




PORTRAIT OF OUR COMMUNITY

2019 TWIN CITIES JEWISH POPULATION STUDY




Brandeis

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the 2019 Twin Cities Jewish Community Study, the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) at Brandeis University employed innovative state-of-the-art methods to create a comprehensive portrait of the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of present-day Twin Cities Jewry. The study also provides national and historical context by considering trends and data in the United States and where possible, comparisons to the Twin Cities in 2004. This report is based on survey data collected from 3,326 respondents from September to December 2019.

This study is intended to be a first step in identifying communal trends; generating questions to explore; and determining strategies, programs, and policies to support and enhance Jewish life in the area. Specifically, the study seeks 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, health and 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

DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2019 Twin Cities Jewish Community Study estimates that there are 34,500 Jewish households. In these households live 88,400 people, of whom 64,800 are Jewish. Approximately 5% of the 1,273,000 households in the catchment area includes at least one Jewish adult.

- The Jewish population of the Twin Cities in 2019 grew substantially since 2004. Using the same definitions and geography as the last study, the number of Jewish households increased by 44% and the number of Jewish individuals increased by 23%. This population change tracked overall regional growth.
- The increase in the non-Jewish population living in Jewish households in the Twin Cities area is an outcome of the larger number of intermarried families in 2019.

- The mean age of local Jewish adults is 48, and the median age is 49. By comparison, the median age of Jewish adults in the US is 50.
- In total, 62% of households have extended family living in other Twin Cities households. Twenty-eight percent of households have children of any age who live in another household in the Twin Cities. Nearly half of households, 48%, with respondents younger than age 75 have a parent living in the Twin Cities but in a separate household.
- The individual intermarriage rate of 48% is similar to the national intermarriage rate of 44%. Nearly 60% of married Jewish adults under age 50 have a spouse or partner who is not Jewish.
- Seven percent of households includes someone who was born in a Russian-speaking home.
- Nine percent of Jewish households include at least one LGBTQ individual.
- Seven percent of Jewish households include someone who is a person of color or is of Hispanic or Latino origin.

GEOGRAPHY AND RESIDENCE

Jews live in five regions within the Twin Cities: Minneapolis, the Minneapolis suburbs, St. Paul, the St. Paul suburbs, and the Outer suburbs. See Chapter 3 for regional definitions. Nearly half (48%) of Jewish adults were raised in the Twin Cities, while 11% moved to the Twin Cities within the past five years.

- Two thirds of the Jewish population are located in the Minneapolis “half” of the Twin Cities and one third in the St. Paul “half.” In 2004 and 1992-93, the St. Paul community formed about one quarter of the Twin Cities Jewish population.
- The largest share of Jewish households is in the Minneapolis suburbs (31%), followed by Minneapolis (24%). The remaining households are nearly split between St. Paul (16%), the Outer suburbs (15%), and the St. Paul suburbs (14%).
- Minneapolis is the primary location for Jewish life for the majority of Jewish adults who live in Minneapolis (67%), the Minneapolis suburbs (69%), and the Outer suburbs (67%). St. Paul is the primary location for Jewish life for almost half of the Jews in St. Paul (48%) and just over half of the Jews in the St. Paul suburbs (56%).
- One quarter of Jewish adults have resided at their current address for 20 years or longer, 21% for 10-19 years, 16% for 5-9 years, and 37% for less than five years.

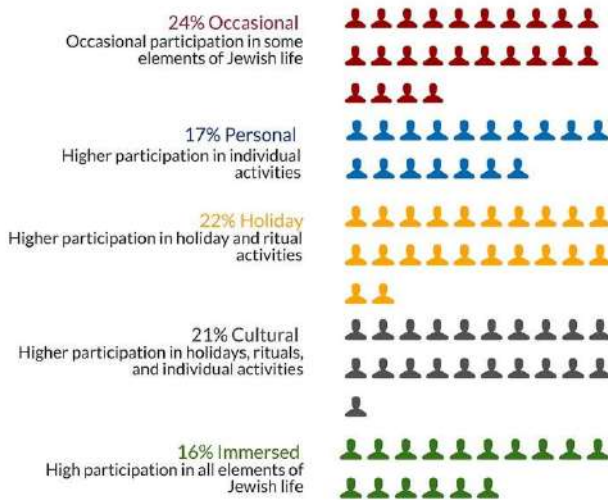
JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

There are multiple ways that Jews in the Twin Cities express their Jewish identities.

