

Jewish **STL**

2024 Greater St. Louis Jewish Community Study | **Full Report**



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**Jewish
Federation**
of St. Louis

THE 2024 GREATER ST. LOUIS JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Greater St. Louis Jewish Community Study was conducted by the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University, in partnership with NORC at the University of Chicago. This project was commissioned by the Jewish Federation of St. Louis, in partnership with local Jewish organizations and congregations. The study employed state-of-the-art methods to create a portrait of the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of the Jewish community. Some of the issues explored in this study emerged out of conversations surrounding the Pew Research Center's 2013 *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, which pointed to growing and shrinking US Jewish sub-populations, declining affiliation in traditional institutions, new forms of Jewish engagement, an increase in both secular and Orthodox Jews, and a relationship between intermarriage and community growth.¹ A more recent Pew report, *Jewish Americans in 2020*² reinforced many of the findings of the original Pew study and contributed new insights about the state and character of the American Jewish community. With the Pew studies and the related national discourse as a backdrop, the *2024 Greater St. Louis Jewish Community Study* seeks to describe the current dynamics of its population.

The principal goal of this study is to provide valid data about the Greater St. Louis 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 to effective decision making, allocation of resources, strategic priorities, community support, robust participation, and outreach.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- Provide information, at household and individual levels, on a wide range of demographic, geographic, and socio-economic characteristics
- Provide information about current Jewish connections, attitudes, engagement, barriers to participation, community opportunities, and ideas for new programs and communication methods
- Understand the multifaceted cultural, communal, and religious expressions of Judaism that constitute Jewish engagement
- Understand the diversity of the community in terms of race and ethnicity, age, religious identity, financial needs, LGBTQ+, local ties, and more
- Gauge current and potential need for human services, particularly for community members who are struggling financially

The *2024 Greater St. Louis Jewish Community Study* provides a snapshot of today's Jewish population in Greater St. Louis and considers trends and developments in Jewish life and engagement. In interpreting the data, it is important to bear in mind that the study represents the characteristics and views of community members at the time of the survey. Notably, the data were collected during the Israel-Hamas war that began in October 2023, and during a period of rising antisemitism in the United States. It is likely that attitudes about Israel, concerns about antisemitism, and other markers of Jewish identity were influenced by these events.

Methodology overview

This study is based on an analysis of a rich set of data collected from 1,771 eligible households between January and April 2024. Invited households were contacted by mail, email, and telephone and invited to complete the survey online or by telephone.

The study design integrated households from a combined set of Jewish organizational lists (the list sample) with another set of households randomly selected from all remaining mailing addresses in the study geographic area (the Address-Based Sample or ABS). The study area included St. Louis City, MO, St. Louis County, MO, St. Charles County, MO, Jefferson County, MO, Madison County, IL, and St. Clair County, IL (see Figure 1.2 for a map).

Over 210,000 households in the study area received invitations to take the survey, including 17,647 drawn from organization lists and 196,396 from the ABS non-list sample. Invitations were also sent to an additional 5,349 households for whom email addresses were available but not street addresses. In all, 1,544 completed surveys were achieved from the list sample, 63 from the ABS sample, and 164 from the email-only supplemental sample.

The survey of Jewish households was designed to represent the views of an entire community based on responses from a randomly selected sample of households from the community. When analyzing survey data, we are not only interested in the answers of the respondents, but also the larger subgroup or community that they represent. Each completed survey is assigned a numeric “weight” that indicates our estimate of how many people in the population of interest the respondent represents. The weighted respondent thus stands in for that segment of the population, and not only the household from which it was collected.

Despite the careful methodological approaches employed in this study, bias in estimates is inevitable. Assigning weights is a way to reduce such bias. The study uses survey weights to provide accurate estimates of the population. Survey weights account for the survey design, nonresponse, and adjustments based on external data for the Jewish and total Greater St. Louis populations; they are based on data from the American Community Survey,³ American Jewish Population Project,⁴ and data on enrollment and membership in local organizations and programs.

Details of survey methods, weighting, and analysis are provided in Appendix A.

How to read this report

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.

As you read this report, keep in mind the following:

- Note that the base category or denominator for each analysis may differ, e.g., Jewish adults, Jewish households, Jewish households with children. The relevant category is noted in the text, table, or figure. In most tables, it appears in the top left of the table in bold type.
- Unless otherwise specified, references to “all Jewish adults” or “all Jewish households” refer to Jewish adults and Jewish households in Greater St. Louis.
- Throughout this report, the terms “couples,” “inmarried,” and “intermarried” refer both to those who are legally married and to those who are partnered and living together. Unless otherwise specified, “children” refers to minor children under age 18.
- When a percentage is between 0% and 0.5% and would otherwise round down to 0%, the number is denoted as < 1%.
- When there are insufficient respondents in a particular subgroup for reporting reliable information, the estimate is shown as “—”.

How to read report tables

Numeric data in this report are most often presented in tables, although bar graphs and pie charts are used in some cases to illustrate or amplify selected data. To interpret tables correctly, the title and/or first row of each table will indicate the denominator for any reported numbers. Some tables report a percentage of Jewish households, some a percentage of Jewish adults, and some report on a subset for whom the questions are relevant.

Some tables and figures that present proportions do not add up to 100%. In some cases, this was a result of respondents having the option to select more than one response to a question; in such cases, the text of the report indicates that multiple responses were possible. In most cases, however, the appearance that proportional estimates do not add up to 100% is a result of rounding.

Most tables in this report are “row tables.” These tables are read horizontally by row. Example Table 1 illustrates a typical “row table,” which shows that of all Jewish households, 37% are members of a congregation, and of households between ages 22 and 39, 55% are congregation members.

Example Table 1, row table

From report Table 4.1 Membership in Jewish congregations

	Congregation member (%)
All Jewish households	37
Age	
22-39	55
40-54	34
55-64	29
65-74	35
75+	43

Less frequently we include “column tables” for reasons of space or content. These tables appear primarily in Chapter 1 and are read vertically by column. To underscore that this table should be read by column, we have inserted a down arrow (↓) under the column headers. Example Table 2 tells us that of Greater St. Louis Jewish adults, 22% are between the ages of 18 and 34.

Example Table 2, column table

From report Table I.3. Age of adults in Greater St. Louis

Jewish adults Greater St. Louis	
	(%)
	↓
18-34	22
35-49	19
50-64	28
65-74	15
75+	14
Total	100

Row and column totals

When a table shows all possible values and those values are mutually exclusive, the table will total 100. In that case, the table will show a TOTAL row or column of 100. When the row total column does not appear, it usually indicates that not all possible values are shown (i.e., we display the “yes” response but not the “no” response). In other cases, it means that multiple options could be selected (usually as a “select all that apply” question), and the total could exceed 100.

Note that in some cases when the total of 100 is shown, the numbers may not add up exactly to 100 due to rounding.

Examples:

Example Table 1, above, does **not** show the total column. The table shows the share of Jewish households that are congregation members but does not show the share that are **not** members.

Example Table 2, above, shows the age distribution of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis. Since each individual belongs in only one age category, and all age categories are shown, the bottom of the column displays the total of 100.

Multiple part tables

To save space and facilitate comparisons, some tables include multiple characteristics. Vertical lines in these tables separate the different characteristics that are measured. When there is a double vertical line after the first column, it is an indicator that it refers to an overall category, and the remaining columns are subsets.

Example Table 3 shows activities avoided by Jewish adults out of a fear of antisemitism. The first column of numbers, with the heading “Any activity,” shows that 51% of all Jewish adults avoided at least one type of activity. The rest of the table shows specific types of activities avoided: for example, 36% of Jewish adults did not mention Israel out of a fear of antisemitism. Among those who are ages 22 to 39, 71% did not mention Israel. Respondents could select each activity they avoided, so each column should be read separately.

There are no totals shown here because each column shows the percentage of Jewish adults who avoided each activity but does not show the percentage who did not avoid the activity.

The gray shading indicates statistical significance, which is explained in the next section.

Example Table 3

From Table 8.8. Avoided activities out of a fear of antisemitism

Any activity (%)		Mentioning Israel, in person or online (%)	Wearing or displaying objects that would identify you as a Jew (%)	Posting Jewish content online that would identify you as a Jew (%)	Going to certain places or events (%)	Other (%)
All Jewish adults		36	28	26	24	6
Age						
22-39	77	71	34	37	35	17
40-54	49	38	31	28	20	3
55-64	48	17	32	26	30	2
65-74	42	21	27	23	17	5
75+	25	9	15	9	11	3

Interpretation of estimates and statistical significance

For most tables in this report, data are compared across a consistent set of subgroups that have been defined for purposes of this study. The structure of the table varies based on the content. This information is always provided in the first row of the table.

