

# 2017 GREATER WASHINGTON JEWISH COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY



The Jewish Federation  
OF GREATER WASHINGTON

Cohen Center  
for Modern Jewish Studies

Steinhardt  
Social Research Institute

Brandeis  
University



THE MORNINGSTAR FOUNDATION

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Established in 2005 and housed at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) uses innovative research methods to collect and analyze sociodemographic data on the Jewish community.

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.

Full report and public dataset may be downloaded from: <http://www.brandeis.edu/ssri/communitystudies/dcreport.html>

**A Note from Susie and Michael Gelman**

February 6, 2018

We are pleased to present the 2017 Greater Washington Jewish Community Demographic Study. This comprehensive research, conducted by world-class experts from the Cohen Center at Brandeis University, examines our diverse community and presents information on who makes up our Jewish community, where members of our community live, how they connect to their Jewish identity, and what our community believes to be our strengths.

As the population in the National Capital Region has grown, so has the Jewish population. We commissioned this study, the first comprehensive look at Greater Washington's Jewish community since 2003, because we believe it is essential for our communal leadership to be able to make data-driven decisions regarding growth and services. This study compiles and analyzes information - about our community's demographic characteristics, needs, wants, affiliations, and attitudes - which is crucial for planning by the institutions and organizations that serve our local population. To that end, we are pleased to be working closely with the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, an organization standing at the center of strengthening Jewish life in our area.

As a destination of choice for young adults, many of whom have been touched by national Jewish programs like Birthright Israel, Washington, DC has seen an influx of people bringing vitality to places where Jewish life did not thrive in 2003. Our community's population has experienced enormous growth in Northern Virginia. We know that our community remains strong in Montgomery County. Our intent is for Jewish organizations, schools, synagogues, and other communal institutions to use this study as a tool to better understand their constituencies and prepare for the next chapter of Jewish life in our dynamic region.

May we all go from strength to strength.



Susie and Michael Gelman



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OF GREATER WASHINGTON

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**To the Jewish Community of Greater Washington:**

We are pleased to present the **2017 Greater Washington Jewish Community Demographic Study**, funded by The Morningstar Foundation. The study comes at a pivotal time for our Jewish community – the third largest and one of the fastest growing in the United States, with Jews constituting roughly 6% of the area population.

As we have grown and evolved since the last comprehensive study was conducted in 2003, so too have our methods of engaging in Jewish communal life. The study results will be immensely beneficial to the institutions involved in planning and providing services that will strengthen our vibrant community.

Conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at Brandeis University, the study creates a comprehensive portrait of the characteristics, attitudes and behaviors of Greater Washington's Jewish community.

These data are a gift to the community. We now face the important work of using them to better understand who we are and to define where we want to go. What type of Jewish community do we seek to build? What is our vision for a vibrant Jewish community of meaning and purpose for all of its members? How do we integrate a deep understanding of today's Jewish community with our vision for tomorrow's? These are questions that we must ask and answer throughout the community so that we may continue to grow and evolve.

At The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, we look forward to using these data to inform our work as we enter a new strategic planning process, driven by identifying and attaining our communal hopes, dreams, vision and values.

The Jewish Federation is especially grateful to The Morningstar Foundation, whose funding and commitment to strengthening the future of our Jewish community made this research possible. We join The Morningstar Foundation in extending our sincere thanks to the talented team of researchers from the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at Brandeis University: Dr. Janet Krasner Aronson, Dr. Matthew Boxer, Matthew Brookner and Dr. Leonard Saxe.

Finally, thank you to the thousands of individual respondents from across the region for participating in this study. Your contributions to this research, and to the future success of our community, will enable Jewish Greater Washington to continue growing and thriving for years to come.

Sincerely,

**Gil Preuss**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Advisory Committee List

We acknowledge with appreciation the individuals who served on the advisory committee, representing their respective organizations and the needs of the general community.

Michael Gelman, Chair  
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## CMJS/SSRI Acknowledgments

The Brandeis research team is grateful to The Morningstar Foundation for the opportunity to collaborate to develop and conduct the 2017 Greater Washington, DC Jewish Community Demographic Study.

The study was proposed and sponsored by The Morningstar Foundation, led by Michael and Susie Gelman. Adina Dubin Barkinskiy, Director of Programs, shepherded the project through every phase, with the assistance of Lisa Gerton Jacobson, Program Officer, along with Gail Hyman. Gil Preuss, Chief Executive Officer of The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, supported the final development of the report and its dissemination to the community. We are grateful to the members of the Advisory Committee who provided valuable input on the study design, questionnaire, and report. We also appreciate the generosity of the organizations that shared contact information with us for the purposes of this study.

We appreciate the work of the staff of Abt Associates who served as the call center for this study. We were pleased to work with Benjamin Phillips, our former colleague at CMJS/SSRI, who directed the project at Abt Associates, assisted by Valrie Horton. Dennis Daly oversaw administration of the data collection operation.

We are deeply grateful for the efforts of our colleagues at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies. Particular thanks go to Sarah Harpaz and Matthew Feinberg. Sarah cleaned membership lists, managed respondent communications, corresponded with community members, and developed the maps; Matthew managed the deduplication of the sample frame and drawing of the sample. This project truly would not have gone as smoothly as it did without their ceaseless efforts. We are also grateful to our colleagues Elizabeth Tighe, Raquel Magidin de Kramer, and Daniel Parmer of SSRI's American Jewish Population Project for their development of the Jewish population data synthesis estimates.

We also want to thank the team of students who worked on various elements of the project. Lev Paasche-Orlow, Camille Evans, and Tamar Shachaf Schneider cleaned mailing and membership lists to prepare the survey sample. Lev, Camille, Tamar, Jeff Hart, Gal Zahori, Joanna Spyra, Yaoyao Gao, and Eve Litvak spent countless hours searching for missing contact information for members of the sample. As part of the analysis, Tamar, Jeff, Gal, Joanna, and Yvette Deane coded responses to open-ended questions in the survey. Jeff also developed a computer program to simplify the compiling of the Codebook and Comparison Charts.

We thank Deborah Grant for her editorial advice, Masha Lokshin for her design assistance, and Naomi Weinblatt for her careful review of the final report. Masha and Ilana Friedman provided logistical support throughout the study.

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## Executive Summary

The 2017 Greater Washington, DC Jewish Community Demographic Study provides an up-to-date description of the size and character of DC-area Jewish adults, children, and households. Developed to provide communal leaders, planners, and members with actionable information, the study findings can be used to enhance the quality of life in the community and increase Jewish engagement. The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute of Brandeis University conducted the study, with funding from The Morningstar Foundation and in collaboration with the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. Interviews with over 6,600 Jewish households residing in the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and Suburban Maryland form the basis of the report.

Key findings of this study include:

**Greater Washington, DC's Jewish community numbers nearly 300,000 Jewish adults and children in over 155,000 households.** As defined by federation catchment areas, it is the third largest Jewish community in the United States. Greater Washington, DC's Jews constitute about 6% of the area population. The Jewish community's size has grown by 37% since 2003.

**Metro DC's Jews are younger than the national Jewish population.** The median age of all Washington-area Jewish adults is age 45, younger than the median age (50) of Jewish adults nationally. Compared to the national Jewish population, the Washington-area Jewish community has proportionally more adults ages 30-39 and fewer who are ages 40-64.

**The community is diverse.** Seven percent of Jewish adults identify as LGBTQ, and 7% as a person of color or Hispanic/Latino. Among households with **married or partnered Jews**, 53% of couples include someone who does not identify as Jewish.

**A greater share of Metro DC's Jews are Democrats compared to Jews nationally.** Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Metro DC's Jews identify as Democrats, 6% as Republicans, 15% as independents, and 8% other. Nationally, 54% of Jewish adults identify as Democrats, 14% as Republican, and the remaining 32% as independent or other party affiliation.

### Greater Washington Jewish Community Population Estimates, 2017

Total Jews	295,500
Adults	
Jewish	244,500
Non-Jewish	70,900
Children	
Jewish	51,000
Non-Jewish	9,100
Total people	375,500
Total households	155,200

## Geographic Distribution

The geography of the greater Washington, DC Jewish community includes all of the District of Columbia; Suburban Maryland (Montgomery and Prince George’s counties); and Northern Virginia (Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun counties, Arlington county/city, and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park). The distribution of Jewish households and individuals in the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia is shown in Table ES.1.

**The District of Columbia is home to 19% of area Jews.** Since 2003, the Jewish population in the District has more than doubled. Over one-third of DC’s Jews are between ages 30 and 39. Forty percent have lived in the area for less than ten years. Just 16% of households include children ages 17 or younger. Nineteen percent of DC’s Jewish households are synagogue members.

**Suburban Maryland is home to 39% of area Jews.** Since 2003, the Jewish population in Suburban Maryland has remained stable. Almost two-thirds (63%) of Suburban Maryland’s Jews are ages 50 or older. Over three-quarters (76%) were born or raised in the DC area or have lived there for 20 years or more. Just under one-quarter (24%) of households include children ages 17 or younger. Over one-third (34%) of Suburban Maryland Jewish households are synagogue members.

**Northern Virginia is home to 41% of area Jews.** Since 2003 the Jewish population in Northern Virginia has grown by 80%. Half of Virginia’s Jewish adults are under age 50. Half were born or raised in the DC area or have lived there for 20 years or more. Over one-quarter (26%) of households include children ages 17 or younger. One-quarter of Northern Virginia Jewish households are synagogue members.

Despite the perception of DC as a “transient community,” **94% of Jews consider the Metro DC area to be their “home base.”** Three-in-five Jewish adults have no plans to move; 22% plan to move to another location within Metro DC; and 17% plan to leave the DC area. One-quarter of Jewish adults have lived in Metro DC for fewer than 10 years, 18% for 10-19 years, and 49% for 20 years or longer.

Table ES.1 Summary of Jewish population by region

	DC	Suburban Maryland	Northern Virginia	TOTAL
<b>Jewish Households</b>				
number	34,600	56,900	63,700	155,200
percent	22	37	41	100
<b>Jewish individuals</b>				
number	57,300	116,700	121,500	295,500
percent	19	39	41	100

## Children

Overall, 85% of **children in Jewish households** are being raised Jewish in some way. Seventy-six percent are being raised exclusively Jewish, either by religion (45%) or culturally (31%). Among children with intermarried parents, 61% are being raised exclusively Jewish, with 19% being raised Jewish by religion and 42% being raised culturally Jewish.

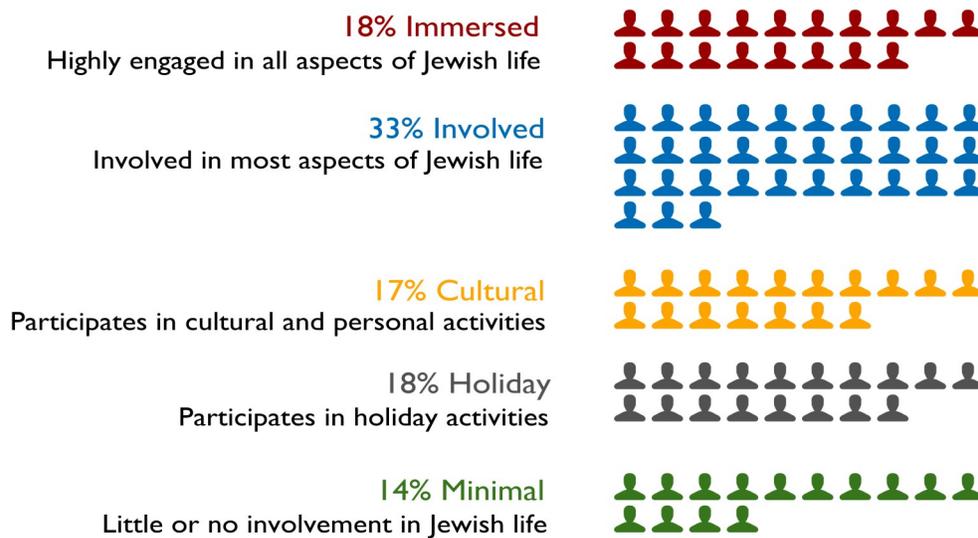
Forty percent of **Jewish children in grades K-12** are enrolled in Jewish part-time school or Jewish day school. Just 7% of Jewish children ages 0-5 are enrolled in Jewish preschool. In total, 31% of Jewish children are enrolled in some form of Jewish education.

## Jewish Engagement and Synagogue Membership

Jewish behavior includes family and home-based practices, ritual practices, personal activities, and organizational participation. Looking at an index that combines multiple measures of Jewish life, members of the Metro DC Jewish community can be thought of as having one of five **patterns of Jewish engagement**, as shown in Figure ES.1. These groupings provide a deeper way to understand Jewish engagement aside from denominational affiliation and ritual behavior.

**Metro DC Jews are less likely than US Jews overall to identify with a specific denomination.** Over one-third (39%) of Metro DC Jews indicate that they have no denomination, compared to 30% of all US Jews. This is the case for Jews in all age brackets.

Figure ES.1 Patterns of Jewish engagement



**In the Metro DC Jewish community, 26% of households belong to a synagogue or another Jewish worship community of some type.** In terms of Jewish adults, levels of synagogue membership in the Metro DC area (31% of Jewish adults) are lower than that of the rest of the country (39%).

**The largest group of synagogue members (18% of households) are dues-paying members of local “brick-and-mortar” synagogues.** The number of member households in these synagogues has declined slightly since 2003 and has not kept pace with community growth.

**The remaining synagogue members (8% of households) belong to independent minyanim, Chabad, or non-local congregations, or consider themselves members of brick-and-mortar synagogues but do not pay dues.**

## Israel

**Approximately two-thirds (68%) of Washington-area Jews have been to Israel or have lived there.** Nearly one-third (30%) have been to Israel once. Another third (31%) have been to Israel more than once, and 7% have lived there at some point, including the 4% of Washington-area Jews who are Israeli. This figure represents a substantially higher proportion than among US Jews in general, of whom in 2013, 43% had been to Israel.

**One-third (34%) of Washington-area Jews feel very connected to Israel.** By contrast, 14% feel not at all connected.

## Community

**Jewish community ties are not central to Washington-area Jews.** Just over one-quarter (28%) feel that being part of a community is an essential part of being Jewish. One-third (33%) feel very connected to the global Jewish community, and 15% feel very connected to the local Jewish community. However, 60% say at least half of their closest friends are Jewish.

**Forty-one percent of Jewish adults did some volunteer activity in the past month,** either with Jewish or non-Jewish organizations. Volunteers included 15% of Jewish adults who volunteered with at least one Jewish organization and 32% who volunteered for at least one non-Jewish organization. In all, 6% of Jewish adults volunteered for both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations.

For volunteering and charitable donations, the **most popular cause among Metro DC’s Jews is education:** 86% say it is very important. Other causes of interest are social justice (76%) and politics (64%).

**Eighty-seven percent of Jewish adults made a charitable contribution in the past year.** Of all Jewish adults, three-fifths (61%) donated to at least one Jewish organization, and half (51%) donated to a Jewish organization that primarily serves the DC area.

## Health and Financial Well-being

**The majority of DC-area Jewish households are financially comfortable,** with 45% describing their standard of living as being prosperous or very comfortable, and another 44% reporting they are reasonably comfortable. Another 10% of households described themselves as “just getting along.” A total of 1% indicated they are “nearly poor” or “poor.”

**Economic insecurity may be a concern for some Jewish households.** Thirteen percent of Jewish households do not have enough savings to cover three months of expenses. In addition, 5% of households reported that at some point in the past year they were unable to participate in Jewish life because of financial constraints.

An estimated **18% of Jewish households include someone with a health limitation.** These households include at least one person who has a limitation on the amount or kind of work, school, or housework they can do because of an impairment, disability, chronic physical problem, or mental health issue.



## Chapter 1. Introduction

The 2017 Greater Washington, DC Jewish Community Demographic Study, conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) at Brandeis University, employed innovative state-of-the-art methods in order to create a comprehensive portrait of the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of present-day Metro DC Jewry.<sup>1</sup> The Pew Research Center’s 2013 study, *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, galvanized discussions in the American Jewish community on a host of topics: growing and shrinking sub-populations, declining affiliation in traditional institutions as well as new forms of Jewish engagement, the rise of both secular and Orthodox Jews, and the impact of intermarriage on community growth (see Saxe, Sasson, & Krasner Aronson, 2015). With Pew and the related national discourse as a backdrop, understanding the dynamics of Metro DC’s Jewish community takes on added significance.

The goal of this study is to provide valid data about the Metro DC 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 for 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 community programs and institutional Judaism and understand reasons for participation
- Understand the multifaceted cultural, communal, and religious expressions of Judaism that constitute Jewish engagement
- Assess attitudes toward Israel and Judaism

The present study provides a snapshot of today’s Metro DC Jewish community. At the same time, the report considers trends and developments that diverge from those of the past—not only within the Metro DC community, but also in the American Jewish community as a whole.

### History

The present study is the latest in a succession of occasional studies about the Greater Washington, DC Jewish community. The first study that was regarded as “scientific,” conducted in 1956, identified 80,900 Jews in 27,200 households. A 1983 study, using different methods and geographic boundaries, found 158,000 Jews in 68,000 households. The most recent demographic study, in 2003 (Sheskin, 2004) found 215,000 Jews in 110,000 Jewish households, with a slightly expanded geography than was used in the present study.

Two additional studies of the community, conducted in 1997 and 2014, were designed not as population or demographic studies, but rather for the purpose of assessing attitudes and interests of community members. These studies were intended to be tools for community planning and priority setting. All reports on previous studies can be found at the Berman Jewish Data Bank, <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/studies/us-local-communities.cfm>.

## Methodology

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. Over time, it has become increasingly complex to conduct these surveys and, in particular, to obtain an unbiased sample of community members. The 2017 Greater Washington, DC Jewish Community Demographic Study updates the methods that have been used since 1965, using innovative approaches to overcome the challenges of survey research (Saxe, Tighe, & Boxer, 2014).

The central obstacle for Jewish community studies is that Jews are a relatively small group and traditional methods of identifying a representative sample of Jews are no longer feasible. The classic survey methodology, random digit dialing (RDD), relied on telephone calls to randomly selected households in a given geographic area and phone interviews with household members. Today, as a result of changing telephone technology (e.g., caller ID), fewer people answer the phone for unknown callers, and response rates for telephone surveys are in the single digits.<sup>2</sup> More significantly, nearly half of households no longer have landline phones<sup>3</sup> and rely exclusively on cell phones. Because of phone number portability (Lavrakas, Shuttles, Steeh, & Fienberg, 2007), cell phones frequently have an area code and exchange, and in some cases a billing address, that are not associated with the geographic location in which the phone user resides. Therefore, it is no longer possible to select a range of phone numbers and assume that the owners of those numbers will live in the specified area and be willing to answer the phone. In Jewish community studies, this has proven to be especially problematic for ensuring that the survey reaches young adults and newcomers to the community.

The present study addresses these obstacles with several innovative methods, described in detail in Appendix A:

- **Enhanced RDD.** The enhanced RDD method<sup>4</sup> relies on a synthesis of national surveys that are conducted by government agencies and other organizations that include information about religion. The synthesis combined data from hundreds of surveys and used information collected from Washington-area residents to estimate the Jewish population in the region.
- **Comprehensive list-based sample.** The CMJS study selected respondents based on their appearance on the membership and contact lists of hundreds of Washington-area Jewish organizations. This comprehensive list-based approach ensured that anyone in the Washington area who had had even minimal contact with any area Jewish organization was represented.
- **Ethnic name sample.** Needless to say, not all Jewish community members were known by a community organization. For that reason, the sample was supplemented with a list of households in the area comprised of individuals who had a Jewish first or last name.

- **Multiple survey modes.** CMJS contacted survey participants by postal mail, phone, and email. Multiple attempts were made to reach respondents and to update contact information when initial efforts were unsuccessful.

The 2017 Greater Washington, DC Jewish Community Demographic survey was based on a sampling frame of over 145,000 households. From this frame two samples were drawn: a **primary sample** of 8,900 households who were contacted by postal mail, email, and telephone, and a **supplemental sample** of 42,315 households who were contacted by email only. Designed to be representative of the entire community, the primary sample was used as a basis for population estimates and analyses of the community as a whole. The response rate for this sample was 30.8% (AAPOR RR3). Because households from the supplement were only contacted by email, we expected that highly engaged households would be more likely to complete the survey. Consequently, we utilized statistical adjustments to account for the different likelihood of response in the two samples. The survey weights ensured that the full response sample—primary and supplemental—represented the entire community in terms of key factors including age, Jewish denomination, and synagogue membership.

In addition to the list-based sample, the study included a small RDD sample of 214 respondents. Details about the use of this RDD frame and its incorporation into the dataset are provided in Appendix A.

A unique component of this study is the incorporation of a short survey of 156 respondents who lived in the Metro DC area within the past two years but have moved away. The survey focused on their demographic characteristics, their reasons for leaving, and their plans to return to the area.

Throughout this report, for purposes of analysis and reporting, we derived estimates about the entire population from the primary sample only. We used the combined, or full, sample for analyses of subgroups—such as families with children—where the increased number of respondents supported more robust analysis.

Table I.1 Summary of survey respondents

	Primary	Supplement	RDD	Total
<b>DATA FOR ANALYSIS: MAIN SURVEY</b>				
Completes	1,864	4,197	209	
Partial	125	263	5	
<b>TOTAL main survey</b>	<b>1,989</b>	<b>4,460</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>6,663</b>
Movers	28	123	5	156
Screen out/incomplete/ineligible	1,777	2,132	4,573	8,482
<b>Total Households Reached</b>	<b>3,794</b>	<b>6,715</b>	<b>4,792</b>	<b>15,301</b>
Response Rate (AAPOR RR3)	30.8%	15%	10.6%	
Cooperation Rate	69.9%	95.0%	44.3%	

## Undercounted Populations

The goal of the community study is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the Metro DC Jewish population. Nevertheless, some groups are likely to be undercounted and/or underrepresented. In particular, residents of institutional settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, dormitories on college campuses, and military bases, as well as adults who have never associated in any way with a Jewish organization in the Metro DC area, are less likely to have been identified and contacted to complete the survey. Although we cannot produce an accurate count of these individuals, these undercounts are unlikely to introduce significant bias into the reported estimates. Where appropriate, we have noted the limitations of the methodology.

## 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 (“weighted”). Each individual respondent is assigned a weight so that his/her 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 derived 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.)

When size estimates of subpopulations (e.g., synagogue members, intermarried families, families with children) 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.

Some tables and figures that present proportions do not add up to 100%. In some cases, this is because that multiple responses were possible; this will be indicated in a note. In most cases, the appearance that proportional estimates do not add up to 100% is a result of rounding. For simplicity, in some tables not all groups will be shown. For example, if the proportion of a group who participated in a Passover seder is shown, the proportion who did not participate will not be shown. When a table shows “0,” it means no respondents selected that option, “<1” indicates that the estimate rounded down to 0, and “--” indicates that there were insufficient responses to report reliable estimates.

For tables that are based on households proportions, age categories are based on the ages of all adults in the household. If all adults are ages 22-39, households are classified as “young adults 22-39” households. If all adults are ages 65 and over, households are classified as “seniors 65+” households. If at least one adult is age 40-64, the household is classified as “adults 40-64.”

All tables and figures are described briefly in the text that appears above or below the respective table or figure. Data that are most noteworthy are discussed in the text. For most tables, more detailed data can be found in Appendix C.

### 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, it would be misleading to report the weighted proportion of responses to these questions. Instead, we report the total number of responses that mentioned a particular code or theme. This number appears in parentheses after the response without a percent sign, or in tables labelled as “n” or number of responses. In many cases sample quotes are also reported, with identifying information removed and edited for clarity.

### Comparisons Across Surveys

As part of the goal to assess trends, comparisons of answers to a number of questions are made to earlier local data (in particular, the 2003 study) and data from national studies (in particular, Pew’s 2013 *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*). Although these analyses are informative, comparisons across studies are not as precise and reliable as the data from the present study.

Because of the methodological differences between this study and the 2003 study of the Metro Washington Jewish community (Sheskin, 2004), we limited comparisons to that report. Only basic population size information is compared. Wherever available, we compared administrative data supplied by community organizations. With respect to comparisons with Pew, although our framework for identifying Jews parallels Pew’s, there are differences that affect direct comparisons.

