portland	69	61	47
SW Portland	68	57	40
NW Portland	72	62	40
Western Suburbs	62	59	33
SW Wash and N Portland	58	57	24
Other Suburbs	72	73	30
<b>Age</b>			
18-34	53	49	17
35-49	52	51	28
50-64	75	71	48
65-74	80	77	45
75+	64	62	45
<b>Financial situation</b>			
Struggling	79	80	56
Enough	65	60	34
Extra	64	59	26
Well-off	50	46	20

For about one third (31%) of Jewish adults in Greater Portland, a fear of antisemitism and a concern for their safety or comfort as a Jew caused them to change their behavior in the past year (Table 7.7). Eighteen percent of Jewish adults personally experienced antisemitism in the past year.

Although young adults ages 18-34 are the least concerned about antisemitism in Greater Portland of any age group (17%; see Table 7.6 above), a larger share of these individuals both changed their behavior out of concern or fear of antisemitism (48%) and personally experienced antisemitism in the past year (28%) compared to those in any other age group.

Table 7.7. Experiences of antisemitism

	Changed behavior out of concern for safety or comfort as a Jew out of fear of antisemitism	Personally experienced antisemitism in the past year
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	31	18
<b>Jewish engagement</b>		
Minimally involved	13	10
Cultural	36	19
Ritual	45	11
Communal	40	30
Immersed	47	31
<b>Region</b>		
NE Portland	35	19
SE Portland	19	8
SW Portland	46	15
NW Portland	22	10
Western Suburbs	28	17
SW Wash and N Portland	27	21
Other Suburbs	51	41
<b>Age</b>		
18-34	48	28
35-49	35	23
50-64	23	13
65-74	30	12
75+	8	1
<b>Financial situation</b>		
Struggling	38	29
Enough	37	18
Extra	30	19
Well-off	25	8
<b>Concern about antisemitism in Greater Portland</b>		
Not at all concerned	--	--
Not too concerned	23	8
Somewhat concerned	32	17
Very concerned	42	29

# CHAPTER 8. CONNECTIONS TO ISRAEL

## Chapter Highlights

Israel plays a vital role in the Jewish identity of many Jewish adults in Greater Portland, but for others, the country's relationship to their lives is less significant. Jewish adults in Greater Portland travel to Israel at rates similar to the national Jewish community, but they express a weaker sense of emotional attachment to Israel than among all US Jewish adults.

- A minority of Jewish adults in Greater Portland are emotionally attached to Israel, with 18% feeling very attached and 28% feeling somewhat attached. Taken together, this proportion (46%) is lower than among all US Jewish adults (58%).
- Fifty percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland have traveled to Israel. This share is similar to that of US Jews in general, of whom 45% have traveled to Israel.
- Thirty percent of age-eligible Jewish adults (younger than age 51) in Greater Portland have participated in a Birthright Israel trip.
- About half (48%) of Jewish adults in Greater Portland follow the news on Israel, 12% very closely and 36% somewhat closely.
- Twenty-six percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland self-identify as Zionists. Fifty-two percent do not identify as Zionists, and the remaining 22% either are not sure how they identify or prefer not to say.
- Ninety-seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland consider it important for Israel to be a democratic state, and 65% consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state. Eighty-seven percent consider it important for Israel to exist for the Jewish people, now and in the future. Eighty-two percent believe Israel is under constant threat from hostile neighbors who seek its destruction, but only 43% believe Israel lives up to its values with respect to human rights.

## Emotional Attachment to Israel

Jewish adults in Greater Portland are equally divided on their attachment to Israel, with 55% not at all (23%) or not too attached (32%) and the remaining 46% feeling somewhat (28%) or very attached (18%). By comparison, 58% of Jewish adults in the US are somewhat or very attached to Israel.<sup>20</sup> These differences vary significantly by engagement group. Half of the Minimally Involved group (50%) are not at all attached to Israel, compared to just 2% of the Immersed group.

There are also notable geographic differences with respect to attachment to Israel. Nearly half of the Jewish adults (46%) in Southeast Portland are not at all attached to Israel and 5% are very attached to Israel, compared to Southwest Portland, with 10% of Jewish adults who are not at all attached to Israel and 33% who are very attached to Israel.

The majority of Jewish adults who have never been to Israel are not at all (32%) or not too (44%) attached to Israel. Those who have been to Israel more than once or lived in Israel include much

larger shares of those who are attached to Israel: A majority of both groups are somewhat or very attached to Israel.

There are no statistically significant differences in attachment to Israel between age groups in Greater Portland.

**Table 8.1. Attachment to Israel**

	Not at all attached	Not too attached	Somewhat attached	Very attached	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	23	32	28	18	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	50	34	14	2	100
Cultural	18	37	34	11	100
Ritual	10	50	30	10	100
Communal	9	20	39	32	100
Immersed	2	8	21	69	100
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	19	42	31	8	100
SE Portland	46	30	19	5	100
SW Portland	10	26	30	33	100
NW Portland	9	29	44	18	100
Western Suburbs	20	14	38	28	100
SW Wash and N Portland	34	47	9	10	100
Other Suburbs	14	48	19	18	100
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	17	46	16	22	100
35-49	34	25	26	14	100
50-64	20	30	32	17	100
65-74	17	21	45	17	100
75+	29	26	30	15	100
<b>Travel to Israel</b>					
Never	32	44	21	3	100
Once	19	31	33	17	100
More than once	4	15	46	36	100
Lived in Israel	2	6	24	68	100

## Travel to Israel

Half of Jewish adults (50%) in Greater Portland have been to Israel at least once (Table 8.2), slightly above the national proportion of 45%.<sup>21</sup> This share includes 23% who have visited once, 15% who have visited more than once, and 11% who have previously lived in Israel. Nearly three quarters (72%) of the Minimally Involved group have never been to Israel, whereas the majority (66%) of the Immersed group has traveled to Israel at least once, including about one third (32%) who have lived there.

Among age groups, Jewish adults ages 18-34 have the largest share ever to have traveled to Israel (59%), in large part because of Birthright Israel (see Table 8.3a, below). Smaller shares of older adults have traveled to Israel.

Smaller shares of financially struggling Jewish adults have traveled to Israel compared to those who are financially more secure. Two thirds of struggling Jewish adults (67%) have never been to Israel, whereas 64% of well-off adults have visited Israel at least once or lived there.

Table 8.2 Travel to Israel

	Never	Once	More than once	Lived in Israel	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	50	23	15	11	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	72	20	7	1	100
Cultural	58	22	11	9	100
Ritual	44	29	18	9	100
Communal	29	32	24	15	100
Immersed	15	19	34	32	100
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	54	20	19	6	100
SE Portland	54	36	7	3	100
SW Portland	38	25	18	19	100
NW Portland	36	18	26	19	100
Western Suburbs	47	25	18	9	100
SW Wash and N Portland	55	20	7	18	100
Other Suburbs	74	17	7	2	100
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	41	35	17	7	100
35-49	45	18	21	17	100
50-64	58	15	11	16	100
65-74	57	24	12	6	100
75+	68	13	11	8	100
<b>Financial situation</b>					
Struggling	67	14	12	7	100
Enough	43	23	16	19	100
Extra	52	30	12	6	100
Well-off	36	29	23	12	100
<b>Emotional attachment to Israel</b>					
Not at all attached	75	21	3	1	100
Not too attached	68	23	7	2	100
Somewhat attached	37	28	26	9	100
Very attached	8	22	31	38	100

Jewish adults from Greater Portland have traveled to Israel for many purposes, including as part of Birthright Israel (30% among age-eligible participants), for educational programs, volunteer trips, trips sponsored by Jewish organizations that are either shorter than six months (12%) or longer than six months (6%), vacations to visit family or friends (24%), and for work (5%; Table 8.3a).

The types of Israel travel experienced by Jewish adults in Greater Portland are related in part to Jewish engagement. The largest shares of any engagement groups that have been to Israel on a short-term trip (i.e., lasting fewer than six months) sponsored by a Jewish organization are in the Communal (25%) and Immersed (24%) groups. The Immersed group has the largest share of Jewish



adults who have traveled to Israel for vacation or to visit friends or family (59%), for long-term programs (i.e., six months or longer) sponsored by Jewish organizations (14%), or for work (11%).

Among Jewish adults ages 18-34, 45% traveled to Israel with Birthright, compared to the 14% of adults ages 34-49. Of the Jewish adults younger than age 51<sup>22</sup> who have been to Israel only once, nearly three quarters traveled on a Birthright Israel trip (Table 8.3b).

**Table 8.3a Types of trips to Israel**

	Birthright (age < 51)	Vacation or to visit friends/family	Educational program, volunteer trip, or a trip sponsored by a Jewish organization (< 6 months)	Educational program, volunteer trip, or a trip sponsored by a Jewish organization (6 months +)	Work
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	30	24	12	6	5
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	--	11	4	1	1
Cultural	27	19	9	4	6
Ritual	34	30	16	6	1
Communal	33	43	25	9	6
Immersed	26	59	24	14	11
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	25	25	16	5	4
SE Portland	54	13	11	1	2
SW Portland	29	35	19	9	3
NW Portland	--	41	12	11	8
Western Suburbs	--	33	12	4	6
SW Wash and N Portland	--	14	6	5	1
Other Suburbs	--	18	7	1	3
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	45	21	8	5	1
35-49	14	34	16	5	6
50-64	--	25	15	8	7
65-74	n/a	29	14	3	4
75+	n/a	20	4	1	8

Table 8.3b Types of trips to Israel

	Birthright (age < 51)	Vacation or to visit friends/family	Educational program, volunteer trip, or a trip sponsored by a Jewish organization (< 6 months)	Educational program, volunteer trip, or a trip sponsored by a Jewish organization (6 months +)	Work
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	30	24	12	6	5
<b>Travel to Israel</b>					
Never	0	0	0	0	0
Once	73	31	19	2	2
More than once	48	82	39	6	12
Lived in Israel	--	53	20	33	19
<b>Emotional attachment to Israel</b>					
Not at all attached	21	8	4	1	<1
Not too attached	31	10	8	1	1
Somewhat attached	38	39	19	6	5
Very attached	36	58	23	16	14

## News about Israel

Nearly half of Jewish adults in Greater Portland follow news about Israel somewhat (36%) or very closely (12%; Table 8.4a). The majority of both the Communal (77%) and Immersed (87%) groups follow news about Israel somewhat or very closely, while the majority of the Minimally Involved (80%) group follows news about Israel not at all or not too closely. Jewish adults between the ages of 50 and 74 tend to track the news more closely than those who are older and those who are younger.