As indicated previously, numbers and percentages should not be understood as exact measurements, but as the most likely value we would expect to find if we had surveyed the entire population of Greater St. Louis Jewish households. This value is also known as a point estimate. It is particularly important to keep this in mind when comparing subgroups. Small differences between subgroups might be the result of random variation in the survey responses rather than actual differences in the population.

When there is a statistically significant difference among subgroups, we are 95% confident that at least some of the differences in estimates reflect actual differences and are not just the result of random chance. Statistical significance is a way to assess whether differences between estimates reflect true differences between different segments of the population or are just the results of random differences in the group that answered the survey. Statistical significance is not a property of individual estimates, but of the relationship between estimates, and is used only when comparing estimates to each other. When differences are statistically significant, there is at least a 95% probability that, if we collected data from the entire population, we would find differences between those population segments on the characteristic in question.

In the tables in this report, we designate these differences by shading them light gray. Findings that are not statistically significant are not shaded. Even in cases where there are statistically significant differences in a full set of responses, it is unlikely that there are statistically significant differences between every pair of numbers.

When there is a statistically significant difference among subgroups represented in a figure, we designate these differences by adding an asterisk (*) to the figure title. Where the differences between groups represented in a figure are not statistically significant, no asterisk will be added.

In some cases, relatively large differences in estimates are not indicated as statistically significant. This might be the result of small sample sizes in the underlying data. It is possible that differences would be significant at the 90% or 85% level (i.e., we are 90% or 85% confident that the true value for the population falls within a particular range; lowering the specified degree of confidence makes the confidence intervals narrower). To fully understand particular estimates, we recommend further analysis of the dataset.

Example:

In Example Table 3 above, we measure the share of Jewish adults who avoided activities out of fear of antisemitism. The first row indicates that 51% of all Jewish adults avoided at least one activity. Because this is a single estimate and not a comparison, statistical significance is not relevant, and this row is never shaded gray.

The second column of the table tells us that some differences among Jewish adults regarding avoiding mentioning Israel are statistically significant by age. Although the table does not tell us which specific differences are statistically significant, in this case, it is reasonable to assume that the difference in the estimate for the youngest age group (71%) compared to that for the 40 to 54 age group (49%) is significantly significant. In turn, it is unlikely that the 40-54, 55-64, and 65-74 age groups are significantly different from each other because the difference between them is smaller than 10 percentage points.

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, and because in some cases there were very few responses, it would be misleading to report the weighted proportion of responses to these questions. Instead, we may report the total number of responses that mentioned a particular code or theme. This number may appear in text or in parentheses after the response without a percent sign, or in tables labeled 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

Although comparisons across surveys are informative, because of methodological differences, they are less precise and reliable than assessments of the data from the present study alone. In several places throughout the report, data from Pew's 2020 study, *Jewish Americans in 2020*,⁵ are used to show how the Greater St. Louis Jewish community is similar to or different from the United States Jewish community. All references to the US Jewish community in this report are drawn from the 2020 Pew study.

Additional references are also made to CMJS' Combined Dataset (CDS) of 25 local Jewish community studies conducted between 2015-2023, with data from over 53,000 respondents.⁶ At the time of publication, the CDS represents a population of more than 2,000,000 Jewish adults and nearly 1,300,000 Jewish households, which is more than one third of the national Jewish adult population. Communities represented in the CDS conducted a community study with CMJS and, consequently, the population described by this dataset does not represent the entire US Jewish community, but only the Jewish populations in these communities.

Due to methodological differences and variations in question wording between the present study and the *2014 St. Louis Jewish Community Study*, comparisons across studies should be treated with caution. The methodology used for the previous study and many others in the past, random digit dialing (RDD), is particularly problematic when trying to reach households within a specific geographical region. RDD relies on telephone calls to randomly selected households in a given geographic area and phone interviews with household members. As a result of changing telephone technology, particularly caller ID, fewer people answer the phone for unknown callers, putting response rates for telephone surveys below those necessary for generating valid estimates.

More significantly, nearly half of households no longer have landline phones and instead rely exclusively on cell phones. Because of phone number portability, cell phones often 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 addition, reliance on cell phones can introduce an age bias since younger individuals are more likely to rely exclusively on cell phones, while older individuals may still utilize landlines.

Limitations

Due to the methodology used to reach community members, some groups were likely to have been undercounted and/or underrepresented. In particular, residents of institutional settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, and dormitories on college campuses, as well as adults who were never in contact with a Jewish organization in Greater St. Louis, were less likely to have been identified and contacted to complete the survey. Undergraduate students were not considered to be part of the Jewish population for purposes of this study because many of them have permanent homes elsewhere. Some populations, such as financially struggling households, might be less likely to participate in the survey and therefore be undercounted. Although we cannot produce a precise count of these individuals, these undercounts were unlikely to have introduced significant bias into the reported estimates. Where appropriate, we noted the limitations of the methodology.

The present report has been designed to provide basic information about Jewish life across a wide range of topics and a variety of subgroups. It was not designed to provide detailed information about any single topic or subset of the community. Although detailed data cannot always be provided, the information that is included can serve as a springboard for more specific and targeted analyses as well as additional follow-up research. Note that more details about each item are available in the report appendices and through analysis of the dataset.

Report overview

This report presents key findings about the Greater St. Louis 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 1. Demographic Snapshot

The report begins with an overview of the demographic composition of the Jewish community.

Chapter 2. Patterns of Jewish Engagement

This chapter describes the multifaceted ways in which the Jewish adults 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. This chapter also reports on attitudes about the meaning and importance of Judaism.

Chapter 3. Jewish Children and Jewish Education

This chapter discusses Jewish children and families as well as participation in Jewish education.

Chapter 4. Congregations and Ritual Life

This chapter discusses membership in Jewish congregations and participation in Jewish ritual life.

Chapter 5. Jewish Organizations, Programs, and Activities

This chapter discusses membership and involvement in organizational, social, and personal Jewish life, and the barriers that limit involvement with Jewish organizations.

Chapter 6. Volunteering and Philanthropy

This chapter examines the volunteering and philanthropic behaviors of the Jewish community.

Chapter 7. Community Connections

This chapter explores where Jewish adults find community in general, as well as their connections to the Jewish community.

Chapter 8. Connections to Israel

This chapter describes the frequency and types of travel to Israel and other markers of Israel connection.

Chapter 9. Concerns about Antisemitism

This chapter discusses Jewish adults' experiences of, and concerns about, antisemitism.

Chapter 10. Financial Well-Being

This chapter examines the living conditions of Jewish households, in particular with regard to economic well-being and economic hardship.

Chapter 11. Health Needs

This chapter examines the health and social service concerns of Jewish households.

Chapter 12. In the Words of Community Members

This chapter summarizes survey respondents' answers to two open-ended questions at the end of the survey.

Chapter 13. Future Directions

This chapter highlights key themes and questions that emerge from the study.

Additional study materials

All study documents and data are available for download from the study website:

<https://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/community-studies/st-louis-report.html>.

Executive Summary

Summary of the study key findings.

Methodological Overview

Overview of the study methodology in greater detail than the brief introduction to the main report.

Technical Appendices

Details of methodology, data collection, analysis, full survey instrument and codebook, and study documentation.

Comparison Charts

Detailed cross-tabulations of all survey data for key subgroups of the population, provided in excel format.

Public Use Dataset

Dataset in Stata format for additional analysis by researchers. Any responses that identify individuals have been removed from the public use version.