## Chapter 2. Demographic Snapshot of the Greater Washington, DC Jewish Community

Knowledge of the size, geographic distribution, and basic socio-demographic characteristics of the Greater Washington, DC Jewish community provides a context to understand the Jewish character, behavior, and attitudes of community members. As a large Jewish community, Metro DC is not homogenous. The ways in which Metro DC Jews identify as Jewish and engage with the Jewish community vary significantly, in terms of who they are, where they live, their household composition, their ages, and their Jewish identities. The socio-demographics of the community are best understood in context of the Greater Washington, DC community as a whole, which is one of the top destination cities<sup>5</sup> in the United States. This demographic overview describes the size of the community and the basic characteristics of community members.

<b>Greater Washington Jewish Community Population Estimates, 2017</b>	
Total Jews	295,500
<b>Adults</b>	
Jewish	244,500
Non-Jewish	70,900
<b>Children</b>	
Jewish	51,000
Non-Jewish	9,100
Total people	375,500
Total households	155,200

### Jewish Population Estimation

Based on the 2017 community study estimates, the Greater Washington, DC Jewish community numbers nearly 300,000 Jewish adults and children. Based on federation catchment area,<sup>6</sup> it is the third largest Jewish community in the United States (Sheskin, 2017, p. 223). Metro DC's Jews constitute about 6% of the area population. From 2003 to 2017, Greater Washington's Jewish community grew by about 37%.<sup>7</sup> The overall regional population grew 22% during this period.<sup>8</sup>

### Jewish Adults

Estimates of Jewish population sizes rest on a set of fundamental questions about who is counted as Jewish for the purposes of the study. Recent Jewish population studies, such as Pew Research Center's 2013 *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, classify respondents according to their responses to a series of screening questions: What is your religion? Do you consider yourself to be Jewish aside from religion? Were either of your parents Jewish? Were you raised Jewish? On the basis of the answers to these questions, Jews have been categorized as "Jews 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 state that they have no religion, but they consider themselves Jewish in another way. Although Jews by religion as a group are more engaged with Judaism than are Jews of no religion, many JBRs and JNRs look similar when examining Jewish behaviors and attitudes. For the purposes of this study, and to ensure that Metro DC Jewry could be compared to the population nationwide, we utilized a variant of Pew's scheme, supplemented by several other measures of identity. Included in the Jewish population are those adults who indicate that they are Jewish and another religion: we refer to this category as Jews of multiple religions (JMR).

## Report Overview

This report presents key findings about the Greater Washington, DC 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 of the Greater Washington, DC Jewish Community**

The report begins with an overview of the demographic composition of the Greater Washington, DC Jewish community and reveals significant changes in the Jewish population size and characteristics since 2003.

### **Chapter 3. Geography and Mobility**

This chapter provides details about the geographic distribution of the community and the differences in demographic characteristics by geographic region. Information about reasons for living in the area and plans to move, both within and away from the Metro DC area appear in this section. The chapter also summarizes data from almost 160 respondents who lived in the Metro DC area within the past three years but have since moved away.

### **Chapter 4. Patterns of Jewish Engagement**

This chapter describes the multifaceted ways in which the Jews of Metro DC 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.

### **Chapters 5-8. Jewish Children, Synagogue and Ritual Life, Social and Communal Life, Connections to Israel**

Each of these chapters focuses on a particular aspect of Jewish life and describes key behaviors and attitudes.

### **Chapter 9. Education, Income, and Health**

This chapter examines the living conditions of Metro DC's Jewish households, in particular with regard to economic well-being, economic hardship, and health and human service concerns.

### **Chapter 10. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The concluding chapter summarizes the findings of the study and recommendations along with comments from survey respondents in their own words.

## Report Appendices

The appendices, available in a separate document, include:

**Appendix A. Methodological Appendix:** Details of data collection and analysis

**Appendix B. Latent Class Analysis:** Details of the latent class analysis method that was used to develop the index of Jewish engagement

**Appendix C. Comparison Charts:** Details cross-tabulations of all survey data for key subgroups of the population

**Appendix D. Survey Instrument and Codebook**

Among Jewish adults in the Greater Washington, DC area, 72% (175,900 individuals) identify as Jews by religion (JBR). The remaining Jewish adults identify as Jews of no religion (JNR) (19%, or 49,200 individuals) or Jews of multiple religions (JMR) (9%, or 19,400 individuals).<sup>9</sup> The proportion of Metro DC Jewish adults who are Jews by religion is lower than that in the overall United States Jewish population as reported by Pew (78%).<sup>10</sup>

### Jewish Households

Greater Washington's Jewish population resides in an estimated 155,200 households (Table 2.1). Households are classified as Jewish if they include at least one Jewish adult.

Adults and children who live in Jewish households include Jews and non-Jews (Table 2.2). Non-Jewish adults include three groups: those who report that they are not Jewish in any way (listed as not Jewish); those who say they are Jewish but were not born to Jewish parents, were not raised Jewish, and did not convert (listed as Jewish affinity); those who have Jewish parents or were raised Jewish but do not currently consider themselves to be Jewish in any way (listed as Jewish background). Non-Jewish children include those who are being raised with no religion or a religion other than Judaism. Of the non-Jewish children, nearly all are being raised with no religion or their parents have not yet decided on their religion.

An estimated 70,900 non-Jewish adults and 9,100 non-Jewish children live in Jewish households in Metro DC. These 80,000 individuals bring the total population of people living in Jewish households in the region to approximately 375,500 people (315,400 adults and 60,100 children).

In addition to the adults listed here, the study found fewer than 1,000 adults who have a Jewish background but do not consider themselves Jewish in any way and do not live with any other Jewish adults. These individuals are not included in Table 2.2. The study also found fewer than 1,000 adults of Jewish affinity who live outside of Jewish households in the Metro DC area. These individuals are not included in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.1 Jewish population of Greater Washington, DC area, summary  
(rounded to nearest 100)**

	2017	2003	Change 2003 to 2017
Households with at least one Jewish adult	155,200	110,000	41%
Total Jewish adults and children	295,500	215,000	37%
Total people in Jewish households	375,500	267,800	40%

Table 2.2 Jewish population of Greater Washington, DC area, detail  
(rounded to nearest 100)

	2017	2003	Change 2003 to 2017
<b>Jewish adults</b>	<b>244,500</b>	168,345	45%
Jews by religion (JBR) adults	175,900		
Jews of no religion (JNR) adults	49,200		
Jews of multiple religions (JMR) adults	19,400		
<b>Non-Jewish adults in Jewish households</b>	<b>70,900</b>	38,397	85%
Jewish background	4,500		
Jewish affinity	3,800		
Not Jewish*	62,600		
<b>Jewish children in Jewish households</b>	<b>51,000</b>	46,655	9%
JBR children	27,300		
JNR children	18,500		
JMR children	5,200		
<b>Non-Jewish children in Jewish households</b>	<b>9,100</b>	14,403	-37%
No religion	6,200		
Not yet decided	2,200		
Other religion	700		

\* Not Jewish includes 300 adults whose religion was unspecified

## Undercounted Populations

Several segments of the population were not explicitly included in the study and may be undercounted in the reported population estimates.

**Local college students** whose families are not from the Metro DC area were likely to be omitted from the study. College students whose families live within the study area would have been counted as part of their family's households, whether or not they attend a school locally. Our study identified 3,300 full-time Jewish undergraduate students who attend school in the Metro DC area, and 10,300 students who attend school elsewhere but have families who live in the DC area. Published estimates of the Metro DC college population suggest that there are over 12,000 Jewish undergraduate students in the Greater Washington, DC area.<sup>11</sup> Based on these estimates, there may be over 8,000 Jewish undergraduates in the Greater DC area who are not represented in these population estimates.

**Residents of nursing homes** constitute a second population that was not included in the study sample. There are 550 beds in Jewish-sponsored nursing homes in the Metro DC area. Not known, however, is what proportion of the residents are Jewish or how many Jewish residents reside in non-Jewish sponsored nursing homes.<sup>12</sup>

**Jewish families who live on military bases** were not included in the study sample but might be included through their involvement in area organizations. The study reports that 1% of Jewish adults indicate that they are currently in the military, living in 1,900 households. This comports with an estimate of the Jewish military population in the Metro DC area of about 3,000 individuals, including those in the military and their families.<sup>13</sup>

## Age and Gender Composition

Consistent with a community experiencing steady growth, the Jewish population of the Metro DC area is relatively evenly distributed across all age groups. The mean age of Washington's Jewish adults based on the present population estimate is 47-years-old and the median is 45, younger than the median age (50) of Jewish adults nationally.<sup>14</sup>

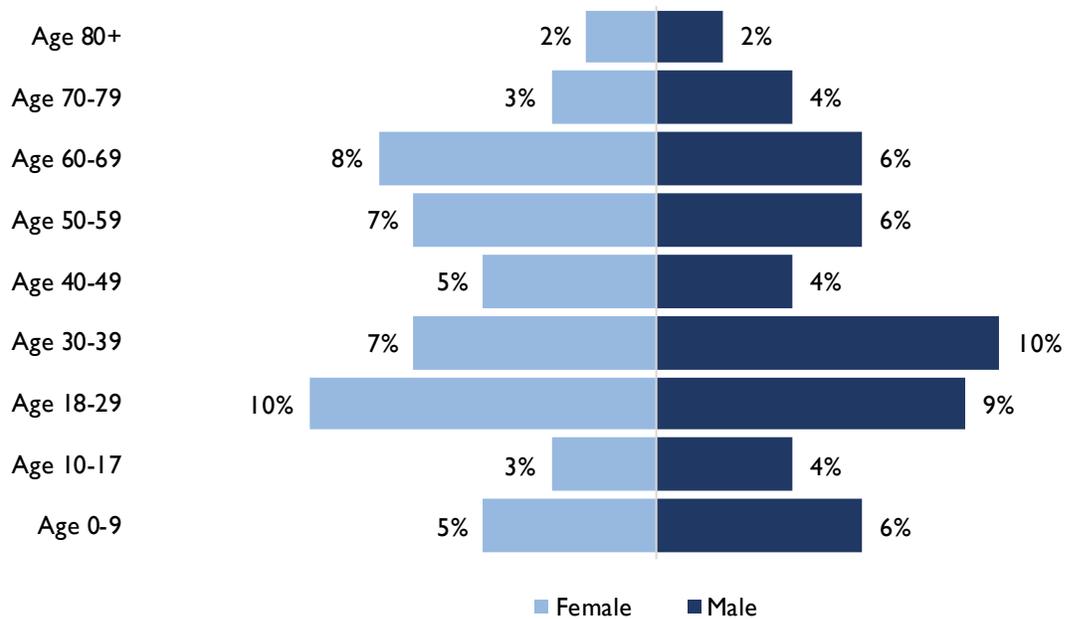
The mean age of all Washington Jews (adults and children) is 40 and the median is 37. Compared to the national Jewish population, the Washington Jewish community has proportionally more adults ages 30-39 and fewer who are ages 40-64 (Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3 Age of Jewish adults in Washington and nationally<sup>15</sup>**

	Washington	Pew 2013 <sup>16</sup>
18-29	22	21
30-39	21	14
40-49	10	14
50-64	25	30
65+	20	22
	100%	100%

The age-gender pyramid (Figure 2.1) shows the distribution of the population. Overall, the community is evenly divided by gender, with 49% female and 51% male. A small proportion, less than 1% of adults, identify as a gender other than male or female.

Figure 2.1 Age-gender distribution of Jewish individuals in Greater Washington, DC<sup>17</sup>



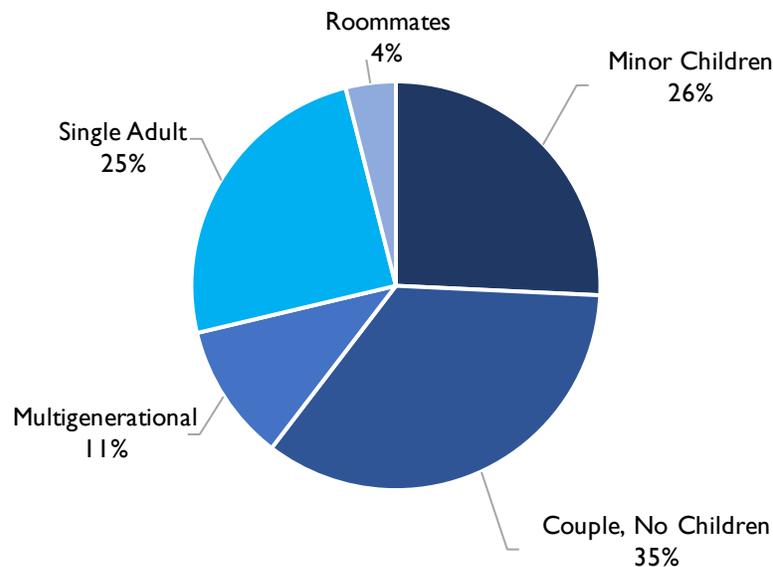
## Household Composition

Households with children under age 18 (comprised of single, two-parent, or multigenerational households) make up 26% of Jewish households in Metro DC (Figure 2.2). The remaining households are comprised of single adults (25%), couples without children (35%), households with parents and adult children living together (multigenerational households) (11%), and households comprised of roommates (including adult siblings without their parents) (4%).

Among households in which a single adult resides, 30% are seniors ages 65 and older, 18% are ages 50-64, 10% are ages 40-49, 22% are ages 30-39, and the remaining 21% are ages 18-29. Among households comprised of roommates, 56% include individuals between the ages 18-29, 35% include individuals in their 30's, and the remaining 8% include adults ages 40-64.

Overall, two-thirds of households (67%) include a married, engaged, or cohabiting couple, living with or without children or other relatives. Among households with children, the mean number of children ages 17 and younger is 1.5. The mean household size of all households is 2.4.

Figure 2.2 Household composition





## Jewish Denominations

Historically, denominational affiliation has been one of the basic indicators of Jewish identity and practice. Overall, about three-fifths of Metro DC's Jewish adults identify with a formal Jewish denomination, and the remainder indicate they are secular, just Jewish, or have no specific denomination (Table 2.6). The largest denomination, Reform, includes 29% of Jewish adults.

**Table 2.6 Age by denomination (% of Jewish adults)**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>18-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-64</b>	<b>65 +</b>
Orthodox	5	6	4	10	6	3
Conservative	21	19	20	22	23	21
Reform	29	32	29	27	26	31
Reconstructionist	3	2	2	2	4	2
Other	3	2	2	3	2	2
None	39	39	44	36	38	41
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Metro DC Jews are less likely than US Jews overall to identify with a specific denomination (Table 2.7). Over one-third (39%) of Metro DC Jews indicate that they have no denomination, compared to 30% of all US Jews. The share of the DC population that is Orthodox (5%) is smaller than the Orthodox population in the United States as a whole (10%).

**Table 2.7 Denomination of Jews in 2017 compared to the national Jewish community (% of Jewish adults)**

	<b>Washington 2017</b>	<b>Pew 2013</b>
Orthodox	5	10
Conservative	21	18
Reform	29	36
Reconstructionist	3	1
Other	3	5
None	39	30
	100%	100%

## Inmarriage and Inter-marriage

Over two-thirds (67%) of Jewish households include a couple who is married or partnered. Of those couples, 61% are intermarried and 39% are inmarried. Six percent of inmarried couples include someone who converted to Judaism. Regarding individual Jewish adults, nearly two-thirds (63%) are married or partnered (Table 2.8). Among them, 56% are inmarried and 44% are intermarried; this is equal to the rate for all US Jews. Those in the youngest age group, ages 18-29, are least likely to be married or partnered (34%), but of those who are, 61% have a spouse/partner who is not Jewish.

**Table 2.8 Age by inmarriage (Includes partners who live together) (% of Jewish adults)**

	Overall	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65 +
Unmarried	37	66	35	27	29	32
Married	63	34	65	73	71	68
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Inmarried (of married)	56	39	50	52	57	64
Intermarried (of married)	44	61	50	48	43	36
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## Demographic Subgroups

A number of subgroups in the region are of particular interest to Metro DC-area Jewish organizations. The size and socio-demographic characteristics of each subgroup appear below.

### *Jewish young adults*

Young adults, ages 22 to 39, constitute 35% of Metro DC's adult Jewish population (86,400 people). One-quarter of those are parents and the remaining three-quarters do not have children. Among those who are not parents, 14% are full-time students and 5% are part-time students. Of the students, about one-quarter (23%) are undergraduates and the remainder are graduate students. Of all young adults, 30% live in DC, 28% live in Suburban Maryland, and 42% live in Northern Virginia. Information about Jewish young adult programming appears in Chapter 7.

Another 18,500 Jewish adults, ages 18 to 21, are part of the population but, for the purposes of this study, are not counted as young adults. Among this group, 5% are in high school, 14% are college students in the DC area, and 56% are college students elsewhere. The remainder are not students, or their student status is unknown.

### *Russian speakers*

Two percent of Jewish adults in the Metro DC area (4,900 adults) were raised in a Russian-speaking household. In total, 6,800 Jewish adults and 2,100 Jewish children live in households with a Russian-speaker. Within those households, 81% include a married couple; among them, 39% are inmarried. Three-in-ten Russian-speaking Jews are senior citizens, 16% are young adults without children, and one-fifth are young adults with children. About two-fifths each of the Russian-speaking Jews live in Suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia, with the remaining fifth in DC.

### *Israelis in Greater Washington, DC*

In Metro DC, an estimated 4% of Jewish adults (9,900 adults) are Israeli citizens. Five percent of households include someone who is Israeli, and 14,300 Jewish adults and 5,200 Jewish children live in these households. Seventy-two percent of those households include a married couple, and among those couples, 79% are inmarried. Nine percent of Israelis are senior citizens, 22% are young adults without children, and 14% are young adults with children. One-quarter of Israelis live in Northern Virginia, 30% in DC, and 44% in Suburban Maryland.

### *LGBTQ Jewish adults*

An estimated 7% of Jewish adults (17,100) identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ).<sup>19</sup> About 8% of households include someone who is LGBTQ, whether Jewish or not; 19,400 Jewish adults and 3,300 Jewish children live in these households. Half (52%) of LGBTQ Jews are young adults without children, and 6% each are young adults with children and senior citizens. Among the fifth of LGBTQ Jews who are married (or partnered), 67% are married (or partnered) to someone who is not Jewish. Thirty percent of LGBTQ Jews each live in DC and Suburban Maryland, and 41% live in Northern Virginia.<sup>20</sup>

### *Jews of Color*

An estimated 7% of Jewish adults (12,200) identify as a person of color or as having Hispanic or Latino origin. About 9% of households include someone who is a person of color, whether Jewish or not, and 20,600 Jewish adults and 4,900 Jewish children live in these households. Half (52%) of the DC area's Jews of color are young adults without children, 6% are young adults with children, and 3% are senior citizens. Among the 61% of Jews of color who are married, 62% are married to someone who is not Jewish. Three-in-ten Jews of color live in DC, one-fifth in Suburban Maryland, and half live in Northern Virginia. Among US Jewish adults, an estimated 8% are Black and/or Hispanic.<sup>21</sup>

### *Holocaust Survivors*

One percent of Jewish adults (2,400 adults) in the DC area are Holocaust survivors. One percent of households include someone who survived the Holocaust, and 2,600 Jewish adults live in these households. Forty-five percent of Holocaust survivors live in Northern Virginia, 12% in DC, and 43% in Suburban Maryland.

**Other subgroups:** The size of subgroups used throughout this report is shown in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9 Size of subgroups

	Households	Jewish adults		Households	Jewish adults
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>			<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>		
Immersed	22,700	43,700	Young adults 22-39, not parents	37,100	64,800
Involved	44,700	77,600	Young adults 22-39, parents	16,400	21,600
Cultural	24,360	39,100	Adults 40-64, not parents	44,500	57,200
Holiday	26,400	42,000	Adults 40-60, parents	22,400	28,100
Minimal	24,100	34,000	Seniors 65+	30,300	48,700
<b>MARRIAGE</b>			<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>		
Inmarried	49,100	85,200	DC	34,600	48,900
Intermarried	55,000	67,600	MD	56,900	95,300
Unmarried	51,000	91,600	VA	63,700	100,300

## Chapter 3. Geography and Mobility

The geography of the greater Washington, DC Jewish community includes all of the District of Columbia; Suburban Maryland (Montgomery and Prince George’s counties); and Northern Virginia (Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun counties, Arlington county/city, and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park).<sup>22</sup> The distribution of Jewish households and individuals in Metro DC is described in Table 3.1. Maps showing the distribution of Jewish households appear below (Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

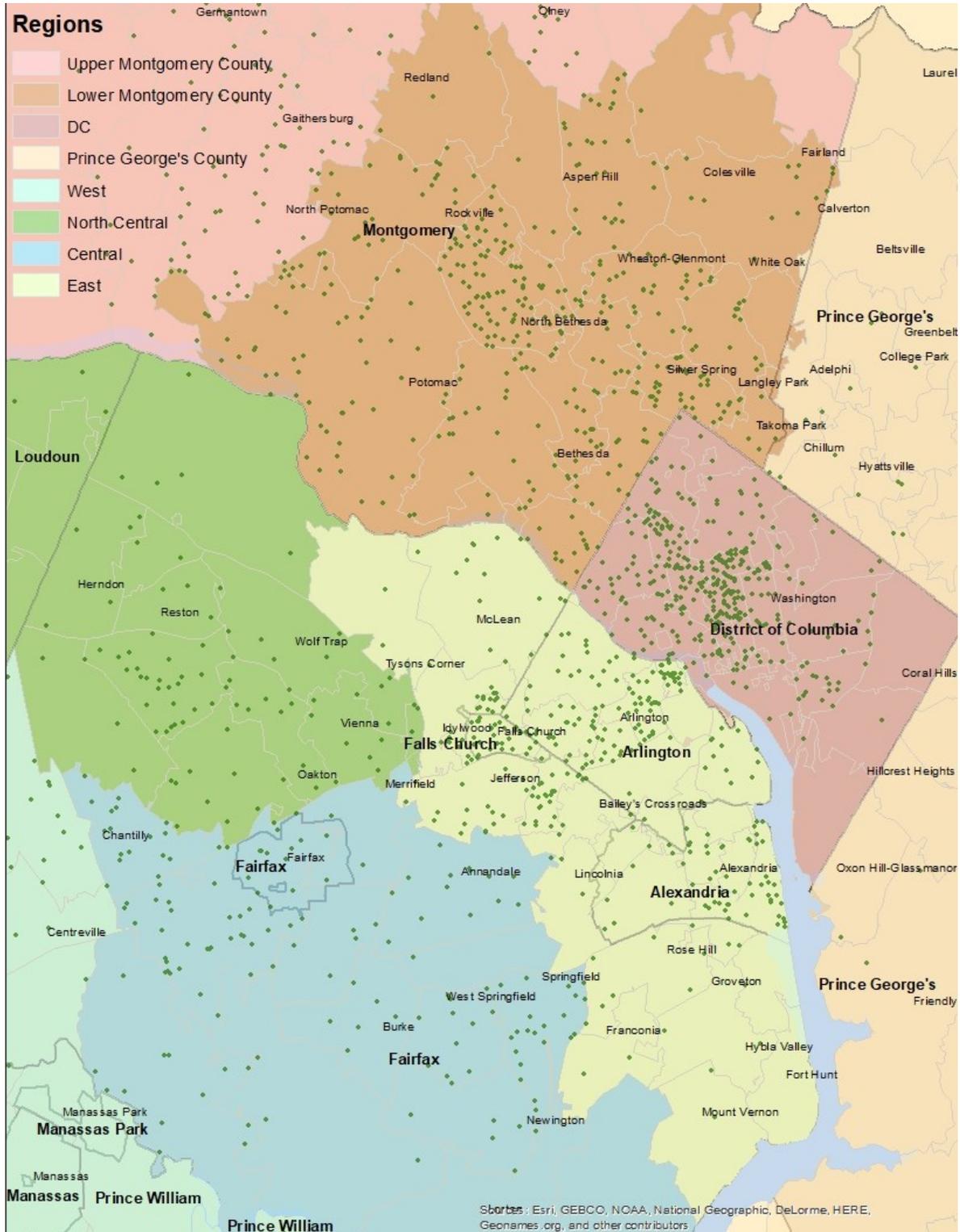
Table 3.1 Geographic distribution of Washington’s Jews

Geographic region	Household %	Households	Jewish individuals %	Jewish individuals
<b>Washington, DC</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34,600</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>57,300</b>
<b>Suburban Maryland TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>56,900</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>116,700</b>
Lower Montgomery County	28	42,700	29	86,900
Upper Montgomery County	5	7,700	6	18,400
Prince George’s County	4	6,500	4	11,400
<b>Northern Virginia TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>63,700</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>121,500</b>
North-Central	7	11,200	8	24,500
Central	8	12,200	8	23,100
East	19	29,600	18	54,400
West	7	10,700	7	19,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>155,200</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>295,500</b>

Note: Sums may not add up due to rounding.



