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**Building Resilient Jewish
Communities:**

Building Resilient Jewish Communities:

St. Louis Key Findings

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BRJC St. Louis Key Findings Report

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Building Resilient Jewish Communities:

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected members of Jewish communities around the world. In addition to the health effects experienced by many, nearly everyone has felt significant disruption to their personal, social, and economic lives. The pandemic is, thus, a crisis for the community as well as for individuals and families. For the Jewish community, whose core values promote a sense of responsibility for one another, COVID presents a challenge to adapt and respond to changing needs. How the Jewish community responds will depend on understanding the specific ways in which the crisis has affected its members. This report, based on a survey of St. Louis-area adults in May and June 2020, identifies some of the ways the community has been affected by COVID and aims to facilitate communal planning during and beyond the COVID pandemic.

The results of this study allow us to compare various populations, for example, those with different pre-crisis levels of economic security and different levels of engagement with Jewish institutions. Because our respondents are drawn from an incomplete sample of the St. Louis Jewish community (e.g., our sample includes a larger proportion of synagogue members, as well as Federation donors), the study's strength is in highlighting the differences between sub-groups and the ways in which these sub-groups have coped and/or been challenged by the crisis. One should be cautious in using the point estimates of any particular finding.

This report focuses on the impact of the crisis on the financial well-being and emotional health of respondents, and the roles Jewish institutions have played during the crisis. These findings are a subset of those drawn from a relatively long survey. We emphasize those that have direct implications for short- and medium-term planning by Jewish Federation of St. Louis and other communal organizations.

The key findings presented in this report respond to the research questions that drove this study: How were members of the Jewish community affected by the pandemic, and who was most affected? How did Jewish organizations respond to the crisis? How did Judaism and online Jewish life help members of the Jewish community cope emotionally with pandemic challenges? In addition to the findings in this report, detailed responses to survey questions broken down by demographic subgroups are available in a separate topline report.

Summary

Financial Well-being

- Respondents in more difficult financial situations prior to the pandemic were more likely to have their financial situation worsen because of the pandemic.
- Although the vast majority of respondents reported that they had at least “enough” money prior to the pandemic, older adults tended to be significantly better off financially than younger adults.
- Women were much more concerned about their immediate financial needs than were men or non-binary individuals.

Coping and Emotional Health

- Despite having similar or greater social support, younger adults (ages 18-34) had more trouble coping with the psychological effects of the pandemic than older adults.
- Respondents whose financial situations were worse prior to the pandemic had a harder time coping and tended to have less emotional support than more affluent respondents.
- Adults under age 35 had the greatest need for social services, such as help obtaining food or other necessities, Meals on Wheels, home health care, mental health services, vocational services, medical care, and/or help obtaining public benefits.
- Younger adults and those in the most difficult financial situations had worse psychological outcomes, with the worst outcomes for respondents who were both young *and* lacked sufficient financial resources prior to the pandemic.
- Respondents whose work hours increased and those whose jobs were most difficult to perform from home experienced the most job stress.

Relationships with Jewish Organizations

- Donors to Federation were more likely to be contacted by Jewish organizations and by Federation than those who did not donate to Federation. They were also more aware of Federation’s response to the pandemic and rate the response more favorably than non-donors.
- Respondents who participated frequently in programs or activities sponsored by Jewish organizations prior to the crisis were more likely to be contacted by Jewish organizations and Federation than people who did not participate or participated only occasionally prior to the pandemic.
- Synagogue members who prior to the pandemic attended religious services frequently (monthly or more often) were more likely to receive all types of contacts from their congregations than those who did not attend services or attended them only occasionally.
- Regardless of frequency of attendance at services prior to the pandemic, older synagogue members were more likely to be contacted by Jewish organizations as part of a general welfare check, while younger synagogue members were more likely to be invited to volunteer.