CHAPTER 1. DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

Chapter highlights

- Greater St. Louis includes 45,800 Jewish adults and children living in 26,700 households; these households also include 12,600 adults and 2,800 children who are not Jewish.
- The Greater St. Louis Jewish community skews older than the broader area population; 22% of Jewish adults are younger than 35, compared to 33% of all adults living in Greater St. Louis.
- The Greater St. Louis Jewish population (adults and children) is 47% male, 52% female, 1% non-binary/non-confirming, and 1% transgender.
- Nine percent of Jewish adults identify as LGBTQ+.
- The individual intermarriage rate (i.e., the proportion of Jewish adults with a non-Jewish spouse) is 53%, higher than the national average of 42%.
- About two thirds of Jewish adults (65%) identify with a personal Jewish denomination. Five percent of Jewish adults are Orthodox, 13% Conservative, 45% Reform, and 2% another denomination.
- Ninety-two percent of Jewish individuals in Greater St. Louis identify solely as white and non-Hispanic. Although 8% of Jewish individuals identify with a racial identity other than white or as Hispanic, only 2% identify as a Person of Color.
- About one quarter of Jewish households (24%) reside in the Creve Coeur area, and 22% live in St. Louis City. Eighteen percent of Jewish households reside in U. City / Clayton, 12% are in Chesterfield / West County, and 11% are in Olivette / Ladue. The remaining 13% of Jewish households reside in the rest of Greater St. Louis.
- While 22% of all Jewish adults live in the City of St. Louis, disproportionately more of those ages 22 to 39 (40%) do so.
- About half of Jewish adults (52%) were raised in Greater St. Louis. This share includes 30% who have lived in the area for their entire adult lives, and 22% who moved away and returned. Another 42% of Jewish adults were raised elsewhere in the United States, 2% in Israel, 2% in Russia or the Former Soviet Union, and 2 % in another country.
- Nearly one quarter of Jewish adults (23%) have moved to Greater St. Louis within the past decade, including 16% who have resided in the area for fewer than five years.
- Fifty-seven percent of Jewish households have an adult child or a parent living in another household within Greater St. Louis.
- Forty percent of Jewish adults, including both those originally from the area and those who moved into it, attended college or graduate school in Greater St. Louis.
- Fourteen percent of Jewish adults have plans to move away from Greater St. Louis within the next two years.
- The majority of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis describe their political viewpoints as “very liberal” (27%) or “liberal” (31%). Thirty percent of Jewish adults identify as “moderate,” 11% as “conservative,” and 1% as “very conservative.”

Jewish population estimate

There are approximately 26,700 Jewish households in the Greater St. Louis area (Table 1.1). These households include 61,100 individuals, of whom 45,800 are Jewish.

Jewish households comprise 2.4% of all households in Greater St. Louis.⁷

Table 1.1. Greater St. Louis area Jewish community population estimates, 2024

Total people in Jewish households	61,100
Total Jewish households	26,700
Total Jews	45,800
Adults (ages 18+)	48,400
Jewish	35,800
Non-Jewish or unknown	12,600
Children (under age 18)	12,800
Jewish	10,000
Non-Jewish or unknown religion	2,800

People in Jewish households

For the purposes of this study, estimates of the size of the Jewish community rest on a few definitional questions about the respondent's Jewish background. Recent studies, such as the Pew Research Center's 2013 and 2020 national studies of the US Jewish community, classify respondents according to their responses to a series of screening questions:

- What is your religion, if any?
- Do you consider yourself to be Jewish aside from religion?
- Were either of your parents Jewish?
- Were you raised Jewish?

Jewish adults are categorized by Pew as “Jewish by religion” (JBR) if they respond to a question about religion by stating that they are solely Jewish, or alternatively as “Jews of no religion” (JNR) if they identify as atheist or do not adhere to any religion but consider themselves Jewish by some other means. Jews by religion tend to be more engaged with Judaism than Jews of no religion, but many JBRs and JNRs look similar in terms of Jewish behaviors and attitudes.

For the purposes of this study and to ensure that the Greater St. Louis Jewish community can be compared to the national Jewish population, a variant of Pew's scheme was employed, supplemented by several other measures of identity. Also included in the Jewish population are those adults who indicate they are Jewish and another religion, such as Catholic or Buddhist; we refer to this category as “Jews of multiple religions” (JMR).

Definitions: Who is a Jew?

DEFINITIONS: WHO IS A JEW?

Definitions used in this report:



Jewish adults:

Identify as Jewish AND have Jewish background: at least one Jewish parent, raised Jewish, or converted to Judaism

- **Jewish by religion (JBR):** Religion is Jewish only
- **Jews of no religion (JNR):** No religion but ethnically or culturally Jewish
- **Jews of multiple religions (JMR):**
 - Two religions— Jewish and another religion
 - A religion other than Judaism and ethnically or culturally Jewish



Non-Jewish adults

- Identifies as Jewish and has no Jewish background:
 - No Jewish parent, was not raised Jewish, and did not convert
- Does not identify as Jewish and has Jewish background
- Does not identify as Jewish and has no Jewish background



Children (birth to age 17):

Are classified based on whether their parents consider them to be Jewish

- **Jewish:** Parents consider children Jewish exclusively (either by religion, culturally or ethnically)
- **Jewish and another religion:** Parents consider children Jewish and another religion
- **No religion:** Parents consider children to have no religion
- **Another religion:** Parents consider children to be a religion other than Judaism



Jewish households: Includes at least one Jewish adult

Among Jewish adults in the Greater St. Louis area, 26,400 individuals (74%) can be classified as JBR (Table 1.2). Another 6,100 (17%) of Jewish adults are JNRs, and 3,300 (9%) are JMRs. In the overall US Jewish population reported by the Pew Research Center, which does not include JMRs, 73% of Jewish adults are JBR, and 27% are JNR. The comparable population shares in Greater St. Louis are 81% JBR and 19% JNR.

Table 1.2. Jewish population of Greater St. Louis, detail (rounded to nearest 100)

Jewish adults	35,800
JBR adults	26,400
JNR adults	6,100
JMR adults	3,300
Non-Jewish adults in Jewish households	12,600
Jewish children in Jewish households	10,000
Exclusively Jewish	7,600
Jewish and something else	2,400
Non-Jewish children in Jewish households	2,800
No religion or unknown	2,200
Exclusively another religion	500

Age and gender and sexual identity

Table 1.3 displays the age distribution of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis. The mean age of Jewish adults is 52.3, and the median age is 54 (not shown in table). In comparison, the national mean and median ages of Jewish adults are both 49.⁸ Including children in the analysis lowers the mean and median ages. The mean age of all Jews in Greater St. Louis Jewish households is 42.8, and the median age of all Jews is 45.

Table 1.3. Age of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis

	Jewish adults (%)
	↓
18-21	7
22-29	8
30-34	7
35-39	6
40-44	5
45-49	8
50-54	8
55-59	6
60-64	14
65-69	8
70-74	7
75+	14
Total	100

The Greater St. Louis Jewish community skews older than both the broader area population and the national Jewish population (Table 1.4).

NOTE: undergraduate students in Greater St. Louis are not considered permanent community members. The small number of undergraduates ages 18 to 21 reflected in the survey are shown in Table 1.3 and the left section of Table 1.4. In the remainder of the report, this group is excluded only from age-based analyses, as indicated in the right section of Table 1.4. All other analyses include the 18 to 21-year-old population.

Table I.4. Age of adults in Greater St. Louis

	Jewish Greater St. Louis 2024 (%) ↓	Greater St. Louis (ACS 2023; %)⁹ ↓	US Jews (Pew 2020; %) ↓	Age categories for report	Jewish adults (%) ↓
18-34	22	33	28	22-39	23
35-49	19	23	23	40-54	23
50-64	28	23	20	55-64	22
65-74	15	13	17	65-74	16
75+	14	9	13	75+	15
Total	100	100	100	Total	100

Overall, the Greater St. Louis Jewish population (adults and children) is 47% male, 52% female, 1% non-binary/non-confirming, and 1% transgender.

Nine percent of Jewish adults identify as LGBTQ+.

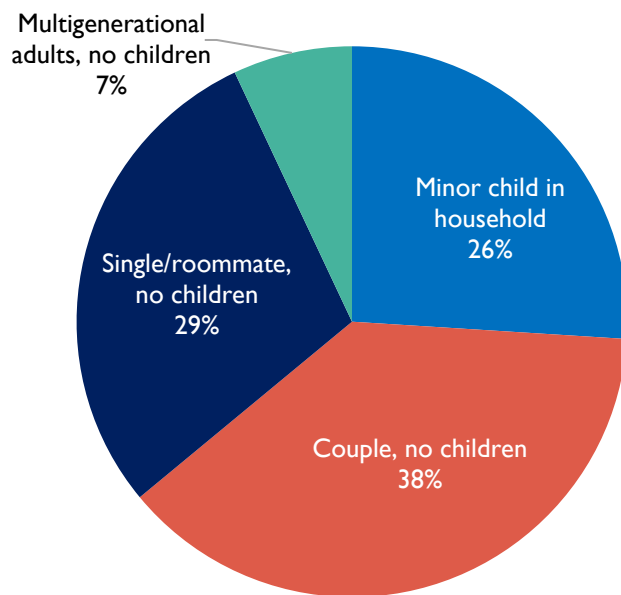
Household composition

Households with children under age 18 (including single-parent, two-parent, or multigenerational households) make up 26% of Jewish households in Greater St. Louis (Figure 1.1). Couples without children constitute 38% of households. People living alone or with unrelated roommates comprise 29% of households.

Multigenerational households, defined as parents and adult children of any age living together, constitute 7% of households. This category can include adults, typically in their 70s or older, who have moved in with their adult children, or younger adults, typically in their 20s or 30s, who live in their parents' homes.

