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# A PORTRAIT OF THE INDIANAPOLIS JEWISH COMMUNITY

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# 2017 INDIANAPOLIS JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDY

## *A Portrait of the Indianapolis Jewish Community*

In your hands is a document that paints a portrait of the Indianapolis Jewish community. It tells the story of our size, where we live, our practices, what we care about, and how we connect Jewishly. This information will form the basis of many critical policy discussions over the coming months and years, and will help us to select strategies to keep our community vibrant.



This 2017 Jewish Community Study was made possible through the generous support of The Glick Philanthropies, Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF), The Robert and Toni Bader Charitable Foundation, Gershman Partners, Brad and Nancy Bell, Chuck and Karen Cohen, Bruce and Linda Frank, Leon Mordoh, Dr. Allan Arkush z"l, the estates of Gladys Nisenbaum, Barb and Dr. Stephen Bailie, Charles Sydney, and others, with additional support from the 2016-2017 JFGI annual campaign. We thank these forward thinking individuals and foundations for their understanding of the importance of a study. We also want to thank Offer Korin, immediate Past President of the Jewish Federation, whose leadership was instrumental in moving this project forward.

We collaborated with two highly experienced and trusted professionals:

**Dr. Ira Sheskin** Chair of the Department of Geography at the University of Miami (FL), and Director of the Jewish Demography Project of the Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies.

**Dr. David Dutwin** Executive Vice President and Chief Methodologist of SSRS, Social Science Research Solutions.

Surveying was completed April-July 2017. Because phone numbers were generated using a technique known as random digit dialing (RDD), the phone was dialed 306,834 times to complete the 600 interviews. The complete report, methodology, and findings can be found at [jewishindianapolis.org/community](http://jewishindianapolis.org/community).

The 2017 Jewish Community Study is not just a snapshot of who we are. It also serves as a valuable resource for the Federation, our agencies, local synagogues and other Jewish organizations, to help them understand the makeup of our Jewish community and determine how to best meet the needs of our constituents. The Federation in partnership with the community will ultimately apply the information gathered from this study to fulfill our philanthropic and communal responsibilities.

We are proud of the successful completion of the 2017 Indianapolis Jewish Community Study and look forward to utilizing the data as a tool to improve the quality of Jewish life and to address emerging needs in Indianapolis. We are confident the information revealed through this study will be essential for Federation and all Jewish institutions in our city, as we strive collectively to strengthen Jewish life and enhance connections to Jews in Indianapolis, in Israel, and worldwide.

This executive summary includes highlights and key trends our community leadership and researchers identified. We invite you to read these findings and share any thoughts or reactions to this or the full report at [CommunityStudy@jfgi.org](mailto:CommunityStudy@jfgi.org).