Charitable Support for Jewish Organizations

- Most respondents expected to increase (13%) or maintain (62%) the amount they give to Jewish causes. Those who were financially well-off prior to the pandemic were more likely to increase or maintain their levels of Jewish giving than those who were not.
- Donors who were well-off and received a donation request from a Jewish organization and those who rated Federation's COVID response as "excellent" were more likely to indicate they would increase their Jewish giving.
- Interest in Jewish causes decreased slightly for everyone, regardless of past Jewish donating behavior.

Online Jewish Life

- Online Jewish life had the greatest appeal for those who were engaged in Jewish life prior to the pandemic and was critical in maintaining Jewish connections in the absence of in-person activities.
- Among respondents whose Jewish engagement was similar prior to the pandemic, women were more likely to be active in online Jewish life than were men.
- Online religious services were more likely to attract older adults more than younger adults. In contrast, social media was more likely to appeal to younger adults than to older adults who had similar levels of Jewish engagement.
- Among those with a medium and high levels of engagement prior to the pandemic, those who had high levels of participation in online Jewish life were most likely to report that they valued it in a variety of ways and expected to continue to use it.
- Online Jewish life was more effective at connecting people to programs and resources than to other people.
- Regardless of Jewish engagement and level of online use, those respondents with fewer financial resources before the pandemic were more likely to feel that Judaism helped them cope with issues surrounding the crisis.
- For respondents with medium and high levels of Jewish engagement prior to the pandemic, online Jewish life helped them maintain connections to the Jewish community.

Methodological Notes

- This report is based on data from 1,202 respondents collected online between May 27 and June 25, 2020. Respondents are representative of Jewish adults known to selected organizations and not of the whole community.
- Throughout this report, "level of Jewish communal engagement" refers to Jewish engagement prior to the pandemic and includes organization member, donor to Jewish charity, program participation, and Jewish volunteering. "Level of Jewish ritual engagement" refers to ritual behavior prior to the crisis and includes religious service attendance, Shabbat observance, and seder participation.
- Study results appear either as proportions or as predicted probabilities. Each table indicates which type of measure is used.
- Proportions of single variables or in crosstabs show weighted proportions of respondents who responded to survey questions.
- Predicted probabilities are weighted estimates of the likelihood of a particular response given specific values of other variables, as estimated using a statistical model. When predicted

probabilities are reported, they should be understood as the likelihood of a particular response given a set of conditions (such as age and financial status), rather than the actual responses of survey respondents. When we estimate predicted probabilities, we control for values of other variables that are not shown in the table. The full models with all control variables appear in the Appendix.

- We present predicted probabilities for selected scenarios that are intended to illustrate key findings. Not all combinations of variables are shown.
- A brief Methodological Appendix appears at the end of this report. An Appendix showing details of the statistical models is available in a separate document.

Report Findings

1. Financial Well-being

Respondents in more difficult financial situations prior to the crisis were more likely to have their financial situation worsen. Not surprisingly, these individuals were more worried about their financial future and more likely to need health or human service assistance.

Among all respondents, 28% reported that their financial situation worsened, and nearly three quarters (73%) were worried about at least some aspect of their financial future (Table 1.1). Financial worries included affording basic living expenses, affording testing or treatment for COVID-19, maintaining accustomed standard of living, and having enough money for retirement. Among those who did not have enough money prior to the pandemic, financial worries were significantly worse than for those who had more resources to begin with.

Table 1.1. Financial situation (proportions)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Financial situation worsened	Any financial worry	Very worried about finances	Somewhat or very worried about losing job	Needed any services
Overall	28	73	15	23	11
Not enough money	27	99	56	34	17
Enough money	30	91	19	28	16
A little extra money	25	78	10	24	8
Well-off	29	45	2	11	3

Although the vast majority of respondents of all ages reported they had at least “enough” money, older adults tended to be significantly better off financially than younger adults (Table 1.2). However, 36% of people between the ages of 35-49 and 50-64 reported not having enough money.