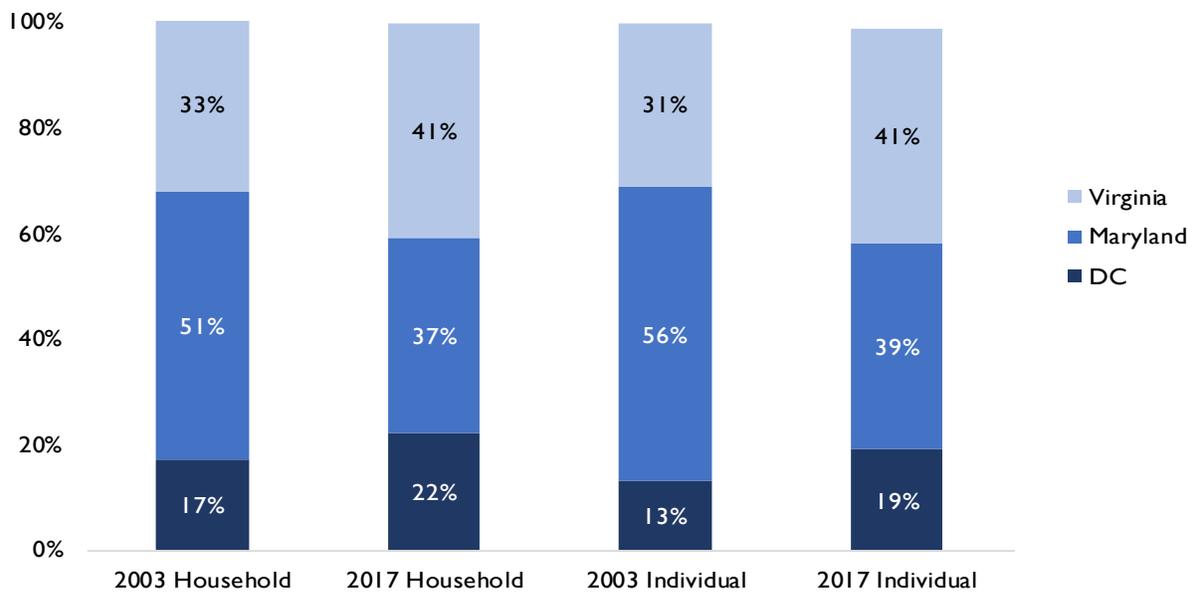
Figure 3.2 Dot density map of central area  
 (1 dot=100 households, dots positioned randomly within zip codes)



### Changes in Geographic Distribution

The geographic distribution of Jewish households has shifted since 2003 (Figure 3.3). The share of Jewish households in DC and Northern Virginia increased, and the share who live in Suburban Maryland declined. The number of Jewish individuals in Northern Virginia increased by 80%, in the District by 105%, and there was no change in Suburban Maryland. This shift is consistent with regional trends. From 2005-15 the general population grew by 31% in Northern Virginia, 14% in Suburban Maryland, and 13% in DC. However, the white non-Hispanic college-educated population in DC grew by 52%.

Figure 3.3 Change in geographic distribution of Jewish households 2003-17



### Demographic Differences across Regions

There are distinct differences in demographics across the region. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Jewish adults in DC are under age 40 and almost half (46%) of Jewish adults in DC live alone or with roommates (Tables 3.2, 3.3). In Maryland, nearly two-thirds (63%) of Jewish adults are ages 50 or older. In Virginia, half of Jewish adults are under age 50 and half are older.

Table 3.2 Age by geographic region (% of Jewish adults)

	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65 +	
DC	30	30	10	18	13	100%
MD	15	17	12	30	26	100%
VA	26	21	9	24	19	100%
Overall	22	21	10	25	20	100%

Table 3.3 Household type by geographic region (% of Jewish households)

	Children	Couples, No Children	Multigenerational	Single Adults or Roommates	
DC	16	35	2	46	100%
MD	24	36	16	25	100%
VA	26	36	14	25	100%
Overall	26	35	11	29	100%

### Roots in Greater Washington, DC

Households in the Metro DC Jewish community have lived in the area for an average of 26 years. Excluding the 9% of Jewish adults who were born in the DC area, the average length of residence is 24.5 years. Three-out-of-four (73%) Jewish adults own their homes. Extended family provides a tie to the community for only a minority: One-fifth (19%) of Jewish adults have children living in another DC-area household and 29% have parents living in another DC-area household. Despite the perception of DC as a “transient community,” 94% of Jews consider the Metro DC area to be their “home base.”

One-quarter of Jewish adults have lived in Metro DC for fewer than 10 years, 33% for 20 years or more, and 27% were born or raised in the area (Table 3.4).

The District has the largest share of newcomers, with 19% having lived in the area for less than five years. In Maryland, by contrast, more than three-quarters are long-time residents, including one-third (32%) who were born or raised in the area and 44% who have lived in the area for 20 years or more. In Virginia, 60% are long-time residents with 22% having been born or raised in the area and 38% living in the area for 20 years or more. Of those who provided a reason for moving to the area (668), the most common reason was for work (460).

Table 3.4 Length of residence in Metro DC by geographic region (% of Jewish adults)

	< 5 years	5-9 years	10-19 years	20 + years	Born/Raised in DC area	
DC	19	21	19	21	20	100%
MD	4	8	12	44	32	100%
VA	13	9	20	38	22	100%
Overall	11	13	17	33	27	100%

## Internal Mobility

As with most communities, there is a great deal of internal mobility within the Metro DC area. Although households in the Metro DC Jewish community have lived in the area for an average of 26 years, they have lived at or near their current address for an average of 14 years. Mobility is highest among those who live in the District.

Overall, about one-third of households (34%) have moved within the past five years (Table 3.5). A smaller share (23%) of those who currently live in Suburban Maryland have moved in the past five years, but over half (55%) of those currently in the District have moved in the past five years.

## Plans to Move

Of all Jewish adults, 60% have no plans to move from their current residence (Table 3.6). The remaining adults have plans to move away from the Greater DC area (17%), to move elsewhere within their current region (16%) or to another region in Metro DC (6%). Compared to other

Table 3.5 Years at/near current address by geographic region (% of Jewish adults)

	< 5 years	5-9 years	10-19 years	20 + years	Whole Life	
DC	55	17	14	14	< 1	100%
MD	23	11	25	38	3	100%
VA	35	14	20	30	1	100%
Overall	34	16	18	31	1	100%

Table 3.6 Plans to move by geographic region (% of Jewish adults)

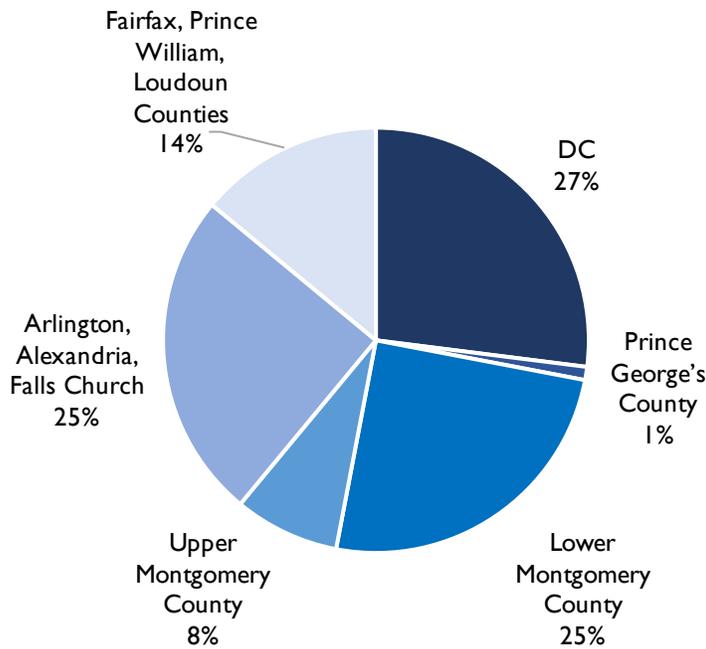
	No Plans to Move	Move Within Region	Move Elsewhere in Metro DC	Leave Metro DC	Don't Know	
DC	53	17	7	22	< 1	100%
MD	68	10	3	17	2	100%
VA	65	13	3	19	1	100%
Overall	63	13	4	19	1	100%

regions, a greater share of those currently living in the District have plans to move either within Metro DC (17%) or away from the area (22%). Of the 22% who plan to move within the Metro DC area, over one-quarter (27%) plan to move to the District and another quarter (25%) plan to move to Lower Montgomery County (Figure 3.4).

Those with plans to leave Metro DC within five years were asked their reason for moving (637) and where they intend to move (620). The plurality are moving to be closer to family (151), followed by those moving for their own or their spouse’s job, whether a new position or a transfer (134). Some moving are planning to retire (74) or start school for themselves or their partner (67). Others are not happy with the cost of living (49) and weather (34) in Metro DC.

The largest shares of those who intend to leave the DC area plan to relocate to the Northeastern (161), Southern (125), or Western (104) United States. Some expect to relocate to the Midwestern United States (32), Israel (32), or some other country (44), but more are undecided (117).

Figure 3.4 Intended relocation region within the DC area (% of the 22% of Jewish adults with plans to move within Metro DC)



**Recent Movers**

The study included interviews with members of approximately 160 Jewish households who had moved away from the DC area in the two years prior to the study. Although the information about this group is not representative of all who have moved away from the area, it provides an indication of their characteristics.

The most common reason for moving from the area was for work (Table 3.7). Those who relocated for work include recent graduates as well as some who were reassigned as part of their military or foreign-service positions. Other reasons include the death of a spouse or family member, divorce, improved quality of life, and more clement weather.

The most common destination for those who moved was in the Northeastern United States (Table 3.8).

Two-fifths each of the recent movers were living in the District or Montgomery County, 4% in Prince George’s County, and 17% in Northern Virginia (Figure 3.5). The recent movers had lived in the area for a median of five years, ranging from less than one year to 66 years.

Only 10% of recent movers have plans to return to the DC area, but 30% are unsure. One-quarter of movers still consider the DC area their “home base,” and one-third still have close relatives living in the DC area.

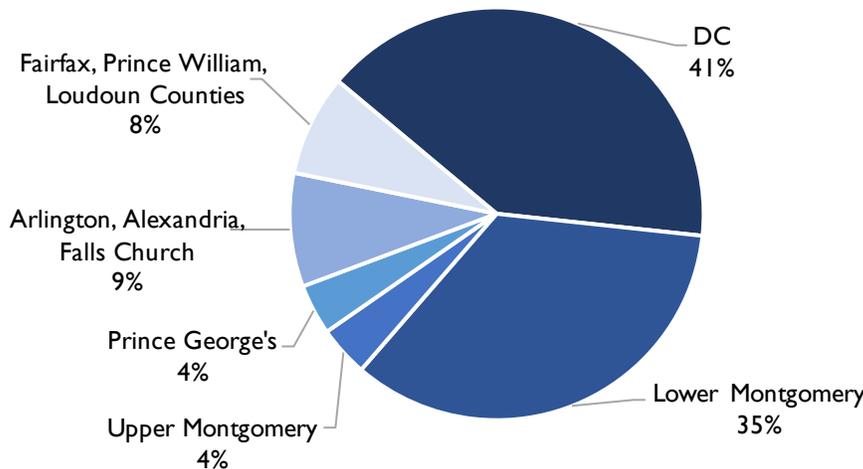
**Table 3.7 Reasons for moving from Metro DC**

	n
Work	62
School	29
Family	29
Cost of Living	12
Retire	11
Other	20

**Table 3.8 Regions where relocated**

	n
Northeastern United States	42
Western United States	26
Southern United States	25
Midwestern United States	17
Other Maryland or Virginia	13
Europe	7
Israel	5
Other	5

**Figure 3.5 Location of home in DC area before moving (% of mover households)**



## Chapter 4. Patterns of Jewish Engagement

The diversity of Metro DC Jewry is reflected not only by the varied demographics of the residents, but in the many types of Jewish identification and means of engagement in Jewish life. Examining the ways in which Washington-area Jews not only view but also enact their Jewish identities is necessary to understand this population and the ways in which Jewish life in the region can be enhanced. The varieties of Jewish identity reflect the fact that Judaism is not only a religion, but is also an ethnicity, a culture, a people, and a heritage (see, e.g., Batnitzky, 2011).

### Background: Classifications of Jewish Identity

As discussed in Chapter 2, many Jewish demographic studies, including most recently Pew (2013), classify Jewish adults as either “Jewish by religion” (JBR; they respond that they are “Jewish” when asked about their religious identity) or “Jews of no religion” (JNR; they consider themselves to be Jewish in a way other than religion). For purposes of this report and comparability with other studies, we used a variant of this set of classifications for the population estimates.

Although research has shown that Jewish adults who are “JBR” are, overall, more engaged Jewishly than those who are “JNR,” these classifications are too broad to provide insight about the range of Jewish behaviors and attitudes within each group. We developed a new set of categories specifically for this study that are based on behavior rather than self-identification. We refer to these categories as the “Index of Jewish Engagement.”

### Index of Jewish Engagement

We specifically designed the Index of Jewish Engagement to identify opportunities for increased engagement for groups with different needs and interests. The Index focuses on the ways in which individuals occupy and involve themselves in Jewish life. Such behaviors are concrete and measurable expressions of Jewish identity. In many cases, behaviors are correlated with demographic characteristics, background, and attitudes. 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 skills and resources that enable them to participate, and the opportunities available and known to them. We are interested in how Washington-area Jews think about their Jewish identities and participate in Jewish life.

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 the typology are inclusive of the different ways—public and private—that contemporary Jews engage with Jewish life. Cultural activities, such as participation in educational programs, reading Jewish literature, and using Jewish sources on the web are included in addition to religious activities, such as attendance at religious services and observance of Jewish laws of Shabbat and kashrut. 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: family and home-based practices, ritual practices, personal activities, and organizational participation. The behavioral measures include:

- **Family holiday** celebrations: Participating in a Passover seder and lighting Chanukah candles. Family holiday celebrations are practiced by many US Jews for religious and other reasons, e.g., social, familial, cultural, and ethnic. In contrast to High Holy Day services, these can be practiced at home without institutional affiliation.
- **Ritual practices:** Keeping kosher, lighting Shabbat candles or having a Shabbat dinner, attending religious services regularly, attending High Holy Day services, fasting on Yom Kippur
- **Personal activities:** Engaging in cultural activities (book, music, TV, museum), reading Jewish material (newsletter, website), following news about Israel
- **Communal activities:** Belonging to a synagogue, belonging to a JCC or other Jewish organization, attending Jewish activities, volunteering for Jewish organizations, donating to Jewish causes

We employed a statistical tool, latent class analysis (LCA),<sup>23</sup> to identify 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.

### Patterns of Jewish Engagement

Within the set of behaviors listed above, Jewish individuals make unique choices regarding their participation in Jewish private and communal life. Nonetheless, individual sets of choices can be clustered into patterns of behavior that tend to go together. Applying LCA to the data from the survey responses yielded five distinct patterns of behavior and engagement with Jewish life in Metro DC. The patterns are summarized in Figure 4.1 and described below. Table 4.1 shows, for each pattern, the level of participation in each of the 15 behaviors that were used to construct the Index of Jewish Engagement.

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. The classification enables us to understand the characteristics of people who participate in Jewish life in different ways: the demographics, background, and attitudes that are associated with each pattern of participation. 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 were developed specifically for this study and are intended to highlight the behaviors that distinguish each group from the others.

The five patterns differ both in degree and types of engagement with a broad set of Jewish behaviors. Two patterns exhibit engagement with all aspects of Jewish life including holiday, ritual, personal, and communal behaviors. For Jews with the "Immersed" pattern, all of the behaviors are common and are practiced by more than half of those with this behavior pattern. Those with the "Involved" pattern have high participation in almost all of the activities, though less so than the

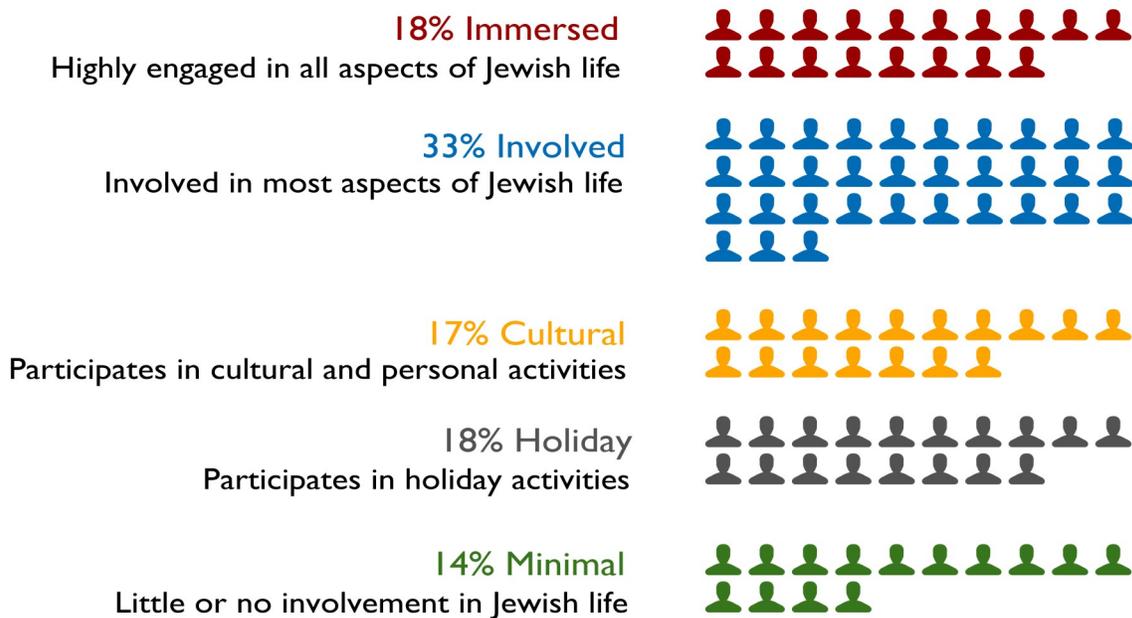
Immersed group. However, the Involved group attends Shabbat services and observes kashrut much less often than do those in the Immersed group.

Two groups represent medium levels of engagement. In comparing these two groups, the “Cultural” group has lower levels of Jewish holiday observance, but higher participation in Jewish cultural and home-based activities. In contrast, the “Holiday” group has lower levels of Jewish cultural and personal activity, but higher Jewish holiday and synagogue participation.

The lowest level of engagement is found in the “Minimal” group, in which only small minorities participate in any of the activities listed, including 4% who participate in none of them. Jews who are classified in the Minimal group are referred to in this report as “Minimally Involved” Jews.

As shown in Figure 4.1, the largest group, approximately one-third of Jewish adults, are characterized by the Involved pattern. Each of the other groups includes 14-18% of Jewish adults in the community. The remainder of this chapter describes the distinguishing characteristics of each of the five groups.

Figure 4.1 Patterns of Jewish engagement



## Jewish Behaviors and Jewish Engagement

As shown in Table 4.1, the Jewish behaviors across the five engagement patterns vary widely, but all patterns include at least some behaviors that represent a connection to Jewish life. This section focuses on the 15 behaviors that were used to construct the typology of Jewish engagement. Later chapters of this report relate these patterns to specific areas of Jewish communal engagement and attitudes about Judaism and Jewish life.

### *Family holidays*

The home-based holidays of Passover and Chanukah are widely observed, in particular among the Immersed, Involved, and Holiday groups. The majority of the Cultural group observes these holidays, but very few of the Minimally Involved group do so.

### *Ritual activities*

Other than keeping kosher, all ritual practices are observed by almost all of those in the Immersed group. Observance of High Holy Days, either through synagogue attendance or fasting on Yom Kippur, is nearly universal among the Involved, but the other practices are followed by few of the Involved Jews. Levels of observance of kashrut and Shabbat are one of the primary distinctions between the Immersed and the Involved.

About half of the Holiday Jews celebrate High Holy Days, but almost none observe the other rituals. An even smaller share of the Cultural celebrate High Holy Days, but notably a larger share fast on Yom Kippur, which is an individual activity, than attend services. Although fewer Cultural Jews celebrate High Holy Days compared to Holiday Jews, slightly larger shares of Cultural Jews observe Shabbat compared to the Holiday group. Very few of the Minimally Involved follow any Jewish rituals.

### *Personal activities*

Nearly all Immersed Jews read Jewish websites and news about Israel regularly, and half participate in cultural activities weekly. The Cultural Jews are second to the Immersed Jews in participation in all of these personal activities, followed by the Involved Jews. About a third of Holiday and Minimally Involved groups follow news about Israel, but a greater share of the Minimally Involved group accesses Jewish websites compared to a smaller share of the Holiday group.

### *Communal activities*

Communal activities include memberships and participation in synagogue and organizational life. A large majority (84%) of the Immersed are synagogue members, as are under half of the Involved. Few or none of the other groups are synagogue members. Organization membership, activity, and support through donations is highest among the Immersed, followed by the Involved, Cultural, Holiday, and Minimally Involved. Regarding volunteering, the Cultural group participates at a higher rate than does the Involved.

Table 4.1 Behaviors used to construct Index of Jewish Engagement

	Immersed	Involved	Cultural	Holiday	Minimal
<b>Family holidays</b>					
Passover seder (typically)	99%	99%	85%	95%	9%
Chanukah (typically)	99%	98%	73%	89%	19%
<b>Ritual</b>					
Kosher at home or always	53%	5%	4%	1%	2%
Shabbat candles or dinner (usually/always)	94%	34%	14%	6%	1%
Services at least monthly	86%	13%	3%	< 1%	0%
Yom Kippur fast (all or part of day)	97%	89%	25%	47%	3%
High Holy Day services (any in 2016)	98%	93%	6%	55%	< 1%
<b>Personal activities</b>					
Jewish cultural activities weekly or more (book, music, TV, museum)	52%	18%	27%	< 1%	< 1%
Jewish news or websites monthly or more	97%	84%	95%	10%	21%
Israel news monthly or more	92%	79%	87%	39%	33%
<b>Communal activities</b>					
Synagogue member	84%	41%	< 1%	7%	< 1%
Organization member (JCC, formal, informal)	69%	45%	36%	9%	9%
Organization activity in past year	91%	64%	54%	30%	6%
Volunteered with or for a Jewish organization in past month	65%	40%	51%	32%	20%
Donated to a Jewish organization in past year	94%	81%	64%	35%	19%

## Demographics and Jewish Engagement

The patterns of engagement are associated with demographic characteristics of respondents. Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 show the distribution of selected demographic characteristics within the Jewish engagement categories. To best understand demographic patterns, it is useful to compare the distribution of each demographic category across the engagement groups to that of the overall adult Jewish population, shown in the bottom row of each table. This comparison indicates where each engagement group differs from the overall population. See Appendix B for a table showing the distribution of engagement groups within each demographic characteristic (i.e., column totals rather than row totals).

Note that the overall rows in these tables do not necessarily match those given elsewhere in the report because they are based only on the subset of Jewish adults who provided sufficient information for assignment of a Jewish engagement category.

There are some age differences across the engagement groups (Table 4.2). The Immersed group has a larger share, 30%, of the 50- to 64-year-olds. The Cultural Jews are older than others, with 35% ages 65 and over. The Holiday Jews are younger than others, with 20% younger than age 30 and 29% between the ages of 30 and 39.

**Table 4.2 Age by Jewish engagement (% of Jewish adults)**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>18-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-64</b>	<b>65 +</b>	
Immersed	18	18	13	30	20	100%
Involved	17	22	12	25	24	100%
Cultural	12	19	11	24	35	100%
Holiday	20	29	11	24	16	100%
Minimal	17	18	22	21	23	100%
Overall	19	22	12	24	24	100%

Family patterns are similar across all five groups (Table 4.3), although fewer of the Cultural group have children at home, which can be explained by their older ages. Nearly all of the Minimally Involved (94%) are intermarried, and nearly all of the Immersed (90%) are inmarried.

**Table 4.3 Marriage and children by Jewish engagement (% of Jewish adults)**

	<b>Married</b>	<b>Unmarried</b>	<b>Inmarried (of married)</b>	<b>Intermarried (of married)</b>	<b>Has children</b>	<b>No children</b>
Immersed	68	32	90	10	24	76
Involved	65	35	69	31	22	78
Cultural	62	38	36	64	14	86
Holiday	59	41	45	55	23	77
Minimal	61	39	6	94	25	75
Overall	63	37	56	44	22	78

The geographic distribution within each engagement group differs from that of the overall Jewish adult population (Table 4.4). Nearly half (45%) of the Immersed live in Maryland. The largest shares of the Involved, Cultural, and Holiday groups reside in Virginia. Among the Minimally Involved group, 17% are DC residents, 22% are Maryland residents, and 61% are Virginia residents.