Jewish adults who have traveled to Israel more than once or who once lived there are more likely to follow news about Israel than those who have only been once or who never traveled to Israel (Table 8.4b). Similarly, Jewish adults who are somewhat or very emotionally attached to Israel follow news about Israel more closely than those who are not at all or not too attached.

Table 8.4a. News about Israel

	Not at all closely	Not too closely	Somewhat closely	Very closely	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	9	42	36	12	100
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally involved	15	65	17	3	100
Cultural	5	35	48	13	100
Ritual	18	56	24	1	100
Communal	3	20	50	27	100
Immersed	1	12	63	24	100
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	9	44	36	11	100
SE Portland	22	33	39	5	100
SW Portland	7	32	43	18	100
NW Portland	5	32	45	17	100
Western Suburbs	6	37	46	11	100
SW Wash and N Portland	4	58	29	9	100
Other Suburbs	2	53	21	24	100
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	8	56	31	5	100
35-49	3	46	41	10	100
50-64	9	33	45	13	100
65-74	8	25	42	24	100
75+	23	31	29	16	100

Table 8.4b News about Israel

	Not at all closely	Not too closely	Somewhat closely	Very closely	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	9	42	36	12	100
<b>Travel to Israel</b>					
Never	11	49	33	7	100
Once	8	40	43	9	100
More than once	3	33	49	15	100
Lived in Israel	6	20	36	38	100
<b>Emotional attachment to Israel</b>					
Not at all attached	22	46	26	6	100
Not too attached	6	69	24	1	100
Somewhat attached	4	28	58	11	100
Very attached	2	6	48	44	100

## Zionism and Views on Israel

Twenty-six percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland explicitly<sup>23</sup> self-identify as Zionists, while 52% explicitly do not; the remaining 22% either do not know how to identify (20%) or prefer to not

to say (2%). Notably, within the Greater Portland Jewish community, there are no significant differences between age groups on Zionist self-identification (Table 8.5a).

Jewish adults in the Immersed (54%) and Communal (43%) engagement groups have the largest shares who self-identify as Zionists, while the Minimally Involved group has the largest share who explicitly do not identify as Zionists (76%).

One third (34%) of Jewish adults in Greater Portland who have lived in Israel explicitly do not identify as Zionists (Table 8.5b). Adults who have never traveled to Israel or who have visited once have large shares who explicitly do not self-identify as Zionists (59% and 49%, respectively). Similarly, as may be expected, 90% of Jewish adults who are not at all emotionally attached to Israel explicitly do not self-identify as Zionists.

One fourth (25%) of very liberal Jewish adults in Greater Portland self-identify as Zionists, while 60% explicitly do not. By contrast, 36% of conservative and very conservative Jewish adults self-identify as Zionists, while 25% explicitly do not. Political moderates are the most likely to self-identify as Zionist (44%), while the largest share of conservative and very conservative Jewish adults do not know or prefer not to say (40%).

*There needs to be a larger conversation within the Jewish community related to Israel/Palestine. – male, 53, Other Suburbs*

**Table 8.5a. Zionist self-identification**

	No	Yes	Don't know / Prefer not to say	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	52	26	22	100
<b>Minimally involved</b>	76	10	14	100
Cultural	49	22	29	100
Ritual	40	24	36	100
Communal	33	43	24	100
Immersed	16	54	30	100
<b>Region</b>				
NE Portland	55	18	27	100
SE Portland	73	12	15	100
SW Portland	40	37	23	100
NW Portland	42	31	27	100
Western Suburbs	38	38	24	100
SW Wash and N Portland	58	16	26	100
Other Suburbs	48	31	21	100
<b>Age</b>				
18-34	50	20	30	100
35-49	51	32	17	100
50-64	44	30	26	100
65-74	45	28	27	100
75+	61	11	28	100

Table 8.5b Zionist self-identification

	No	Yes	Don't know / Prefer not to say	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	52	26	22	100
<b>Travel to Israel</b>				
Never	59	14	27	100
Once	49	27	25	100
More than once	31	43	25	100
Lived in Israel	34	52	14	100
<b>Emotional attachment to Israel</b>				
Not at all attached	90	1	9	100
Not too attached	60	7	33	100
Somewhat attached	32	36	32	100
Very attached	11	68	21	100
<b>Political views</b>				
Very liberal	60	25	15	100
Liberal	52	18	29	100
Moderate	35	44	21	100
Conservative and very conservative	25	36	40	100

Figure 8.1 displays the extent to which Jewish adults in Greater Portland agree or disagree with a series of statements about Israel. Nearly all (97%) agree that it is important for Israel to be a democratic state, including 82% who strongly agree. Most contested among Greater Portland's Jewish community is whether Israel lives up to its values with respect to human rights; 58% disagree with this statement, including 32% who strongly disagree.

*It's getting worse. During Sheikh Jarrab, people would get violent when I walked down the street downtown. I'd leave now if I could. – non-binary, 18-34, Northeast Portland*

*Like a lot of the [political] Left, there is now a virulent anti-Zionist streak in the more liberal parts of the Portland Jewish community that is very exclusionary. – female, 59, Northeast Portland*

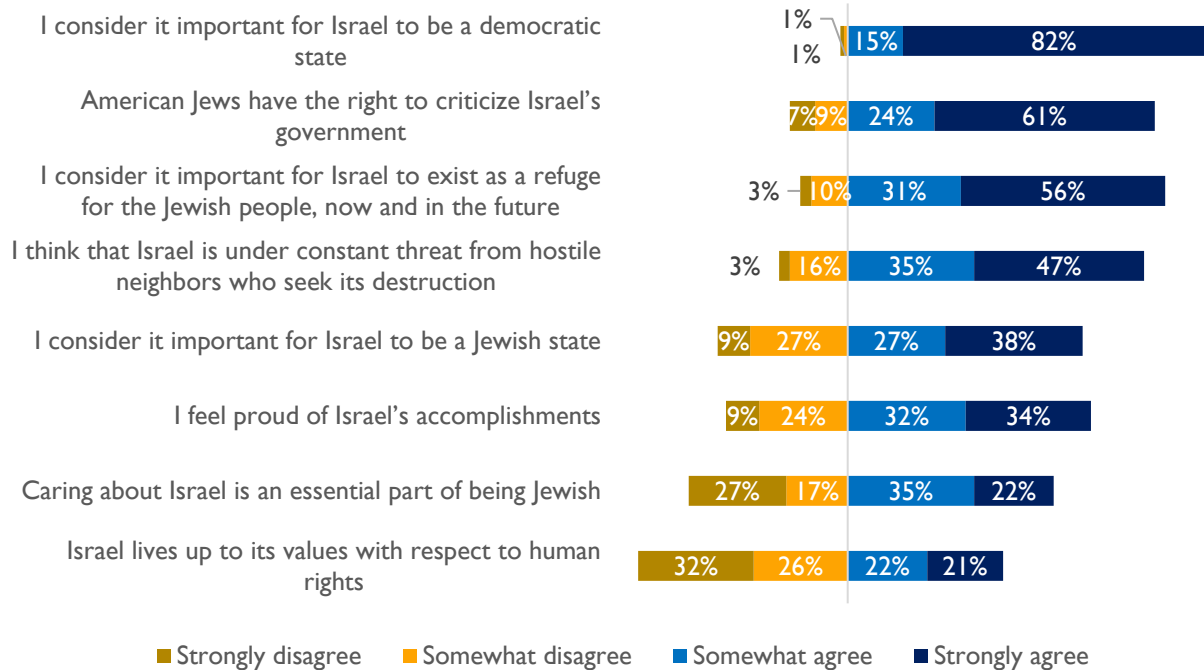
*The Federation is commonly regarded as being overly Zionist and hawkish—not enough on the side of seeking peaceful resolutions. – male, 50, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

*I am uncomfortable with the emphasis on supporting Israel. – female, 71, Southwest Portland*

*I feel very conflicted about the wonderful Jews I know and have worked with, as well as their warm, creative culture. However, their presence and behavior in Israel is appalling, and the US should not support it. – female, 61, Northwest Portland*

*Left-wing anti-Israel protests and antipathy are frightening. – female, 64, Southeast Portland*

Figure 8.1. Views about Israel



There is broad consensus among Jewish adults in Greater Portland that it is important for Israel to be a democratic state and that American Jews have the right to criticize Israel's government; there are no significant differences between Jewish engagement groups, regions, ages, or by emotional attachment to Israel (Table 8.6a). However, when it comes to whether it is important for Israel to exist for the Jewish people or the belief that Israel is under constant threat from hostile neighbors, there are significant differences. Each age group has a progressively larger share who strongly agree with these statements than the next younger group. Similarly, the greater one's emotional attachment to Israel, the more Jewish adults in Greater Portland agree with these statements. Notably, 36% of Jewish adults who are not at all attached to Israel still strongly agree that Israel should exist for the Jewish people.

Table 8.6b shows that the Cultural group, compared to the Minimally Involved and Ritual engagement groups, is more likely to strongly agree that Israel should be a Jewish state, that they feel proud of Israel's accomplishments, that caring about Israel is an essential part of being Jewish, and that Israel lives up to its values with respect to human rights.