Table 1.2. Pre-pandemic financial situation by age (proportions)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	18-34	35-49	50-64	65-74	75+	Overall
Not enough money	17	14	12	9	6	11
Enough money	30	29	31	18	20	25
A little extra money	42	31	29	26	22	29
Well-off	12	26	28	47	51	34
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Women were much more concerned about their immediate financial needs than were men or non-binary individuals, regardless of their age, household structure, economic situation, and other concerns about the future. Thirty-one percent of women respondents were somewhat or very concerned about affording basic living experiences or maintaining their standard of living, compared to 15% of other respondents.

Business owners and the self-employed were more concerned about immediate financial needs than were regular employees.

2. Coping and Emotional Health

Consistent with research on Americans’ responses to the coronavirus crisis, **younger respondents had more trouble coping with the psychological effects of the pandemic despite having similar or greater social support than older adults. Similarly, respondents whose financial situations were worse prior to the pandemic had more difficulty coping with challenges related to the crisis. They also tended to have less social support than respondents who were more affluent.**

Adults under age 35 had the greatest need for social services, such as help obtaining food or other necessities, Meals on Wheels, home health care, mental health services, vocational services, medical care, and/or help obtaining public benefits. Although not enough respondents needed any one of these services to enable a break down by age, research on the general US population suggests that young adults are in greatest need of mental health services, vocational services, and help accessing public benefits, whereas older adults are in greater need of other services.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show psychological outcomes, service need, and available social support by age and pre-pandemic financial situation, respectively.

Table 2.1. Psychological outcomes, service need, and social support by age (proportions)

Age	Not coping Well	Lonely	Emotional difficulties	Need any services	Adequate support network	In contact with others
Overall	9	40	30	11	56	95
18-34	19	59	54	21	62	95
35-49	11	51	38	11	55	89
50-64	5	31	27	8	60	97
65-74	6	39	25	8	52	97
75+	7	30	15	9	53	99

Not coping well: Coping not at all or not too well
 Lonely: Felt lonely in past week sometimes, often, or all the time
 Emotional difficulties: Emotional or mental difficulties hurt ability to live day-to-day life in past week sometimes, often, or all the time
 Adequate support network: Fair number or a lot of people you can rely on
 In contact with others: In contact with family and friends not living with you sometimes or often in past week

Table 2.2. Psychological outcomes, service need, and social support by pre-pandemic financial situation (proportions)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Not coping Well	Lonely	Emotional difficulties	Need any services	Adequate support network	In contact with others
Overall	9	40	30	11	56	95
Not enough money	16	65	52	27	38	89
Enough money	9	39	33	16	50	95
A little extra	9	43	31	8	58	95
Well-off	5	30	21	3	64	99
Not coping well: Coping not at all or not too well Lonely: Felt lonely in past week sometimes, often, or all the time Emotional difficulties: Emotional or mental difficulties hurt ability to live day-to-day life in past week sometimes, often, or all the time Adequate support network: Fair number or a lot of people you can rely on In contact with others: In contact with family and friends not living with you sometimes or often in past week						

Despite having more sources of social support, **younger adults, especially those in challenging financial situations prior to the pandemic, were more likely to have emotional difficulties during the pandemic than older adults.** Respondents with few financial resources had fewer sources of social support and experienced somewhat greater emotional strain than respondents who were more affluent. Table 2.3 illustrates the outcomes for age and financial status.

Table 2.3. Psychological outcomes and support by age and financial status (predicted probabilities)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Age	Not coping well	Lonely	Emotional difficulties	Need any services	Adequate support network	In contact with others
Not enough money	18-34	18	64	57	28	49	92
	50-64	8	43	29	29	40	93
	75+	*	19	8	28	34	94
Well-off	18-34	14	56	53	4	73	97
	50-64	4	30	23	4	65	97
	75+	1	16	7	4	59	97
Not coping well: Coping not at all or not too well Lonely: Felt lonely in past week sometimes, often, or all the time Emotional difficulties: Emotional or mental difficulties hurt ability to live day-to-day life in past week sometimes, often, or all the time Adequate support network: Fair number or a lot of people you can rely on In contact with others: In contact with family and friends not living with you sometimes or often in past week * There were not enough cases to reliably estimate the number of respondents ages 75 or older who did not have enough resources prior to the pandemic and were not coping well.							