**Table 4.4 Geography by Jewish engagement (% of Jewish adults)**

	DC	MD	VA	
Immersed	23	45	32	100%
Involved	28	31	41	100%
Cultural	25	30	45	100%
Holiday	30	27	43	100%
Minimal	17	22	61	100%
Overall	22	37	41	100%

**Jewish Background and Jewish Engagement**

The following tables describe the Jewish identity and Jewish backgrounds of those in each Jewish engagement category. Tables 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 show the distribution of selected Jewish identity characteristics across the Jewish engagement categories in comparison to the overall Jewish adult population (last row). See Appendix B for a table showing the distribution of engagement groups within each demographic characteristic (i.e., column totals rather than row totals).

Note that the overall rows in these tables do not necessarily match those given elsewhere in the report because they are based only on the subset of Jewish adults who provided sufficient information for assignment of a Jewish engagement category.

Jewish denomination corresponds closely to Jewish engagement, but is not identical (Table 4.5). The Immersed group has the largest share of both Orthodox (25%) and Conservative (39%) Jews and the Involved group has the largest share (38%) of Reform Jews. The denominational distribution of the Cultural and Holiday is similar, but the Minimally Involved is largely composed of Jews with no denomination (81%).

**Table 4.5 Denomination by Jewish engagement (% of Jewish adults)**

Denomination	Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Other	None	
Immersed	25	39	20	7	10	100%
Involved	2	30	38	5	25	100%
Cultural	0	9	29	3	58	100%
Holiday	3	11	30	4	52	100%
Minimal	0	2	14	3	81	100%
Overall	5	21	29	6	39	100%

The vast majority of the Immersed (97%) and the Involved (91%) are Jewish by religion (JBR) (Table 4.6). In comparison, just over half (54%) of the Cultural are JBR, and just over two-thirds of the Holiday (68%). The largest share of the Minimally Involved (60%) are Jews of no religion (JNR), and this group has the largest share who are Jewish as well as another religion (21%).

Jewish backgrounds are associated with Jewish engagement in adulthood. Overall, more than three-quarters (78%) of Metro DC Jewish adults were raised by two Jewish parents (Table 4.7). However, just over half (55%) of those who are Minimally Involved were raised by inmarried parents. Three-quarters of those in the Immersed group had some Jewish education in childhood, 60% of those in the Involved group, and just under half in the remaining three groups.

**Table 4.6 Jewish identity by Jewish engagement (% of Jewish adults)**

Type of Jew	JBR	JNR	JMR	
Immersed	97	2	1	100%
Involved	91	6	4	100%
Cultural	54	30	16	100%
Holiday	68	21	11	100%
Minimal	19	60	21	100%
Overall	72	19	9	100%

**Table 4.7 Jewish background by Jewish engagement (% of Jewish adults)**

Jewish background	Parents inmarried	Had Jewish education
Immersed	85	75
Involved	85	60
Cultural	74	47
Holiday	73	47
Minimal	55	44
Overall	78	56

### Attitudes about Being Jewish and Jewish Engagement

Just as Jewish behaviors vary across the engagement groups, so too do attitudes about being Jewish. The figures below show responses to a set of attitudinal questions that illustrate the differences among the groups. As is evident from Figure 4.2, nearly three-quarters (73%) of the Immersed consider being Jewish to be very much part of their daily lives, with the proportions in the other groups being much less. The same pattern is evident in response to a question about whether Judaism is a matter of religion (Figure 4.3). In contrast, but not shown, is that there is general agreement across all groups regarding Judaism as a matter of culture (65% very much agree) and ethnicity (40% very much agree).

Figure 4.2 Being Jewish is a part of daily life (% very much)

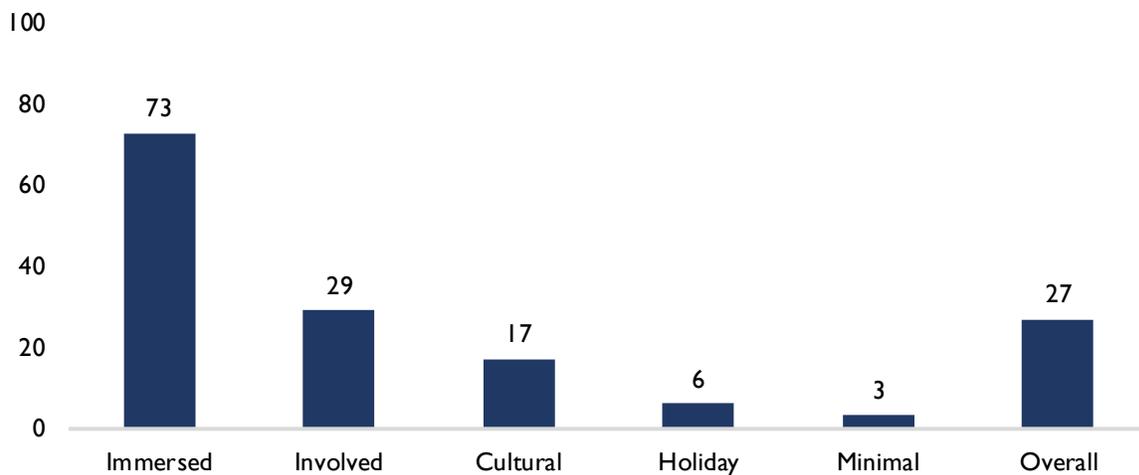
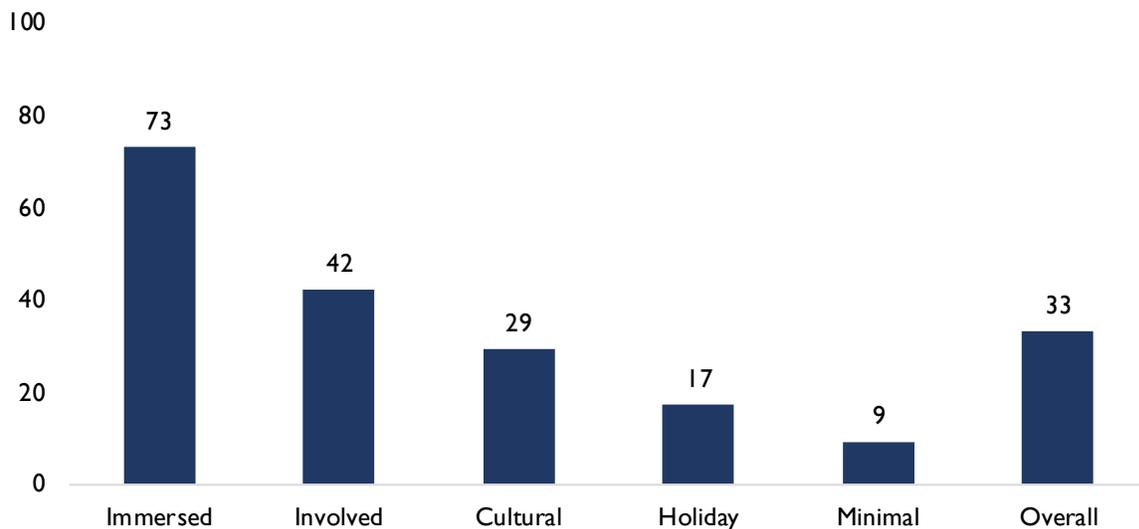


Figure 4.3 Being Jewish is a matter of religion (% very much agree)



To further explore the meaning of being Jewish, respondents were asked about whether various aspects of Judaism were an essential part of being Jewish to them. In Figure 4.4, these results are presented for each engagement group, for the overall Greater DC Jewish community, and, because these questions were included in the Pew survey, for all US Jews. For the two dimensions “Leading a moral and ethical life” and “Working for justice and equality” the differences between the groups are not dramatic and, in all cases, is equal to or higher than the US Jewish average. For the dimension “Working for justice and equality,” the group with the highest proportion who think this dimension is essential is the Cultural group. Being part of a Jewish community was seen as essential to three-quarters (77%) of the Immersed, less than one-third (30%) of the Involved, and very few of any of the other groups.

Consistent with the finding above that being part of a Jewish community is not essential to most DC-area Jews, it is not surprising that feelings of connection to either the global or local Jewish community are not strong (Figure 4.5). Over half of the Immersed feel very connected to the global (59%) and the local (57%) Jewish communities, but minorities of the other groups feel the same. For all groups, feelings of connection to the global Jewish community are stronger than to the local Jewish community.

Figure 4.4 Meaning of being Jewish (% essential)

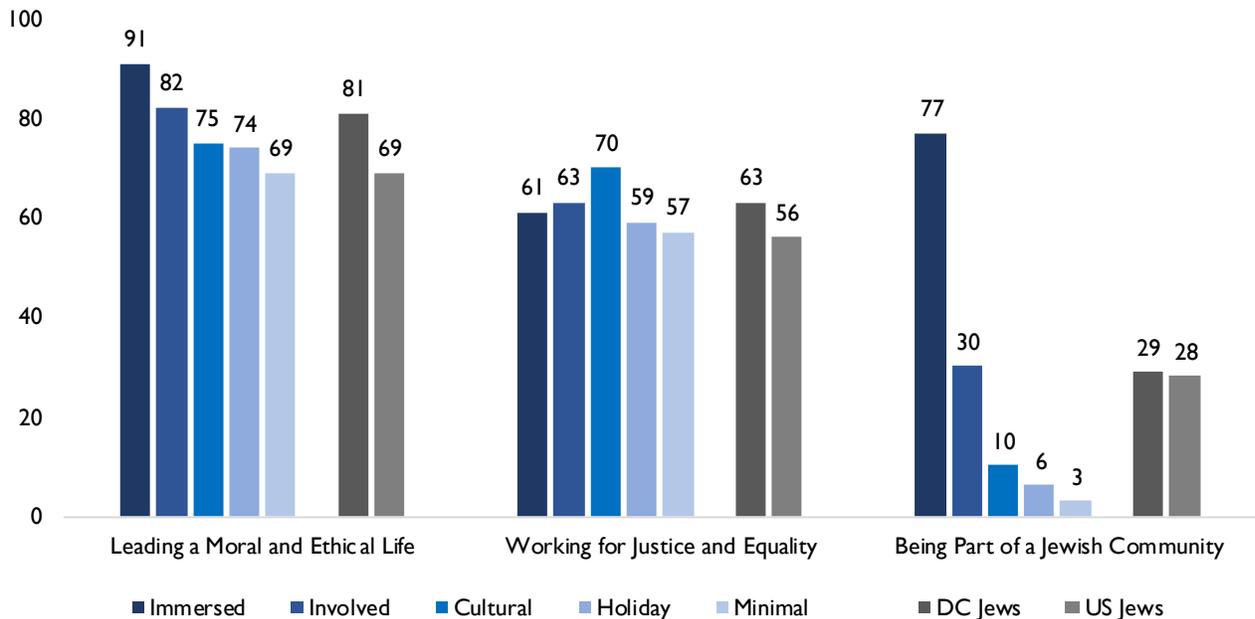
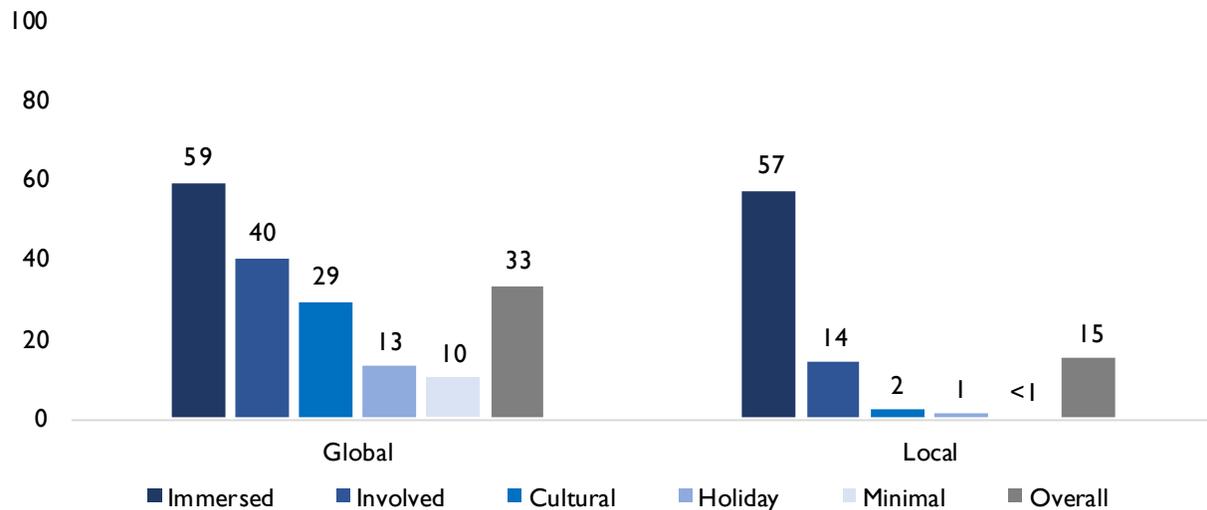


Figure 4.5 Connections to global and local Jewish community (% very much)



### *Meaningful Jewish experiences*

For a deeper understanding of the meaning of being Jewish for each of these groups, the survey asked respondents to describe their most meaningful Jewish experiences. The responses are reported below as the number of respondents who mentioned each type of experience, rather than the percent of responses.

Among the Immersed group (1,478 responses), the most meaningful Jewish experiences were found in synagogue services (493), studying and education (361), and observance of Shabbat (328) and other holidays (304). Experiences with family members (197), the community in general (189), and the synagogue community (157) were noted as meaningful.

A 59-year-old from Montgomery County described “attending shul/synagogue on Saturday/ Shabbat, and on the High Holidays. Passover seder at my family’s home. Having a Friday night Shabbat dinner with friends and family.” A 26-year-old in DC wrote, “Classes where I can grow my Judaism and feel more at home and connected to the community, like I am ‘in the group’ and am confident and comfortable in my Judaism.” Meaningful experiences for this group, however, are not limited to religious settings. A 70-year-old from Virginia described “historical and adult education programs at the three JCC’s (mostly JCC-NV), at synagogues, by the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington, on rare occasion by the Jewish War Veterans Museum, Holocaust Museum, and Theater J. Synagogue services are like ‘comfort food.’”

Among the Involved group (1,394 responses), holiday celebrations were most meaningful (462) and, related to holidays, synagogue services (353) and celebrations with family (264) were mentioned. A 62-year-old from Montgomery County expressed a preference for “religious services that include more participation and singing in English. I attend a Torah study group about three times a year and find the insights very meaningful. I would go more if I had time.” The quality of the synagogue experience was important to many, who appreciated music and active participation. Many mentioned services in their own particular synagogue. A 33-year-old in DC expressed a

preference for “a good Shabbat service with music and singing.” And a 76-year-old from DC explained, “I sing with a small group of members of our chavurah during the High Holidays. Rehearsing and singing at those services is very meaningful to me and a major way I celebrate the Holidays.” Many described other ways to make services meaningful such as, “if they include reflection and remarks on relevant events, taking a principled stand, rather than being cutesy stories that shy away from being ‘controversial.’” [33-year-old from DC]. “I genuinely enjoy a great Shabbat service in which the congregation is fully engaged, and great classes taught by excellent scholars who get us to think about ancient texts with a modern perspective.” [62-year-old from DC]

For many Involved Jews, attending services or Jewish observances was most meaningful as a way to enhance family connections. A 44-year-old from Maryland wrote, “Number 1 reason to be part of the community is so our kids feel a sense of belonging, and I feel a natural support group. It is a true community feeling.”

For Cultural Jews (306 responses), cultural (84) activities are most meaningful, including art, music, dance, films, and books. A 57-year-old from Maryland wrote, “Love learning about Jewish culture and reading non-fiction about Judaism, even though I am not personally ‘religious.’”

Although synagogues and services are rarely the site of Jewish meaning for Cultural Jews, holiday celebrations (99) were mentioned frequently, especially in the context of celebrating with family (46). A 33-year-old from Virginia wrote, “I enjoy Passover and all the things it can mean for different people. It continues to resonate in the modern era in terms of the refugee crisis, or at least it does for me.” And a 26-year-old from Virginia wrote, “I really enjoy the Passover seder with my family every year. It feels like I’m connecting with the traditions of my ancestors and reflecting on how Jewish people have survived so much.” A 46-year-old from Maryland mentioned “holidays and family celebrations (e.g., bris, bar/bat mitzvah), less for the ‘Jewish’ aspects and more because of the life markers.”

For the Holiday Jews (311 responses), the greatest source of meaning is in celebrating Jewish holidays (138), whether in synagogue services (60) or at home with family (80). A 35-year-old from Maryland valued “time for reflection during the major holidays (Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur).” A 63-year-old from DC wrote, “I am not a formally religious person and my experiences are private and spiritual. I light yahrzeit candles for departed loved ones. I go to High Holy Day services at a conservative congregation because I love the rabbi...The liturgy means very little to me, but I feel I am a Jew and am proud of it.” In contrast, a 42-year-old from DC wrote, “Singing together and celebrating the main holidays. I actually like going to more traditional services. I like praying in Hebrew and being both in my own space and connected to others.”

Among the Minimally Involved Jews (89 responses), culture was mentioned most frequently (23), followed by holidays (19) and family (15). Culture most often included traditional Jewish food, but it also referred to the source of connection with other Jews. A 28-year-old from Virginia wrote, “I like being around my friends who are Jewish where we can make occasional Jewish jokes or when I understand Jewish cultural references in the media, but other than that I don’t feel as though I have many Jewish ‘experiences.’” When describing meaningful Jewish holidays, Passover seders were mentioned most frequently.

## Chapter 5. Jewish Children

The focus of this chapter is on the choices that parents make regarding how to raise their children in terms of religion and how families participate in Metro DC’s Jewish educational opportunities. Participation in Jewish educational institutions includes formal programs, such as preschools and part- and full-time schools, as well as informal programs, such as camp and youth groups.

In the Metro DC area with 51,000 Jewish children, there are 37 Jewish early childhood centers, eight Jewish day schools and yeshivot, along with 31 part-time schools.<sup>24</sup>

Raising Jewish children does not start with enrollment in educational institutions. Parents’ initial decisions include whether to raise the children as Jewish religiously or culturally, in no religion, multiple religions, or in another religion. Parents in the survey were asked to describe how they were raising their children in terms of religion with response options as shown in Figure 5.1.

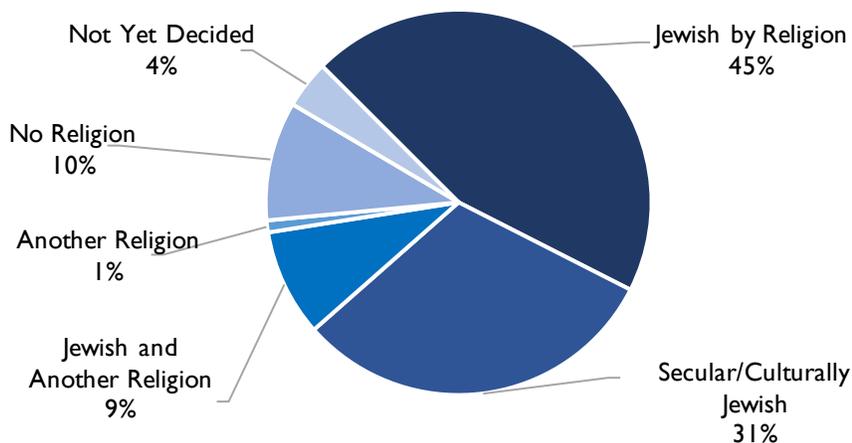
Among the 60,100 children who live in Metro DC Jewish households, there are 51,000 children being raised Jewish in some way: either Jewish by religion, secular or culturally Jewish, or Jewish and another religion (Table 5.1). Of the 9,100 children who are not being raised Jewish, fewer than 1,000 are being raised solely in another religion.

**Table 5.1 Metro DC child population estimates, 2017**

	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>All children</b>
Age 0-5	24,100	29,400
Age 6-12	13,900	16,200
Age 13-17	12,100	13,500
Age unknown		1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,000</b>	<b>60,100</b>

Nearly half (45%) of all children in Jewish homes are being raised Jewish by religion (Figure 5.1). Another 31% of children are being raised as secular or cultural Jews. Nine percent of children are Jewish and another

**Figure 5.1 Religion of children in Jewish households (% of children in Jewish households)**



religion, 10% have no religion, and 1% are being raised in a different religion. For 4% of children, the parents have not yet decided on a religion: about half of the children with no religion, or whose parents have not yet decided on a religion, are age five or under.

### Religion of Children by Household Characteristics

Overall, 85% of children in Jewish households are being raised Jewish in some way (Table 5.2) and 76% are being raised exclusively Jewish, either by religion (45%) or culturally (31%). Nearly all parents who are part of the Holiday, Involved, and Immersed engagement groups are raising their children Jewish in some way, as are the majority of parents in the Cultural (81%) and Minimally Involved (58%) groups. In Maryland and Virginia, approximately 9-in-10 children are being raised Jewish, compared with children in DC, of whom two-thirds are being raised Jewish.

Of children living in Jewish households, 45% are being raised by inmarried parents, 48% by intermarried parents, and 7% by single parents. Nearly all children of inmarried parents are being raised exclusively Jewish, with 77% being raised Jewish by religion and 17% raised as secular or cultural Jews (Figure 5.2). Three-fifths (61%) of children of intermarried parents are being raised exclusively Jewish and another 14% are being raised Jewish and another religion (Figure 5.3). Only 1% are being raised in a different religion entirely. Since 2003, the percentage of children being raised exclusively Jewish by intermarried parents has increased from 45% to 61%.