In the CMJS Combined Dataset of 25 communities (CDS), 25% of households include children, 33% are couples without children, 27% are singles/roommates without children, and 14% are multigenerational.

Figure I.1. Household composition (% of Jewish households)



Inmarriage and intermarriage

Of all Jewish households in Greater St. Louis, 64% include a couple who is married, engaged, or partnered. Among these couples, 32% are inmarried and 68% are intermarried.

Definitions: Inmarriage and Inter marriage

“Couples” and “marriages” include married and cohabitating couples. “Spouse” refers to marital spouses and partners.

Inmarried: two partners who are currently Jewish (JBR, JNR, JMR), regardless of whether they were born Jewish or converted

Intermarried: one partner currently Jewish and one partner not Jewish

Household intermarriage rate: percentage of couples that include a Jewish and non-Jewish partner

Individual intermarriage rate: percentage of married/partnered Jewish adults with a partner who is not Jewish

Understanding Intermarriage Rates Example

Jewish household 1: Intermarried



Jewish



Non-Jewish



Household intermarriage rate is 50%
because half of the couples (1 out of 2)
are intermarried



Individual intermarriage rate is 33%
because one of the three Jewish
individuals is intermarried

Jewish household 2: Inmarried



Jewish



Jewish

The individual intermarriage rate (i.e., the proportion of Jewish adults with a non-Jewish spouse) is 53%, higher than the national average of 42% (Table 1.5).¹⁰

Table I.5. Relationship status of Greater St. Louis Jewish adults by age

	All Jewish adults (%)	Ages 22-39 (%)	Ages 40-54 (%)	Ages 55-64 (%)	Ages 65-74 (%)	Ages 75+ (%)
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Married/partnered	71	76	84	65	74	66
Religious composition among couples						
Inmarried	47	34	46	59	59	49
Intermarried	53	66	54	41	41	51
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Jewish denominations

Denominational affiliation has historically been one of the primary indicators of Jewish identity and practice. In Greater St. Louis, the Reform movement claims the largest share of Jewish adults, 45%, which is higher than across the national community (Table 1.6).¹¹ The second-largest group of Greater St. Louis Jews, 35%, do not identify with any particular denomination. The share in this category is slightly higher than nationally. Another 13% of Jewish adults identify as Conservative, and 5% of Jewish adults identify as Orthodox, shares that are smaller than those found in the national Jewish population.

The Orthodox Jewish population of Greater St. Louis includes 3% of all Jewish adults who are Modern Orthodox (60% of Orthodox Jews), 2% who are Haredi/Yeshivish (34% of Orthodox Jews), and < 1% each who are Lubavitch/Chabad, Hasidic, or are another type of Orthodox.

Table I.6. Denomination of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis and the United States

	Greater St. Louis 2024 (%)	US Jews 2020 (%)
	↓	↓
Orthodox	5	9
Modern Orthodox	3	n/a
Haredi/Yeshivish	2	n/a
Hasidic	< 1	n/a
Lubavitch/Chabad	< 1	n/a
Other Orthodox	< 1	n/a
Conservative	13	17
Reform	45	37
Other denomination	2	4
No denomination	35	32
Total	100	100

Subpopulations

Seventy-nine percent of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis identify as Ashkenazi (i.e., predominantly of Eastern or Central European descent; Table 1.7). Three percent of Jewish adults have Sephardi heritage (i.e., descended from Spanish or Portuguese Jews), and less than 1% identify as Mizrachi (i.e., of Middle Eastern Jewish ancestry, such as Persian, Iraqi, or Yemenite Jews). One percent identify with some other ancestry, such as Ethiopian. The remainder identify with either no

particular Jewish ethnicity (6%), do not know their Jewish ethnicity (10%), or say the concept of Jewish ethnicity does not apply, for example Jews by choice (4%).

Table 1.7. Jewish ethnicity

	Jewish adults (%)	Jewish households that include someone with this ethnicity (%)
Ashkenazi	79	76
Sephardi	3	4
Mizrachi	<1	1
Other	1	1
None, no particular heritage	6	8
This does not apply to me	4	5
Don't know	10	12

Note: Total exceeds 100 because respondents could select more than one option.

Ninety-two percent of Jewish individuals in Greater St. Louis identify solely as white and non-Hispanic (Table 1.8). Although 8% of Jewish individuals identify with a racial identity other than white (i.e., Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or another racial origin) or as Hispanic, only 2% identify as a Person of Color. Notably, the proportion of Jewish individuals who identify with a racial identity other than white is higher among children than adults, indicating that the Jewish community may be becoming more diverse racially.

Table 1.8. Race and ethnicity

	Jewish individuals (%) ↓	Jewish adults (%) ↓	Jewish children (%) ↓	All individuals in Jewish households (%) ↓	Of Jewish households, at least one person has this identity (%) ↓
Self-identifying Person of Color	2	2	5	4	8
Combined race and ethnicity					
Single-race, non-Hispanic white	92	93	89	90	94
Single-race, Hispanic white	1	1	2	2	3
Any non-white racial identity, including multiracial, non-Hispanic	6	5	8	8	11
Any non-white racial identity, including multiracial, Hispanic	1	<1	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	*

*Note: Household could include people with different racial and ethnic identities.

Twelve percent of adults in Greater St. Louis were raised in a Russian-speaking home, but not necessarily in Russia or the former Soviet Union (Table 1.9). Three percent of Jewish adults are Israeli citizens.

Table I.9. National identities

	All Jewish adults (%)
Russian-speaking Jews	12
Israeli citizens	3

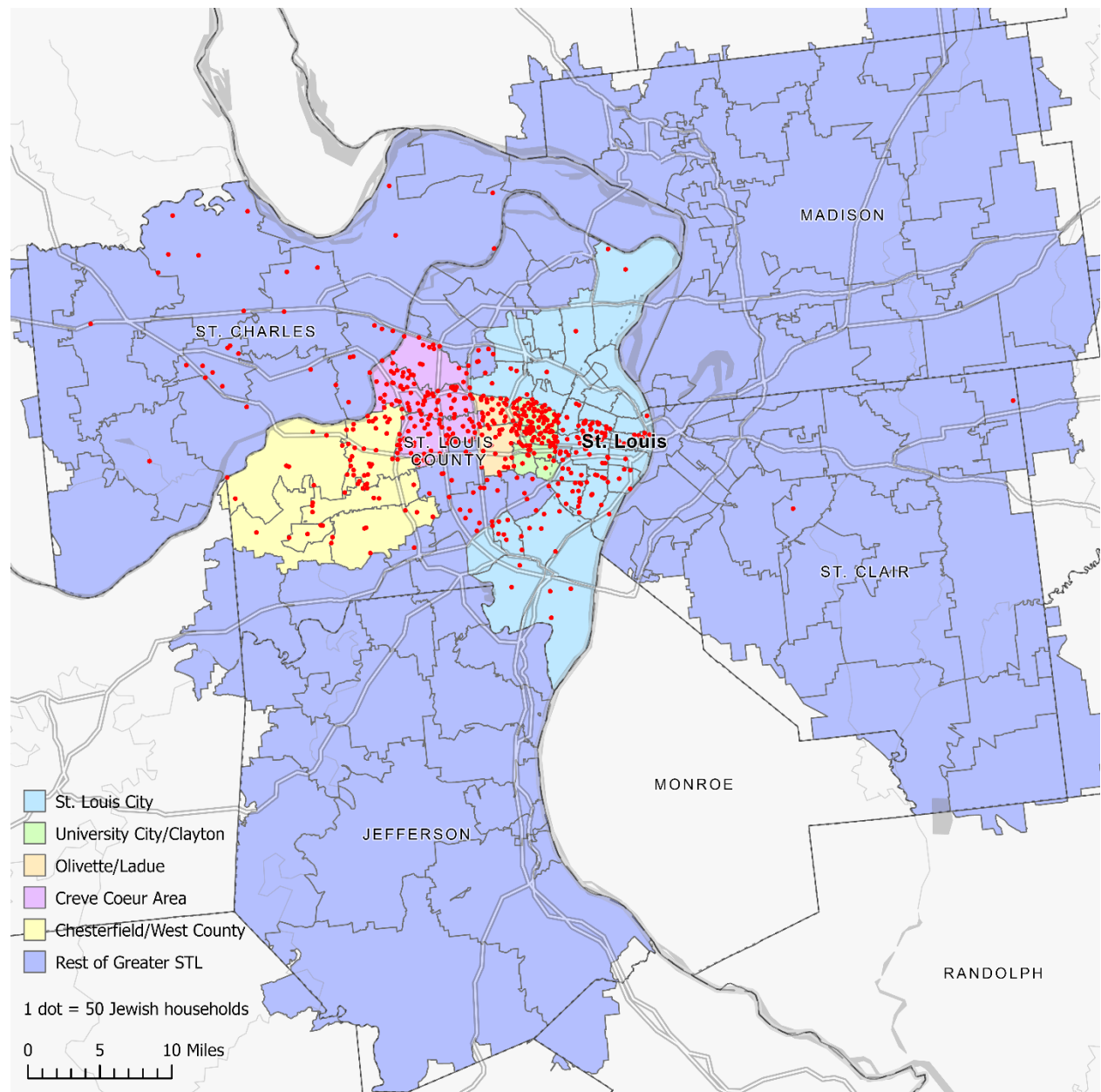
Geographic distribution

The Jewish community of Greater St. Louis can be divided into six regions based on county and ZIP code (Table 1.10, Figure 1.2). “St. Louis City” is comprised solely of the city of St. Louis. Four additional regions are listed by zip code in Table 1.10 and include different sections of St. Louis County. The fifth region, “Rest of Greater St. Louis,” includes portions of St. Louis County along with the entire counties of Jefferson and St. Charles, MO, and Madison and St. Clair, IL.