Sincerely,

Board President

Executive Vice President & CEO

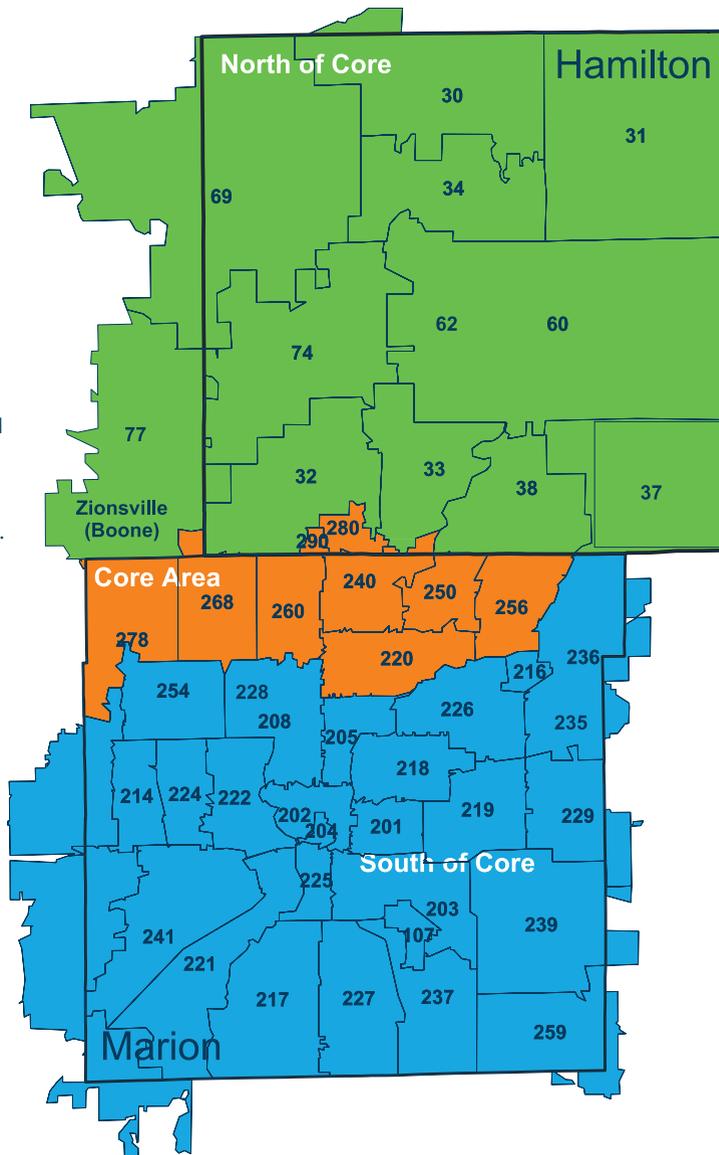
# WHERE WE LIVE

**At 23,500 persons living in 8,500 Jewish households, we're bigger than we thought.**

This number includes all persons, Jewish and non-Jewish, who are living in a household with at least one self-identified Jewish adult.

**Of the 23,500 persons, 17,900 identify as Jewish.**

A Jewish person is an adult age 18 and over who considers him/herself Jewish or is a child being raised Jewish.



**44%**  
North of Core 44%

(3,700 households) reside North of Core. 60% of households contain children ages 0-17, the highest of the three areas.

**36%**  
Core Area 36%

(3,100 households) reside in the Core Area. 17% of households in this area are senior (65+).

**20%**  
South of Core 20%

(1,700 households) reside South of Core. 32% of households are married couples without children at home, the highest of the three areas, and 25% are single person households.