Job Stress

Among respondents who were employed at the time of the survey, 63% reported feeling more stress in their work, 27% reported that their stress level had not changed much, and 10% reported less stress in their job, compared to before the pandemic (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4. Job stress and challenges (proportions)

New feelings of stress at work	%
Less stress	10
Hasn't changed much	27
More stress	63
Total work hours increased	
Yes	10
No	90
Difficulty of working from home	
Relatively easy	34
Can be done with some challenges	36
Difficult, but possible	15
Impossible	14
Not sure	1

Respondents whose work hours increased, and those whose jobs were most difficult to do from home, experienced the most job stress. While only 10% of those employed reported increased hours, 78% of those individuals reported experiencing more stress. Respondents with jobs that were “relatively easy” to do from home felt less stress than others, regardless of whether or not they started working from home due to the pandemic (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5. Job stress by increase in work hours and ease of working from home (predicted probabilities)

Change in hours	Ease of work from home	More job stress
Hours increased	Relatively easy	64
	Impossible	94
Hours same	Relatively easy	45
	Impossible	87

Respondents who described their jobs as “careers” experienced more stress than those who considered their jobs just as “a way to get by.” Eighty-two percent of workers described their jobs as a career; among them, 65% felt more job stress, compared to 51% of respondents whose jobs were not careers. There were no differences in stress levels between business owners, the self-employed, and those employed by others.

Additionally, people whose financial situation was worse before the pandemic, or whose situation became worse during the pandemic were more likely to report increased stress. After accounting for change in work hours and work at home status, “essential workers” did not feel greater stress than other workers.

3. Relationships with Jewish Organizations

Jewish organizations and synagogues reached out to community members by offering assistance, checking in on how they were doing, inviting them to online programs or to volunteer, and requesting donations. In all, 39% of Jewish adults were contacted by both a Jewish organization and by a synagogue, 21% only by a synagogue where they were a member, and 17% by a Jewish organization but not by a synagogue. Notably, 23% were not contacted by any Jewish organization since the start of the crisis (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Contacts with Jewish institutions by type of contact and organization (proportions)

% who received this contact from...	Any type of contact	Offer of assistance	Ask how you were doing	Invite to program	Invite to volunteer	Ask for donation
Synagogue and Jewish organization	39	8	15	17	6	13
Synagogue only	21	17	32	21	12	6
Jewish organization only	17	6	7	13	8	22
% who were not contacted	23	68	47	49	74	59
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Synagogue contact only asked of synagogue members

Donors to Federation were more likely to be contacted by Jewish organizations and by Federation than those who did not donate to Federation. Respondents who frequently participated in programs or activities sponsored by Jewish organizations prior to the pandemic were more likely to be contacted by Jewish organizations and Federation than people who did not participate or participated only occasionally prior to the pandemic (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Contact with Jewish organizations by donor status and frequency of program attendance prior to the pandemic (proportions)

	Any type of contact	Offer of assistance	Ask how you were doing	Invite to program	Invite to volunteer	Ask for donation
Overall	56	15	22	30	14	35
2019 donations						
Did not donate to Jewish org.	43	8	9	25	11	31
Donated to Jewish org., not to Federation	51	11	13	26	11	31
Donated to Federation	64	20	31	34	17	40
Frequency of program attendance						
Never	34	1	3	7	1	26
Occasionally	51	12	16	26	10	30
Monthly or weekly	69	23	34	41	23	43

Forty-seven percent of the respondents rated Federation’s response to the coronavirus pandemic as positive, 7% rated the response as just fair or poor, and 46% of respondents did not know how to respond to the question.