**Table 5.2 Children raised Jewish by household characteristics**  
(% of children in Jewish households)

Household type	Children raised exclusively Jewish (%)	Children raised Jewish in some way (%)
Overall	76	85
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>		
Immersed	99	99
Involved	78	89
Cultural	57	81
Holiday	72	87
Minimal	48	58
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>		
DC	65	66
MD	83	92
VA	75	88
<b>PARENT MARRIAGE</b>		
Inmarried	94	94
Intermarried	61	75
Single parent	68	76

Figure 5.2 Religion raised, children of inmarriage (% of children in inmarried Jewish households)

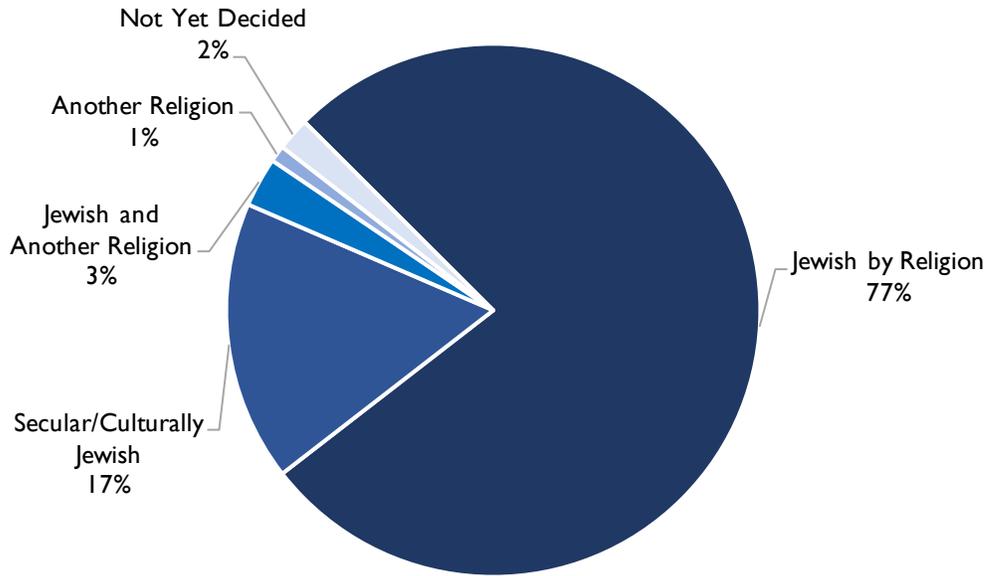
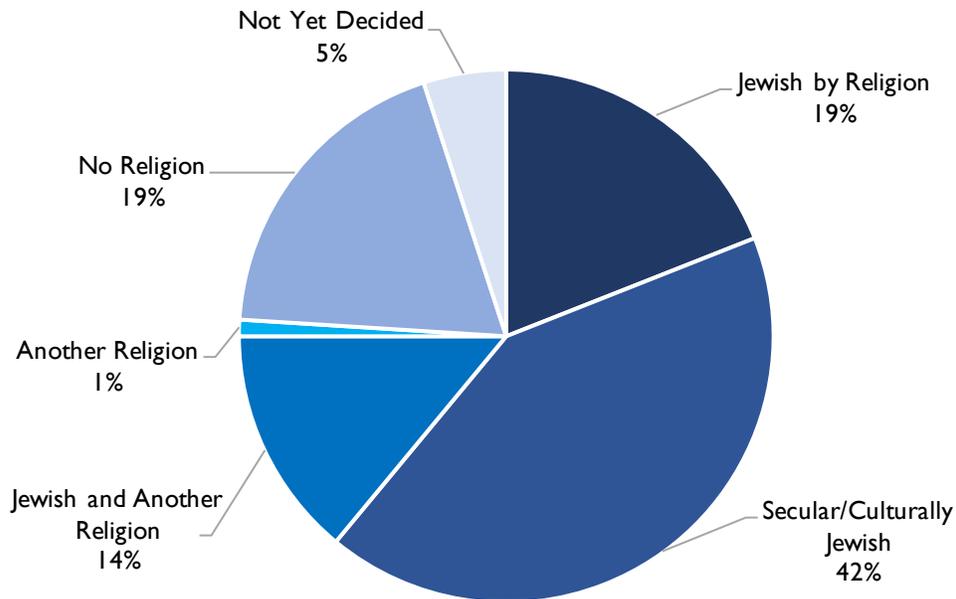


Figure 5.3 Religion raised, children of intermarriage (% of children in intermarried Jewish households)



## Participation in Jewish Education

Jewish education is provided in the context of Jewish preschools, day schools, and part-time supplementary schools and in informal settings, including camp, youth groups, and peer trips to Israel. Overall, one-third of all Jewish children are enrolled in some form of Jewish education.<sup>25</sup> Table 5.3 shows the overall numbers of children participating in each form of Jewish education. This table also displays the proportion of Jewish children who are enrolled in each form of Jewish education, among Jewish children who are age-eligible to attend that form of Jewish education. Among children in Jewish households who are not being raised Jewish in any way, several hundred additional children attend Jewish camps or preschool (not shown in table). A total of 2,100 children in grades K-12 are currently enrolled in day school, compared to 3,100 in 2003. A total of 8,800 children are enrolled in part-time schools, compared to 11,000 in 2003.<sup>26</sup>

Of Jewish children who are not yet in kindergarten, 7% are currently enrolled in a Jewish preschool program. Formal Jewish education includes both part- and full-time school programs. One-third of Jewish children in grades K-12 are enrolled in part-time schools, including 42% of children in grades K-8 and 14% of those in grades 9-12. For full-time day schools, 8% of K-12 students are enrolled, including 10% of K-8 Jewish students and 4% of Jewish high school students. Fifteen percent of K-12 Jewish children are taking some sort of private Jewish class, such as b'nai mitzvah lessons or Hebrew tutoring, in addition to or instead of formal Jewish education.

Informal Jewish education refers to camps and youth groups. Approximately 17% of Jewish children in grades K through 12 attended Jewish day camp in summer 2017, and 13% attended an overnight Jewish camp. About one-fifth of Jewish children in grades 6-12 participated in a youth group. Just over one-tenth (13%) of Jewish high school students have traveled on a Jewish peer group trip (such as USY on Wheels, Israel trip, or March of the Living).

**Table 5.3 Children in Jewish education (number and % of Jewish children)**

	<b>Jewish Student Enrollment</b>	<b>Percent of Age-Eligible Jewish Children</b>
<b>Jewish pre-school</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Day school</b>		
K-8	1,700	10
9-12	400	4
TOTAL K-12	2,100	8
<b>Part-time school</b>		
K-8	7,300	42
9-12	1,500	14
TOTAL K-12	8,800	32
<b>Private classes/Tutoring</b>	<b>4,100</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Informal Jewish education</b>		
Day camp, K-12	4,600	17
Overnight camp, K-12	3,600	13
Youth group, 6-12	3,100	19
Peer trip, 9-12	1,300	13
<b>Total (all forms)</b>	<b>15,800</b>	<b>31</b>

Note: Numbers do not add to totals since children can be enrolled in multiple forms of education.

## Drivers of Participation in Jewish Education

Parents' overall Jewish engagement and characteristics typically inform their decisions regarding enrollment and type of Jewish education their children will receive. Table 5.4 describes the households who participate in various forms of Jewish education. For each household characteristic listed, the table shows the proportion of Jewish households with Jewish age-eligible children who have at least one child enrolled in that form of Jewish education.

Table 5.4 Household participation in formal Jewish education  
(% of households with age-eligible children who have at least one child enrolled)

	Pre-K	Part-Time	Day School	Tutoring	Any Classroom K-12: Part-Time or Day School
Overall	6	28	5	15	33
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>					
Immersed	25	58	23	39	78
Involved	9	40	2	26	41
Cultural	24	8	2	7	9
Holiday	3	14	0	7	14
Minimal	--	--	--	--	--
<b>PARENT MARRIAGE</b>					
Inmarried	13	43	10	23	52
Intermarried	6	14	< 1	17	15
Single parent	7	15	3	13	18
<b>PARENT AGE</b>					
22-39	7	28	7	9	35
40-64	6	29	5	16	34
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>					
DC	5	14	4	25	17
MD	11	28	8	20	36
VA	8	28	2	15	30
<b>FINANCIAL STATUS</b>					
Prosperous/ Very comfortable	7	29	6	24	34
Not prosperous	10	24	5	15	28

### ***Formal Jewish Education: Preschool, Part-time school, Day school, Tutoring***

Six percent of households with age-eligible children have at least one child enrolled in a Jewish preschool; more than one-quarter (28%) in part-time school; 5% in day school; and 15% in private classes or tutoring. Twenty-three percent of households without children in part-time schools previously had children enrolled in those settings, and 5% of households without children in day school previously had children enrolled in day schools. Thirty percent of households without children in day school considered sending their children there.

Families in the Immersed group participate in formal Jewish education at higher rates than do other groups. One exception is the high rate of Jewish preschool participation in the Cultural group (24%). Nearly half (43%) of inmarried households with Jewish children in K-12 have at least one child in part-time school, in contrast to under one-sixth of intermarried and unmarried households. Financial status has no bearing on participation in formal Jewish education, except for engaging in private classes.

Respondents with preschool aged children who are **not enrolled in a Jewish early childhood program** were asked about the motivating factors behind their choice. The most important reasons for non-enrollment cited by parents were location and transportation. Two-thirds (29%) either listed only this concern or said it was most important out of multiple reasons they selected. Cost was the most important to 16% of parents, followed by lack of interest (11%) and not finding a good fit (5%). The remaining 39% said some other issue was the most important, such as that the children were too young (72) or that the schedule was not convenient (59).

Among those with children in **grades K-12 who are not enrolled in Jewish schools**, the most important reason cited was lack of interest (47%). Cost was the primary reason for 19%. Finding the right school fit was a problem for another 19%, with 10% citing no religious fit, 7% citing no academic fit, and 2% citing no social fit. The remaining 8% indicated some other reason.

### ***Non-Jewish Private School***

One-in-ten Jewish children in grades K-12 are enrolled in a non-Jewish private school (Table 5.5). A larger share of prosperous households had children enrolled in private school (15%) compared to 8% of non-prosperous households. A greater share of inmarried households had children in non-Jewish private school (15%) compared to intermarried households (8%). For comparison, Table 5.5 repeats the Jewish day school enrollment data from Table 5.4.

Respondents who enrolled their K-12 age children in non-Jewish private schools were asked the primary reason for their school choices. More than one-quarter (27%) said the school was a better academic fit. Other top reasons included cost (16%), social fit (14%), and school quality (13%). Only 2% indicated that location was the primary reason. Another 28% indicated some other reason.

Table 5.5 Household participation in non-Jewish and Jewish private education  
(% of households with age-eligible children who have at least one child enrolled)

	Non-Jewish Private School	Day School
Overall	10	5
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>		
Immersed	26	23
Involved	11	2
Cultural	6	2
Holiday	9	< 1
Minimal	--	--
<b>PARENT MARRIAGE</b>		
Inmarried	15	10
Intermarried	8	< 1
Single parent	6	3
<b>PARENT AGE</b>		
22-39	6	7
40-64	10	5
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>		
DC	12	4
MD	12	8
VA	9	2
<b>FINANCIAL STATUS</b>		
Prosperous/Very comfortable	15	6
Not prosperous	8	5

### *Informal Jewish Education: Camps, Youth Groups, and Peer Trips*

Informal Jewish education includes Jewish camp, both day and overnight camp, as well as Jewish youth groups and peer trips to Israel. Camp and youth group participation in Table 5.6 reflects the proportion of households with age-eligible children who had at least one of those children participate in the current year or previous summer. Regarding peer trips, this number reflects the proportion of households whose children have ever gone on a trip.

For most forms of informal education, participation is highest among families in the Immersed group, followed by those in the Involved, Cultural, Holiday, and Minimally Involved groups.

Participation in camping, youth group, and Israel travel is higher for inmarried than intermarried families. Families who are financially prosperous are more likely to participate in Jewish day camps but are equally likely to participate in other types of informal Jewish education.

**Table 5.6 Household participation in informal Jewish education**  
(% of households with age-eligible children who have at least one child enrolled)

	Day Camp	Overnight Camp	Youth Group	Peer Trips
Overall	14	11	18	12
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>				
Immersed	45	39	54	42
Involved	15	19	26	12
Cultural	9	6	13	11
Holiday	5	3	2	6
Minimal	--	--	--	--
<b>PARENT MARRIAGE</b>				
Inmarried	26	23	34	25
Intermarried	11	11	10	5
Single parent	10	7	11	11
<b>PARENT AGE</b>				
22-39	13	2	--	--
40-64	14	12	18	12
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>				
DC	22	10	14	11
MD	16	19	25	13
VA	16	11	18	15
<b>FINANCIAL STATUS</b>				
Prosperous/Very comfortable	20	15	22	15
Not prosperous	14	13	21	12

## Chapter 6. Synagogue and Ritual Life

Synagogues have long been the central communal and religious “home” for US Jews, and membership in a congregation is one of the primary ways in which Jews affiliate with the Jewish community. Synagogue membership notwithstanding, many Jews participate in rituals on a daily or occasional basis at home. Some Jews perform rituals for religious reasons, while other Jews are motivated by civic, familial, and cultural reasons.

Congregational affiliation has evolved in the past decade and less often involves payment of dues to a brick-and-mortar synagogue. Minyanim and chavurot have grown in popularity, and voluntary contributions have replaced dues in some congregations (Olitzky & Judson, 2002). For this study, respondents indicated whether they were members of “a Jewish congregation, such as a synagogue, temple, minyan, chavurah, or High Holy Day congregation.” Members were asked to name each congregation (up to five) and, for each one, to indicate whether they pay dues, consider themselves members without paying dues, or are not required to pay dues for membership. All congregations that could be identified were coded with a type and denomination.

For purposes of this study, “brick-and-mortar” synagogue membership is defined as dues-paying (or dues equivalent) members of synagogues with buildings and clergy. Other membership types include households who consider themselves members but do not pay dues or households who are members of a synagogue that is not brick-and mortar, such as an independent minyan or Chabad.

### Synagogues and Congregations

In the Metro DC Jewish community, 26% of households belong to a synagogue or another Jewish worship community of some type. In terms of Jewish adults, levels of synagogue membership in the Metro DC area (31% of Jewish adults) are lower than that of the rest of the country (39%). Comparing the number of reported member households of “brick and mortar synagogues” over time, there was a small decline from 26,500 households in 2003 to 25,600 households in 2017.<sup>27</sup> The total number of synagogue households also includes member organizations that are not brick-and-mortar including minyanim, chavurot, and Chabad.

Synagogue membership (Table 6.1, column 1) is highest among those in the Immersed group, followed by those in the Involved group. A smaller share of young adult families are synagogue members compared to other families, but parents of any age are more likely to be members than those without children. Half (48%) of inmarried households are synagogue members, compared to 14% of intermarried households. One-third of Maryland households belong to Jewish congregations, compared to one-quarter of Virginia households and one-fifth of DC households.

Eighteen percent of Jewish households indicate they are dues-paying members of a brick-and-mortar synagogue (Table 6.1, column 2). The remaining 8% of synagogue member households indicate that they are members but do not pay dues, or that they are members of a synagogue that is not brick-and-mortar, such as an independent minyan or Chabad (Table 6.1, column 3). Among young adults who are not parents, and for those who live in DC, more than half of those who are synagogue members belong to one of these synagogue alternatives.

Table 6.1 Synagogue membership (% of Jewish households)

	Member of any Synagogue	Brick and Mortar, Pays Dues	Any other Membership Type
Overall	26	18	8
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>			
Immersed	86	66	20
Involved	42	27	15
Cultural	< 1	< 1	< 1
Holiday	7	4	3
Minimal	< 1	< 1	< 1
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>			
Young adults 22-39, not parents	17	6	11
Young adults 22-39, parents	20	14	6
Adults 40-64, not parents	28	20	8
Adults 40-64, parents	34	27	7
Seniors 65+	29	21	8
<b>MARRIAGE</b>			
Inmarried	48	36	12
Intermarried	14	8	6
Unmarried	21	12	9
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>			
DC	19	9	10
MD	34	25	9
VA	25	18	7

Note: For Table 6.1 and all following tables: In young adult households, all adults are age 22-39; in senior households, all adults are age 65 or older; in adult households, at least one adult is age 40-64.

Table 6.2 describes the type of synagogue memberships that are held by the 26% of households that are synagogue members.

Among member households, 69% are dues-paying members of brick-and mortar synagogues, and another 8% are members of brick-and-mortar synagogues but do not pay dues. In some of those cases, dues are not required. The remaining synagogue member households belong to an alternative to a local brick-and-mortar synagogue, such as a minyan or chavurah (16% of member households) or Chabad (5% of member households), or belong to a synagogue that is not in the local area (13%). Of member households, 18% belong exclusively to one of these alternative structures. Ten percent of member households belong to multiple synagogues or worship groups, and 5% of member households belong to a brick-and-mortar synagogue and a synagogue alternative.

Among households who are members of brick-and-mortar synagogues, nearly all belong to Orthodox (20%), Conservative (38%) or Reform (38%) congregations (Table 6.3). Seven percent are members of synagogues with other denominations or no denominations (for example, Renewal or Reconstructionist).

### Reasons For Not Joining Synagogues

Of Jewish adults who are not currently synagogue members, one-third (34%) were members of synagogues at one point in their adult lives. Of those who are not currently members of synagogues, nearly half (45%) indicated that the primary reason they did not join was because they were “not religious.” Other reasons included cost (14%), not finding a good fit (13%), not interested (8%), and not having children at home (5%). Of the 15% who indicated other reasons, 466 respondents provided other reasons that they had not joined. The most frequent other reason was that there were no synagogues in a convenient location (60), that they had a non-Jewish spouse or partner (51), or that they could participate in a synagogue without being a member (36).

**Table 6.2 Household membership in congregations of different types (% of synagogue member households)**

Synagogue Type	% of Member Households
Brick-and-mortar, pays dues	69
Brick-and-mortar, doesn't pay dues	8
Independent minyan	16
Chabad	5
Non-local	13

Note: Total is more than 100% because households can belong to multiple synagogues

**Table 6.3 Denomination of brick and mortar synagogues (% of brick and mortar member households)**

	% of Member Households
Orthodox	20
Conservative	38
Reform	38
Other/Nondenominational	7

## Synagogue Participation

Both members and non-members of synagogues participate to varying degrees in synagogue life (Table 6.4). Three-quarters of Jewish adults attended at least one religious service in the past year, with attendance nearly universal among those who are part of the Immersed and Involved groups. Half of Jewish adults (53%) attended services on the High Holy Days. Among those who did attend a service, three-quarters felt that they had a meaningful experience, whereas one-quarter felt somewhat or very much like an outsider. This feeling of not belonging is most common among Cultural, Holiday, and Minimally Involved engagement groups.

Table 6.4 Synagogue participation (% Jewish adults)

	Attended Services at Least Once in Past Year	Attended Services Monthly	Attended High Holy Day Services	Services Felt Somewhat/Very Much Meaningful	Somewhat/Very much Felt Like an Outsider at Services	Donated to a Local Synagogue
Overall	75	20	53	75	27	43
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>						
Immersed	100	86	98	92	11	76
Involved	93	13	86	79	24	45
Cultural	62	3	4	53	43	8
Holiday	61	< 1	33	59	36	20
Minimal	23	0	< 1	56	49	1
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>						
Young adults, not parents	81	20	56	78	31	28
Young adults, parents	76	18	47	63	32	36
Adults 40-64, not parents	72	20	51	73	25	51
Adults 40-64, parents	67	22	54	76	26	53
Seniors 65+	66	17	45	69	26	42
<b>MARRIAGE</b>						
Inmarried	85	30	72	73	22	56
Intermarried	58	7	29	71	33	29
Unmarried	74	19	50	74	32	36
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>						
DC	76	17	56	74	30	38
MD	78	27	59	74	23	47
VA	70	15	44	71	31	39
<b>SYNAGOGUE MEMBER</b>						
Local synagogue member	98	54	93	86	11	77
Not local member	66	7	37	66	37	18

## Ritual Practices

The majority of Metro DC's Jewish adults mark Jewish holidays over the course of the year, with 82% lighting Chanukah candles and 83% attending a Passover seder (Table 6.5). Passover and Chanukah celebrations are nearly universal among the Immersed, Involved, and Holiday engagement groups. In contrast, Shabbat candle lighting and Shabbat meals are widespread among those in the Immersed group but infrequent for all other groups.

Table 6.5 Ritual practices (% of Jewish adults)

	Light Chanukah Candles	Attend Passover Seder	Ever Light Shabbat Candles	Have Shabbat Meal in Past Month	Fasted any part of Yom Kippur	Any Kosher Practices
Overall	82	83	44	32	51*	32
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>						
Immersed	99	99	89	89	86	79
Involved	98	99	56	32	73	35
Cultural	73	85	23	12	18	19
Holiday	89	95	19	6	38	12
Minimal	19	9	2	1	3	10
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>						
Young adults, not parents	87	87	38	32	55	38
Young adults, parents	86	85	47	25	43	32
Adults 40-64, not parents	81	83	40	28	51	31
Adults 40-64, parents	84	85	58	39	53	34
Senior citizens	72	85	33	23	39	23
<b>MARRIAGE</b>						
Inmarried	94	97	62	45	66	43
Intermarried	73	72	23	13	32	18
Unmarried	77	84	36	27	48	33
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>						
DC	83	89	42	34	52	33
MD	86	87	51	36	55	38
VA	78	81	35	22	45	27
<b>SYNAGOGUE MEMBER</b>						
Local synagogue member	98	98	74	59	76	56
Not local member	75	80	29	18	38	23

\*Those who did not fast (not shown in table) include 10% who could not for medical reasons.



## Chapter 7. Social and Community Life

The Metro DC Jewish community offers myriad avenues for communal participation. Washington-area Jews join local and national membership organizations and attend an array of cultural, educational, and religious events. They volunteer and donate their time to causes both Jewish and non-Jewish. Through their participation, they make Jewish friends and strengthen their ties to the local community. This chapter describes the multiple ways in which Washington-area Jews interact and participate with their local peers and institutions and provides insight into measures that can enhance these connections.

### Organizations and Activities

Washington-area Jews participate in a wide range of Jewish organizations and activities. Ten percent of households currently belong to a Jewish Community Center (JCC) and nearly one-fifth (18%) of households belong to at least one Jewish organization other than a synagogue or JCC, such as Hadassah or AIPAC (Table 7.1). Among the 10% of households who are members of a local JCC, 40% belong to the Edlavitch DCJCC, 28% belong to the JCC of Northern Virginia, and 33% belong to the Bender JCC of Greater Washington. Another 23% of households are former members of an area JCC.

Table 7.1 Household memberships and activities (% of Jewish households)

	JCC Member (dues)	JCC Member (no dues)	Other Organization Member
Overall	5	5	18
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>			
Immersed	12	5	43
Involved	8	6	25
Cultural	7	6	16
Holiday	2	1	3
Minimal	4	8	2
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>			
Young adults, not parents	3	7	13
Young adults, parents	4	4	10
Adults 40-64, not parents	7	5	19
Adults 40-64, parents	8	6	15
Seniors 65+	9	4	23
<b>MARRIAGE</b>			
Inmarried	9	4	28
Intermarried	6	5	9
Unmarried	5	5	18
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>			
DC	6	4	15
MD	7	5	23
VA	6	5	16

Nearly two-thirds of Washington-area Jews (62%) participated in at least one program, event, or class aside from religious services in the year prior to the study; 40% attended at least monthly (Table 7.2). Nearly all of the Immersed group attended at least one program, as did more than half of the Involved and Cultural groups. Three-fifths of young adults without children attended programs compared to about half of young adults with children (52%) and senior citizens (51%). About two-thirds (65%) of those living in DC attended a program, compared to just over half (55%) of those in Maryland, and just under half (44%) of those in Virginia.

Table 7.2 Organizational participation in past year (% of Jewish adults)

	Participate/ Attend Ever	Participate/ Attend Monthly +	Program Felt Somewhat/ Very Much Meaningful	Somewhat/ Very Much Felt Like an Outsider at Program	Read Organization Materials
Overall	62	12	86	18	61
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>					
Immersed	92	41	93	13	93
Involved	64	13	84	16	78
Cultural	54	9	83	21	86
Holiday	30	2	79	25	9
Minimal	6	< 1	45	25	21
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>					
Young adults, not parents	60	17	83	23	60
Young adults, parents	52	8	69	20	59
Adults 40-64, not parents	49	11	88	18	61
Adults 40-64, parents	49	12	88	17	59
Seniors 65+	51	13	85	10	69
<b>MARRIAGE</b>					
Inmarried	63	16	86	14	72
Intermarried	36	7	82	17	53
Unmarried	57	16	83	21	58
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>					
DC	65	16	81	22	59
MD	55	15	87	14	67
VA	44	10	84	17	60

The majority (86%) of those who attended a program felt that it was meaningful, but one-in-five (18%) who participated felt like an outsider at the time. Three-fifths (61%) of the community reads materials distributed by Jewish organizations.

### Young Adult Programs

For purposes of this study, Jewish young adults are defined as Jewish individuals ages 22-39 who do not have children. Half (53%) of the Jewish young adult population participated in a dedicated Jewish young adult program within the six months preceding the study (Table 7.3) One-quarter (26%) participated in a program with one organization, 7% in two organizations, 11% in three organizations, and 8% in four or more organizations. Another 14% of young adults did not attend any dedicated young adult programs in the past six months but did attend a program or event sponsored by the Jewish community within the past year.

Table 7.3 Young adult programs (% of Jewish young adults)

Organization Name	Participation (%)
Any organization	53
Sixth and I	41
GatherDC	16
OneTable	14
Moishe House	13
Shir Delight at Adas Israel*	9
2239 at Washington Hebrew Congregation	9
Other	12

\*Due to a programming error, not all eligible respondents were asked this item; the true proportion may be higher

## Volunteering

In the Washington-area Jewish community, 41% of Jewish adults engaged in some volunteer activity in the past month, either with Jewish or non-Jewish organizations (Table 7.4). During that time, 32% volunteered for a non-Jewish organization, 15% for a Jewish organization, and 6% for both. One-in-ten (9%) of Metro DC's Jews volunteered exclusively for Jewish organizations. The Immersed group was more likely to participate in Jewish-sponsored volunteering than in non-Jewish volunteering; for all other groups, non-Jewish volunteering was more popular. This pattern was most noticeable among those in the Cultural group, whose participation in volunteering exceeded that of the Involved. Ten percent of Jewish adults volunteered in a leadership role for a Jewish organization.

Table 7.4 Volunteering (% of Jewish adults)

	Any Volunteering	Non-Jewish Organization	Jewish Organization	Leadership Role
Overall	41	32	15	10
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>				
Immersed	65	34	51	40
Involved	40	33	15	10
Cultural	51	47	11	5
Holiday	32	31	3	2
Minimal	20	20	1	< 1
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>				
Young adults, not parents	40	31	14	10
Young adults, parents	28	20	15	9
Adults 40-64, not parents	44	36	17	12
Adults 40-64, parents	47	36	22	15
Seniors 65+	45	38	16	12
<b>MARRIAGE</b>				
Inmarried	47	34	25	18
Intermarried	37	34	9	5
Unmarried	42	33	15	10
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>				
DC	45	37	17	11
MD	41	30	20	15
VA	41	34	14	9

Regarding causes and interests for volunteering and philanthropy, the most popular cause among Metro DC's Jews is education; 86% say it is very important (Table 7.5). Other causes are social justice (76%) and politics (64%). Interest in all causes is highest among those in the Cultural group, with the notable exception of their interest in Israel.