Table 8.6a Views about Israel, strongly agree

	Consider it important for Israel to be a democratic state	American Jews have the right to criticize Israel's government	Consider it important for Israel to exist as a refuge for the Jewish people, now and in the future	Think that Israel is under constant threat from hostile neighbors who seek its destruction
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	82	61	56	47
<b>Jewish engagement</b>				
Minimally involved	80	55	49	28
Cultural	80	66	51	49
Ritual	70	66	47	31
Communal	93	60	76	64
Immersed	82	31	86	80
<b>Region</b>				
NE Portland	87	74	39	31
SE Portland	75	56	36	43
SW Portland	73	60	66	52
NW Portland	89	60	71	53
Western Suburbs	90	45	80	68
SW Wash and N Portland	75	60	61	28
Other Suburbs	64	51	51	46
<b>Age</b>				
18-34	71	54	37	28
35-49	88	62	59	47
50-64	84	65	62	52
65-74	86	60	73	63
75+	76	47	83	72
<b>Emotional attachment to Israel</b>				
Not at all attached	80	60	36	23
Not too attached	73	64	31	29
Somewhat attached	87	62	81	61
Very attached	86	42	96	86

Table 8.6b Views about Israel, strongly agree

	Consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state	Feel proud of Israel's accomplishments	Caring about Israel is an essential part of being Jewish	Israel lives up to its values with respect to human rights
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	38	34	22	21
<b>Jewish engagement</b>				
Minimally involved	24	13	10	13
Cultural	43	34	20	19
Ritual	31	27	13	11
Communal	59	51	40	27
Immersed	73	81	62	52
<b>Region</b>				
NE Portland	28	21	12	11
SE Portland	28	16	9	16
SW Portland	55	51	35	34
NW Portland	49	50	27	30
Western Suburbs	55	52	38	30
SW Wash and N Portland	43	23	18	10
Other Suburbs	40	37	28	23
<b>Age</b>				
18-34	23	23	19	16
35-49	33	30	16	14
50-64	55	36	29	14
65-74	59	54	38	33
75+	59	53	21	41
<b>Emotional attachment to Israel</b>				
Not at all attached	9	9	4	11
Not too attached	30	10	4	10
Somewhat attached	59	55	29	22
Very attached	78	81	74	49



# CHAPTER 9. FINANCIAL WELL-BEING AND HEALTH NEEDS

## Chapter Highlights

Jewish organizations in Greater Portland devote a significant share of their resources toward caring for families and individuals in need. The community's economic stability has provided sufficient means to provide for the needs of many. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are some unmet needs in the community.

Like the overall Jewish community in the United States, the Greater Portland Jewish community is highly educated and economically comfortable. Most Jewish households describe themselves as having enough money to meet their needs, including 43% of households that say they “have a little extra” or are “well-off.” Yet there is a significant number of households with unmet financial and health needs, including some whose needs preclude their participation in Jewish life.

- Twenty-eight percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland include at least one person who is limited in their work, school, or activities by some sort of health issue, special need, or disability. The most common health issues are mental or emotional health problems, faced by 18% of households, and chronic illnesses, experienced by 15% of households.
- Forty-two percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland require any of a variety of health services, whether they were received or not. The most commonly needed health service is mental health treatment, required by 34% of households.
- Among the 31,100 Jewish households in Greater Portland, 12% are serving as primary caregivers or managing care for a close relative or friend, separate from routine childcare.
- Sixty-six percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland have attained at least a bachelor's degree, a slightly higher proportion than in the national Jewish community.
- Close to two thirds (65%) of Jewish adults who are not in high school are working, including 50% working full-time in one job or position, 9% working part-time in one job or position, and 6% working in multiple positions. Sixteen percent of Jewish adults are retired.
- Twenty-six percent of Jewish households say either that they cannot make ends meet (4%) or are just managing to make ends meet (23%).
- While 16% of Jewish households in Greater Portland have an income of \$200,000 or more, the same proportion (16%) have an income of less than \$50,000.

## Chronic Health Issues

Chronic health issues, special needs, and disabilities can indicate the need for assistance from human and social service agencies. A health issue that limits someone from work, school, or activities can affect their ability to participate in the world around them, including the Jewish community. Twenty-eight percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland include at least one person limited in this way (Table 9.1), including about half (52%) of households that are struggling financially.

In 24% of Jewish households, only an adult has a health issue, in 3% only a child has a health issue, and in 1%, both an adult and a child have a health issue (not shown in table).

*Wished we participated more, but health problems [in the last few years] for one family member have constrained our abilities to participate. – female, 58, Southwest Portland*

*There are more services in larger cities in Jewish communities than there are here in Oregon. I admire that we support Holocaust survivors, but we need to [help others more too] (e.g., those who have disabilities, etc.). – female, Southwest Portland*

**Table 9.1. Chronic health issues, special needs, and disabilities**

	Someone has a chronic health issue, special need, or disability
<b>All Jewish households</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Jewish engagement</b>	
Minimally Involved	19
Cultural	35
Ritual	19
Communal	28
Immersed	34
<b>Region</b>	
NE Portland	30
SE Portland	42
SW Portland	23
NW Portland	12
Western Suburbs	22
SW Wash and N Portland	35
Other Suburbs	21
<b>Age</b>	
18-34	25
35-49	18
50-64	42
65-74	27
75+	31
<b>Minor child in household</b>	
No	31
Yes	19
<b>Financial situation</b>	
Struggling	52
Enough	23
Extra	18
Well-off	16

The most common health issues are mental or emotional health problems, experienced by someone in 18% of Jewish households in Greater Portland (63% of households with any health issue; Table 9.2). Fifteen percent of Jewish households include someone limited by a chronic illness (56% of households with a health issue). Other top health issues include physical disabilities (8% of all Jewish households), developmental or intellectual disabilities (7%), and substance abuse or addiction (5%).

Respondents who indicated that someone in their household was experiencing mental or emotional health problems were asked to provide more information. Nine percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland include someone with a significant mental health condition such as anxiety, panic attacks, OCD, persistent depressive disorder, PTSD, or eating disorders, and 4% include someone with severe and persistent mental illness, such as major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia/schizoaffective disorder (not shown in table).

**Table 9.2. Types of health issues, special needs, or disabilities**

	All Jewish households	Jewish households with health issue
Any health issue, special need, or disability	28	100
Mental or emotional health problems	18	63
Chronic illness	15	56
Physical disability	8	29
Developmental or intellectual disability	7	26
Substance abuse/addiction	5	19
Dementia, including Alzheimer's Disease	1	3
Complications related to COVID-19	<1	1
Other	1	2

## Support Systems

Seven percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland feel that they have no close friends or relatives they can rely upon for support in the event they need it, and 51% feel they can only rely on a few people. Households that are struggling financially tend to have fewer people they can count on compared to households that are financially stable.

Table 9.3. Personal support networks

	No one	Just a few people	A fair number of people	A lot of people	Total
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	7	51	27	14	
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	8	63	25	4	100
Cultural	11	53	25	11	100
Ritual	2	43	29	26	100
Communal	3	47	34	16	100
Immersed	4	45	28	23	100
<b>Region</b>					
NE Portland	1	54	33	12	100
SE Portland	1	53	32	14	100
SW Portland	2	45	23	30	100
NW Portland	7	43	39	11	100
Western Suburbs	11	54	27	8	100
SW Wash and N Portland	17	54	20	9	100
Other Suburbs	4	72	14	11	100
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	6	53	24	17	100
35-49	4	61	26	9	100
50-64	11	39	34	16	100
65-74	8	50	32	9	100
75+	3	67	24	6	100
<b>Financial situation</b>					
Struggling	25	59	10	6	100
Enough	4	52	31	14	100
Extra	2	53	30	16	100
Well-off	2	45	37	15	100

## Health Service Needs

Forty-two percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland indicated that someone in the household needed any of a variety of health services, whether or not they received it (Table 9.4). The most commonly needed service, required by one third (34%) of households, was mental health treatments, such as counseling, medication, psychotherapy, or inpatient treatment. Thirteen percent of households needed assistance in obtaining or paying for medical care, dental care, or vision care, and 7% required assistance related to aging for themselves, their spouse, or a parent.

**Table 9.4. Health service needs**

	All Jewish households
Any service need	42
Mental health treatment (e.g., counseling, medication, psychotherapy, inpatient treatment)	34
Assistance in obtaining or paying for medical care, dental care, or vision care	13
Assistance related to aging for self, spouse, or parent	7
Assistance for a child or adult who has a developmental or intellectual disability	5
Assistance for a victim, bystander, or witness of domestic violence	2
Other	1

Jewish adults ages 75 and older reported the least need for health services across age cohorts (Table 9.5), though the differences between age groups are not statistically significant. Parents with children in the household expressed higher needs of services than those without a minor in the household (not shown in table).

**Table 9.5. Health service needs**

	Needed health service, past year
<b>All Jewish households</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Jewish engagement</b>	
Minimally Involved	43
Cultural	41
Ritual	51
Communal	47
Immersed	43
<b>Region</b>	
NE Portland	45
SE Portland	54
SW Portland	29
NW Portland	41
Western Suburbs	39
SW Wash and N Portland	44
Other Suburbs	19
<b>Age</b>	
18-34	45
35-49	55
50-64	49
65-74	35
75+	27
<b>Financial situation</b>	
Struggling	60
Enough	38
Extra	41
Well-off	37

Lack of transportation kept 4% of Jewish households in Greater Portland from medical appointments, meetings, work, or accessing things for daily living at least sometimes. That

percentage increases to 10% of households with Jewish adults ages 75 and older. Of Jewish households that include someone with a significant health issue, 15% said a lack of transportation created these problems at least sometimes, including 2% who said it was an issue all of the time.

Two percent of Jewish adults in Greater Portland do not have health insurance, compared to about 6% of the overall adult population of the area.<sup>24</sup>

## Caregiving

Twelve percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland are serving as the primary caregivers or managing the care for a close relative or friend on a regular basis, separate from routine childcare (Table 9.6). Five percent personally provide the care, 3% manage the care, and another 4% do both.