**35.5 is the median age**  
**2.77 is the average household size**

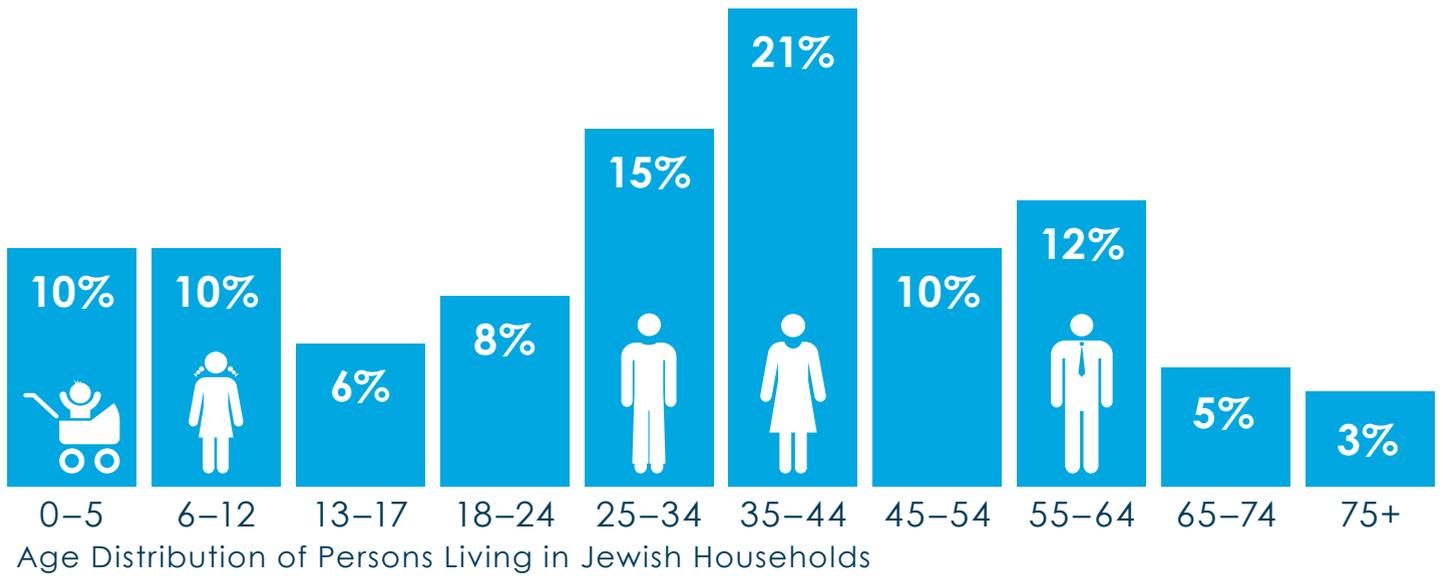
**Top 5 Zip Codes of Jewish Households**  
46260, 46032, 46074, 46220, 46077

## WE CONTINUE TO HAVE DEEP ROOTS IN THE COMMUNITY



- 50% of Jewish households have lived here for 20 or more years
- 16% of households are new to Indianapolis (within the past 5 years)
- 30% of adults in Jewish households were born in Indianapolis
- 7% were born in the former Soviet Union
- 2% were born in Israel

# DEMOGRAPHY



## HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

**6,300** children age 0-17 live in Jewish households

**12%** (1,600) of Jewish adults consider themselves to be Sephardic Jews

**7%** of households contain an adult who is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender

**68%** of adults are currently married

**39%** of households have children age 0-17 at home

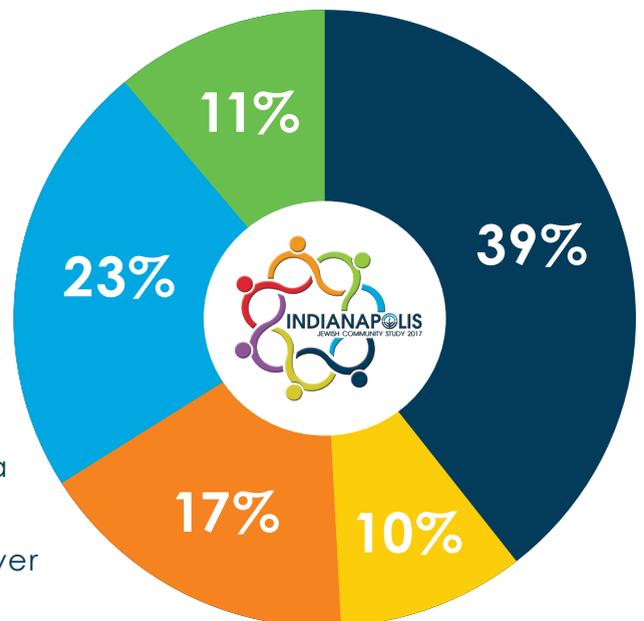
**79%** of households with children age 0-17 contain a Jewish child

**83%** of persons in Jewish households age 25 and over have a four-year college degree

**47%** of children age 12 and under live in households in which both parents (or the parent in a single parent household) are employed full time

**1%** of Jewish respondents cannot make ends meet; **15%** are just managing to make ends meet; **35%** have enough money; **32%** have some extra money; and **16%** are well off

**84%** of Jewish households own their own home



- **39%** Married with children ages 0-17
- **11%** Married with children ages 18-29 living at home
- **23%** Married with no children
- **17%** Single person household
- **10%** Other