Table 7.5 Very important causes and interest (% of Jewish adults)

	Education	Social Justice	Politics	Arts and Culture	Israel
Overall	86	76	64	60	47
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>					
Immersed	85	66	57	54	68
Involved	81	74	62	59	50
Cultural	87	81	71	67	46
Holiday	85	78	61	68	27
Minimal	78	62	62	49	39
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>					
Young adults, not parents	78	72	53	54	38
Young adults, parents	84	65	54	49	37
Adults 40-64, not parents	81	76	65	66	51
Adults 40-64, parents	87	64	57	51	54
Seniors 65+	89	81	77	71	51
<b>MARRIAGE</b>					
Inmarried	84	73	61	60	54
Intermarried	87	72	61	60	45
Unmarried	79	75	66	60	40
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>					
DC	78	75	67	57	39
MD	84	74	63	61	53
VA	86	71	60	62	47

## Philanthropy

Within the Metro DC Jewish community, most (87%) Jews report making a charitable contribution in the past year (Table 7.6). Three-fifths (61%) donated to at least one Jewish organization and half (51%) donated to a Jewish organization that primarily serves the DC area.

Nearly all of those in the Immersed and Involved groups donated to a nonprofit organization in the past year, and majorities of all groups did so. About one-fifth of the Minimally Involved and

Table 7.6 Philanthropy (% of Jewish adults)

	Any Donation	Any Jewish Organization	Any Local Jewish Organization	Received Request
Overall	87	61	51	62
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>				
Immersed	95	94	83	84
Involved	92	81	64	73
Cultural	90	63	50	65
Holiday	84	35	26	40
Minimal	66	19	16	30
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>				
Young adults, not parents	83	54	42	55
Young adults, parents	84	52	37	46
Adults 40-64, not parents	86	68	53	63
Adults 40-64, parents	93	60	49	61
Seniors 65+	95	80	71	77
<b>MARRIAGE</b>				
Inmarried	95	82	69	74
Intermarried	88	50	39	51
Unmarried	80	56	45	58
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>				
DC	88	58	45	60
MD	88	71	60	69
VA	87	62	49	57

one-third of the Holiday groups donated to at least one Jewish organization. At least half of all Jews from the Immersed, Involved, and Cultural groups say they received a solicitation from a Jewish nonprofit.

Among those who donated to any Jewish cause (Table 7.7), 43% percent of Jews gave money to a synagogue aside from membership dues, 39% donated to a Jewish human service agency, 31% donated to a Jewish social justice organization, 30% to the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington (JFGW), and 17% donated to a Jewish educational institution. One-quarter indicated other organizations. Of over 1,088 responses listing additional organizations, the most common were Israel and Zionist organizations (333), social justice (180), human service (158), health and medical (156), Jewish education (125), and the Holocaust Museum (USHMM) (110).

Table 7.7 Jewish organizations receiving donations (% of donors)

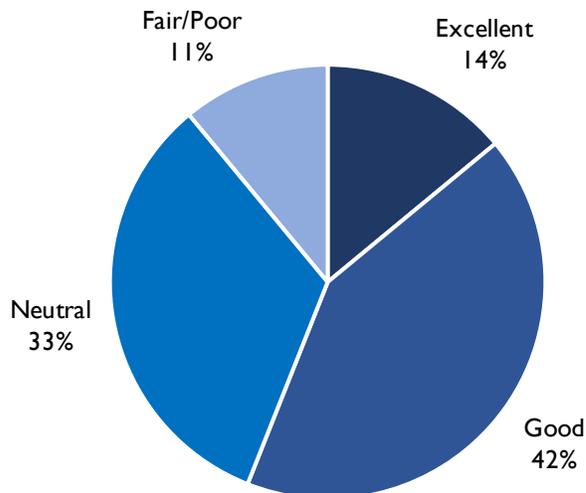
	Synagogue	Human Service	Social Justice	JFGW	School/Camp	Other
Overall	43	39	31	30	17	25
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>						
Immersed	76	48	41	37	33	26
Involved	45	35	27	27	12	26
Cultural	8	41	33	30	8	29
Holiday	20	27	15	13	3	34
Minimal	1	53	11	27	1	24
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>						
Young adults, not parents	26	30	34	11	12	25
Young adults, parents	40	29	30	13	24	26
Adults 40-64, not parents	53	42	29	31	14	28
Adults 40-64, parents	56	37	26	28	33	22
Seniors 65+	44	47	31	44	13	30
<b>MARRIAGE</b>						
Inmarried	56	44	34	36	23	25
Intermarried	28	30	27	19	9	20
Unmarried	35	41	28	26	11	35
<b>STATE</b>						
DC	36	31	39	23	15	31
MD	51	45	30	33	21	27
VA	40	40	27	29	12	25

### The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington

One-third of Metro DC's Jews are familiar enough with JFGW to have an opinion about it. Another third (32%) don't know enough about JFGW to rate it, and the remainder (32%) have not heard of JFGW. Of those who have an opinion, 56% regard it as good or excellent (Figure 7.1). Among Jewish adults, 17% say they have made a donation to JFGW in the past year (Table 7.8).

Nearly all of the Immersed, and majorities of the Involved and Cultural groups, are familiar with JFGW. About three-fifths of young adults and four-fifths of senior citizens are familiar with the organization. Two-thirds of single Jews and 83% of inmarried Jews are familiar with the JFGW, although just over half of intermarried Jews have heard of the federation. Over three-fourths (78%) of the Jews in Maryland are aware of the federation, compared to about two-thirds of Jews in Virginia and the District.

Figure 7.1 Impressions of Jewish Federation of Greater Washington (% of Jewish adults with an opinion)



**Table 7.8 Impressions of Jewish Federation of Greater Washington**  
(% of Jewish adults)

	Aware	Rated Good/Excellent (of those familiar and with opinion)	Donated
Overall	68	56	17
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>			
Immersed	92	56	32
Involved	79	55	20
Cultural	67	67	16
Holiday	52	40	4
Minimal	37	--	4
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>			
Young adults, not parents	60	47	5
Young adults, parents	58	63	5
Adults 40-64, not parents	71	56	18
Adults 40-64, parents	71	59	15
Seniors 65+	81	60	33
<b>MARRIAGE</b>			
Inmarried	83	57	26
Intermarried	54	63	8
Unmarried	66	52	13
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>			
DC	65	57	12
MD	78	60	21
VA	64	52	15

### Informal and Cultural Activities

Personal friendships are interactions are important to the Jews of Greater Washington. The vast majority (95%) of Jews in Metro DC have at least some friends who are Jewish, and 60% say at least half of their closest friends are Jewish. Informal and cultural activities include Jewish activities and participation in Jewish life outside of the framework of organizations (Table 7.9 A and B). Discussing Jewish topics was the most common activity, followed by eating Jewish foods and seeking information about Judaism online. Jewish culture includes reading Jewish books, listening to Jewish music, or attending Jewish performances or museums.

Table 7.9A Participation in informal and cultural activities (% of Jewish adults)

	Discuss Jewish Topics		Eat Jewish Foods		Seek Jewish Info Online	
	Ever	Weekly +	Ever	Weekly +	Ever	Weekly +
Overall	92	51	73	34	67	33
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>						
Immersed	100	91	91	63	94	71
Involved	95	60	79	31	74	36
Cultural	95	60	71	28	73	40
Holiday	81	25	58	13	29	2
Minimal	78	22	33	11	35	3
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>						
Young adults, not parents	92	58	66	28	67	34
Young adults, parents	89	43	70	23	59	25
Adults 40-64, not parents	89	54	70	31	65	32
Adults 40-64, parents	93	58	66	31	66	30
Seniors 65+	91	52	75	33	59	33
<b>MARRIAGE</b>						
Inmarried	93	64	77	37	71	41
Intermarried	88	44	63	23	56	22
Unmarried	92	53	68	29	63	31
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>						
DC	93	55	67	25	66	32
MD	91	59	77	41	63	35
VA	89	50	67	26	63	30

Table 7.9B Participation in informal and cultural activities (% of Jewish adults) (continued)

	Jewish Culture		Study Jewish Text		Jewish Dating Service/App (of single adults)	
	Ever	Weekly +	Ever	Weekly +	Ever	Weekly +
Overall	55	22	20	9	16	12
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>						
Immersed	85	52	66	37	24	15
Involved	64	18	15	5	25	15
Cultural	63	27	11	5	10	6
Holiday	21	< 1	1	< 1	11	6
Minimal	19	< 1	< 1	< 1	0	0
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>						
Young adults, not parents	53	18	20	9	26	16
Young adults, parents	52	19	10	6	6	5
Adults 40-64, not parents	55	22	22	10	10	6
Adults 40-64, parents	53	20	20	9	11	9
Seniors 65+	54	21	17	8	2	< 1
<b>MARRIAGE</b>						
Inmarried	64	27	27	14	n/a	n/a
Intermarried	41	13	13	6	n/a	n/a
Unmarried	53	19	17	7	n/a	n/a
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>						
DC	53	19	18	8	22	13
MD	59	23	24	13	8	5
VA	50	18	16	7	15	9

## Experiences of Antisemitism

Fifteen percent of Greater Washington, DC's Jews say that they experienced antisemitism in the past year. Young adults without children are twice as likely (20%) as young adults with children or senior citizens (10%) to have had an antisemitic encounter. Of respondents who personally experienced antisemitism, 729 described those experiences. The most frequent experiences are listed in Table 7.10 along with the number of respondents who mentioned that experience.

As an example of general comments, one respondent wrote:

*More of a conversation and the person asking why Jews think they are so special that they deserve to have a country of their own. Not so directed at me personally, but I did take it personally, as I am Jewish and a Zionist.*

For comments related to Israel and Zionism, one wrote:

*I was told Jews weren't an actual people, just a religion. They then asserted that the only reason someone could be a Zionist was for greed and monetary gain. I struggle with Zionism, but that was cruel.*

One comment specifically related to the current political climate included:

*Shortly after Trump was elected president my son came home from school upset that other kids had said in class, proudly, that once Trump was in office all the Jews would be killed. He asked if we were planning to move to Canada.*

Table 7.10 Types of antisemitic experiences

Type of experience	Number of respondents
General Comments - Conversational	160
Insults	156
Vandalism	73
Anti-Israel/BDS	61
Internet	58
Jokes	56
Stereotypes - Cheap/Rich	53
Neo-Nazism	52
Religion/Theological	48
Microaggressions	45
General Comments	43
Alt-Right/Bannon/Trump	37
Bomb Threat (JCC or other)	35

## Chapter 8. Connections to Israel

The Metro DC Jewish community has strong ties to Israel, grounded in religious, cultural, familial, and business connections. For many Jewish adults, Israel is central to their Jewish identity. Travel to Israel is frequent and friendships with Israelis are common.

Approximately two-thirds (68%) of Washington-area Jews have been to Israel or have lived there (Table 8.1). Nearly one-third (30%) have been to Israel once. Another third (31%) have been to Israel more than once, and 7% has lived there at some point, including the 4% of Washington-area Jews who are Israeli. This figure represents a substantially higher proportion than among US Jews in general, of whom in 2013, 43% had been to Israel (Pew, 2013).

Those in the Immersed group are the most likely to have been to Israel (91%), followed by the Involved (76%). Among those in the Minimally Involved group, nearly half (48%) have been to Israel. Three-quarters (76%) of inmarried Jews have been to Israel, compared to three-fifths (59%) of the intermarried and 69% of the unmarried.

Table 8.1 Frequency of Israel travel (row %) (% of Jewish adults)

	Never	Once	Multiple	Lived/Israeli
Overall	32	30	31	7
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>				
Immersed	9	22	58	11
Involved	24	33	37	5
Cultural	40	29	22	9
Holiday	42	40	16	2
Minimal	52	27	19	3
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>				
Young adults, not parents	20	39	35	6
Young adults, parents	30	33	27	10
Adults 40-64, not parents	42	24	28	6
Adults 40-64, parents	31	26	35	8
Seniors 65+	36	29	32	3
<b>MARRIAGE</b>				
Inmarried	24	27	41	9
Intermarried	41	32	23	4
Unmarried	31	34	30	5
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>				
DC	20	34	38	9
MD	30	30	34	7
VA	40	29	27	4

Aside from travel to Israel, Washington-area Jews connect to Israel through their family and friends who live there. Over half (54%) of Washington-area Jews indicate that they have close family or friends living in Israel. Engagement with Israel is further facilitated by fluency in the Hebrew language. Among Jewish adults who are not Israeli, 8% can understand most or all of what they read in Hebrew, and another 26% can understand some.

### Types of Israel Travel

Among those who have traveled to Israel, 30% have gone on a federation, synagogue, or other organizational mission, and one-quarter have participated on an educational or volunteer trip (Table 8.2). Three-fifths of those under age 46 who have traveled to Israel have gone on Birthright trips, representing 20% of the overall adult population. An additional 9% of DC-area Jews who have been to Israel have gone on business.

Those from the Immersed group are least likely to have gone on a Birthright trip, likely because more of them were ineligible until recently.<sup>28</sup> They are, however, the most likely to have gone to Israel on education, volunteer, and mission trips.

Table 8.2 Types of Israel travel (% of Jewish adults who have been to Israel)

	Birthright (age-eligible)	Education/ Volunteer	With Federation, Synagogue, Organization	Business
Overall	61	26	30	9
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>				
Immersed	41	41	47	10
Involved	61	24	34	10
Cultural	48	19	16	15
Holiday	65	11	16	2
Minimal	52	13	9	6
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>				
Young adults, not parents	69	30	28	7
Young adults, parents	41	25	30	6
Adults 40-64, not parents	7	22	33	7
Adults 40-64, parents	3	24	32	16
Seniors 65+	n/a	16	28	13
<b>MARRIAGE</b>				
Inmarried	49	28	37	11
Intermarried	47	26	22	9
Unmarried	64	15	26	6
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>				
DC	62	25	26	11
MD	47	27	33	8
VA	52	21	29	8

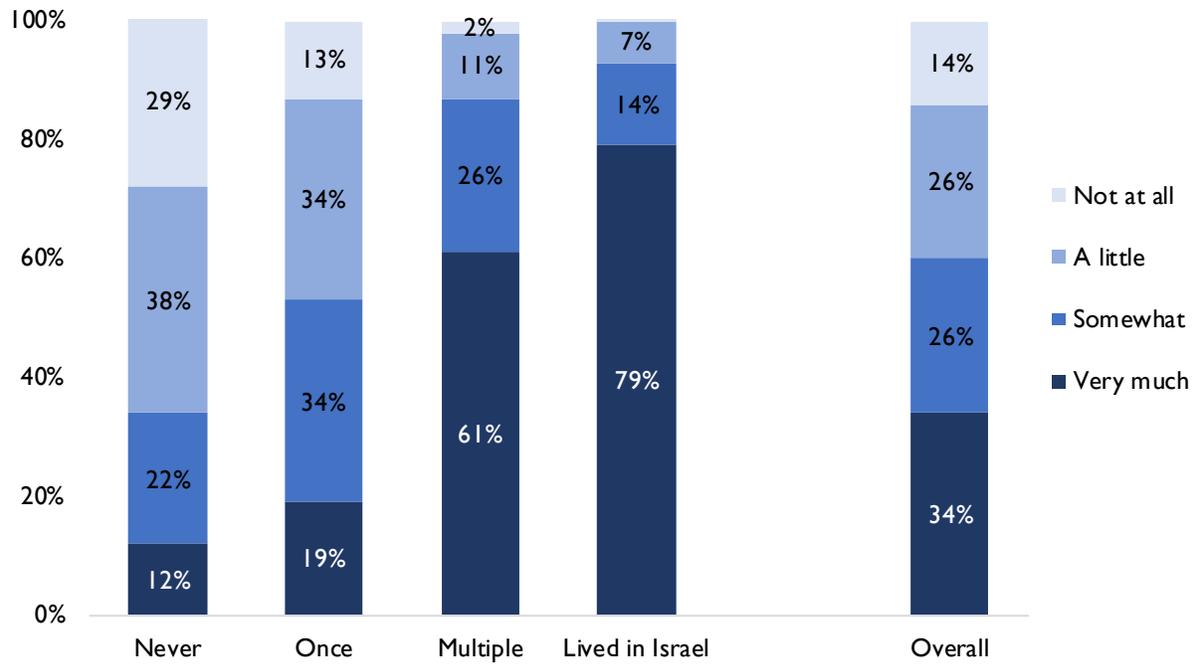
## Emotional Connection to Israel

Feelings of connection to Israel are intimately tied to Israel travel and Jewish engagement (Table 8.3). In terms of Jewish engagement, the strongest connections to Israel are found among the Immersed group (63% very much). Inmarried Jews feel more connected than do intermarried Jews. As shown in Figure 8.1, Jewish adults who have been to Israel feel much more connected to Israel than those who have never been, and those who have traveled multiple times or lived there exhibit even stronger connections.

Table 8.3 Emotional connection to Israel (% of Jewish adults)

	Not at All	A Little	Somewhat	Very Much	
Overall	14	26	26	34	100%
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>					
Immersed	3	9	24	63	100%
Involved	7	25	32	36	100%
Cultural	18	23	27	32	100%
Holiday	28	42	19	11	100%
Minimal	29	27	27	18	100%
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>					
Young adults, not parents	17	26	26	31	100%
Young adults, parents	23	24	27	26	100%
Adults 40-64, not parents	19	24	24	34	100%
Adults 40-64, parents	12	24	33	31	100%
Seniors 65+	8	27	27	37	100%
<b>MARRIAGE</b>					
Inmarried	9	23	26	43	100%
Intermarried	21	27	29	23	100%
Unmarried	16	27	26	31	100%
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>					
DC	20	25	25	30	100%
MD	13	23	27	38	100%
VA	14	28	27	31	100%

Figure 8.1 Travel to Israel and emotional connection



## News about Israel

Over two-fifths (43%) of Washington-area Jews follow news about Israel at least once a week (Table 8.4). Those who have been to Israel follow news more closely, with one-fifth (20%) following news about Israel daily. The Immersed group follows Israel news most closely, with one-third following news on a daily basis.

## Political Views about Israel

Respondents' views about the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians were assessed with questions about dismantling Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the two-state solution.

Table 8.4 Following news about Israel in past month (% of Jewish adults)

	Never	Occasionally	Weekly	Daily	
Overall	30	26	29	14	100%
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>					
Immersed	8	20	40	32	100%
Involved	21	31	31	17	100%
Cultural	13	33	38	16	100%
Holiday	61	26	11	2	100%
Minimal	66	16	12	5	100%
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>					
Young adults, not parents	30	28	32	11	100%
Young adults, parents	42	31	21	7	100%
Adults 40-64, not parents	35	24	24	18	100%
Adults 40-64, parents	33	26	25	16	100%
Seniors 65+	21	27	31	21	100%
<b>MARRIAGE</b>					
Inmarried	21	28	30	21	100%
Intermarried	43	27	21	9	100%
Unmarried	30	26	30	14	100%
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>					
DC	29	28	28	15	100%
MD	28	25	29	18	100%
VA	33	28	26	13	100%
<b>PAST TRAVEL</b>					
Never	47	30	18	6	100%
Ever/Lived	23	26	32	20	100%

A large majority (88%) of Metro DC Jewish adults had an opinion regarding a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Table 8.5). Under one-in-ten oppose it (9%), 12% are neutral, and a total of two-thirds support it somewhat (28%) or strongly (39%).

The highest level of support for a two-state solution is among the Cultural group, of whom nearly half (48%) strongly support this option. A larger share of the Immersed and Minimally Involved groups oppose a Palestinian state than in the other groups, but in both groups fewer than one-in-five oppose it. Half of Republicans oppose a Palestinian state, compared to the three-quarters of Democrats who support it. Past travel to Israel does not make a significant difference in views on this question.

Table 8.5 Support for two-state solution (% of Jewish adults)

	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Neither	Somewhat Support	Strongly Support	Don't Know	
Overall	4	5	12	28	39	12	100%
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>							
Immersed	9	8	10	28	37	8	100%
Involved	5	7	10	29	37	12	100%
Cultural	7	5	6	24	48	9	100%
Holiday	2	5	9	26	40	18	100%
Minimal	14	1	10	15	42	18	100%
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>							
Young adults, not parents	3	4	6	23	47	16	100%
Young adults, parents	4	8	16	34	24	14	100%
Adults 40-64, not parents	8	7	10	26	35	15	100%
Adults 40-64, parents	15	7	6	25	35	12	100%
Seniors 65+	5	4	12	26	46	7	100%
<b>MARRIAGE</b>							
Inmarried	7	6	10	27	38	12	100%
Intermarried	7	5	9	24	42	13	100%
Unmarried	6	6	9	25	41	13	100%
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>							
DC	4	4	4	25	57	7	100%
MD	8	7	8	27	36	15	100%
VA	7	6	13	25	34	14	100%
<b>PAST TRAVEL</b>							
Never	4	2	12	27	40	16	100%
Ever/Lived	8	7	8	25	40	11	100%
<b>POLITICS</b>							
Republican	28	22	11	19	5	16	100%
Democrat	3	3	8	26	49	11	100%
Independent	6	8	14	33	27	12	100%
Other	23	9	12	10	24	22	100%

Question: "Do you support or oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, known as the two-state solution?"

Over three-quarters (78%) of Metro DC Jewish adults had an opinion about the final status of Israeli settlements in the West Bank as part of a permanent agreement with the Palestinians (Table 8.6). One-quarter of Jewish adults believe that all settlements should be dismantled, 44% believe some should be dismantled, and 11% think none should be dismantled. The remaining 22% don't know or have no opinion on the matter.

Those in the Cultural group express the highest support for dismantling all settlements, while for all other groups, the plurality support the more moderate “some settlements” position. Over half

Table 8.6 Position on dismantling settlements (% of Jewish adults)

	Dismantle No Settlements	Dismantle Some Settlements	Dismantle All Settlements	Don't Know	
Overall	11	44	24	22	100%
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>					
Immersed	15	53	14	17	100%
Involved	12	49	19	20	100%
Cultural	7	37	39	16	100%
Holiday	6	38	30	26	100%
Minimal	18	40	17	25	100%
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>					
Young adults, not parents	6	42	31	22	100%
Young adults, parents	11	43	22	24	100%
Adults 40-64, not parents	14	44	18	24	100%
Adults 40-64, parents	23	39	20	18	100%
Seniors 65+	9	52	24	15	100%
<b>MARRIAGE</b>					
Inmarried	12	50	19	19	100%
Intermarried	12	37	30	21	100%
Unmarried	10	45	24	21	100%
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>					
DC	4	46	38	12	100%
MD	14	46	17	22	100%
VA	13	43	20	24	100%
<b>PAST TRAVEL</b>					
Never	8	39	29	24	100%
Ever/Lived	12	47	22	19	100%
<b>POLITICS</b>					
Republican	51	33	3	14	100%
Democrat	5	48	28	19	100%
Independent	14	48	18	20	100%
Other	28	24	18	30	100%

Question: “As part of a permanent settlement with the Palestinians, Should Israel be willing to...dismantle no/some/all settlements?”

(51%) of Republicans do not support any dismantling of settlements, compared to nearly half (48%) of Democrats who support dismantling some settlements.

### Emotional Attachment and Political Views

Though the majority of all groups support a two-state solution, those who are more emotionally attached to Israel are less supportive of it (Table 8.7). Nearly three-quarters (73%) of those who are not at all connected to Israel somewhat (22%) or strongly (51%) support a two-state solution, compared to the 60% of those who are very emotionally attached to Israel who somewhat (25%) or strongly (35%) support this position.

Similarly, although the majority of all groups are willing to dismantle at least some settlements, those who are more emotionally attached to Israel are less supportive of dismantling settlements (Table 8.8). Over half (53%) of those who are very connected to Israel advocate dismantling some settlements, but the plurality (44%) of those who are unattached to Israel support dismantling all settlements.