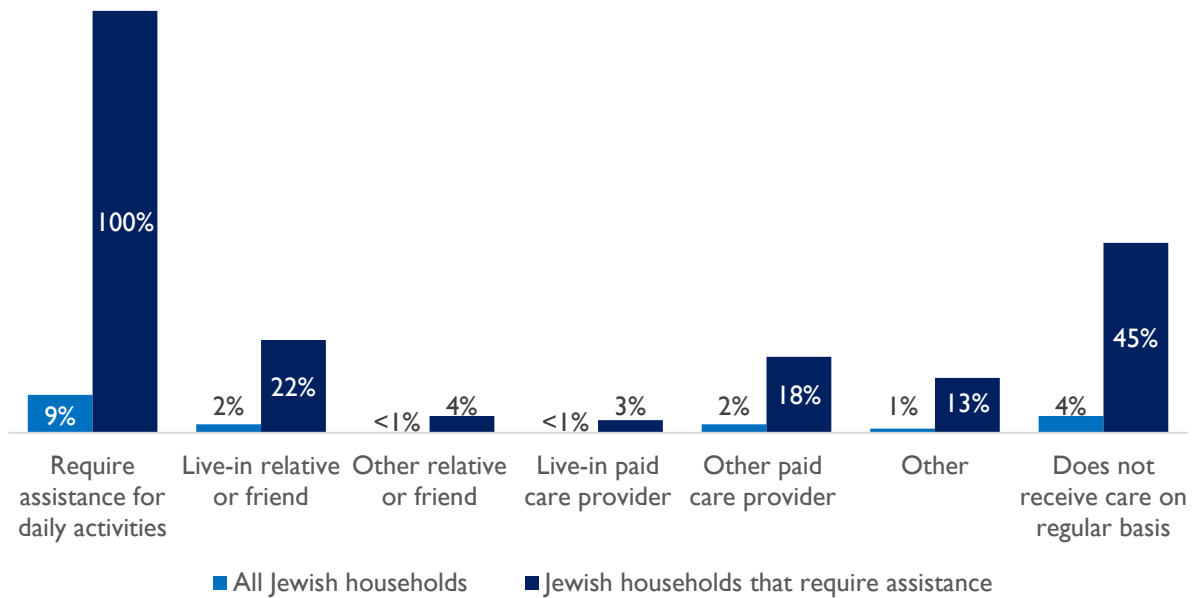
**Table 9.6. Caregivers**

	Household provides or manages care
Personally provide care	5
Manage care provided by others	3
Both personally provide care and manage care	4
Neither personally provide nor manage care	88

Fifty-eight percent of caregivers indicated that they are providing or managing care for someone outside their household who is age 65 or older, and 25% indicated that they are providing or managing care for someone outside their household who is under age 65. Thirty-one percent of caregivers are not providing or managing care for someone outside of their household.

Of Jewish households in Greater Portland that include someone age 55 or older, 9% include someone who requires assistance with daily activities such as doing housework, preparing meals, dressing and undressing, taking a bath or shower, or walking up and down stairs (Figure 9.1). Nearly half of households (45%) that require assistance with daily activities do not receive needed care on a regular basis. Twenty-six percent receive assistance from relatives or friends, 21% from paid care providers, and 13% from other sources.

Figure 9.1. Care providers for assistance with daily activities



Note: Totals add up to more than 100% because some households receive care from multiple sources.

## Older Adults

Of Jewish adults under age 75, 12% have a parent or close relative who is currently a resident of an assisted living facility, nursing home, or independent living building or community.

For Jewish households with members 55 years of age and older and without children, 66% plan to age in place at their current home and 19% plan to downsize to a smaller home, condo, or apartment in the coming years. Thirteen percent expect to move into an independent senior living building or retirement community, and 6% expect to move to an assisted living facility or nursing home. Four percent plan to move in with family or caregivers, and 8% have other plans. Twenty-two percent are uncertain of their plans (Table 9.7).

*Do not feel [that there is] access to subsidized housing for low-income seniors. – female, 73, Northeast Portland*

Table 9.7. Future plans for aging

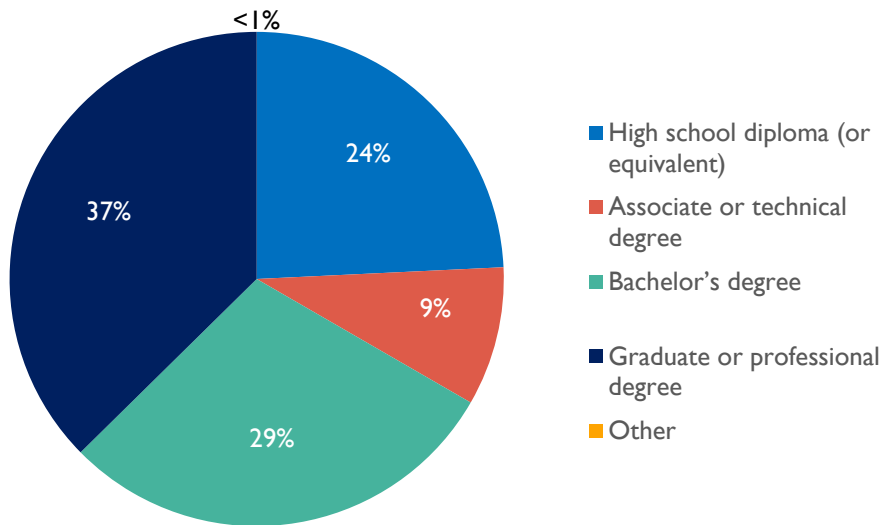
	Age-eligible Jewish households
Stay in current home and age in place	66
Move to a smaller home, condo, or apartment	19
Move to an independent senior living building or retirement community	13
Move to assisted living or a nursing home	6
Move in with family/caregivers	4
Other	8
Don't know	22

Note: Totals add up to more than 100% because respondents were able to select multiple options.

## Educational Attainment and Employment

The Jewish population of Greater Portland is highly educated. Two thirds of Jewish adults (66%) have earned at least a bachelor's degree, including 37% who have obtained a graduate or professional degree (Figure 9.2). Among Jewish adults in the United States, 58% have a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>25</sup>

Figure 9.2. Highest level of schooling completed



Two thirds of Jewish adults in Greater Portland who are not in high school are working either a full-time job (50%), a part-time job (9%), or in multiple positions (6%), while 16% are retired (Table 9.8). Despite 19% of Jewish adults not being currently employed—including 18% who say they are not working for pay and 1% who are on temporary leave—only 1% were receiving unemployment benefits. This suggests that the majority of this group may be unemployed by choice, perhaps as stay-at-home parents or as full-time students.



**Table 9.8. Employment**

	Jewish adults not in high school
Full-time in one job or position	50
Part-time in one job or position	9
Working in multiple positions	6
Not working for pay	18
On temporary leave	1
Retired	16

## Financial Situation and Income

To assess financial well-being, each survey respondent was asked to provide a subjective assessment of their household’s financial situation. Four percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland said they cannot make ends meet and another 23% shared that they are just managing to make ends meet (Table 9.9). These two categories are combined for the purposes of this report into a single category referred to as “struggling” and constitute 26% of Jewish households. Of the remaining households, 30% said they have enough money, 22% said they have some extra money, and 21% described themselves as well-off.

Among Jewish households that are not currently struggling, 14% stated that they could not or just managed to make ends meet at some point within the past 3 years (not in table).

**Table 9.9. Financial situation**

Report Category	Financial situation	All Jewish households
Struggling	Cannot make ends meet	4
	Just managing to make ends meet	23
Enough	Have enough money	30
Extra	Have some extra money	22
Well-off	Well-off	21

The financial situation of Jewish households in Greater Portland does not vary significantly by engagement group, region, or age (Table 9.10). It does vary by marital status; among households that do not include a married couple, 40% reported that they are struggling financially, compared to 18% of households that include a married couple.

Table 9.10. Financial situation

	Struggling	Enough	Extra	Well-off
<b>All Jewish households</b>	26	30	22	21
<b>Jewish engagement</b>				
Minimally Involved	31	23	26	20
Cultural	30	28	22	19
Ritual	21	39	19	20
Communal	21	32	22	26
Immersed	19	43	18	20
<b>Region</b>				
NE Portland	22	31	26	21
SE Portland	39	27	20	14
SW Portland	28	24	17	30
NW Portland	24	26	23	27
Western Suburbs	18	36	24	23
SW Wash and N Portland	33	32	21	14
Other Suburbs	23	39	16	22
<b>Age</b>				
18-34	33	28	17	22
35-49	23	32	30	16
50-64	35	22	25	18
65-74	18	42	15	25
75+	15	33	19	34
<b>Relationship status</b>				
Inmarried	11	34	30	25
Intermarried	21	27	28	24
Not married	40	32	11	17

Sixteen percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland have an income below \$50,000, and 16% have an income of \$200,000 or more (Table 9.11). Another 16% of households, however, declined to provide information on their income. Among households that did not report their incomes, 1% cannot make ends meet, 22% can just manage to make ends meet, 47% have enough money, 16% have some extra money, and 15% are well-off (not shown in table).

Overall, including all Jewish households, regardless of whether they provided information on income, it is clear that the majority of households that are struggling financially have income below \$50,000, while clear majorities of households that have some extra money or are well-off have income of \$100,000 or greater.

Table 9.11. Household income

	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 or more	Don't know/Prefer not to answer
<b>All Jewish households</b>	16	12	14	17	9	16	16
<b>Jewish engagement</b>							
Minimally Involved	12	9	8	25	7	13	26
Cultural	21	9	22	13	8	19	8
Ritual	19	25	8	12	9	16	11
Communal	9	13	11	14	13	19	22
Immersed	17	17	12	21	6	14	12
<b>Region</b>							
NE Portland	17	16	12	17	5	19	15
SE Portland	30	13	6	22	13	9	6
SW Portland	7	12	12	12	7	16	33
NW Portland	15	8	25	13	8	15	16
Western Suburbs	13	11	7	21	11	18	20
SW Wash and N Portland	11	9	32	17	10	11	10
Other Suburbs	19	11	5	12	8	34	12
<b>Age</b>							
18-34	21	12	24	15	7	8	13
35-49	13	11	5	25	15	21	10
50-64	16	7	21	16	8	18	14
65-74	18	14	20	11	8	6	22
75+	20	16	7	16	6	15	21
<b>Financial situation</b>							
Struggling	40	17	19	9	1	1	12
Enough	16	13	18	15	9	7	21
Extra	2	10	11	31	14	22	10
Well-off	<1	5	3	17	14	43	18

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) determines the federal poverty level (FPL) annually, using a formula based on household income and household size. Using that formula, 3% of Jewish households in Greater Portland are below 100% FPL (Table 9.12). In all, 12% of Jewish households are below 250% FPL.