Donors to Federation were more aware of Federation’s response to the pandemic and were more likely to rate it favorably compared to non-donors. Respondents who were contacted by a Jewish organization were also more likely to rate Federation’s response to the pandemic more favorably than those who were not contacted (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3. Rating of Federation response to pandemic by donors and contact (proportions)

	Poor / Just fair	Good / excellent	Don’t know
Overall	7	47	46
2019 donations			
Did not donate to Jewish org.	10	23	67
Donated to Jewish org., not to Federation	11	34	56
Donated to Federation	4	63	33
Was contacted by a Jewish organization			
No	8	33	59
Yes	7	57	36

Synagogues and Congregations

Almost 82% of survey respondents who were members of Jewish congregations were contacted by their synagogues during the coronavirus pandemic (Table 3.4). Sixty-three percent of members were contacted to ask how they were doing, 35% were offered (or provided)

assistance, 52% were invited to participate in programs, 24% were invited to volunteer, and 25% were contacted for donations.

Congregants who prior to the pandemic attended religious services frequently (monthly or more often) were more likely to receive all types of contacts from their synagogue than those who did not attend services or attend them only occasionally.

Table 3.4. Contacted by synagogues by attendance at services prior to the pandemic (proportion of synagogue members)

	Any type of contact	Offer assistance	Ask how you were doing	Invite to program	Invite to volunteer	Ask for donation
Overall	82	35	63	52	24	25
Attendance at services prior to crisis						
Occasionally or less	73	31	51	43	19	21
Monthly or more	92	39	76	62	31	30

Regardless of frequency of attendance at services prior to the pandemic, older synagogue members were more likely to be contacted as part of a general welfare check, while younger members were more likely to be invited to volunteer (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5. Contacted by synagogues by attendance at services prior to the pandemic and age (predicted probabilities of synagogue members)

Attendance at services prior to crisis	Age	Any type of contact	Offer assistance	Ask how you were doing	Invite to program	Invite to volunteer	Ask for donation
Occasionally or less	18-49	58	28	37	35	24	17
	65+	82	33	62	48	15	24
Monthly or more	18-49	86	36	66	55	39	26
	65+	95	42	84	68	26	35

The majority of synagogue members rated the response of their congregation to the pandemic as positive, including 33% as good and 51% as excellent. Seven percent of the respondents rated the response as just fair or poor, and an additional 10% did not know how to respond to the question.

Synagogue members who were contacted by their congregations during the pandemic gave higher ratings to their synagogue’s performance and were more aware of the congregation’s response to the pandemic than synagogue members who were not contacted. Congregants who attended services frequently prior to the crisis gave higher ratings to their synagogue’s performance and were more aware of the synagogue’s response to the pandemic compared to members who attended services less frequently (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6. Rating of congregations' response to crisis by contact with congregations and attendance at services (proportion of synagogue members)

	Poor / Just fair	Good	Excellent	Don't know
Overall	7	33	51	10
Contact with congregation				
No contact	11	30	33	27
Yes-any contact	6	34	55	6
Attendance at services prior to crisis				
Never or occasionally	6	35	44	15
Monthly or weekly	8	31	58	4

4. Charitable Support for Jewish Organizations

Most respondents expected to increase (13%) or maintain (62%) the amount they give to Jewish causes (Table 4.1). Among the 87% of respondents who donated to a Jewish cause in 2019, 14% planned to increase their Jewish giving, and 63% planned to keep it the same. Even among the 13% who did not donate to Jewish causes in 2019, there were some who were considering donating this year (7% plan to, 34% are unsure).

Table 4.1. Plans to change Jewish giving in 2020, by Jewish donations in 2019 (proportions)

	Increase	Maintain	Decrease	Unsure
Overall	13	62	9	15
Donated to Jewish org. in 2019	14	63	10	12
Did not donate to Jewish org. in 2019	7	59	0	34

Respondents who were well-off prior to the crisis were likely to increase or maintain their levels of Jewish giving. Twenty-two percent of 2019 donors who were well-off intended to increase their Jewish giving (Table 4.2). The majority of well-off respondents (93%) donated to a Jewish organization in 2019. Respondents whose financial situations either stayed the same or improved since the start of the pandemic were more likely to increase or maintain their Jewish giving.