Table I.10. Regional definitions, 2024

Region	Included counties and St. Louis County ZIP codes
St. Louis City	63101, 63102, 63103, 63104, 63105, 63106, 63107, 63108, 63109, 63110, 63111, 63112, 63113, 63114, 63115, 63116, 63117, 63118, 63119, 63120, 63121, 63122, 63123, 63124, 63125, 63126, 63127, 63128, 63129, 63130, 63131, 63132, 63133, 63134, 63135, 63136, 63137, 63138, 63139, 63140, 63141, 63143, 63144, 63145, 63146, 63147, 63150, 63151, 63155, 63156, 63157, 63158, 63160, 63163, 63164, 63166, 63167, 63169, 63171, 63177, 63178, 63179, 63180, 63188, 63195, 63197, 63199
U. City / Clayton	63105 63117 63130 63143 63144
Chesterfield / West County	63005 63006 63011 63017 63021 63022 63024 63038 63040
Olivette / Ladue	63124 63132
Creve Coeur area	63043 63141 63146
Rest of Greater St. Louis	63025 63026 63031 63033 63034 63042 63044 63045 63069 63074 63088 63119 63122 63131 Jefferson and St. Charles Counties, MO Madison and St. Clair Counties, IL

Figure 1.2. Geographic distribution of the Greater St. Louis Jewish community



About one quarter of Jewish households (24%) live in the Creve Coeur area, and 22% reside in St. Louis City (Table 1.11). Eighteen percent of Jewish households live in U. City/Clayton, 12% are in Chesterfield/West County, and 11% are in Olivette/Ladue. The remaining 13% of Jewish households are spread across the rest of Greater St. Louis, including 6% in St. Charles County and 4% in Des Peres, Kirkwood, and Webster.

Table 1.11. Distribution of Jewish households and Jewish individuals across geographic regions

	Jewish households (%)	Jewish individuals (%)	Jewish children (%)
	↓	↓	↓
St. Louis City	22	20	23
U. City / Clayton	18	19	20
Chesterfield / West County	12	14	11
Olivette / Ladue	11	12	16
Creve Coeur area	24	22	20
Rest of Greater St. Louis	13	13	9
Des Peres / Kirkwood / Webster	4	5	3
North County Residual	1	1	< 1
South County Residual	< 1	< 1	< 1
St. Charles	6	6	4
Jefferson / Madison / St. Clair	< 1	< 1	1
Total	100	100	100

There are also differences in the geographic distribution of the population by age (Table 1.12). The largest shares of Jewish adults ages 22-39 (40%) and 40-55 (25%) live in the City of St. Louis. Older adults live disproportionately in the Creve Coeur area, which is home to 30% of those ages 55-64, 25% of those ages 65-74, and 35% of those ages 75 and older.

Table 1.12. Ages of Jewish adults by region

	All Jewish adults (%)	Ages 22-39 (%)	Ages 40-54 (%)	Ages 55-64 (%)	Ages 65-74 (%)	Ages 75+ (%)
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
St. Louis City	22	40	25	14	13	7
U. City / Clayton	21	15	13	16	20	26
Chesterfield / West County	14	5	17	23	19	17
Olivette / Ladue	10	13	15	7	13	9
Creve Coeur area	19	10	9	30	25	35
Rest of Greater St. Louis	13	17	22	9	10	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Length of residence and local ties

Most Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis have longstanding ties to the area. About half (52%) were raised in the area, and 30% have lived in the area for their entire adult lives (Table 1.13, Table 1.14). Forty-two percent of Jewish adults were raised elsewhere in the United States, 2% were raised in Israel, 2% were raised in Russia or the Former Soviet Union, and 2% were raised in another country.

Table 1.13. Primarily raised in...

	All Jewish adults (%)
	↓
Greater St. Louis	52
Elsewhere in the United States	42
Israel	2
Russia or the Former Soviet Union	2
Another country	2
Total	100

Two thirds of Jewish adults (66%) have lived in the area for 20 years or longer, including 30% who have lived locally for their entire lives. Another 11% of Jewish adults have lived in the St. Louis area for 10-19 years. However, nearly one quarter of Jewish adults (23%) moved to Greater St. Louis within the past decade, including 16% who have resided in the area for fewer than five years.

Table 1.14. Length of residence in Greater St. Louis

	All Jewish adults (%)
	↓
0-4 years	16
5-9 years	7
10-19 years	11
20 years or longer	66
Entire adult life in Greater St. Louis	30
Moved to Greater St. Louis as adult	36
Total	100

Among adults raised in Greater St. Louis but have not lived in the area for their entire lives, 6% have moved back within the past five years (not shown in table).

Reflecting the large proportions of Jewish adults who were raised in Greater St. Louis and have lived there for their entire adult lives, many Jewish households have family who live locally in other households. Fifty-seven percent of Jewish households have an adult child or a parent living in another household within Greater St. Louis, including 32% of households ages 40 and older who have an adult child in another Greater St. Louis home and 46% of households younger than age 75 who have a parent in another Greater St. Louis home.

Seventy-two percent of households who have lived in Greater St. Louis their entire lives have either a parent or a child in another Greater St. Louis household, compared to 49% of those who have not lived in the area for their entire adult lives.

Moving to and away from Greater St. Louis

There are a variety of reasons why the 23% of Jewish adults who moved to Greater St. Louis within the past decade have done so. The most cited reason is for school (Table 1.15). In fact, 40% of all Jewish adults, including both those originally from the area and those who moved into it, attended college or graduate school in Greater St. Louis. Of Jewish adults who have lived in Greater St. Louis for 10 or fewer years, almost half (47%) cite school as a reason for moving to the area.

Forty-two percent of Jewish adults who moved to the area recently did so for a job or career. The cost of living is cited by 32% of those who have moved to Greater St. Louis in the last ten years as their reason for moving and being close to family is cited by 24%.

Four percent moved to Greater St. Louis for some other reason, such as retirement.

Table I.15. Primary reasons for moving to Greater St. Louis

	Jewish adults living in Greater St. Louis 10 years or less (%)
School	47
Job or career	42
Cost of living	32
To be close to family	24
Quality of the overall community	12
Quality of Jewish life	4
Other	4
None of these	<1

Note: Total exceeds 100 because respondents could select more than one option.

Fourteen percent of Jewish adults have plans to move away from Greater St. Louis within the next two years. Of those planning a move, 60% are relocating to be close to family who live elsewhere (Table 1.16). Fifty-six percent are planning to leave for a job or school. The political climate is cited as a reason for moving by 46% of those planning to leave Greater St. Louis, and the quality of the overall community is cited by 45%.

Six percent of those expecting to move away are doing so for some other reason, such as retirement or for more temperate winters.