Table 9.12 Federal poverty level

All Jewish households	
< 250% FPL	12
< 100% FPL	3
100-149% FPL	4
150-249% FPL	5

Many Jewish adults in Greater Portland expressed concerns about their future financial needs (Figure 9.3 and Table 9.13). Although a majority feel somewhat or very confident about all measures of financial confidence included in the survey, 20% are not at all (5%) or not too confident (15%) about their ability to keep current savings or investments, 5% are not at all (2%) or not too confident (3%) they will be able to afford basic living expenses, and 4% are not at all (2%) or not too confident (2%) they will be able to afford healthcare. Households that are struggling financially are much more concerned about the future than financially stable households; 59% of struggling households are not at all confident in their ability to keep current savings or investments, 20% are not at all confident they will be able to afford basic living expenses, and 19% are not at all confident they will be able to afford healthcare.

**Figure 9.3. Financial confidence**

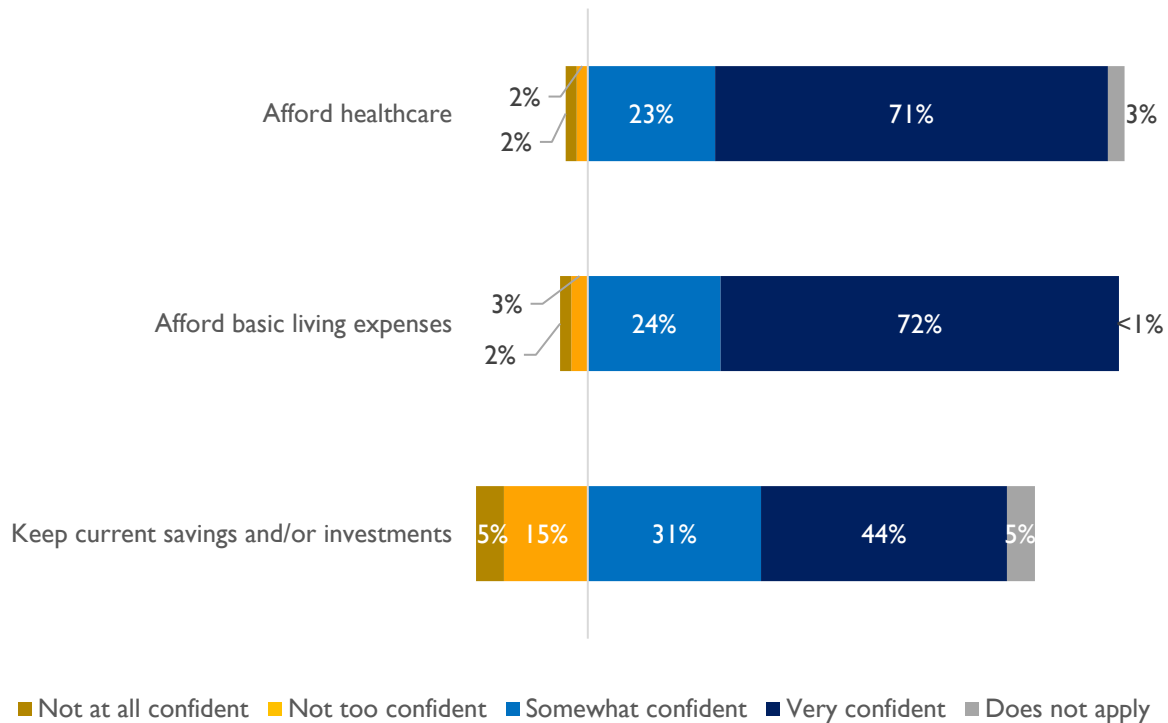


Table 9.13. Financial confidence, not at all or not too confident

	Keep current savings and/or investments	Afford basic living expenses	Afford healthcare
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	20	4	4
<b>Jewish engagement</b>			
Minimally Involved	15	5	7
Cultural	22	6	5
Ritual	13	3	4
Communal	19	7	8
Immersed	36	4	9
<b>Region</b>			
NE Portland	20	6	9
SE Portland	11	3	5
SW Portland	15	2	6
NW Portland	25	5	9
Western Suburbs	22	4	4
SW Wash and N Portland	21	13	9
Other Suburbs	37	2	<1
<b>Age</b>			
18-34	27	2	4
35-49	17	8	8
50-64	22	7	10
65-74	14	6	4
75+	4	1	1
<b>Financial situation</b>			
Struggling	59	20	19
Enough	15	1	5
Extra	4	<1	1
Well-off	<1	<1	<1

## Financial Vulnerability

The number of Jewish households receiving any public benefit may represent unmet needs in the community. Twenty-one percent of all Jewish households in Greater Portland receive any public benefit, such as CHIP, OHP, or Washington Apple Health (14%); food assistance such as SNAP (8%); TANF, SSI, or SSDI benefits (2%); subsidized housing (1%), or home energy or utility assistance (1%; Tables 9.14 and 9.15).

Table 9.14. Public benefits

	All Jewish households
Any public benefit	21
CHIP, OHP, or Washington Apple Health	14
Food assistance, SNAP	8
TANF, SSI, or SSDI benefits	2
Subsidized housing (e.g., Section 8, public housing)	1
Home energy or utility assistance (LIHEAP)	1

Table 9.15. Economic insecurity

	Receive at least one public benefit	Cannot afford unexpected \$400 expense
<b>All Jewish households</b>	21	11
<b>Jewish engagement</b>		
Minimally Involved	19	6
Cultural	23	16
Ritual	17	12
Communal	12	3
Immersed	22	5
<b>Region</b>		
NE Portland	22	17
SE Portland	21	5
SW Portland	7	6
NW Portland	16	1
Western Suburbs	9	6
SW Wash and N Portland	17	7
Other Suburbs	3	1
<b>Age</b>		
18-34	30	27
35-49	21	10
50-64	16	14
65-74	15	6
75+	3	4
<b>Financial situation</b>		
Struggling	45	35
Enough	14	1
Extra	6	<1
Well-off	0	1

Another benchmark commonly used to assess financial vulnerability is the ability to cover emergency expenses. Eleven percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland are unable to pay in full an unexpected \$400 emergency expense with cash, money currently in a bank account, or a credit card.<sup>26</sup>

Eleven percent of Jewish households in Greater Portland experienced an economic hardship within the past year related to paying for medical care or medicine; paying utility bills such as for water, electricity, or heat; buying the food they needed; or paying the rent or mortgage (Table 9.16), and another 3% of households struggled to pay these bills between one and three years ago. The most common hardship in the past year, experienced by 9% of households, was paying medical bills, with another 2% of households saying they struggled to pay such bills one to three years ago. Forty percent of households that are struggling financially faced a hardship in the past year, with an additional 6% of households that struggled to pay one or more of these bills between one and three years ago (Table 9.17).

*We are not all rich and need help with basic stuff. Sadly, I get more help from Christian-based agencies for things like food, rent assistance, and clothing banks. – female, 42, Other Suburbs*

*We are not the only family that's struggling. We \*will\* become homeless in [the near future] when this cheap housing I stumbled on becomes unavailable. Having a thousand-dollar loan won't even pay a security deposit. — female, 43, Southeast Portland*

**Table 9.16. Type of financial hardships**

	Within past year	Between 1-3 years ago
Any hardship	11	3
Health	9	2
Utilities	3	2
Food	3	1
Rent	2	2

**Table 9.17. Financial hardships**

	None	Within past year	Between 1-3 years ago
<b>All Jewish households</b>	86	11	3
<b>Jewish engagement</b>			
Minimally Involved	93	6	1
Cultural	82	15	4
Ritual	91	7	2
Communal	91	6	2
Immersed	85	4	11
<b>Region</b>			
NE Portland	83	13	4
SE Portland	84	13	3
SW Portland	92	4	4
NW Portland	96	3	1
Western Suburbs	94	3	3
SW Wash and N Portland	87	10	3
Other Suburbs	98	2	1
<b>Age</b>			
18-34	80	17	3
35-49	82	12	6
50-64	83	14	3
65-74	92	7	1
75+	99	1	1
<b>Financial situation</b>			
Struggling	55	40	6
Enough	96	<1	4
Extra	99	0	1
Well-off	100	0	<1

# CHAPTER 10. IN THE WORDS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

To provide an additional layer of insight into the thoughts and feelings of members of the Greater Portland Jewish community, the survey closed with two open-ended questions. As noted in Chapter 1, the responses to one of these, asking if there was anything else respondents thought we should know about the Greater Portland Jewish community, have been interspersed throughout this report. The responses to the other question, about what respondents perceive, based on their own experience, to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Greater Portland Jewish community, are summarized in this chapter. In all, 1,516 respondents answered this question. Their insights reinforce the findings presented throughout this report and provide further evidence of the needs of and opportunities available to the community. Many respondents touched on multiple topics, and these respondents may be included in more than one category. A topic was considered a theme for inclusion in the chapter if it was mentioned by at least 50 respondents.

The numbers in this chapter reflect the number of respondents who mentioned each theme being addressed. Unlike in previous chapters, these responses are not weighted to be representative of the full Jewish community. Some quotations have been edited for clarity or to preserve the anonymity of the respondent. As with the responses to the other open-ended question, the quotes presented here were selected not to endorse the views expressed by respondents, but to represent the range of views on that particular topic.