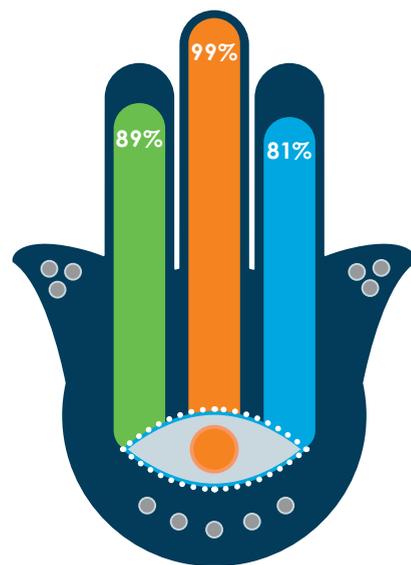
**Median household income is \$129,000**

# IDENTIFICATION

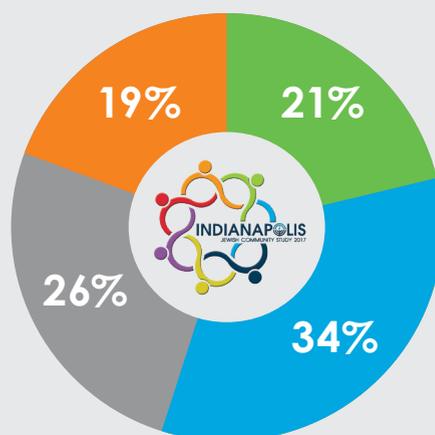
## How we self-identify

Our population identifies largely as “Just Jewish,” with a strong level of engagement, but less religious observance than about 40 comparison communities.

- 89% have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people
- 99% are proud to be Jewish
- 81% have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world



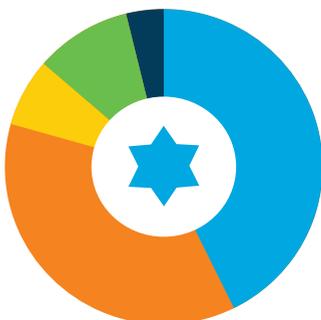
## FEEL PART OF THE INDIANAPOLIS JEWISH COMMUNITY



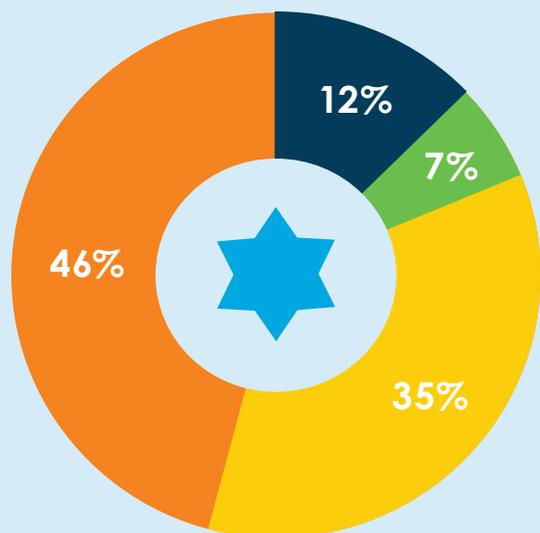
- 21% Very Much
- 34% Somewhat
- 26% Not Very Much
- 19% Not At All

## Self-Identified Jewish Identification

- 4% Orthodox
- 10% Conservative
- 7% Reconstructionist
- 36% Reform
- 43% Just Jewish



# ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION



- 12% Orthodox
- 7% Conservative
- 35% Reconstructionist
- 46% Reform

Based upon information provided by Indianapolis area synagogues.

While 29% of Jewish households are synagogue members, **62% participated in or attended religious services or programs** at, or sponsored by, a local synagogue in the past year.