Table I.16. Primary reasons for leaving Greater St. Louis

	Jewish adults who plan to move away from Greater St. Louis within the next two years (%)
Be close to family who live elsewhere	60
For a job, career, or school	56
Political climate	46
Quality of overall community	45
Quality of Jewish life	25
For cost of living	<1
Other	6
None of these	9

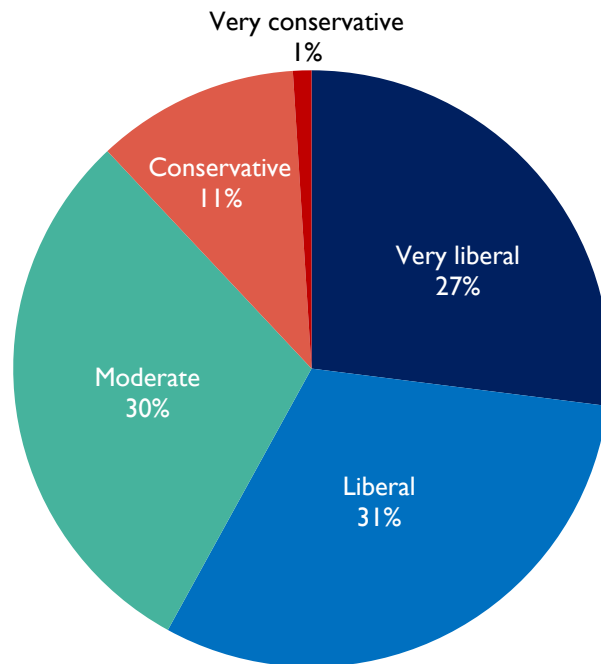
Note: Total exceeds 100 because respondents could select more than one option.

Political views

The majority of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis describe their political viewpoints as “very liberal” (27%) or “liberal” (31%; Figure 1.3). Thirty percent identify as “moderate,” 11% as “conservative,” and 1% as being “very conservative.”

In the CDS, 20% of Jewish adults identify as “extremely liberal,” 42% as “liberal,” 21% as “moderate,” 15% as “conservative,” and 2% as “extremely conservative” (not shown in figure).

Figure 1.3. Political orientation of Greater St. Louis Jewish adults



CHAPTER 2. PATTERNS OF JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

Chapter highlights

- The Index of Jewish Engagement focuses on Jewish behaviors—the ways in which individuals occupy and involve themselves in Jewish life Greater St. Louis.
- There are five distinct patterns of Jewish engagement found among Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis: Minimally Involved, Personal, Holiday, Communal, and Ritual. These names have been developed to reflect the distinguishing characteristics of each pattern.
- The Index can be used to identify opportunities to improve communal planning based on people's different needs and interests.
- Despite making up 27% of the St. Louis Jewish adult population, adults ages 22-39 comprise just 13% of the Minimally Involved engagement group.
- The engagement groups are similar in the shares of its members who are unmarried. The differences between the engagement groups pertain to inmarriage and intermarriage: The majority of Jewish adults in the Communal (68%) and Ritual (76%) groups are inmarried, compared to half or less of the other three groups.
- While there is not a difference in Jewish engagement by Jewish parentage, childhood experiences of Jewish education are related to Jewish engagement in adulthood. About three quarters of the Holiday (72%) and Ritual (74%) groups attended Jewish school or summer camp when they were children, compared to 56% of the Minimally Involved and 48% of the Personal groups.
- About one quarter of Jews in Greater St. Louis (23%) feel that being Jewish is very much part of their lives. While among the Ritual group the vast majority (86%) feels that being Jewish is very much part of their daily lives, very few of the Minimally Involved group (2%) feel the same.
- Half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis very much feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people. Notably, just 9% of the Minimally Involved group does not at all feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people.

Index of Jewish Engagement

Jewish life is complex and multidimensional, including cultural and religious behaviors that are practiced at home, with friends and family, as well as those observed with formal and informal organizations and institutions. Jewish engagement is also associated with attitudes, such as feelings of attachment to the Jewish people. Analyses of Jewish engagement have typically used markers of affiliation, such as congregation membership, denominational affiliation, and financial support for Jewish communal organizations, as indicators of Jewish strength and vitality. These behaviors continue to be measures of Jewish engagement but no longer are the primary indicators of involvement with Jewish life.

While Jewish engagement may include ritual activities, it can also be expressed through involvement with Jewish cultural and non-religious activities. Members of the community may participate in programs through traditional institutions but may also look to non-traditional and emerging organizations. In the *2024 Greater St. Louis Community Study*, we consider an expansive set of ritual, communal, and individual behaviors, as well as overall patterns of Jewish behaviors. The goal is to identify clusters of activities that engage particular groups in the Jewish community based on their current behaviors. Which Jewish adults tend to be engaged in ritual activities, and which prefer cultural activities? Who largely connects with other Jews through organizations and institutions, and who practices their Jewish life on their own, at home, or primarily with friends and family?

This typology of patterns of Jewish engagement, named and described below, serves as one of its primary analytic tools for understanding Jewish life in Greater St. Louis. Adults in Jewish households were categorized into five groups using a statistical tool, latent class analysis (LCA), that examines levels of participation across 17 different Jewish behaviors, including ritual and communal behaviors and Jewish-focused activities. The names of the five groups reflect the primary ways in which each group engages in Jewish life. This typology is unique to the Greater St. Louis community and is used throughout this report to illustrate the diversity of expressions of Jewish life. The names of the groups are intended to highlight the behaviors that distinguish each group.

The Index of Jewish Engagement helps identify engagement opportunities for groups with particular needs and interests.¹² In many cases, behaviors correlate with an individual's demographic characteristics, backgrounds, and attitudes, but in other cases behaviors cut across these features. 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.

The set of Jewish behaviors used to develop this typology is inclusive of a variety of ways—public and private—that contemporary Jews engage with Jewish life. 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:

- **Holidays:** attending a Passover seder in 2023; lighting Hanukkah candles in 2023; fasting on Yom Kippur 2023
- **Rituals:** marking Shabbat in some way; participating in Jewish religious services; High Holiday services in 2023; keeping kosher at home
- **Organizations:** belonging to a Jewish congregation; belonging to an organization aside from a congregation or the J; belonging to or regularly participating with an informal group; participating in a Jewish program; volunteering for a Jewish organization; donating to a Jewish organization
- **Individual:** seeking out news about Israel; reading Jewish publications; reading books, watching TV or movies, or listening to music that is Jewish focused

We employed LCA to cluster 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. Each Jewish adult in the community was classified into one of the five engagement

groups according to the pattern that most closely matched the individual’s participation in different types of Jewish behaviors.

How we developed these categories

Survey respondents answered questions about their Jewish behaviors; based on their responses, we identified the primary patterns of behavior that are presented here. Survey respondents were **not** asked to assign themselves to the groups.

The LCA analysis presented here is unique to the Greater St. Louis Jewish community. Both the set of classifications and their names are derived directly from data collected for this study.

Patterns of Jewish engagement

For each pattern of Jewish engagement among Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis, Table 2.1 illustrates the level of participation in each of the behaviors that was used to construct the Index of Jewish Engagement. As shown in Table 2.1, 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. The table shows the proportion of people in each engagement group that participates in the listed behavior. In this table, the darker the box, the higher the proportion of people that engage in that behavior.

One quarter of Jewish adults (25%) fall into the **“Minimally Involved”** group. They tend to engage in very few Jewish behaviors, with the most common behaviors among this group—reading Jewish publications (63%), engaging with Jewish culture (51%), and seeking news about Israel (50%)—requiring no connection to an organized Jewish community. Even with these behaviors, however, few members of this engagement group participate frequently, and members of the four other engagement groups participate in larger shares.

Twenty percent of Jewish adults are in the **“Personal”** group. The most common dimension of these adults’ involvement in Jewish life is individual activities, which can be completed outside of any organizational framework. These individual activities are completed by nearly all members of the group: engaging with Jewish culture (100%), reading Jewish publications (98%), and seeking news about Israel (94%). The group’s participation in these activities, however, is not as frequent as that of some of the other engagement groups, with larger shares of other groups participating in these individual activities often.

The largest share of Jewish adults (30%) is in the **“Holiday”** group. This group is primarily involved in Jewish life through holiday and ritual activities, including lighting candles during Hanukkah, attending or hosting a seder, and attending services. In fact, all members of this group attended High Holiday services in 2023. Despite this group’s most common dimensions of Jewish life being holiday and ritual behaviors, others participate in these behaviors in larger shares and more frequently. While few do so often, most members of the Holiday group participate in Jewish life through organizations or individual activities, such as participating in Jewish programs or seeking news about Israel.

Twelve percent of Jewish adults are in the **“Communal”** group. Members of this group have the highest levels of Jewish engagement in organizational behaviors and participate at high rates in many

other dimensions of Jewish life. Nearly everyone in this group attended a Jewish program at least once, and over half (56%) did so often. This group had the highest involvement with volunteering for (91%) and donating to (97%) Jewish causes, belonging to Jewish organizations (74%) and informal Jewish groups (44%). Despite their high and frequent engagement in Jewish organizational life, other groups participate to a greater extent and more frequently in ritual and individual behaviors.

The remaining 13% of Jewish adults are in the **“Ritual”** group. This group has the highest levels of engagement across holiday, ritual, and most individual behaviors. The vast majority (90%) are members of a congregation and attend services at least monthly (86%). Nearly half of this group’s members (48%) keep kosher at home. Despite their high participation in the ritual and personal dimensions, members of other groups have larger shares of participation in organizational behaviors.