## Community Characteristics

### Geography

There were 232 comments relating to geography. A number of these were positive, praising the wealth of Jewish resources on the West Side, online programs and services, and the Eastside Jewish Commons and Moishe House for addressing the needs of people—especially young people—living in less densely populated regions. Many comments, however, highlighted the limitations of a geographically dispersed community (210), in particular the scarcity of Jewish organizations in certain neighborhoods, the invisibility of Jewish life, and the distance to synagogues, Jewish schools, and programs that makes participation in communal life unattractive or infeasible.

*I think it is a weakness that most of our Jewish organizations are based on the West Side when there are so many Jews on the East Side. I think established organizations underestimate the interest of young, unmarried, childless Jews to participate in Jewish community. — female, Northeast Portland*

*There is only one synagogue...and the rest are in Portland 30-40 minutes away across the bridge. This is too far for Hebrew school days and weekly events. There is no kosher food, and I need to go to Portland for this. It is disappointing how few Jewish events there are for young families with young children. — female, 30, Southwest Washington and North Portland*



## Community size

The size of the Jewish population of Greater Portland was mentioned by 183 people, with 74 highlighting the advantages of living in what they described as a close-knit and intimate community, and others marveling about the diversity of offerings *despite* what they described as the community's small size.

*I am grateful [for] how warm and supportive I have found other Jewish people I've met and our congregations. We feel an innate kinship being such a small population. — male, 45, Southwest Portland*

*For a 'small' town, the Portland Jewish community provides a wide range of services and programs. My sense is that there is something for everyone who wants to engage. And if you don't see a particular need being served, people will figure out how to provide it. — female, 65, Southwest Portland*

The limitations of the community's size, however, were noted by 117 people, most commenting on the reduced range of organizations, events, and community resources.

*It's a small community... Very little for my teen [child] to do. — female, 49, Northeast Portland*

*This is a relatively small community—which has drawbacks due to lack of resources. — female, 66, Southwest Portland*

## Unity and cohesion

One hundred twenty-eight respondents commented on the unity or the absence of cohesion within the community. Some comments were positive, praising organizations' efforts to communicate effectively, especially during the pandemic. However, other comments noted that the absence of unity and cohesion between organizations, either due to oversight or territorialism, had negative effects that reduced the reach of the community's offerings.

*Lacking the wherewithal of [other large] cities to have a coordinated approach across all organizations in the community; as a result, some things get missed or mishandled, due to lack of coordination between organizations or lack of funds. — male, 66, Northwest Portland*

*I think one of the biggest weaknesses in our Jewish community is the lack of synagogues and organizations working together, supporting each other's programs, sharing, and collaborating programs. Our Jewish community organizations are very territorial, rather than helping each other. — female, 75, Southwest Portland*

## Jewish Organizations

### Synagogues

Synagogues, temples, and *chavurot* were a popular topic (597) in the comments about the Greater Portland Jewish community's strengths and weaknesses. Overall, 286 people offered positive feedback about feeling welcomed and nurtured, and appreciation for their congregations' inclusive policies.

*I am very happy with my congregation, it feeds my spiritual, social, and political needs. – female, 72, Northeast Portland*

*I love the online accessibility...I enjoyed free High Holiday services through [congregation]. I also enjoyed free online programming through [congregation] during the pandemic. – female, 34, Southeast Portland*

There were 323 comments that identified areas for future improvement for area synagogues, including the need for a more welcoming culture, in particular towards newcomers; greater diversity of synagogues across Portland; and fewer economic barriers to membership. Some mentioned having failed to find a congregation that resonated with them. Some criticized as “anti-pluralist” events scheduled on Shabbat or those with non-kosher catering, which alienate religiously observant members of the community.

*Not great at including people. Even though there are several congregations nothing feels right. – female, 63, Northeast Portland*

*The biggest obstacle I see is that synagogues have to charge dues in order to survive, but this is a huge barrier, particularly for younger Jews, families, and working-class folks. – female, 45, Northeast Portland*

### **Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and Mittleman Jewish Community Center**

Two hundred fifty-three respondents mentioned the Federation and Mittleman JCC in their comments on the community’s strengths and weaknesses, including 131 who referred to these organizations as the “glue” and “big tent” of the community, and singled out for praise the programs and facilities, valuable outreach, and fundraising efforts to support to those in need.

*The Jewish Federation does an excellent job in raising money for people who need it. – female, 72, Western Suburbs*

*Strengths are Mittleman Jewish Community Center, with its educational and social opportunities and positive impact in Greater Portland. – female, 26, Southwest Portland*

However, 124 respondents identified opportunities for the Federation and Mittleman JCC to expand their reach and impact. Beyond the geographical challenges of the community, these respondents discussed the need for more family-friendly schedules for activities, less costly membership, greater sensitivity around some community members’ inability to make donations, and greater openness to those whose views on Israel and social justice diverge from those of communal leaders.

*Lots of activities sound interesting but are during the day or at 5 or 6 pm and those of us with full-time jobs can’t make them. – male, 48, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

*Not having a discounted rate for membership at the JCC. – female, 26, Southwest Portland*

# Jewish Leadership

## Outreach and communications

Two hundred seventy-three respondents commented on communal leaders' outreach and communications, with 85 positive comments relating to Greater Portland Jewish organizations' efforts to invite, inform, and encourage the involvement of all Jews, especially those who are minimally engaged, newcomers, and those in interfaith relationships.

*They provide very good outreach to the community for information on events, synagogues, and social services. – male, 76, Southeast Portland*

*I was warmly welcomed when I subscribed to the email news and PJ Library. Loving that so far. Everything I've seen in emails and letters [is] very warm and inviting. – female, 31, Other Suburbs*

One hundred eighty-eight respondents described potential opportunities for improved outreach and communications, including ways to provide greater access to information about organizations and events, especially for the minimally affiliated, as well as communications in addition to those concerning fund-raising efforts, to make people feel valued and welcome.

*There needs to be a better way for newcomers like me to be welcomed into the community. I do not understand what organizations exist, what they do, how to become part of the community in more than just name. I strongly desire connection and a sense of community, but I haven't been able to figure out where I might belong in Portland. So, I remain isolated. It would be great to have a welcoming program that helps explain the landscape and helps you identify the congregations and groups where you might fit. – female, 44, Southwest Portland*

*I have been disappointed in the Jewish community. They do not participate in outreach activities and are not welcoming if you don't know anyone. – female, 71, Other Suburbs*

*The Jewish community does not reach out to us, except for donations. We've lived here [for several decades] and never have we received a friendly non-donation call to meet fellow Jews in any type of social setting. I suppose we could be proactive and reach out, but it would be nice if it were the other way around. – male, 78, Northeast Portland*

## Religious, professional, and lay leaders

Two hundred eight respondents commented on community leaders as strengths or weaknesses of the community, including religious (100) and professional (71) leaders. Of these, 148 respondents made positive observations, including praise for religious leaders for being welcoming, curating meaningful services, and arranging social justice programs, and praise for professional leaders being responsive to the needs of the community.

*I love my rabbi of [many years], Rabbi [name redacted], and studying with him in classes in person and online. – male, 61, Southwest Portland*

*[Redacted] is a strong leader and has built a solid professional team, listens, and is responsive. – female, 61, Northwest Portland*

Sixty-two respondents were critical of religious and professional leaders for not being inclusive of diverse segments of the community, for their political stances, and for failing to maintain regular contact with aging members of their organizations.

*While I joined [synagogue name redacted] for the rabbi, and we had several person-to-person meetings about my [parent], he was not available to me when [my parent] died to give solace or support. — female, 76, Southwest Portland*

*The Jewish institutions and leaders are ...extremely outdated. [Redacted], for instance, has a very important role and it's a tremendous shame that [this leader] is so shamefully biased about Israel and thus irresponsible as a spokesperson for our community. — male, 38, Northeast Portland*

There were also several comments about lay leaders and volunteers that mentioned the many ways that volunteers enrich community life, as well as how volunteering enriches the respondents' lives. Other comments described frustration with obstacles to becoming involved in volunteering, as well as concerns about the lack of young people in leadership.

## Subgroups

Many of the comments about the Greater Portland Jewish community's strengths and weakness focused on programs, activities, and services for specific segments of the community.

### Families and children

Fifty-five respondents described the ways communal organizations reach out to and provide activities for families and children as one of the great strengths of the community. In particular, these respondents complimented the synagogues for family-friendly services, organizations such as the Mittleman JCC and Oregon Jewish Museum for family-friendly programs, PJ library for being a valuable resource, and other families for being welcoming and committed to the community.

*Jewish Portland is plural, inclusive, and participatory, with shuls open to Jews of varying or no background. It's been a 35-year learners' minyan for our family who traveled among [multiple] synagogues, day school, and two summer camps. — male, 72, Northeast Portland*

*I first connected to the Greater Portland Jewish community after my [child] was born and I realized how important it was to me that we have that connection. We found everyone welcoming and the various children's programming and synagogues great. — female, 44, Northeast Portland*

*Oregon Jewish Museum does a great job, especially with education to children about the Holocaust. — male, 83, Northwest Portland*

However, 86 respondents described areas for improvement. They shared frustrations with their inability to find suitable and meaningful social and religious connections, in particular for teenagers, those with special-needs children, and couples without children.

*Just didn't find a good fit for myself or my family, particularly for my teenager. She went to [a particular camp] a couple of times, but she didn't really make any friends there. — female, 56, Southeast Portland*

*Some of the synagogues are not terribly welcoming and none of them do an adequate job accommodating the needs of children who are neurodivergent. These families feel isolated and left out. – female, 48, Southwest Portland*

*As a married couple with no children in our mid to late 40s and no plans for children, there is really nothing bringing us closer to the community or keeping us involved as everything tends to revolve around families... There really does not feel that there is a place for us. As such, we have pretty much stopped trying to be a part of the community and have mostly given up, which does sadden us. – female, 47, Western Suburbs*

## **Seniors**

One hundred ten respondents commented on the Greater Portland Jewish community's offerings for seniors. Collectively, they applauded the community's efforts to support seniors, and particularly Holocaust survivors, with programs and services, through organizations such as Cedar Sinai Park's Robison Jewish Health Center and Rose Schnitzer Manor. Seniors especially praised leaders who maintained contact with them despite their absence from activities due to health and transportation challenges. However, respondents also noted a significant need for social programs—and related transport—to keep seniors connected to the community, as well as for easier access to senior services and related assistance to ease the burden on caregivers. Seniors also noted the need for continued online programs and services to enable their participation as they deal with health and mobility issues.