## 89% of Jewish households are involved in Jewish activity:

- they either are members of a synagogue, the JCC or a Jewish organization
- observe a religious practice
- attend synagogue services at least once per year or
- donated to a Jewish charity in the past year.

**48%** of our community are members of a **synagogue, JCC, or a Jewish organization**

**16%** of households are members of a Jewish organization other than a synagogue, such as Hadassah, NCJW, the Hooverwood Guild, or the Indiana Jewish Historical Society

**16%** participated at Chabad in the past year

**42%** of Jewish children age 13-17 regularly participate in a **Jewish teenage youth group**

**13%** (200 households) of households with Jewish children age 6-17 did not send a child to a Jewish overnight camp in 2017 **because of cost**

**61%** of households with Jewish children received children's books from **PJ Library**

**54%** of Jewish children who attend pre-school attend a **Jewish pre-school**

**25%** of Jewish respondents attended an organized **adult Jewish education** program or class in the past year

**55%** of Jewish children age 0-17 are currently involved in some type of formal or informal Jewish education

**25%** of Jewish children age 3-17 attended/worked at a **Jewish day camp** in 2017

**17%** of Jewish children age 6-17 attended/worked at a **Jewish overnight camp** in 2017



**Of the Indianapolis PJ Library families who participated in the 2016 PJ Library Triennial Family Study**

**87%** of families are very likely to recommend these programs to a friend or family member

**80%** of families attended a program for young Jewish families in the last year

**71%** are interested in getting more connected to local Jewish organizations, activities, and/or people

**86%** say PJ Library has increased their confidence to engage with their children regarding Jewish traditions, value, and/or customs



**Of respondents who were born or raised Jewish:**

**71%** received formal Jewish education as a child

**15%** attended a Jewish day school as a child

**36%** attended a Jewish overnight camp as a child



**JEWISH RITUALS**

**12%**

KEEP KOSHER

**18%**

LIGHT SABBATH CANDLES\*

**73%**

LIGHT CHANUKAH CANDLES\*

**67%**

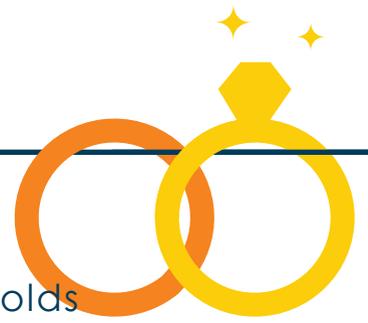
PARTICIPATION IN A PASSOVER SEDER\*

**57%**

HAVE A MEZUZAH ON THE FRONT DOOR

\*Always/usually.

# INTERMARRIAGE



Indianapolis Jewish households include **5,700 married couples**.

**55%** Intermarried Couples  
Only one spouse identifies as Jewish

**45%** In-Married Couples  
Both spouses identify as Jewish

**76%** of persons in Jewish households in Indianapolis **consider themselves to be Jewish**

**68%** of intermarried families follow at least **one home religious practice**

**9%** of Jewish persons are **Jews-by-Choice**

**16%** of intermarried households are **synagogue members**

**100%** of intermarried families reported that PJ Library has **increased confidence** to engage their children regarding Jewish traditions, values, and/or customs\*

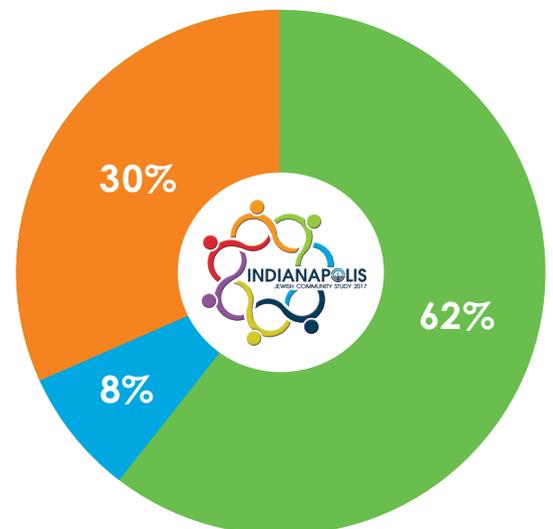
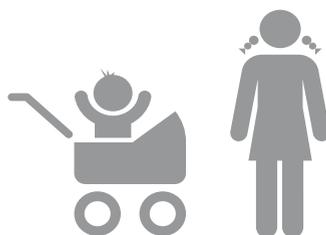
\*includes data from the 2016 PJ Library Triennial Family Study