The patterns of Jewish engagement found among Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis are summarized in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. Greater St. Louis Index of Jewish Engagement

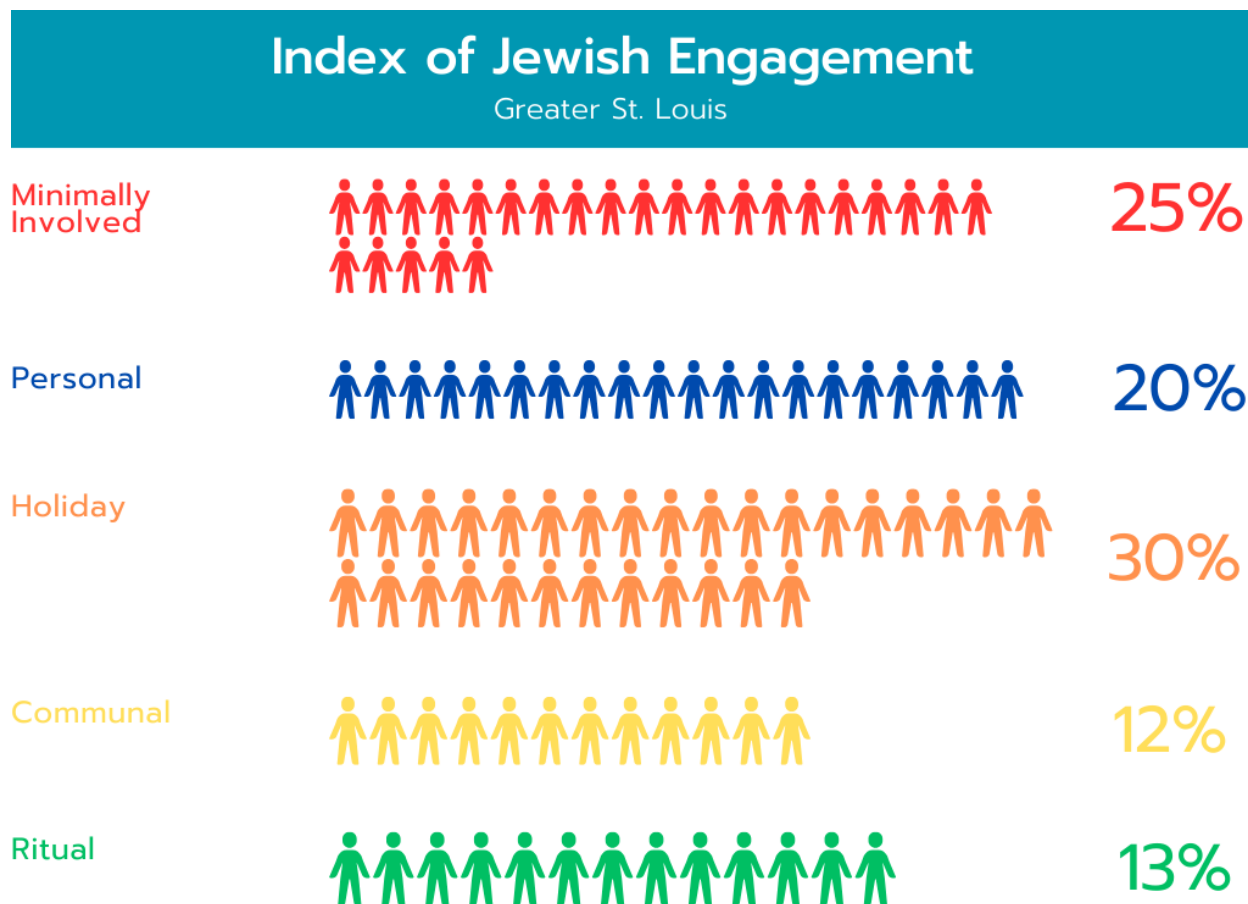


Table 2.1. Jewish behaviors and engagement

	All Jewish adults (%) ↓	Minimally Involved (%) ↓	Personal (%) ↓	Holiday (%) ↓	Communal (%) ↓	Ritual (%) ↓
Holiday Behaviors						
Seder, 2023	70	22	60	95	99	98
Hanukkah candles, 2023	80	46	86	94	97	93
Fast on Yom Kippur, 2023	44	1	35	67	47	89
Ritual Behaviors						
Mark Shabbat, ever	59	4	58	79	81	100
(Almost) every week	22	0	9	26	24	86
Services, ever	64	7	41	100	100	100
Monthly or more	21	0	5	7	4	86
High Holiday services, 2023	53	<1	1	100	99	89
Kosher at home	9	0	1	7	1	48
Organization Behaviors						
Congregation member	44	1	18	68	76	90
Organization member	23	6	17	18	74	23
Informal group member	11	<1	6	6	44	17
Participate in program, ever	68	17	75	81	99	98
Often	16	1	7	7	56	44
Volunteer for Jewish org.	33	7	21	30	91	50
Donate to Jewish org.	62	30	57	72	97	95
Individual Behaviors						
Seek news about Israel weekly or more (past month)	80	50	94	81	98	95
Daily or more	46	14	52	40	67	74
Read Jewish publication, ever	89	63	98	98	100	100
Often	39	3	55	15	90	92
Engage with Jewish culture, ever	85	51	100	92	100	99
Often	25	6	27	7	62	59
Study Jewish text, ever	55	15	54	63	78	93
Often	11	0	3	<1	19	50

Legend	0-19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-100%
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Demographics and Jewish engagement

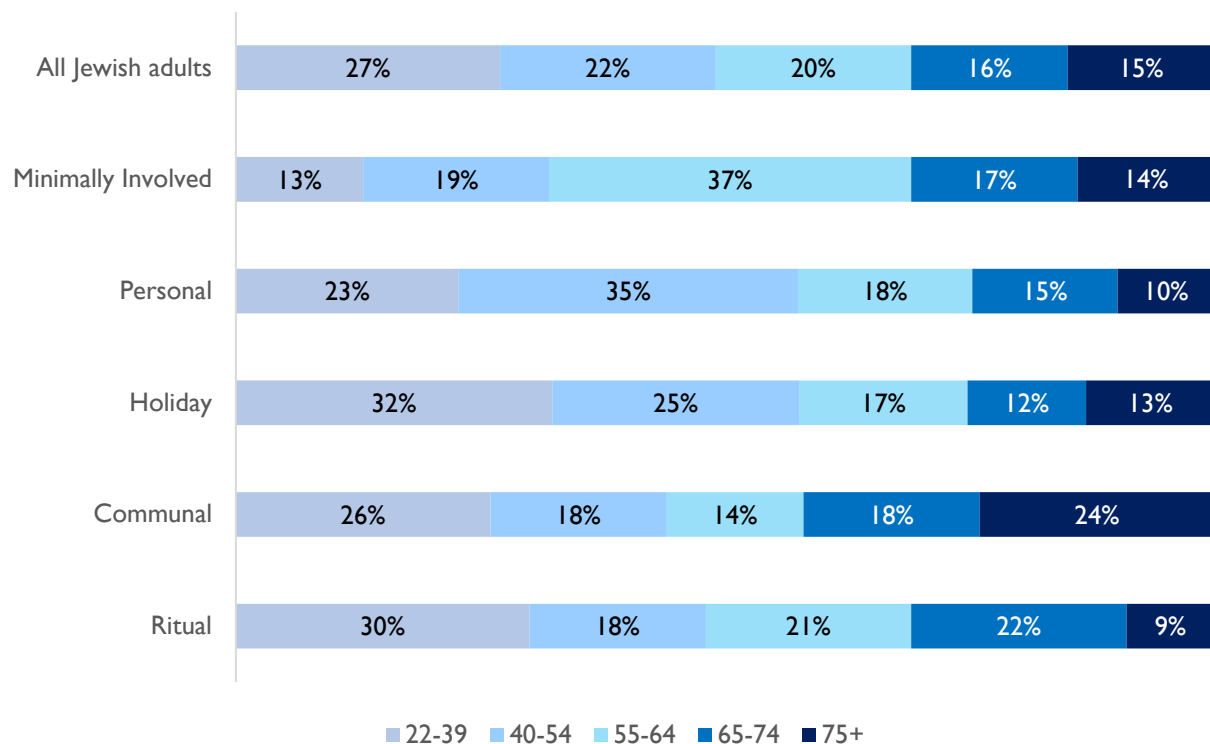
The patterns of Jewish engagement are associated with some, but not all, demographic characteristics. Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 show the distribution of selected demographic characteristics within the Jewish engagement categories (row totals) in comparison to the overall Jewish population (first row). To best understand demographic patterns, it is useful to compare the distribution of each of the engagement groups to that of the overall adult Jewish population, shown

in the top row of each table. This comparison allows one to observe how, if at all, each engagement group differs from the overall population.