*Jewish family services ineffective helping with aging parents when they were needed. – male, 53, Northwest Portland*

*Need a centralized information and referral service especially to help and support seniors. – female, 72, Southwest Portland*

## **Young adults**

Sixty-seven respondents commented on the degree to which young adults are integrated into or excluded from the Greater Portland Jewish community. Some young adults singled out for praise Chabad, Eastside Jewish Commons, Hillel, Moishe House, and One Table for making them feel welcome and catering to their social and religious needs. They were also pleased with leadership training options made available to them. However, 50 respondents described ways in which programs and services for young adults were lacking. Whereas older people expressed concerns about young adults being unaffiliated and about the future of leadership and philanthropy in the community, some young adults noted that they did not find the current suite of community programs to be relevant to their needs; in particular, they sought more cultural and social programs, and believed they would feel more comfortable if a more diverse set of opinions about Israel was welcome in the community.

*It's very hard to connect with other Jewish people in Portland outside of a synagogue. As a childless, cultural Jew in my 30s, even events open to the public are often not of interest to me (too religiously focused and aimed at families). It would be nice to see more social groups for Jews in their 30s. – female, 36, Southeast Portland*

*There are few young people at synagogue. I am uninterested in participating in Jewish events with older Jews who have staunch Zionist views on Israel. – female, 29, Western Suburbs*

## Interfaith couples and families

Fifty-two respondents commented on how the Greater Portland Jewish community treats people in interfaith relationships, some praising the community for its inclusiveness and others criticizing the outreach efforts of leaders and organizations.

*[The community] is changing and diversifying, it is more receptive to mixed families, more progressive voices in clergy, younger and more open-minded community leaders, etc. – female, 74, Northwest Portland*

*I feel very disconnected. I want to be involved, but I have a lot of anxiety about it. My spouse is not Jewish, so I would be going to events alone. – female, 30, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

## Politics

### US politics and social values

Three hundred sixty-seven respondents commented on the prevailing political and social values of the Greater Portland Jewish community. Of these, 229 were proud of the community's overall liberal bent, including its commitment to diversity and inclusion, political activism, and pursuit of social justice. Many specifically noted that the community is welcoming to People of Color and those identifying as LGBTQ+.

*Very civic minded and progressive, which I appreciate. – female, 76, Northeast Portland*

*Engaged with the civic and moral/ethical life of the city; doing meaningful charitable work; providing moral/ethical guidance/leadership on issues of immigrant rights, human rights, women's rights, LGBQ and trans rights. – male, 64, Northeast Portland*

There were 144 respondents, however, who were critical of the community's stances on US politics. Some argued that the community is intolerant of conservative perspectives, while others lamented the community's perceived failure to live up to its proclaimed values. Many felt that the political divisions within the community or the way politics are sometimes invoked in what they believe are inappropriate settings threaten the community's unity and cause some to feel alienated.

*Weakness is extreme liberal mindset and very low tolerance for others' points of view. – male, 58, Northwest Portland*

*Too broad a political/religious spectrum to be cohesive. – male, 69, Northwest Portland*

*For me, personally, I don't like it when politics is brought into the synagogue. – male, 75, Northeast Portland*

*I personally feel disconnected from the Jewish community here. Having a mixed race, mixed religion, mixed culture family, my feeling of connection with the Jewish community here has dwindled over time, especially after having my own kids. There aren't any kids who look like mine when we go to a Jewish event; it is mentally awkward and alienating to belong to the community as a family. – female, 70, Southeast Portland*

## Israel

One hundred twenty-six respondents included Israel in their feedback about the community's strengths and weaknesses, with the positive comments praising support for both pro- and anti-Zionist perspectives in the community. The negative comments (107) also criticized both pro- and anti-Zionist perspectives, some lamenting the prominence of views with which they disagreed, and others worried about the tension caused by the absence of dialogue about opposing stances. Some shared their refusal to associate with certain organizations due to their stances vis-à-vis Israel, while others argued that one could issue critiques of the Israeli government without sacrificing a relationship with the Israeli state.

*At best Zionism is not mentioned in certain spaces but remains an elephant in the room. This is a big barrier for including all Jews. – female, 41, Northeast Portland*

*I love Israel, and I am happy it exists. But the Federation does a huge disservice to our younger generations by refusing to have an open dialogue amongst the community (and by community, I exclusively mean Jews). You can be a young, progressive, liberal-as-hell, Jewish, gay, AND someone that believes Jews have a right to self-determination in their homeland, but wholeheartedly disagree with many policies of the Israeli government. – female, 36, Southeast Portland*

## Antisemitism

Sixty-eight respondents raised the issue of antisemitism in the context of the strengths and weakness of the Greater Portland Jewish community, with some praising efforts to fight against antisemitism and to increase security for the community. Others expressed concern and criticism of community leadership for not fighting antisemitism sufficiently and confessed that they might participate more in the community if they did not fear for their safety.

*I want to be involved, but I have a lot of anxiety about it...I am afraid of targeted attacks and antisemitism. I grew up in the area as well, and I remember being the one of just a few Jewish kids. My dad told me not to tell people I was Jewish at school. – female, 30, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

*I feel like our community is scared, rightfully so, of the consequences of living in full view. Jews in Portland have experienced numerous waves of antisemitism that had/have real life implications. – non-binary, 35-49, Western Suburbs*

## Economics and Affordability

One hundred fifty-six respondents wrote about some of the financial burdens of Jewish life. A number of respondents praised local synagogues and organizations for their philanthropic efforts directed at those with financial challenges. There were, however, 132 comments that focused more on the high costs of joining organizations and participating in programs, the distribution of communal resources, and fundraising strategies that respondents found off-putting and embarrassing. Some respondents expressed concerns regarding the long-term viability of Jewish organizations, given the perception that the community's biggest donors are aging.

*They do nothing to make it easy to attend services without it costing an enormous amount of money. – female, 66, Western Suburbs*

*It's important for synagogues to be mindful of... financial issues and to have a sliding scale available to people based on income. Lots of them have options like this, but it needs to be a welcoming thing and not a secret thing you have to ask for, something that's presented to people equally instead of just assuming who needs that regardless of their financial situation. – non-binary, 18-34, Western Suburbs*

*Cost of being active member of most Jewish organizations and events (which are too often fundraisers). – female, 62, Southwest Portland*

*Tuition for [day school] is ridiculously too expensive. – male, 45, Other Suburbs*

*Too much dependence on a few major donors for financial support. – male, 72, Northwest Portland*

*When I went to [an event] out in the community, and I could barely afford to pay for my lunch, I felt very embarrassed as they passed around a container for [a Jewish charity] and watched people add a contribution, and I didn't know that I needed to bring extra money to donate. It was not discreet at all, it was humiliating. – female, 35-49, Southwest Washington and North Portland*

## Service Needs

Seventy-two respondents mentioned social service agencies, including 56 who lauded the agencies' support for those in financial crisis, the sick, veterans, and those in need of mental health support services.

*I am fortunate to be a veteran and get some emotional support from the community. – male, 75, Western Suburbs*

*When I had a close family member that needed services, I found that Jewish Federation was extremely helpful for guidance in how to access services. – female, 66, Southwest Portland*

Negative comments about services noted that as helpful as local Jewish agencies are, they cannot keep up with demand. Additionally, some respondents said it should not be so difficult to access services.

*There are many who need the services available to them from the Jewish community, but due to their circumstances they are disheartened and feel unworthy of receiving such support. I don't know if there needs to be more outreach or not, but outreach needs to take additional shapes and forms in order to gather these people into a support system. – female, 62, Western Suburbs*

*I have reached out for help for both myself and my aging and disabled, Jewish mother and have not had luck with finding much help. – female, 42, Other Suburbs*



# CHAPTER 11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Greater Portland Jewish community is large and strong, with a robust network of programs, services, and organizations to serve the needs of its members. The population has grown significantly over the last 15 years. The area's strong economy and reputation for high quality of life have driven much of the growth by attracting newcomers to the community in large numbers between 2009 and 2020. The rate of growth may have slowed or even stalled during the Covid-19 pandemic, and expectations for future growth may be tempered by the high cost of living and rising concerns over public safety.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the community's large size,<sup>28</sup> many community members still describe the Jewish community as small, perhaps reflecting the multiple Jewish subcultures that exist within different regions of the community. The community's growth is not entirely reflected in the number of Jewish individuals and families who participate in local Jewish organizations. A majority of Jewish adults in Greater Portland are not affiliated with Jewish organizations, preferring to engage in Jewish life solely at home, on their own, or with close family and friends. Their main barriers to participation are traffic or the location in which activities are held, not finding activities that interest them, lack of confidence in their Jewish knowledge, and the financial expense. The degree to which the organized Jewish community can help people overcome these barriers will determine the success of any efforts to integrate these households into Jewish communal life. There are opportunities for Jews of any background, interest, level of religious observance, political preference, and cultural proclivity, but some community members may require additional assistance to find the activities and organizations that most appeal to them.

The words of community members, shared in chapter 10, taken together with findings presented in chapters 2-9, contribute to a detailed portrait of the Jewish community of Greater Portland. This study described community members' demographic characteristics, participation in Jewish life in both communal and private settings, and their attitudes about Jewish religion and culture, Israel, and the local Jewish community. The findings presented here lead us to several recommendations that we hope will inform planning and policy-making by leaders of the Greater Portland Jewish community, both in the immediate future and in the coming decade.