Table 4.2. Jewish donations in 2019 and plans for 2020, by financial situation, among donors (proportions)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Donated to Jewish org. in 2019	2020 Increase	2020 Maintain	2020 Decrease	2020 Unsure
Not enough money	75	7	52	22	19
Enough money	88	9	64	15	12
A little extra money	84	12	65	9	14
Well-off	93	22	64	5	9

For most individuals, expected changes to Jewish giving were similar to plans for non-Jewish giving. For example, 47% of those who planned to increase their non-Jewish giving also

expected to increase their Jewish giving, and 85% of those who planned to maintain their non-Jewish giving expected to maintain their Jewish giving (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Jewish versus non-Jewish giving (proportions)

Plans to change non-Jewish giving	Plan to change Jewish giving in 2020			
	Increase	Maintain	Decrease	Unsure
Increase	47	39	5	8
Maintain	10	85	2	3
Decrease	3	18	73	7
Unsure	3	20	3	75

Donors who were well-off were more likely to increase their Jewish giving if they received a request for donations from a Jewish organization and if they rated Federation’s COVID response as “excellent” (Table 4.4). For those who were well-off and contacted by a synagogue or Jewish organization, 31% were likely to increase their Jewish giving if they rated the COVID response highly, and 19% were likely to increase giving if they did not rate the response highly. Among the well-off who were not contacted, 24% were likely to increase their Jewish giving if they rated the COVID response highly, compared to 14% who did not rate the response highly.

Table 4.4. Plans to increase or maintain Jewish giving by request for donation and Federation rating (predicted probabilities)

Received request for donation from Jewish org. or synagogue	Rating of Federation COVID response	Increase Jewish giving	Maintain Jewish giving
Yes	Excellent	31	62
	Not excellent or don’t know	19	72
No	Excellent	24	68
	Not excellent or don’t know	14	75

*All well-off financial situation

Issues of Interest

The survey asked respondents for up to three causes they cared most about, both before the coronavirus pandemic and during it. Interest in causes related to social justice, human service needs, politics, and health care and research increased slightly during the pandemic (Table 4.5). Interest in causes related to the environment and climate change, arts and culture, Jewish life, and Israel decreased. There was no change in interest in causes related to antisemitism.

Table 4.5. Interest in selected causes before and after coronavirus (proportions)

	Top cause before	Top cause now	Change
Social justice	46	51	+5
Human service needs	44	45	+1
Politics	39	42	+3
Environment & climate change	31	23	-8
Health care & research	29	37	+8
Arts & culture	16	10	-6
Any Jewish cause	55	51	-4
Jewish life	29	26	-3
Antisemitism	28	28	0
Israel	19	17	-2

Interest in Jewish causes decreased for all respondents, regardless of past donations to Jewish organizations generally or Federation specifically (Table 4.6). Twenty-nine percent of respondents who did not donate to a Jewish organization in 2019 were likely to be interested in Jewish causes now, down 3% from before the pandemic. Among those who donated to Federation in 2019, 60% were likely to be interested in a Jewish cause before the pandemic, and 58% were likely to be interested in a Jewish cause now.

Table 4.6. Interest in Jewish causes among donors (predicted probabilities)

Donor in 2019	Interest Jewish cause before	Interest Jewish cause now	Change
Did not donate to Jewish org.	32	29	-3
Donated to Jewish org., not Federation	54	49	-5
Donated to Federation	60	58	-2

Respondents who were politically liberal were less interested in Jewish causes than were moderates or conservatives, and respondents in worse pre-pandemic financial situations were more interested in Jewish causes than those in better financial standing.

Respondents who donated to Federation in 2019 were more likely to care more about causes related to Jewish life (32%) and Israel (19%) compared to those who were not Federation donors (Table 4.7). In contrast, those who did not donate to Jewish organizations or who donated to Jewish organizations but not Federation were more likely to prefer causes related to the environment and climate change and health care and research.