**Intermarried households with children** ages 0–17 are being raised:

**62%** Jewish only

**30%** Part Jewish

**8%** Non-Jewish



# SOCIAL SERVICE NEEDS

The study identified these needs

## FINANCIAL SERVICES



Households needed financial assistance in the past year



Persons age 65 and over who live below the Federal Poverty levels



Households have income below the Federal Poverty levels



Households age 18-64 needed help in finding a job or choosing an occupation

## DISABILITY SERVICES



Jewish households contain an adult who has a physical, mental, or other health condition that has lasted for 6 months or more and limits/prevents employment, educational opportunities, or daily activities



Households with Jewish children who needed programs for children with learning disabilities or special needs in the past year



Households needed help in coordinating services for a non-elderly disabled person in the past year



## SENIOR SERVICES

Households needed help in coordinating services for individuals 75 years and older; 26% of whom live alone. The greatest needs are as follows:

**18%** needed transportation services

**11%** needed in-home health care in the past year

**11%** needed home-delivered meals

## HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

JFS identified approximately 150 Holocaust Survivors living in Indianapolis when applying for a grant through JFNA. Upon receiving these grant funds in 2016, **we have now been able to assist 102 Holocaust Survivors in our community**; and an average of 60 survivors utilize ongoing supportive services that we offer.