Table 8.7 Support for two-state solution by Israel attachment (% of Jewish adults)

	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Neither	Somewhat Support	Strongly Support	Don't Know	
<b>CONNECTION TO ISRAEL</b>							
Not at all	1	1	8	22	51	18	100%
A little/Somewhat	5	4	10	27	40	12	100%
Very much	11	10	8	25	35	11	100%

Table 8.8 Position on dismantling settlements by Israel attachment (% of Jewish adults)

	Dismantle No Settlements	Dismantle Some Settlements	Dismantle All Settlements	Don't Know	
<b>CONNECTION TO ISRAEL</b>					
Not at all	4	28	44	25	100%
A little/Somewhat	9	44	26	21	100%
Very much	19	53	11	18	100%

## Chapter 9: Education, Income, and Health

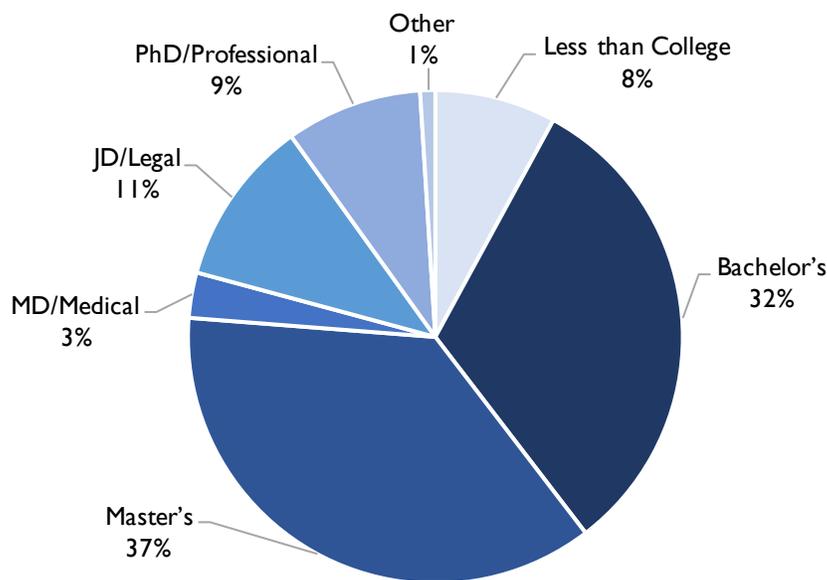
The Metro DC Jewish community devotes a significant share of its resources toward caring for families and individuals who have economic, social, and health needs. The relative affluence of the Metro DC Jewish community, both financially and in terms of human capital, has provided the resources necessary for the organized Jewish community to meet many of these needs.

Nevertheless, it is clear that there are some unmet needs in the community. Aside from the fees associated with Jewish organizations, Jewish school tuition, cost of kosher food, and other means of engaging in Jewish life, less affluent families are also more likely to be struggling with basic necessities such as good health and adequate housing. Health limitations are a concern for a significant number of households in the community.

### Educational Attainment and Employment

The Jewish population of Metro DC is highly educated, not only in comparison with the overall US population, but also in comparison with the US Jewish population as a whole. Ninety-two percent of Jewish adults in Metro DC have earned at least a bachelor's degree, including 61% with at least one post-graduate degree (Figure 9.1). Among Jews in the United States, over half have attained at least a bachelor's degree (58%) and 28% have post-graduate degrees (Pew, 2013). In the US population overall, 20% of adults hold bachelor's degrees and 12% hold advanced degrees.<sup>29</sup>

Figure 9.1 Educational attainment (% of Jewish adults)



Three-quarters (72%) of Jewish adults in the community are currently employed either full- (59%) or part-time (13%). One-fifth of adults are retired. Of the remaining 8% of adults who are neither working nor retired, half are seeking employment, suggesting that the other half are at-home parents, students, or have taken themselves out of the workforce.

Commensurate with their high levels of education, the Jews of Metro DC work in fields requiring significant training, including education (14%); science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (13%); and business and finance (13%). Substantial proportions also work in the legal system (12%) and the human-service sector (12%).

As would be expected in the nation's capital, one-third (33%) of employed Jews work for the government in some capacity, at the federal, state, or local level: 37% of DC residents, 35% of Virginia residents, and 32% of those living in Maryland. The majority of government employees are in the civil service (18%), followed by government contractors (9%), with 1% each working as lobbyists and in the military. Among the 4% who said they worked in some other government role, many indicated they worked in public schools, whether K-12 or higher education.

### Economic Well-Being and Income

The Metro DC Jewish community is relatively affluent. Among those who responded to the question about income, two-in-five households have total income of \$150,000 per year or greater, including 16% whose household income was \$250,000 per year or greater (Table 9.1). On the lower end of the spectrum, 12% indicated their household income was less than \$50,000 per year.

**Table 9.1. Household income and standard of living**  
(% of Jewish households)

<b>Income (of responding)</b>	
\$500,000 or more	3
\$250,000 to \$499,999	13
\$150,000 to \$249,999	24
\$100,000 to \$149,999	23
\$50,000 to \$99,999	25
Less than \$50,000	12
<b>Standard of living</b>	
Prosperous	11
Living very comfortably	34
Living reasonably comfortably	44
Just getting along	10
Nearly poor	1
Poor	< 1

Consistent with high-income levels, 45% describe their standard of living as being prosperous or very comfortable, and another 44% report they are “reasonably comfortable.” A total of 1% indicated they are “nearly poor” or “poor.” As an indication of possible economic vulnerability, 10% of Jewish households indicate they are “just getting along.” More than three-quarters (79%) of these households have a household income under \$100,000.

Income is not a sufficient marker of prosperity, however, because it does not account for wealth. For example, 18% of households who are prosperous or very comfortable have income under \$100,000, as do 42% of households who are reasonably comfortable.

Although the Jewish engagement and demographic groups exhibit some differences in economic well being, most of the variations are not significant (Table 9.2). Young adults without children have lower incomes and are more likely to consider themselves as “just getting along” than young-adult parents and senior citizens.

**Table 9.2. Household standard of living by household characteristics**  
(% of Jewish households)

	Nearly Poor/ Poor	Just Getting Along	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable/ Prosperous	
Overall	1	10	44	45	100%
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>					
Immersed	1	9	45	46	100%
Involved	1	7	49	43	100%
Cultural	1	13	44	42	100%
Holiday	< 1	10	39	51	100%
Minimal	0	15	37	49	100%
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>					
Young adults, not parents	1	15	49	36	100%
Young adults, parents	< 1	9	44	46	100%
Adults 40-64, not parents	1	12	38	50	100%
Adults 40-64, parents	< 1	7	51	41	100%
Seniors 65+	< 1	6	45	49	100%
<b>MARRIAGE</b>					
Inmarried	1	5	41	53	100%
Intermarried	< 1	5	45	50	100%
Unmarried	2	18	47	33	100%
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>					
DC	1	10	41	49	100%
MD	1	12	45	42	100%
VA	1	8	46	46	100%

Another measure of economic well-being is concern for future expenses (Table 9.3). Jewish households in Metro DC report relatively high confidence in their ability to afford their children's college expenses and their own retirement. Of households currently raising children, nearly nine-in-ten (88%) are somewhat or very confident in their ability to pay for their children's college educations; 12% are not very confident or not at all confident. Similarly, eight-in-ten (79%) Jewish households in Metro DC are somewhat or very confident in their ability to finance their retirement; 11% are not very confident or not at all confident.

Table 9.3 Confidence in economic future (% of Jewish households)

	Confident Paying for College (of parents of minor children)	Confident Paying for Retirement
Overall	88	79
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>		
Immersed	83	82
Involved	84	83
Cultural	79	77
Holiday	82	81
Minimal	94	90
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>		
Young adults, not parents	n/a	83
Young adults, parents	87	77
Adults 40-64, not parents	n/a	82
Adults 40-64, parents	85	80
Seniors 65+	---	88
<b>MARRIAGE</b>		
Inmarried	84	88
Intermarried	92	89
Unmarried	49	70
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>		
DC	89	85
MD	78	80
VA	91	84

## Economic Insecurity and Poverty

Although the Metro DC Jewish community as a whole is relatively affluent, some households struggle with significant economic challenges.

As one measure of economic need, respondents indicated whether they skipped necessities in the past year or received government benefits (Table 9.4). These benefits include Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); Medicaid; or WIC (Women, Infants, and Children nutrition program). However, it is important to note that some of these benefits are not entirely restricted to low-income households (e.g., SSDI, Medicaid); accordingly, receipt of these benefits is only a possible indicator of financial need, not a definite indicator. These measures may, however, capture information about those who were unwilling to identify themselves as poor when describing their standard of living.

**Table 9.4 Economic needs (% of Jewish households)**

Receiving SNAP, WIC, SSDI, or Medicaid	3
Skipped rent, mortgage, or utility bill in past year	3
Unable to pay emergency \$400 expense	3
Insufficient savings for three months	13
Unable to participate in Jewish life due to finances	5

Overall, a small proportion of households report having skipped a rent or mortgage payment in the past year (3%) or having received government benefits (3%) (Table 9.4). There is little difference across population groups in terms of economic need.

## Economic Vulnerability

As a measure of possible economic vulnerability among the middle class, several questions<sup>30</sup> asked about the level of financial preparedness in the case of economic emergency (Table 9.4). Three percent of Jewish households say that they would be unable to cover an unexpected \$400 expense using cash, savings, or a credit card they could pay off in full. As another measure, 13% of Jewish households do not have enough savings to cover three months of expenses.

Among all households, 5% reported that at some point in the past year they were unable to participate in Jewish life because of financial constraints. Of the 527 respondents who provided more information, 87 indicated that a program or event fee was unaffordable, 15 mentioned that they were unable to participate in a fundraising event, and 176 mentioned synagogue dues or High Holy Day ticket fees. In addition, 50 reported they were unable to send their children to Jewish camp, 45 mentioned Jewish schools, and 12 mentioned a youth program or Israel trip.

Typical comments from respondents included:

*Everything related to Jewish life is a fortune. My husband and I both took jobs focused on helping the world, not making us rich, and that apparently makes it difficult for us to afford synagogue membership, High Holiday services, Jewish camp, and JCC membership.*

*Some of our favorite programming costs money to attend, and I have some trouble asking for help when we do need it. So I'm sure the organization would work something out with us but we've done so a few times, and I feel uncomfortable doing so too often.*

*There are tons of classes/events I'd like to go to but most of my income goes to rent, student loans and medical bills. I'm not suffering at all, but the fun stuff takes a back seat to practical expenses.*

## Health Status and Needs

Poor health of community members is a matter of concern to the Metro DC Jewish community because it may be an indicator of needs for community-based services, and because it may prevent individuals from participating in the community's programs.

Overall, about one-in-five (18%) of Jewish households in Metro DC include at least one person who has a limitation on the amount or kind of work, school, or housework they can do because of an impairment, disability, or chronic physical problem or mental health issue (Table 9.5). Some households have greater rates of poor health: households in Maryland and Virginia are more likely to have individuals with poor health than those in the District. Senior citizens are particularly vulnerable. Of the 661 respondents who described a health issue, the most frequent response (258) was a chronic illness.

More than half (57%) of the households that include a member with health limitations, or 10% of all households, required services or accommodations. Of the households with health limitations who required services, over half (56%) did not seek out any such services, 11% sought services from Jewish organizations, and 42% sought services from non-Jewish organizations. These numbers include 2% of households who sought services from Jewish organizations but did not receive them as well as 1% who sought services from non-Jewish organizations but did not receive them. Reasons given for not receiving services from Jewish providers (24) included inability to find appropriate services or difficulty navigating bureaucracy.

Some members of the Metro DC Jewish community have elderly parents or close relatives in the area and are either already providing significant care to them or are planning for the possibility of doing so in the future. Six percent indicate that they have at least one parent living in an independent living facility, assisted living facility, or nursing home in Metro DC; one-third of these (2% overall) have parents in local, Jewish-sponsored institutions. An additional 11% have parents living in such facilities outside the DC area.

Seven percent of Jewish households include a member who is unable to participate in Jewish life due to health. Among the 355 respondents who explained the ways in which health problems prevented them from participation in Jewish life, the most commonly cited reasons were impaired mobility (100), chronic disease or illness (57), general poor health (56), and mental or emotional health (50).

**Table 9.5 Households with health limitations (% of Jewish households)**

Overall	18
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>	
Immersed	14
Involved	13
Cultural	19
Holiday	14
Minimal	12
<b>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</b>	
Young adults, not parents	4
Young adults, parents	6
Adults 40-64, not parents	9
Adults 40-64, parents	15
Seniors 65+	25
<b>MARRIAGE</b>	
Inmarried	18
Intermarried	13
Unmarried	13
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>	
DC	8
MD	17
VA	16

## Chapter 10: Conclusions and Recommendations

As one of the largest Jewish communities in the United States, Metro DC's nearly 300,000 Jews express their Jewish identities in a multitude of ways. In addition to personal and social connections, many engage with the Jewish community through religious and communal organizations. Yet, whether due to lack of interest or lack of opportunity, nearly half of Jewish households and families remain largely disconnected from the organized Jewish community. The growth of the community, as reflected in the large proportions of young adults in the District and in less-engaged Jewish households in Northern Virginia, offers the community an opportunity to strengthen and expand existing programs at the same time as it works to develop new initiatives to meet emerging needs.

This chapter highlights the ways in which Greater Washington's Jews are engaged with Jewish life and identifies a number of opportunities to enhance that engagement over the coming years. Below, some of the key findings of the study of the Greater Washington, DC, Jewish community are summarized, with a focus on information that can point the way toward planning for the community's future. In addition, this chapter contextualizes the findings by including commentary from some of the nearly 4,000 survey respondents who shared their perceptions of the strengths of the community and their needs for programs, services, or organizations.

### Population Size

The overall size and the recent growth of the Metro DC Jewish community is one of the key findings of this study. In large part, the population increase is due to the growth in the younger age bracket. DC is one of the top destination cities in the United States and attracts millennials for work and education. Twenty-two percent of Jewish adults in Metro DC are ages 18-29, and 21% are ages 30 to 39. Although 24% of Jews overall have lived in the community for less than 10 years, among those who live in the District, 40% have arrived within the last 10 years.

The size of the community enables it to support an array of organizations and institutions that contribute to its appeal. Respondents described the large size of the community (566) and its diversity (826) as one of its strengths. Members consider it inclusive and pluralistic (321), intellectual (344), and warm and welcoming (349). In the words of community members:

*Many Jews live here, so there are many activities, organizations, and businesses that cater to Jewish interests. Jews of all types, from ultra-Orthodox to Reform, can be comfortable here.*

*I think they provide a lot of opportunities for people of different ages and different denominations, and people that are of mixed marriages and also people that are gay. I just think it's a very progressive community in general with a lot of opportunities no matter who you are. Young and old.*

The diversity of the community is reflected in its demographic composition. An estimated 7% of Jewish adults identify as LGBTQ, and 7% identify as a person of color or having Hispanic or Latino origin.

## Many Ways to be Jewish

When thinking about programs and activities that aim to enhance Jewish engagement, it's valuable to consider the current behaviors and interests of Jews in the community in order to better "meet them where they are." For many organizations and agencies, the starting point of this process is to organize the community into meaningful groups and to plan for each segment. Often these groups are based on demographic characteristics, such as age, geography, or family status; or on religious characteristics, such as denomination, synagogue membership, or intermarriage. These categories of religious affiliation are becoming less useful than they once were. In the Metro DC Jewish community, three-quarters of households are not synagogue members and two-in-five Jewish adults do not identify with a Jewish denomination. Within each of these groups—Conservative, Reform, and no denomination; intermarried and inmarried; synagogue members and nonmembers—Jewish behaviors, affiliations, and attitudes vary widely.

The five categories that comprise Metro DC's Index of Jewish Engagement provide a new tool for understanding the community. The categories are based not on predefined labels, but rather on actual behaviors. The Index synthesizes many of these behaviors and illustrates how they are patterned. In conjunction with demographic characteristics such as age and geography, this Index provides a new approach to understanding the composition of the community. The purpose of this Index is to describe how each group enacts Judaism and to inspire innovative thinking about Jewish engagement efforts for each.

In Metro DC, over half of Jewish adults are highly engaged with Jewish life, with 18% Immersed in Jewish life and 33% Involved in it. Another third of Jewish adults have medium levels of engagement, but in ways that are markedly different from one another: the Cultural group includes 17% of Jewish adults, and the Holiday group includes 18%. The remaining 14% of Jewish adults can be considered Minimally Involved, though many participate occasionally in Jewish communal or private life.

The **Immersed** group (18% of Jewish adults), participates in all dimensions of Jewish life: home- and synagogue-based holidays and ritual practices, personal activities, and communal involvement. Those in the Immersed group are more concentrated in Suburban Maryland (45% of them live there), are somewhat older, and include more inmarried couples than the other groups. One-quarter are Orthodox, 39% Conservative, 20% Reform, 7% have another denomination, and 10% have no denomination. Those in the Immersed group feel strongly connected to the community and positive about it:

*There are Jewish organizations that work on every aspect of Jewish life, be it religious, political (on all ends of the spectrum), volunteer, etc. We are lucky to have so many different Jewish organizations here to fit everyone's need. We also have a strong, vibrant, and engaged young Jewish community in DC that will grow to become a strong, vibrant and engaged older Jewish community in several years.*

The gaps in the community that those in the Immersed group describe include more opportunities to support what they are already doing, including adult and children's education, different types and locations of synagogues, and more kosher food. Many comments related to the affordability of Jewish education.

*There must be some kind of program to help with the costs of day school. It is unaffordable, even oppressive, and getting more so. It limits the amount of money that we can give to other community projects and institutions and lowers our standard of living. It will make it impossible for us to save for retirement. We are unable to afford vacations, and most recreational spending has been eliminated in order to pay tuition.*

*I am concerned about finding a Jewish education program for my kids that is not day school but provides a solid base of Judaism. I think there are fewer and fewer services for Conservative (or at least not Orthodox) who are living in the northern Silver Spring area (i.e., not toward Gaithersburg) such as camps, preschools, etc. I think any program/ service/org that could connect young families with shuls, creating more of a reason for them to join would be great.*

The **Involved** group (33% of Jewish adults) participates in most dimensions of Jewish life. Unlike the Immersed group, however, few observe Shabbat and kashrut. Compared to the Immersed group, a larger share of those in the Involved group live in DC and Northern Virginia.

*Diverse population, lots of activities for Jewish young professionals in their 20's and 30's. Also, you don't have to belong to a synagogue to feel like you are part of the community. Plenty of choices for services on high holidays and for Shabbat dinner/ services.*

*A variety of educational opportunities/classes, such as through the Jewish Study Center. Variety of volunteer/social action activities, especially through the DCJCC and The Jewish Food Experience. The Jewish Food Experience, overall, is the one part of the Federation where I feel a connection. It has provided me the opportunity to connect with a nice circle of Jewish friends, who I met over the last 10 years or so by participating in a variety of Jewish events/ services.*

Similar to the Immersed group, the primary concerns of the Involved group relate to more high-quality and affordable Jewish educational and religious options. Because they are more geographically dispersed, they are more interested in programs throughout the region.

*There is a lack of options for unaffiliated families with young children that do not belong to or live near to a JCC. I live in upper NW DC and am 30 minutes from all three JCCs, and so it is not worth the time to attend programming, nor would I meet fellow parents from my neighborhood. I have not joined a synagogue, as there are limited activities for very young children, and it is expensive.*

*It's not that it's literally 'missing' from the scene but unfortunately Jewish education (Hebrew School and Sunday School, I mean; I don't know enough about the situation with Jewish DAY school education to opine on that) seems to be 'missing the MARK.' From what we've seen, most kids hate it, resent it, and turn away from it, and from Judaism generally, ASAP. Not that I hold the Jewish educational community entirely responsible for this negative outcome. We are remiss ourselves as parents.*

*Greater funding of educational opportunities for youth and adults including funding of trips to Israel for youth and adults. Better funding of synagogue religious schools from community funds to enable more creative educational programs. That funding should go to all the area's Jewish religious schools (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist).*

*In order to build a stronger religious community, I believe you need to start by focusing on a stronger cultural Jewish community. For those who don't have much experience with reading and understanding Hebrew, attending services can be very intimidating and turns people away entirely.*

The **Cultural** group (17% of Jewish adults) is less involved in religious and synagogue life and more involved in the cultural and communal realms. This group is the oldest of the engagement groups, with 35% ages 65 and older, and has the smallest share of parents. Of those who have children, this group has the largest share who are raising their children both Jewish and another religion. The largest share of the Cultural group, 45%, live in Northern Virginia. Their focus is on the diversity of the community and non-religious programming.

*There is significant diversity within the community in terms of denominational options and in terms of social action and organizational options. The community is generally open-minded and concerned with building bridges with other communities (Muslim, African-American).*

*The Jewish community in America and worldwide has strong traditions of education, social justice, and civil service. DC draws Americans of all faiths and ethnicities who believe in those values, and consequently has a large number of Jews who dedicate their lives to them. I'm proud to be associated, through my ethnicity and culture, if not religion, with so many people doing so much good.*

Those in the Cultural group are looking for programs that are not based on religion and build on their social justice values.

*...ways to engage if you're not particularly religious but don't want to lose connections to spiritual people and the connection to religion you grew up with.*

*I don't know for sure, but probably more options for LGBT, newly arrived immigrants of lower income, interfaith couples are needed. This may be an oxymoron, but more synagogues that are more focused on tikkun olam and less on God and traditional prayers. Although this is anecdotal, I suspect that there is a disenfranchised group of Jews for whom the traditional synagogue model isn't very fulfilling.*

The **Holiday** group (18% of Jewish adults) primarily connects to Judaism through celebration of Passover, Chanukah, and High Holy Days. Although 55% attend services on High Holy Days, only 7% are synagogue members. This group includes the largest share of young adults—half are under 40—and the largest share, 30%, who live in DC. As a result of their lower involvement in the community, it is more difficult for them to describe the strengths of the community and what they are looking for.

*I don't identify with a 'metropolitan DC Jewish community' and, therefore, cannot identify strengths. I have some Jewish friends, and I think we all consider ourselves primarily part of a secular, diversified community. Possibly I feel the way I do because I have never been inspired by what I have heard at my Temple. We joined the Temple so our two boys could have bar mitzvahs but haven't participate in Jewish affairs per se for the last 40 years.*

*Availability of synagogue membership without significant financial commitment is the single biggest deterrent to more active participation. Having been raised in another faith, my family never had a financial outlay in order to participate. Just to go to High Holy Day services requires significant savings. My children are missing out because we have to choose between synagogue membership and necessities (food, clothing, doctor appointments, etc.). It is unfeasible to me that it is not donation-based.*

The **Minimally Involved** (14% of Jewish adults) group has the fewest connections to Judaism. Very few participate in a Passover seder or light Chanukah candles, the two Jewish behaviors that are the most widespread. This group includes the largest share (61%) of Jews who live in Northern Virginia, the largest share (81%) with no denomination, and the largest share who are intermarried (94% of those who are married). Of those who have children, less than half (48%) are raising their children exclusively Jewish. However, some of the people in this group occasionally follow news about Israel, read information about Judaism, and volunteer or donate to Jewish organizations. Few of the Minimally Involved knew enough about the community to describe its strengths. Their comments underscore their lack of connection to the Jewish community.

*I feel like a minority here, especially in the urban center of DC, there is just not much of a presence or many people it seems.*

*I don't really have any expectations of the DC Jewish community, although I have enjoyed the activities I have participated in.*

*I was raised Jewish but was never really a part of the Jewish community. I married out of my religion and struggle to keep a connection to my culture. I could use programs that address people, like me, who feel like outsiders in the Jewish community.*

### The Changing Role of Synagogues

One-quarter of Jewish households, including 31% of Jewish adults, are members of a synagogue. Despite the growth in the community since 2003, the number of households who are dues-paying members of brick-and-mortar synagogues has declined slightly. As a result, the proportion of the community that is synagogue-affiliated has dramatically declined.

Across all Jewish households, 18% are dues-paying members of brick-and-mortar synagogues, and another 8% have a different type of synagogue membership: Either they consider themselves members but do not pay dues, are members of an independent minyan or Chabad, or belong to a synagogue that is not in the DC area.

Among synagogue member households, 16% belong to an independent minyan or chavurah and 5% belong to Chabad. As a result, some of the decline in membership in brick-and-mortar synagogues has been offset by an increase in these alternative groups.

The rate of synagogue membership is highest among adults ages 40-64 who have children; 34% of such households are synagogue members. Rates are lowest for young adults ages 22-39 who do not have children; 17% of such households are synagogue members. Nearly half (48%) of inmarried households belong to a synagogue, but only 14% of intermarried households are members. Nearly all (86%) of the Immersed group are synagogue members, but less than half (42%) of the Involved group are members. Almost none in the other groups are synagogue members. Despite this fact, two-thirds of those in the Cultural and Holiday groups attended services at least once in the previous year and one-third of those in the Holiday group participated in High Holy Day services.