Table 4.7. Interest in selected causes by 2019 donor status (predicted probability)

Cause	Did not donate to Jewish org.	Donated to Jewish org., not to Federation	Donated to Federation
Social justice	57	53	50
Human service needs	42	44	48
Politics	49	41	43
Environment & climate change	34	22	22
Health care & research	50	37	33
Arts & culture	9	10	10
Any Jewish cause	29	49	58
Jewish life	11	22	32
Antisemitism	22	29	28
Israel	8	17	19

5. Online Jewish Life

About four-in-five Jewish adults participated in some form of online Jewish life in the past month including online religious services, Jewish programs, Jewish information, and Jewish social media, and/or a virtual Passover seder. Thirty-two percent of Jewish adults participated regularly in many forms of online Jewish life, and another 9% reported participating in all of these activities frequently (Table 5.1). Throughout this report, those in the high and maximum category of online participation are referred to as “high” users.

Online Jewish life had the greatest appeal for respondents who were engaged in Jewish life prior to the pandemic and served as a critical link to maintaining Jewish connections in the absence of in-person activities. Respondents who were most engaged in Jewish communal life (organization and synagogue members, program participants, donors) and those immersed in ritual life (attending religious services or celebrating Shabbat at home) participated in all forms of online Jewish life more regularly during the pandemic than those who were less engaged in Jewish communal life.

Table 5.1. Participation in online Jewish life by prior Jewish engagement (proportions)

	Low	Medium	High	Max	Total
Overall	20	39	32	9	100
Communal Involvement					
Low	45	49	5	1	100
Med	9	52	36	3	100
High	1	19	54	25	100
Ritual Involvement					
Low	58	37	4	1	100
Med	13	55	29	3	100
High	3	22	53	22	100

Among respondents whose Jewish engagement was similar prior to the pandemic, **women were more likely to be active in online Jewish life than were men.** (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Online Jewish life by prior Jewish engagement and gender (predicted probabilities)

Jewish engagement before	Gender	Any online participation	High online participation
Low	Male	52	4
Low	Female	68	8
Medium	Male	86	25
Medium	Female	89	40
High	Male	94	69
High	Female	97	80

Participation in specific types of Jewish online activities varied by prior Jewish engagement and age. Among those with similar levels of engagement prior to the crisis, **online services were more likely to attract older adults than younger adults. In contrast, social media was more likely to appeal to younger adults more than to older adults who had similar levels of Jewish engagement** (Table 5.3). Even for those with low Jewish engagement prior to the pandemic, participation in online seders was relatively high.

Table 5.3. Frequent participation in types of online activities by prior Jewish engagement and age (predicted probabilities)

Prior Jewish engagement	Age	Services	Programs	Social Media	Information	Virtual Seder
Low	18-34	2	11	9	11	47
Low	35-49	7	10	7	12	46
Low	50-64	10	8	6	12	41
Low	65-64	9	8	6	13	36
Low	75+	3	5	2	8	24
Medium	18-34	19	39	36	26	54
Medium	35-49	22	32	25	24	55
Medium	50-64	26	27	22	24	55
Medium	65-64	30	32	23	28	54
Medium	75+	32	28	15	25	49
High	18-34	38	69	67	48	56
High	35-49	43	65	54	43	58
High	50-64	58	66	54	46	63
High	65-64	65	70	53	52	61
High	75+	67	69	50	52	60

Because online services were not available to the Orthodox community during the pandemic for reasons of *halacha*, Orthodox Jews were a notable exception to online service participation (not shown in table). This fact explains the more rapid reopening of in-person services by Orthodox synagogues. Conservative and Reform Jews were more likely to attend online services than Jews with no denominational affiliation. There were few other denominational differences in online Jewish life.

Perception of Value

Among those with a medium and high levels of engagement prior to the pandemic, **those who had high levels of participation in online Jewish life were most likely to report that they valued it in a variety of ways and expected to continue to use it** (Table 5.4). Those who participated in online Jewish life less often were less likely to find it valuable.