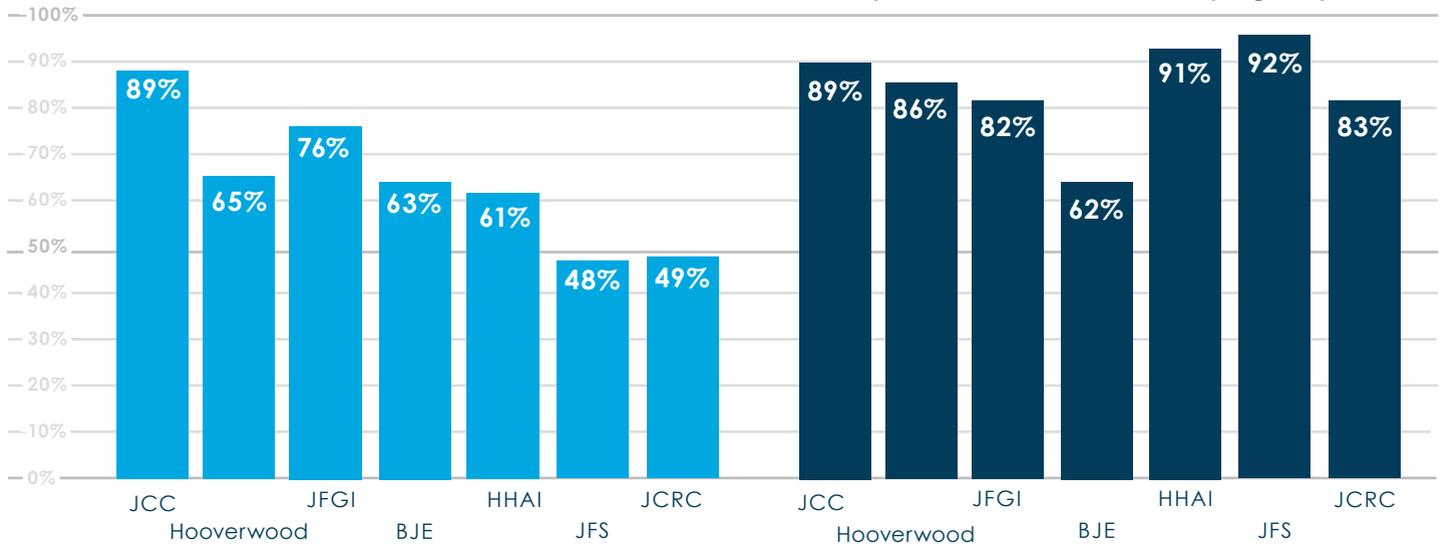


# COMMUNITY FINDINGS

## JEWISH FEDERATION AND ITS AGENCIES

% of Respondents who are Very or Somewhat Familiar

% of Respondents with Excellent and Good Perception of Jewish Community Agency



## POLITICS

95% of respondents are registered to vote.

Our Jewish Community identifies as 55% Democrat, 16% Republican, and 29% Independent

## JEWISH PHILANTHROPY IN THE PAST YEAR

89%

DONATED TO ANY CHARITY

82%

DONATED TO ANY NON JEWISH CHARITY

54%

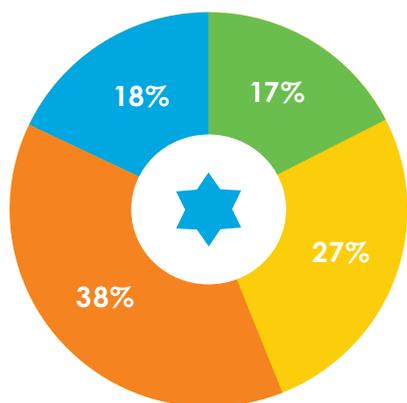
DONATED TO ANY JEWISH CHARITY

31%

DONATED TO THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER INDIANAPOLIS



# ANTI-SEMITISM & ISRAEL



## Connection to Israel

17% Extremely Attached

27% Very Attached

38% Somewhat Attached

18% Not Attached



24% of households with Jewish children 6-17 have sent a child to Israel

33% of households with Jewish children age 6-17 (whose Jewish children have not visited Israel) did not send a Jewish child on a trip to Israel because of cost

52% of Jewish households contain a person who visited Israel, included 32% who visited with a Jewish group

## ANTI-SEMITISM IS AN ISSUE

14% of respondents personally experienced anti-Semitism in Indianapolis in the past year.

29% of households with Jewish children 6-17 have had one of the children experience anti-Semitism in Indianapolis in the past year which is the third highest among 25 comparison Jewish communities.

32% of respondents perceive a great deal or moderate amount of anti-Semitism in Indianapolis.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following donors:



**CICF** CENTRAL INDIANA  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
THE INDIANAPOLIS FOUNDATION  
LEGACY FUND



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Dr. Allan Arkush z"l  
Brad and Nancy Bell  
Chuck and Karen Cohen

**Charles Sydney\* z"l**

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\*Estate gift



Gigi Marks Felsher  
Chair, Jewish Community Study

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*President 2017-2019, Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis*

Offer Korin  
*President 2015-2017, Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis*

Debra Barton Grant  
*CEO and Executive Vice President*

Sheila Yuckman  
*Coordinator, 2017 Indianapolis Community Study*

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## Methodology

The results of the 2017 Indianapolis Jewish Community Study are based on a sampling from the Federation mailing list, with Distinctive Jewish Names, and with a procedure called random digit dialing. During the study 306,834 randomly generated telephone numbers were called. 113,500 households (Jewish and non-Jewish) answered "screener" questions which determined whether there was an adult in the household who self-identified as Jewish, and was used to develop a population estimate. Twenty-minute interviews were conducted with 600 respondents in Jewish households.

A detailed methodology report is available online at [www.jewishindianapolis.org/community](http://www.jewishindianapolis.org/community) or [www.jewishdatabank.org](http://www.jewishdatabank.org).