

THE JEWISH FEDERATION
OF GREATER WASHINGTON

2014 Jewish Community Study Highlights

Data and insights for
synagogues and community
organizations to help shape
the future of our Jewish
community



The Jewish Federation
OF GREATER WASHINGTON

STUDY COMMITTEE

Matthew Weinberg, Chair
Devorah Berman
Alan Cooperman
Andrew Friedson
Calvin Goldscheider
Emilie Hyams
Jon Lerner

Bobby Lipnick
Sacha Litman
Rachel Racoosin
Ken Schwartz
Ashley Steinberg
Steven Rakitt, CEO
Linda Kraner, Lead Staff

With appreciation
to the United Jewish
Endowment Fund for
funding this study

As we look forward to the next **10 years**, our community must make important decisions in the areas of **planning, services** and **funding**.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington's 2014 study of our metro DC area Jewish community asks what individuals are looking for in Jewish programs and services and provides insights into their feelings about community. The study focuses on attitudinal and psychographic information rather than demographics.

Conducted by The Mellman Group, researchers spoke with one thousand Jewish residents from the Greater Washington area and spent up to twenty minutes on the phone with each, delving into their perceptions of the community and the programs and services they feel are most relevant to their families and themselves. Highlights of the findings are included in this pamphlet. The full study results can be found at shalomdc.org.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

from the study:

89% SAY THAT BEING JEWISH IS IMPORTANT

Identifying as Jewish is important for almost all respondents. Those who attend synagogue most frequently see participation in Jewish activities as a priority. For 32% of those surveyed, taking part in Jewish activities is not a priority.

67% FEEL CONNECTED TO THE GREATER WASHINGTON JEWISH COMMUNITY

67% of those surveyed say that they feel a connection to the Greater Washington Jewish community. The highest feelings of connection are among married couples with children at home and those who have Jewish spouses. Those in interfaith relationships and those who rarely attend religious services say they do not feel very connected.

81% SEE THE GREATER WASHINGTON JEWISH COMMUNITY AS WELCOMING

87% of respondents see the Greater Washington Jewish community as providing a good environment for families. 81% view the community as welcoming. However, this does not directly correlate to interest in participating in Jewish communal activities.

50%+ SAID SHARED VALUES DRIVE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Most (82%) say that being part of a community with shared values is a key driver. Community members report that they seek activities and people who share their values. Over 50% of those surveyed cite “shared values” as the reason why they want to participate in the Jewish community.

WHO BELONGS TO A SYNAGOGUE?

90% Orthodox

60% Conservative

50% Reform & Reconstructionist

90% of those who identify as Orthodox report belonging to a synagogue; 60% of those who self-identify as Conservative; and almost 50% of the Reform and Reconstructionist Jews report belonging to a synagogue. 87% of those who self-identify as Orthodox report going to synagogue at least once a month; 39% of Conservative Jews go at least once a month; and 29% of Reform and Reconstructionist Jews report going at least once a month.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

from the study:

40% FEEL STRONGLY CONNECTED TO ISRAEL

40% of those surveyed report feeling a strong/deep connection to Israel while 27% feel almost no connection.

30% DONATE PREDOMINANTLY TO JEWISH CAUSES

30% of those surveyed report that they give more than 50% of their charitable contributions to Jewish causes; 34% give up to 50%, and 20% say they do not give to Jewish organizations.

PROGRAMS THE COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE OF:

50% Volunteering

42% Social programs

38% Cultural activities

35% Programs on Jewish history

34% Programs on Israel

OTHER TAKEAWAYS

- Among those most involved in the community, **cost** and **geography** are not cited as strong deterrents to participation. However, among those who are least involved, these issues are cited as reasons for non-participation.
- Of those who are least involved in the community, very few current program offerings are seen as appealing. 27% report that they are likely to participate in “**volunteering** to help the homeless and other service projects”; 13% say “**exercise programs**” and 12% say “**activities for senior citizens.**”
- While many feel that the local Jewish community is too expensive and too far away, these are not key deterrents to involvement. Among those that identified these issues, most make their Jewish community participation decisions based on **interest factors.**
- According to interfaith couples with children, 41% are raising their children solely as Jews; 13% are raising them another faith; 20% are raising them in both religions and 25% as neither. According to the Jewish spouse interviewed, 70% of non-Jewish spouses feel welcomed by the community, but only 16% say they would likely participate in a program for interfaith families.