Table 5.4. Views on online activity by prior Jewish engagement and online use (predicted probabilities)

Jewish engagement before	Online use	Helped me feel connected	Expect to use online resources in future	Will stay connected to virtual community
Low	Low	16	20	11
Low	Medium	52	52	44
Low	High	78	81	71
Medium	Low	25	20	13
Medium	Medium	56	52	40
Medium	High	84	83	75
High	Low	30	20	11
High	Medium	61	53	38
High	High	88	85	77

Online Judaism was more effective at connecting people to programs and resources than to other people. Regardless of prior Jewish engagement and online use, the greatest value in online life was in access to new programs, followed by new resources (Table 5.5). Fewer people were likely to connect with new people or communities online.

Table 5.5. Exposure to new online activities by online use (predicted probabilities)

Online use	New programs	New resources	New community	New people
Low	11	3	2	1
Medium	19	11	7	4
High	52	31	20	17

Jewish Connections

Regardless of Jewish engagement and level of online use, **those with fewer financial resources before the pandemic were more likely to feel that Judaism helps them cope with issues surrounding the crisis** (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6. Feeling that Judaism helps to cope with crisis (all medium engagement) (predicted probabilities)

Financial situation before	Not at all	Not too much	Somewhat	Very much

Not enough	11	20	42	27
Enough	13	22	41	23
Extra	17	25	40	19
Well off	19	26	40	15

For people with medium and high levels of Jewish engagement prior to the pandemic, online Jewish life helped maintain connections to the Jewish community. Those who were more active online were more likely to feel connected to the worldwide, local, and online Jewish communities (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7. Connections to the Jewish world by online use (predicted probabilities)

Online use	Very connected to worldwide Jewish community	Very connected to local Jewish community	Very connected to online Jewish community
Low	10	11	1
Medium	21	25	4
High	48	61	31

Appendix: Methodology

Data for the BRJC survey of St. Louis was collected between May 27 and June 25, 2020. Participants received up to four email invitations for the survey and were invited to take the survey online. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Respondents were offered two incentive conditions. The majority of respondents who completed the survey were entered into a lottery for their choice of a \$100 Amazon.com gift card or a donation to a charity designated by the Jewish Federation of St. Louis. A smaller sample was offered a guaranteed incentive of \$10 which they could receive as an Amazon.com gift card or donate to a charity designated by the Jewish Federation of St. Louis. The survey instrument was developed for the BRJC project with slight modifications for each community.

Survey Sample

Federation and community organization lists were collected and de-duplicated based on email addresses. The resulting frame was stratified based on the source and characteristics of the lists. After households were de-duplicated, out-of-area addresses and non-valid email addresses were dropped. The resulting frame included 15,383 contacts.

From the full frame, a stratified random sample of 2,000 respondents was drawn into the guaranteed incentive condition. The remainder were assigned to the lottery condition.

Overall, 1,202 individuals screened into the survey, and 74 individuals screened out of the survey. Respondents screened in if they considered themselves Jewish and lived in the designated geographic area. The total response rate was 8.6% (AAPOR 4), and the cooperation rate was 33.4% (AAPOR 1).

Table A.1. Outcome rates (AAPOR)

	Total	Incentive	Lottery
Frame	15,383	2,000	13,383
Sample	15,383	2,000	13,383
Screened In	1,202	201	1,001
Screened Out	74	13	61
Response Rate 4	8.6%	11.2%	8.2%
Refusal Rate 2	16.4%	3.9%	18.2%
Cooperation Rate 1	33.4%	72.1%	30.2%
Contact Rate 2	24.9%	15.1%	26.4%

After completion of data collection, responses were weighted by strata so that the characteristics of the respondent sample would more closely approximate the original list characteristics.

The two incentive conditions were tested for nonresponse bias. While there were no substantive differences by financial situations, demographic characteristics, or experiences of COVID-19, respondents in the lottery condition were more involved with Jewish community life than respondents in the universal incentive condition.