- Among those who affiliate with a denomination, the largest share affiliate with the Reform movement (30%), followed by the Conservative movement (18%), the Orthodox movement (3%) or another denomination (2%). Those who indicate they are secular, “just Jewish,” or have no specific denomination constitute 47% of Jewish adults.
- There is nearly universal agreement that being Jewish is a matter of culture, and widespread agreement that it is about ethnicity. When it comes to religion, there is less consensus.

- Eighty-five percent of Jewish adults say being Jewish is part of their daily lives, including 31% who say it is very much part of their daily lives.
- A typology of patterns of engaging in Jewish life, developed for this study, illustrates the five main ways that adults participate in individual, ritual, and organizational Jewish life. (Figure ES.1).

Figure ES.1. Jewish engagement groups



JEWISH COMMUNITY

Jewish community matters to most Jewish adults in the Twin Cities, and nearly all believe that community is an important aspect of Jewish life. Although most Jewish adults in the Twin Cities have at least some close Jewish friends, fewer feel like they are part of a local Jewish community.

- Nearly all Jewish adults believe that being Jewish is at least to some degree a matter of community, with 38% saying it is very much a matter of community.
- About nine-in-ten Jewish adults feel connected to the worldwide Jewish community, two thirds feel connected to the local Jewish community, and 36% feel connected to an online or virtual Jewish community.
- Among all Jewish adults, 30% do not feel at all connected to either the local Jewish community or an online Jewish community. Nearly half (48%) feel more connected to the local community than to an online community, and 13% feel more connected to an online community. The remaining 9% feel connected to online and local communities equally.
- Most Jewish adults in the Twin Cities have at least some close Jewish friends: 47% say some of their closest friends are Jewish, 18% say about half, 22% say most, and 3% say all.
- Overall, 67% of Jewish adults reported at least one condition that somewhat or very much limited their connection to the Jewish community. Not finding interesting activities (36%) and not knowing many people (36%) were the most common limitations.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH NON-JEWS

The Jewish community in the Twin Cities exists alongside and in the midst of the larger Twin Cities community.

- Thirty-two percent of Jewish adults describe relationships between Jews and non-Jews in the Twin Cities as somewhat positive and 19% as very positive. Only 9% describe the relationship as somewhat or very negative.
- Overall, most Jewish adults in the Twin Cities believe that the United States is somewhat (75%) or very (17%) safe for Jews, while 8% believe it is not too safe or not at all safe.
- About one-in-five Jewish adults personally experienced antisemitism in the previous year.
- Most Jewish adults in the Twin Cities (81%) believe that the country became less safe for Jews in the past year

JEWISH CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

Among the 19,600 children who live in Twin Cities Jewish households, 15,500 children, or 80% of the total, are being raised Jewish in some way, either by religion, secularly or culturally, or as Jewish and another religion. Among the remaining children, 1,900 are being raised without religion, 400 are being raised in another religion, and 1,900 have not yet had a religion decided for them.

- Of the 15,500 Jewish children, 36% are being raised by inmarried parents, 48% by intermarried parents, and the remaining 17% by single parents.
- Nine percent of all Jewish children not yet in kindergarten are in Jewish preschool.
- Twenty percent of Jewish children in grades K-12 were enrolled in some form of Jewish school during the 2019-20 academic year. Fourteen percent of K-12 Jewish children attended a part-time school, and 4% attended a day school.
- One quarter of Jewish children in grades K-12 participated in some form of informal Jewish education during the 2019-20 academic year. Sixteen percent attended day camp, 12% attended overnight camp, and 18% of children in grades 6-12 participated in a youth group.
- Among households with at least one child younger than 13, 21% received books from the PJ Library or PJ Our Way.
- Half (50%) of age-eligible children who are being raised exclusively Jewish have had a bar or bat mitzvah.

SYNAGOGUES AND RITUAL

More people participate in synagogue life than belong to congregations.

- Thirty-one percent of households include someone who belongs to a synagogue or another Jewish worship community of some type. Nineteen percent of Jewish adults were members of a synagogue at some time in the past.
- Almost two thirds (63%) of Jewish adults attended services at least once in the past year, including 12% who attended a service monthly or more. Half of Jewish adults (50%) attended a High Holiday service in a typical year.
- Nearly half (43%) of those who are not synagogue members attended a service at least once in the past year, and 26% attend on High Holidays in a typical year.
- Forty-one percent of Jewish adults attended a local synagogue program or service in the past year.
- In a typical year, 80% of Jewish adults light Hanukkah candles, 72% attend or host a seder, and 42% fast on Yom Kippur. More than half of Jewish adults observed Shabbat at least once in the past year, either by lighting candles (55%) or having a special meal (53%).
- Eight percent of Jewish adults in the Twin Cities keep kosher at home.

ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS

The Jewish community in the Twin Cities includes a wide range of organizations that offer an array of programs, activities, and opportunities for involvement. Jewish adults participate by becoming members of organizations, attending events, donating, and volunteering. Most Jews in the Twin Cities also participate in individual Jewish activities outside of organizations.

- Four percent of Jewish households in the Twin Cities belong to a Jewish community center, either the Sabes JCC or the St. Paul JCC. Eleven percent of households belong to formal Jewish organizations or clubs other than a JCC or a synagogue, such as Hadassah or AJC. Thirteen percent of households participate in informal Jewish groups or grassroots organizations.
- About half of Jewish adults in the Twin Cities participated at least once in a program, event, or activity sponsored by a Jewish organization. Twenty-three percent participated rarely in activities, 21% sometimes, and 6% frequently.
- Sixty-three percent of Jewish households donated to at least one Jewish organization in the past year. Eleven percent of all households made donations only to Jewish organizations. Over the past year, 20% of Jewish adults volunteered at least once for a Jewish organization.
- Seventy percent of Jewish adults in the Twin Cities participated in some form of Jewish life online in the previous year, including 20% who did so frequently.

- Almost all Jewish adults in the Twin Cities discussed a Jewish topic in the past year, and 32% spoke about Jewish topics frequently. Eighty-eight percent of Jewish adults ate traditionally Jewish foods in the past year, and 22% ate these foods frequently. Four-in-five (79%) Jewish adults participated in Jewish-focused cultural activities, such as books, movies, TV shows, and museums, and 14% participated in them frequently. About three quarters (76%) of Jewish adults read Jewish publications, such as articles and magazines, at least once in the past year, and 15% of Jewish adults read this material frequently.

ISRAEL

More Jewish adults in the Twin Cities feel connected to Israel than have ever travelled there.

- Nearly half of the Jewish adults in the Twin Cities (48%) have been to Israel at least once.
- More than three quarters of Jewish adults (77%) feel some level of connection to Israel, and 25% feel very connected.
- Eighty-two percent of Jewish adults sought out news about Israel during the past year, and 28% sought out news frequently.

FINANCIAL WELL-BEING AND ECONOMIC INSECURITY

Among Jewish households in the Twin Cities, 62% said that they lived comfortably, and another 27% reported that they could meet basic expenses with a little left over. In total, 9% of Jewish households reported being able only to meet their basic expenses, and 1% said they could not meet their basic expenses.

- Among Jewish adults in the Twin Cities who are ages 25 and older, 69% hold at least a bachelor's degree, including 46% have earned a graduate degree.
- Among Jewish adults in the Twin Cities in fall 2019, 60% were working in full-time positions and 13% in part-time positions. In total, nearly three quarters (73%) of Jewish adults were employed, and 3% were unemployed. Another 17% of Jewish adults were retired, 4% were not working and not looking for work, and 3% were full-time students.
- In fall 2019, 31% of Jewish households in the Twin Cities did not have enough savings to cover three months of expenses. Seven percent could not pay an emergency \$400 expense, and 4% had to skip or reduce a rent, mortgage, or utility payment.
- Thirty-six percent of parents with pre-college children were not confident in their ability to pay for higher education, and 29% of all Jewish households were not confident in their ability to finance their retirement. Seven percent of all households were not confident in their ability to repay all their student loans.
- Seven percent of Jewish households reported that they were unable to participate fully in Jewish life because of financial concerns.

HEALTH STATUS AND NEEDS

In 18% of Twin Cities Jewish households, there was at least one person whose work, schooling, or general activities was limited by a health issue, disability, or special need.

- Six percent of households did not require any services to manage their health needs, and 10% received the services they needed. Three percent of all Jewish households needed services but did not receive them.
- In 16% of Twin Cities Jewish households, someone managed or personally provided care for a close relative or friend on a regular basis (aside from routine childcare). The large majority of these caregivers (80%) were providing care for parents.
- Twenty-five percent of Jewish adults were somewhat or very much interested in later life planning (e.g., aging in place, advance care planning, powers of attorney), 21% in behavioral or mental health services, 8% in fertility and adoption services (e.g., financial assistance, counseling), and 16% were interested in some other service.
- Nine percent of Jewish adults ages 65 and older live in senior housing communities. Of those who do not, 10% are considering moving to one in the next five years.
- Fifty-two percent of adults ages 65 and older were very satisfied with the amount of time they spend with family and friends, 40% were somewhat satisfied, 4% somewhat dissatisfied, and 3% very dissatisfied.
- Nearly all Jewish adults ages 65 and older have access to transportation when needed; 2% occasionally have access, and 1% never have access.
- Seven percent of households reported that a health issue limited their ability to participate fully in Jewish life.