## Participation without Membership

In addition to synagogues, Jewish organizations have similarly low rates of affiliation. Considering all area JCCs, 5% of households are dues-paying members, and another 5% consider themselves members but do not pay dues. Aside from a synagogue or JCC, 18% of households belong to another organization such as Hadassah or AIPAC. Just over half of Jewish children in grades K-8 are enrolled in formal Jewish education, with 10% in day school and 42% in part-time school, but only 7% of children ages five and under are enrolled in Jewish preschools.

On the other hand, participation in programs, whether attending events, volunteering, or donating, is higher than is the rate of memberships. Almost two-thirds (62%) of Jewish adults attended a Jewish-sponsored event in the past year, and 61% donated to a Jewish organization. Nearly all (92%) of the Immersed group attended a Jewish program or event, two-thirds (64%) of the Involved group, and over half (54%) of the Cultural group.

Community members are active in volunteer activities but volunteering for non-Jewish organizations far exceeds the rate of volunteering for or with Jewish organizations. Volunteering was measured for just the prior month rather than a full year, but in that time, 15% of Jewish adults volunteered for or with a Jewish organization. Over that same period, 32% of Jewish adults volunteered for a non-Jewish organization.

Although levels of participation vary across segments of the community, interests in a variety of causes are shared by many community members. When considering the interests of community members, whether for volunteering or donation, the most popular cause among Metro DC's Jews is education: 86% say education is very important, and this cause was highest for every subset of the population. Other causes of interest are social justice (76%), politics (64%), and arts and culture (60%).

Jewish activities are not restricted to those sponsored by organizations. Half (51%) of Jews discuss Jewish topics with friends and families at least weekly, one-third (34%) eat traditional Jewish foods at least weekly, one-third (33%) go online to read Jewish information, and 22% participate in Jewish culture activities. When it comes to all of these informal activities, those in the Cultural group participate at rates higher than those in the Involved group.

Residents of Greater DC appreciate the institutions that support the community, with specific organizations mentioned by 607 respondents, including JCCs (203), schools (125), and synagogues (445).

*There have always been a lot of organizations, synagogues, schools, and variety that people can find ones they are comfortable with or that can welcome them. There is a vibrant community, even if it is across the spectrum of observance and goals/missions.*

*We have a lot of diversity within the Jewish community so that it is possible to live a Jewish life that is comfortable to the way in which we would like to live that Jewish life. There are many ways to be Jewish in the DC area. As a Jew, I can participate in a synagogue, a youth group, sports leagues, festivals, charity events—the list is endless, and I feel like there is something for everyone.*

*Seems to be a lot of variety of services offered and lots of cultural activities. Well-organized entities, like 6th and I and the DCJCC and JCCNV with lots of programs going on.*

Over 1,000 respondents noted the number and diversity of program offerings, with 609 describing those opportunities. Regarding specific program types, 280 respondents mentioned cultural programs, and 151 mentioned educational programs.

*Beyond the traditional institutions (synagogues/ JCC's/ Jewish organizations) some of which are too expensive for many people (especially retirees) to participate in fully, we are incredibly lucky to live in a community that offers a broad array of alternative Jewish/Israeli programs available at little or no cost...at University of Maryland, American University, and the various OLLI [Osber Lifelong Learning Institute] programs at every university; these allow one to remain as involved as one chooses in the intellectual and cultural life of the community.*

*Large, broad-based community, with all types of Jews and Jewish cultural and religious resources. It's a community with not only a wealth of synagogue-related options, but with cultural and artistic options like Jewish theatre, Jewish food, Jewish literature, etc.*

### Political Views and Social Justice

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Metro DC's Jews identify as Democrats, 6% as Republicans, 15% as independents, and 8% other. In comparison, nationally, 54% of Jewish adults identify as Democrats, 14% as Republican, and the remaining 32% as independent or other party affiliation.

Two-thirds (63%) of Metro DC's Jews believe that working for justice and equality is an essential part of being Jewish, compared to 56% of US Jews. This feeling is shared among all engagement groups but is strongest for those in the Cultural group. Three-quarters (76%) of the community said that social justice was a very important cause to them, and two-thirds (64%) indicated that politics was very important. This proportion was highest among the Cultural group but was significant for all engagement groups.

Indeed, the community's political views were valued by many members (286), and, in particular, the community's progressive views (184) and political activism (134). The emphasis on social justice (351) and the community's relationships with non-Jews (196) were noted as strengths.

*A healthy position in regards to politics—Active engagement without being contentious or beating the horse to death. The community's education level and the political and policy engagement of its members give it a strong voice in government advocacy.*

*With our close ties to the federal government, we are in a unique position to advance and influence social justice and relations with Israel. Our involvement in a majority Black and underprivileged community offers neverending challenges for tikkun olam.*

Nonetheless, 45 respondents had concerns about the community's political views, with some feeling that the community was too liberal and left-leaning and some feeling that it was too politicized in general.

*Bias towards liberalism/progressive programs and a disregard for those seeking conservative viewpoints and conservative principles.*

## Israel

Two-thirds (68%) of Metro DC Jews have been to Israel at least once, including half (48%) of the Minimally Involved, 58% of the Holiday, and 60% of the Cultural groups. Support for the two-state solution is strong among all of the engagement groups, with 39% strongly supporting it, and 28% somewhat supporting it.

Emotional connection to Israel and interest in Israel, however, are more divided. Among the Immersed group, 63% feel very connected to Israel. Among the Involved and Cultural groups, about one-third feel very connected to Israel, and among the Holiday and Minimal groups, fewer than one-in-five feel that level of connection.

Unlike other areas of interest which are shared across the whole community, interest in Israel varies widely for different segments of the community. Overall, just under half (47%) of Jewish adults view Israel as an important cause. Over two-thirds (68%) of the Immersed group feel Israel is a very important cause, as do about half of the Involved and the Cultural groups and one-quarter of the Holiday group. Among the Minimally Involved group, interest in Israel is slightly higher, with 39% considering it a very important cause.

The diverse views about Israel were reflected in respondents' comments; 39 respondents appreciated the community's support for Israel, and 20 mentioned the availability of programs about Israel. However, 32 respondents disagreed with community positions about Israel.

*The Jewish community needs support for debate regarding Israel issues that is as open and as broad-based as the debate that takes place in Israel itself.*

*There is an emphasis on Israel that, while understandable, can make families like mine feel alienated. I am a bit leery of political work regarding Israel since I tend to be on the less traditional side of that lens within the community.*

*I strongly oppose the Jewish establishment's support of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and people. I would love to participate in the community more broadly but cannot support the organizations that do not explicitly reject the occupation.*

## Opportunities for Growth

There are several subgroups who, through their comments, indicated that they perceived significant gaps in programs and institutions that met their needs. A focus on these subpopulations points to opportunities to address expressed needs and interests of community members.

### ***Northern Virginia***

Although a sizeable share (41%) of the area's Jews live in Northern Virginia, engagement in Jewish life is lower there than in DC or in Suburban Maryland. This is due, in part, to the weaker Jewish ties of those in Northern Virginia, but also from having fewer accessible options available. The largest shares of the Cultural (45%), Holiday (43%), and Minimally Involved (61%) groups reside in Northern Virginia.

Participation in Jewish education is lower for families in Northern Virginia than in Suburban Maryland, as is the rate of synagogue membership. Although synagogue membership is higher in Northern Virginia than in DC, rates of attendance at synagogue services is lower for those in Northern Virginia. There may be more opportunities in DC to attend services as a non-member than there are in Northern Virginia. Attendance at any Jewish-sponsored program in the past year is lower among those in Northern Virginia than for the other areas.

Respondents report a lack of programs in Northern Virginia (126) and the feeling that the population is too dispersed to allow for convenient participation in programs.

*Very little offered in Northern Virginia. JCC is too far away to participate regularly. There should be J's without walls—rented space in other parts of Fairfax Co. The Federation does not have much of a presence in NoVa, nor do they seem to care about establishing one. They need to invest in community organizing before it will pay off in dollars raised.*

*Virginia community too spread out, can't use JCC, no agencies for aging, day school far away from everything—most issues are geographic.*

*Home care for the elderly and/or sick in Northern Virginia. Independent living and continual retirement care in the Northern Virginia area.*

### ***Young adults and singles***

There exists a wide array of programs for young adults in DC, and participation in these programs is high. Half (53%) of the young adult population (ages 22-39) without children participated in a dedicated young adult program within the six months preceding the study. Jewish engagement among young adults varies as much as it does for all other Jewish adults, although young adults represent a larger share of the Holiday group than do older Jews.

Among respondents, 256 described the programs for young adults as a strength of the community.

*The Metropolitan DC Jewish Community is the best community for Jewish Young Professionals in the US in my opinion. The options for activities are plentiful and of great variety. The efforts of Sixth & I Historic Synagogue and the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington have a great deal to do with this opinion. Sixth & I offers a variety of classes on any Jewish topic, book talks on secular topics and any type of service. There is a Shabbat service for young professionals nearly every week.*

*Very welcoming. As a young professional, there are many, many opportunities, and many people are from everywhere and have unique stories. I feel welcomed every time I walk into an event within the Jewish community.*

However 143 respondents saw gaps and wanted more or different programming for this population.

*Trying to replicate some of the young professionals programming that exists in the city in suburbia; I know the NoVa Tribe Series has started some of this, but I think there would be an interest in young professionals programming in Bethesda, Rockville, Silver Spring, and Alexandria, just to name a few.*

*I think it's really difficult for millennials to join a synagogue because of the cost of membership.*

*Most of the young professional Jewish programs I've gone to have been bad experiences. The people are very cliquy and the organizers make me feel like an outsider.*

*The Reform synagogues are not welcoming or appealing to 'young' adults—young meaning the very large segment of the population who isn't yet married and having children. Once-a-month dinners don't make a community. I'm 26 and would love to join a synagogue—pay dues, join committees, volunteer, make friends of all ages, all of that—if there were such an option for a single adult.*

*Young people gathering groups where the vibe is less 'singles mixers' and more focused on something substantive. There are a lot of events for young members. But they are disjointed and usually focus around happy hours. I'd like something more substantive that was tied to a synagogue so I could begin to form a community rather than seeing new faces every time.*

*More programming for 30's who don't want to join congregations.*

*A more centrally located Reconstructive/Reform community or synagogue with better reach to young professional Jews who are seeking a more diverse and liberal Jewish experience. A synagogue or community group of liberal Jews in Columbia Heights or similarly young, diverse, dense area of DC.*

*A Humanistic Jewish congregation that has more young adults and a strong young adult group, and that meets at times and locations that are accessible to people in their 20's and 30's.*

With the community's focus on young adults, single adults who are older than 40 feel the lack of programs and services that are geared toward their needs. Respondents (107) frequently noted the absence of programs for the adult population between young adult age and senior citizens and, in particular, single and/or people without children in these age groups. Unmarried people are a larger share of the medium and low engagement groups than they are of the higher engagement groups.

*As an over 50 adult, having a hard time finding activities and programs where I am made to feel welcome. Interested in spiritual and educational content. See there is a lot of outreach to YP (young professional) and for 65+ ages but not finding things for my age group or single mature adults. Attend events but not having opportunities to socialize with others there. Am looking for a place to fit and a community.*

*Services for single adults over 35. All the single groups skew 'young professionals.' If you're over 35 and single, you are completely on your own. If you don't have a partner or children, it's hard to feel connected to the community. Something that crosses generations. Something that isn't designed only for matures, singles, under 40, with kids, or*

*without kids. Something that crosses the various divides. As a 42-year-old who does well financially but is single without kids, it is impossible to find a place to join. The dues are 4K a year for one person with programming that doesn't meet my needs.*

*My friends and I are in our mid to late forties. There is one group I know of from the DCJCC for our age group, and it hasn't had steady leadership or activities. Most of the community activities we end up attending are directed specifically at 20's and 30's, but they are creative, fun or meaningful activities and we want to go to! So we do. Wish we had great activities for our age group—and that would draw a good number of diverse people.*

### **Interfaith and Intermarried Families**

One-third of households include a couple that is intermarried. Among those who are in an interfaith relationship, 19% find the community to be somewhat welcoming, and 31% find it to be very welcoming. In their comments, however, 68 respondents in interfaith relationships reported ways that the community made them feel unwelcome. Intermarried families make up part of all engagement groups, but, among married people, 10% of the Immersed group are intermarried compared to 94% of the Minimally Involved group.

*I married out of my religion and struggle to keep a connection to my culture. I could use programs that address people, like me, who feel like outsiders in the Jewish community.*

*I think we could use professional 'boutique' outreach to those on the margins of our community, especially targeted outreach to the young adult offspring of intermarriage, who may already feel part of our Jewish family but not the institutional community.*

*As someone from an interfaith household, it's hard to engage with the community if I have to convince my spouse, 'Don't worry, you'll feel comfortable and welcome.' She often feels like the Jewish community is insular and skeptical of non-Jews, and that makes it hard for me to find ways to engage in the community as well.*

*The interfaith community focuses too much on raising kids in a Jewish household. But I just want to be comfortable bringing my interfaith partner to events without him feeling pressured.*

### **People with Disabilities**

Seven percent of Jewish households include a member who is unable to participate in Jewish life due to health. Among the 355 respondents who explained the ways in which health problems prevented them from participation in Jewish life, the most commonly cited reasons were impaired mobility (100), chronic disease or illness (57), general poor health (56), and mental or emotional health (50).

Respondents (77) noted gaps in programming and services for those with disabilities.

*Disability support for adults with physical challenges. We have a close family member who is unable to participate in Jewish life because of constraints caused by chronic health issues.*

*More availability for kids with special needs—support services/groups have waiting lists.*

*Services to assist families with special needs or disabled children to access, be welcomed by, and feel connected to their Jewish community—so that they do not feel on the outside.*

*Programs to include children with physical disabilities (not intellectually challenged children). Programs that would help you and would include children. To integrate them into the community better. My child doesn't have intellectual difficulties. She has physical challenges resulting from chemotherapy. There are programs for intellectually challenged children, but a big gap for physical disabilities. We feel left out of the Jewish community frequently.*

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The Greater Washington, DC Jewish community is growing and, by many measures, thriving. The portrait painted in this report is one of a young and vibrant community interested in forming meaningful connections to Jewish life. The data suggest, however, that to continue to serve the community, new ways will need to be found to engage those who have eschewed traditional institutions. Continuing to innovate new programs and engage diverse populations and geographic areas will no doubt present challenges, but also a host of opportunities. We hope that this portrait of the community will stimulate a discussion about how to take advantage of the DC community's many strengths.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the report, the terms “Metro DC,” “Greater Washington, DC,” and “DC-area” will be used interchangeably to refer to the entire region comprising the study. “DC” on its own or “the District” will be used to refer specifically to the District of Columbia alone. Boundaries of Greater Washington are listed in Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.people-press.org/2012/05/15/assessing-the-representativeness-of-public-opinion-surveys/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless201712.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [ajpp.brandeis.edu](http://ajpp.brandeis.edu)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/01/18/the-top-10-places-people-are-moving-and-how-their-choices-differ-by-race/?utm\\_term=.4e77f56f51c3&wpisrc=nl\\_rainbow&wpmm=1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/01/18/the-top-10-places-people-are-moving-and-how-their-choices-differ-by-race/?utm_term=.4e77f56f51c3&wpisrc=nl_rainbow&wpmm=1)

<sup>6</sup> Based on Jewish federation service areas. The two larger federation service areas are New York and Los Angeles. Chicago at 291,800 is slightly smaller. <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=3557>

<sup>7</sup> All comparisons with 2003 are based on the 2003 Greater Washington DC Jewish community study. Due to methodological differences with the 2003 report, all comparisons should be treated with caution.

<sup>8</sup> All regional population trends in chapters 2 and 3 are derived from the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) for years 2000 and 2015.

<sup>9</sup> The definitions used in this study are similar but not identical to those used in Pew’s *A Portrait of Jewish Americans* (2013). Adults who are Jewish and a second religion, if they were raised Jewish or have Jewish parents, are classified by Pew as “Jewish Background” and are not included among the Jewish “count.” This study classifies them as Jews of Multiple Religions and includes them in the count of both Jewish adults and Jewish children.

<sup>10</sup> If the Jews of multiple religions were excluded from the total Jewish population, as was done in the Pew study, the resulting proportion of Jews by religion would be 78%.

<sup>11</sup> From the Hillel website, <http://www.hillel.org/college-guide>, as of December 2017. Includes American University, Gallaudet University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, University of Maryland College Park, and George Mason University.

<sup>12</sup> The Hebrew Home of Greater Washington is the only Jewish nursing home in Greater DC.

<sup>13</sup> Based on personal correspondence with Rabbi Irving A. Elson, CAPT, USN (Ret), Director, JWB Jewish Chaplains Council.

<sup>14</sup> All national comparisons are based on 2013 Pew’s *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, the most recent national data available.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Pew, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Pew, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> The 1% of the population who identify as neither male nor female are not represented in the figure.

<sup>18</sup> <http://ajpp.brandeis.edu/>

<sup>19</sup> Gender identity terminology follows the language utilized by Keshet, [www.keshetonline.org](http://www.keshetonline.org).

<sup>20</sup> Age, denomination, and marital status are estimated only for LGBTQ Jewish adults who were respondents to the survey, not for others in their households.

<sup>21</sup> <http://ajpp.brandeis.edu/>

<sup>22</sup> **The DC region** includes Washington, DC (zip codes 20001-20098 and 20201-20599).

**Lower Montgomery County region** includes the following towns/cities and zip codes: Potomac, MD (zip codes 20854 and 20817 and part of 20852 and 20818), White Oak, MD (zip codes 20904, 20903, and 20901). Calverton, MD (zip codes 20904 and 20705 and part of 20903), Fairland, MD (zip code 20904 and part of 20866 and 20905), Redland,

MD (zip code 20855 and part of 20877 and 20879), Silver Spring, MD (zip codes 20901 and 20910 and part of 20903, 20912, and 20815), Bethesda, MD (zip codes 20817, 20894, 20814, and 20816 and part of 20815), Takoma Park, MD (zip code 20912 and part of 20910 and 20901), Aspen Hill, MD (zip codes 20853 and 20906 and part of 20851), Wheaton-Glenmont, MD (zip codes 20902 and 20906 and part of 20853, 20895, and 20905), North Bethesda, MD (zip code 20852 and part of 20895, 20817, 20851, and 20814), Rockville, MD (zip codes 20850, 20851, and 20852 and part of 20854, 20853, 20877, and 20855), and Colesville, MD (zip codes 20904 and 20905 and part of 20906).

**Upper Montgomery County region** includes the following towns/cities and zip codes: Gaithersburg, MD (zip codes 20878 and 20877 and part of 20879, 20850, and 20899), Germantown, MD (zip codes 20874 and 20876 and part of 20879), Montgomery Village, MD (zip codes 20886 and 20879 and part of 20882 and 20877), North Potomac, MD (zip codes 20878 and 20850), Damascus, MD (zip codes 20872 and 20882) and Olney, MD (zip codes 20832, 20853, and 20833 and part of 20860 and 20855).

**Prince George's County region** includes the following towns/cities and zip codes: Hyattsville, MD (zip codes 20782 and 20781 and part of 20783), Adelphi, MD (zip code 20783 and part of 20903 and 20782), Chillum, MD (zip codes 20782 and 20783 and part of 20912 and 20712), Langley Park, MD (zip code 20783 and part of 20903), College Park, MD (zip codes 20740 and 20742 and part of 20705), East Riverdale, MD (zip codes 20737 and 20781 and part of 20710 and 20784), Beltsville, MD (zip code 20705 and part of 20783 and 20740), Greenbelt, MD (zip code 20770 and part of 20706, 20740, 20737, and 20705), New Carrollton, MD (zip code 20784 and part of 20706), Lanham-Seabrook, MD (zip code 20706 and part of 20784), Bowie, MD (zip codes 20715 and 20716 and part of 20721 and 20720), Glenn Dale, MD (zip code 20769 and part of 20720 and 20706), Greater Upper Marlboro, MD (zip codes 20772 and 20774), Kettering, MD (zip code 20774), Coral Hills, MD (zip code 20743 and part of 20747 and 20746), Greater Landover, MD (zip code 20785 and part of 20784 and 20706), Walker Mill, MD (zip code 20743 and 20747), Hillcrest Heights, MD (zip code 20748 and part of 20745), Oxon Hill-Glassmanor, MD (zip codes 20744 and 20745 and part of 20748), Camp Springs, MD (zip codes 20744, 20748, and 20746), Forestville, MD (zip code 20747 and part of 20743 and 20746), Suitland-Silver Hill, MD (zip code 20746 and part of 20747 and 20748), Clinton, MD (zip code 20735 and part of 20748), Friendly, MD (zip code 20744), Rosaryville, MD (zip codes 20772 and 20735 and part of 20623), Laurel, MD (zip code 20707 and part of 20708), and South Laurel, MD (zip code 20708 and part of 20707 and 20705).

**The North Central region** includes the following towns/cities and zip codes: Herndon, VA (zip code 20170), Reston, VA (zip codes 20190, 20191, and 20194 and part of 22181, 22182, 22124, 20171, and 20170), Oakton, VA (zip code 22124 and 22181 and part of 22031, 22180, and 22030), Vienna, VA (zip code 22180 and part of 22181, 22031, and 22182), Wolf Trap, VA (zip code 22182 and part of 22181 and 2280), and Tysons Corner, VA (zip codes 22182 and 22102).

**The Central region** includes the following towns/cities and zip codes: Lorton, VA (zip code 22079 and part of 22060, 22153, and 22039), Chantilly, VA (zip codes 20151, 22033, and part of 20120), Fairfax, VA (zip codes, 22030, 22031, and part of 22032), Merrifield, VA (zip code 22031, and part of 22180, 22042, and 22027), Burke, VA (zip codes 22015, 22153 and part of 22152, 22032, and 22039), Annandale, VA (zip code 22003 and part of 22031, 22042, 22312, and 22151), West Springfield, VA (zip code 22152 and part of 22151, 22003, 22153, and 22150), and Newington, VA (zip codes 22153 and 22079 and parts of 22150 and 20598), and Springfield, VA (zip code 22150 and part of 22151, 22312, and 22304).

**The East region** includes the following towns/cities and zip codes: McLean, VA (zip codes 22101 and 22102 and part of 22043, 22046, and 22207), Idylwood, VA (zip codes 22043 and 22046 and part of 22042), Jefferson, VA (zip code 22042 and part of 22044 and 22046), Falls Church, VA (zip code 22046 and part of 22044, 22042, and 22213), Groveton, VA (zip codes 22306, 22307, 22310, and 22309 and part of 22303), Baileys' Crossroads, VA (zip code 22041 and part of 22311 and 22302), Lincolnia, VA (zip code 22312 and part of 2241 and 22003), Rose Hill, VA (22310 and part of 22303 and 22315), Alexandria, VA (zip code 22301, 22302, 22304, 22305, 22311, and 22314 and part of 22206 and 22312), Arlington, VA (zip codes 22201-2207, 22209, 22211, and 22213 and part of 22044 and 22101), Fort Hunt, VA (zip code 22307 and 22308), Hybla Valley, VA (zip codes 22306 and 22307 and part of 22308), Franconia, VA (zip codes 22315, 20598, and 22310 and part of 22079 and 22150), and Mount Vernon, VA (zip code 22309).

**The West region** includes the following towns/cities and zip codes: Dale City, VA (zip code 22193 and part of 22192 and 20112), Lake Ridge, VA (zip code 22192), Woodbridge, VA (zip code 22191 and part of 22192), Montclair, VA (zip codes 22025 and 22193), Leesburg, VA (zip codes 20175 and 20176), Bull Run, VA (zip code 20109), Centreville, VA (zip codes 20120 and 20121 and part of 20151 and 20124), Manassas, VA (zip code 20110), and Manassas Park, VA (zip code 20111).

<sup>23</sup> A description of latent class analysis and details of how it was applied to our data are provided in Appendix B.

<sup>24</sup> Based on information from community records and JFGW.

<sup>25</sup> For analysis of Jewish education, 18- and 19-year-olds who are in high school are counted as Jewish children. In all other contexts, 18- and 19-year-olds are counted as adults.

<sup>26</sup> 2003 school enrollment data was provided by JFGW.

<sup>27</sup> These numbers are based on administrative data provided by synagogues and JFGW, not from survey results.

<sup>28</sup> Until 2013, those who participated in peer educational programs after age 13 were ineligible for Birthright Israel. That rule has been relaxed. Currently, an applicant is ineligible only if he or she has been on an educational program for more than three months.

<sup>29</sup> Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016 vintage; population age 25 and older.

<sup>30</sup> Questions were modelled on those used by the Federal Reserve in <https://www.federalreserve.gov/2015-report-economic-well-being-us-households-201605.pdf>. See the discussion of middle class vulnerability in <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/05/my-secret-shame/476415/>



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