**Invest in adult education and more diverse programs and activities.** In Greater Portland, 60% of Jewish adults belong to engagement groups with behavioral patterns that involve little to no contact with Jewish organizations. Nevertheless, many of these adults engage in Jewish life on their own terms with family and friends. Their disengagement from organized Jewish life does not necessarily reflect a lack of interest in Judaism. Rather, in many cases, it indicates that they have not found Jewish activities that interest them or that they are not confident that their current level of Jewish knowledge will enable them to fit comfortably within Jewish institutions. For the former, the community must develop new Jewish activities that might appeal to unengaged Jews who are nevertheless interested in Jewish life. For the latter, the community must develop or expand programs that will allow those who wish to acquire foundational Jewish content knowledge to do so

in a no-pressure, supportive environment. The emergence of the Eastside Jewish Commons and the growth of Chabad suggest there are multiple models that can successfully meet these needs in the Greater Portland Jewish community.

**Promote opportunities to volunteer through Jewish organizations.** Jews in Greater Portland are distinguished by their sense that working for justice and equality and taking care of Jews in need are critical to what it means to be Jewish. Yet only 47% of Jewish adults in the area say they volunteered anywhere in the past year, including 19% who volunteered for or with a Jewish organization. Research on the volunteering habits and preferences of Jews in the United States suggests that volunteering is a core activity that appeals across all ages, denominations, and socioeconomic statuses, and can be especially valuable for providing an outlet that unites universal prosocial values with individuals' Jewish identities.<sup>29</sup> Because of its universal appeal, volunteering may also serve as a means of providing low-cost, low-barrier activities that help newcomers and less-engaged individuals and families meet new people who share their interests and become more involved in the Jewish community.

**Focus on newcomers to the community.** Although nearly half of Jewish adults in Greater Portland have resided in the areas for 20 or more years, and although 23% were raised in the area, including 13% who have spent their entire lives there, about one third have arrived in the past decade. Many of these newcomers say they have had trouble learning their way around their new Jewish community and figuring out where they belong. It may be helpful to have a community-wide initiative to introduce new residents to their options for synagogues, Jewish schools, Jewish cultural programs and activities, and to point them to places where they can meet other Jews who share their interests.

**Support families in need.** Collectively, the Greater Portland Jewish community is largely middle-class, with a substantial proportion of the population that is quite affluent. However, 26% of Jewish households in the area are struggling financially, saying that they either cannot make ends meet or are just managing to do so. Three percent of Jewish households live below the federal poverty limit, and another 9% live below 250% of it. Five percent worry about affording basic living expenses. Many receive at least one public benefit or have experienced a recent financial hardship, and 11% say they cannot afford an emergency \$400 expense that can be paid off with cash on hand, money currently in a bank, or on a credit card. To best serve families in need, it may be necessary to raise awareness of available resources in the community, particularly for young adults, families with children, and senior adults, and to allocate new resources.

**Reach out beyond the historic geographic core of the community.** The bulk of Greater Portland's Jewish communal infrastructure is physically located on the west side of Portland and in the Western Suburbs, which are home to about 40% of Jewish households in the area. Although there are also synagogues, schools, and social and cultural resources in the other regions, and growing communal infrastructure on the East Side of Portland, residents of these regions report often feeling as though they are building community on their own. A little more than half of Jewish residents of the Southwest Washington and North Portland and Other Suburbs regions, and nearly half of those in Southeast Portland, do not feel any connection to the Greater Portland Jewish community. Several respondents from the Vancouver area in particular, part of the Southwest Washington and North Portland region, noted that they feel as though they are a completely separate community, cut off from the rest of the Greater Portland Jewish community both physically, by the Columbia River, and emotionally. Bringing more programs to outlying areas within

Greater Portland, keeping and making more programs and activities available online, and promoting stronger ties between Jewish organizations in the outlying areas and those in the historic core may help to market communal offerings to new people and expand the community's reach.

**Endorse greater efforts at civil dialogue about Israel.** The Greater Portland Jewish community has strong ties to Israel. Nearly half of Jewish adults in the community feel strongly or somewhat connected to Israel, and half have visited Israel at least once. Strong majorities of Jewish adults in the community believe it is important for Israel to exist as a refuge for the Jewish people, now and in the future, consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state, and feel proud of Israel's accomplishments. Yet the community is deeply divided over Israel. Only 26% of Jewish adults in Greater Portland describe themselves as Zionists, compared with 52% who say they are not and 22% who do not know or would prefer not to say, and 58% do not believe that Israel lives up to its values with respect to human rights. Many respondents used the open-ended questions on the survey to question whether it is appropriate for local Jewish organizations to support Israel, specifically citing Israel's behavior toward Palestinians, the political influence of Orthodox streams of Judaism, and the treatment of racial and religious minorities. Some believe that the community's failure to engage in constructive dialogue is alienating specific segments of the community who are committed to Judaism and a Jewish way of life but are troubled by current Israeli policies. Others wish that the community would throw its unequivocal support behind Israel, regardless of the news of the day. Respondents on both sides of the divide could benefit from the facilitation of an organization like Resetting the Table or For the Sake of Argument to help them have difficult discussions about Israel in the spirit of the great sages Shammai and Hillel, whose Talmudic disputes are legendary but were always for the sake of Heaven.<sup>30</sup>

These recommendations are not one-size-fits-all, and we do not expect that they will all resonate perfectly with every individual, group, or organization within the Greater Portland Jewish community. However, the recommendations emerge from data collected systematically from a representative sample of the community. This study assesses the size, characteristics, needs, and concerns of a diverse community with descriptions of the interest in and opportunities for Jewish engagement. We hope that this snapshot of the community in late 2022 and early 2023 will stimulate discussion to enable the community to capitalize on its strengths, improve on its weaknesses, and plan for its future.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Leonard Saxe, Theodore Sasson, and Janet Krasner Aronson, “Pew’s Portrait of American Jewry: A Reassessment of the Assimilation Narrative,” in *American Jewish Year Book 2014*, ed. A. Dashefsky and I. Sheskin (New York, NY: Springer International Publishing, 2015), 78–81.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Fried. (1972). *The Portland Jewish community*. Portland, OR: Jewish Welfare Federation of Portland.

<sup>3</sup> The Berman Jewish Data Bank’s documentation for the 2009 study indicates that the initial study estimates “were reviewed with the Federation on behalf of the Data Bank (by Ira Sheskin). A general consensus emerged that the published number was probably an overestimate.” See <<https://www.jewishdatabank.org/databank/search-results?city=Portland&state=Oregon&year=2009>>.

<sup>4</sup> We have not located any PDF copies of the 1971 study, but print copies can be found in a few dozen libraries around the United States, including at Brandeis University.

<sup>5</sup> This question elicited 728 written responses.

<sup>6</sup> Janet Krasner Aronson et al., “Building Resilient Jewish Communities: A Jewish Response to the Coronavirus Crisis: BRJC Topline Report for Aggregated Data” (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, September 2020).

<sup>7</sup> On April 10, 2023, as we were writing this report, President Biden signed a bipartisan congressional resolution ending the COVID national emergency.

<sup>8</sup> ACS 2021 five-year estimates.

<sup>9</sup> Throughout this report, quotes from respondents will typically be included with the respondent’s gender, age, and region, and possibly some additional relevant information to provide context. In some cases, gender, age, or region may be redacted to help protect the identity of the respondent, or age may be presented as an age range. In other cases, information on gender or age will not be provided because the respondent did not answer the relevant question.

<sup>10</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.” (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2021.)

<sup>11</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

<sup>12</sup> ACS 2021 five-year estimates. ACS provides a narrow range, not a specific age.

<sup>13</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

<sup>14</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

<sup>15</sup> As asked on the survey, the question included an explicit response option for respondents who preferred not to answer. Two percent selected this option and are excluded from the analysis. However, if they were included, the estimated proportion of Jewish adults identifying as very liberal would be reduced to 31% and all other estimates would be unchanged.

<sup>16</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

<sup>17</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

<sup>18</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

<sup>19</sup> Ideally, all tables in this report would separate respondents who identify as conservative from those who identify as very conservative. Unfortunately, there are not enough respondents identifying as very conservative to produce separate estimates for them. Accordingly, in all analyses reported by political orientation, conservative and very conservative respondents are combined into a single group.

<sup>20</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

<sup>21</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

<sup>22</sup> This is the population that has ever been eligible to participate in a Birthright Israel trip.

<sup>23</sup> Given the charged political climate around Israel, we use the word “explicitly” repeatedly in this section to emphasize that some Jewish adults who say they do not know how they feel or prefer not to answer likely do agree or disagree with the statements about which they were asked in the survey. Thus, for example, the proportion of Jewish adults in Greater Portland who identify as Zionists may be greater than 26%, and the proportion who are not Zionists may be greater than 52%.

<sup>24</sup> ACS 2021 one-year estimates. Although we use five-year estimates where we rely upon ACS data elsewhere in this report, we believe based on the timing of the study and the impact of the Covid pandemic that the one-year estimates are more comparable. Note also that ACS breaks down health insurance by people who are under age 19 versus those who are ages 19 and older, while the present study assesses Jewish adults ages 18 and up.

<sup>25</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

<sup>26</sup> According to the US Federal Reserve, in 2021, 32% of US households could not cover a \$400 emergency expense. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/files/2021-report-economic-well-being-us-households-202205.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Downtown in distress: Oregonian/OregonLive poll results, May 14, 2021. <https://www.oregonlive.com/business/2021/05/downtown-in-distress-oregonianoregonlive-poll-results.html>

<sup>28</sup> Based on current estimates, Greater Portland is home to the 30<sup>th</sup> largest Jewish community in the United States, as measured by Jewish Federation Service Areas. See Ira M. Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky, “United States Jewish Population, 2021,” in Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin, *American Jewish Year Book 2021* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer), pp. 207-297.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Fern Chertok et al., “Volunteering + Values: A Repair the World Report on Jewish Young Adults” (New York and Waltham, MA: Repair the World and the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University).

<sup>30</sup> *Pirkei Avot* 5:17.