See Appendix B for the distribution of the engagement groups within each of the demographic categories.

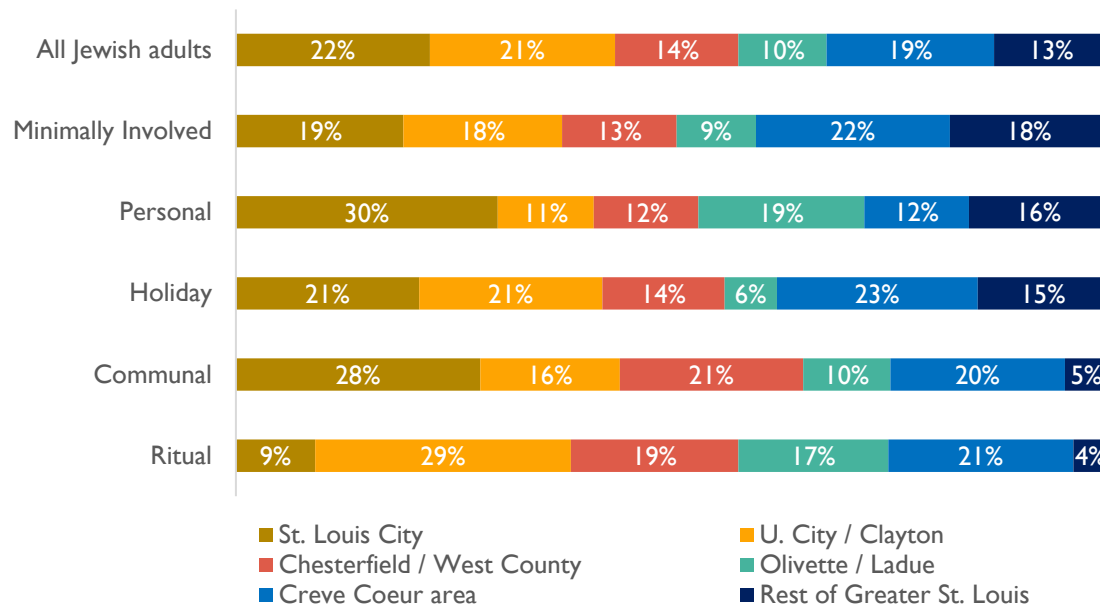
Despite making up 27% of the St. Louis Jewish adult population, adults ages 22-39 comprise just 13% of the Minimally Involved engagement group (Figure 2.2). The Communal engagement group is older, and the Ritual group is younger than the overall populations. Just 9% of Jewish adults ages 75 and older are in the Ritual engagement group, while 24% of this age cohort are in the Communal engagement group.

Figure 2.2. Jewish engagement by age*



There are no significant geographic differences between the engagement groups (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3. Jewish engagement by region



Similar shares of each engagement group are not married (Figure 2.4). Differences in relationship status between the groups pertain to inmarriage and intermarriage: Majorities of Jewish adults in the Communal (68%) and Ritual (76%) groups are inmarried, compared to half or fewer of the other three groups. Correspondingly, the Minimally Involved group had the highest rate of intermarriage (79%), and the Communal (13%) and Ritual (6%) groups had the lowest rate of intermarriage (Table 2.2).

Figure 2.4. Jewish engagement by relationship status*

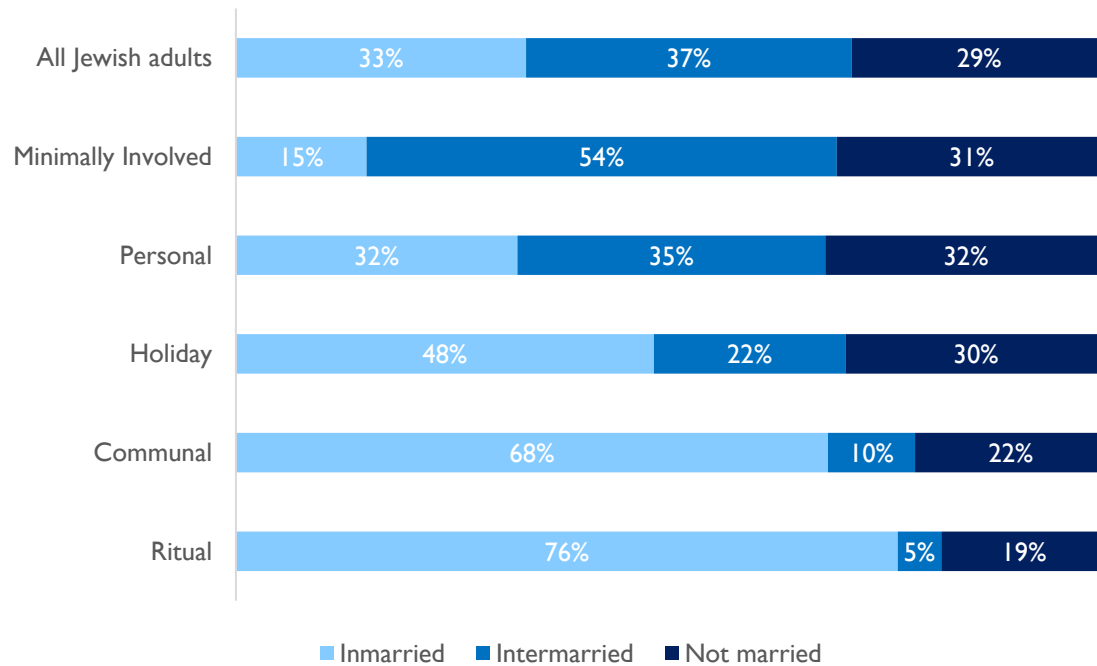
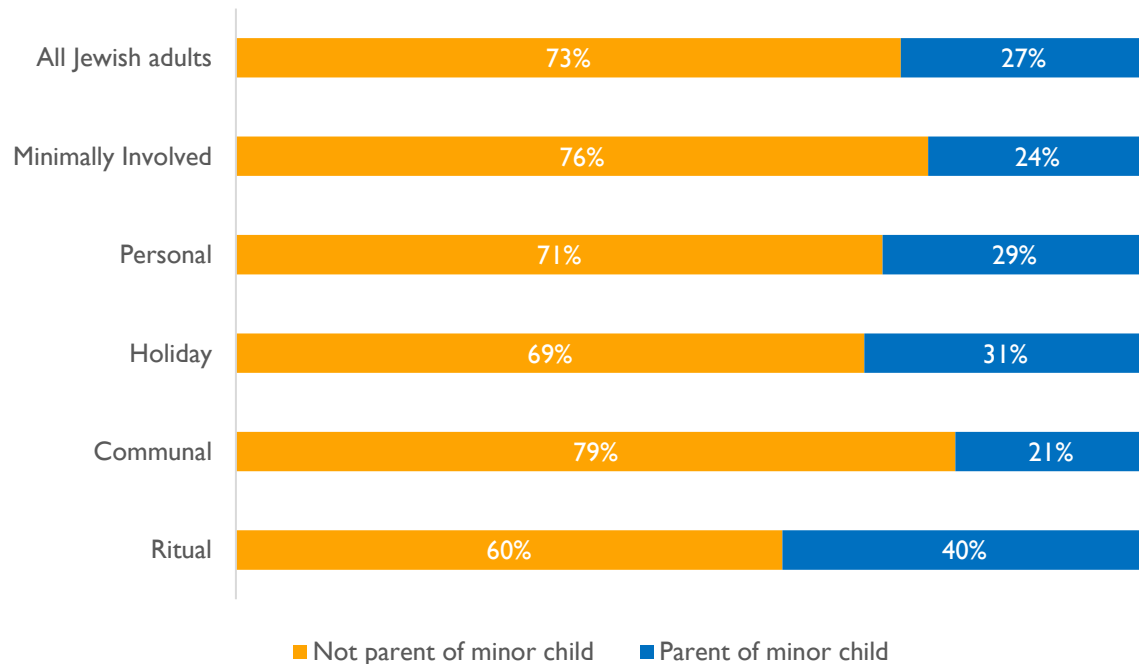


Table 2.2. Jewish engagement by intermarriage rate

	Intermarriage rate
All Jewish adults	53
Minimally Involved	79
Personal	52
Holiday	31
Communal	13
Ritual	6

There are no significant differences between the engagement groups when it comes to parental status (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. Jewish engagement by parental status

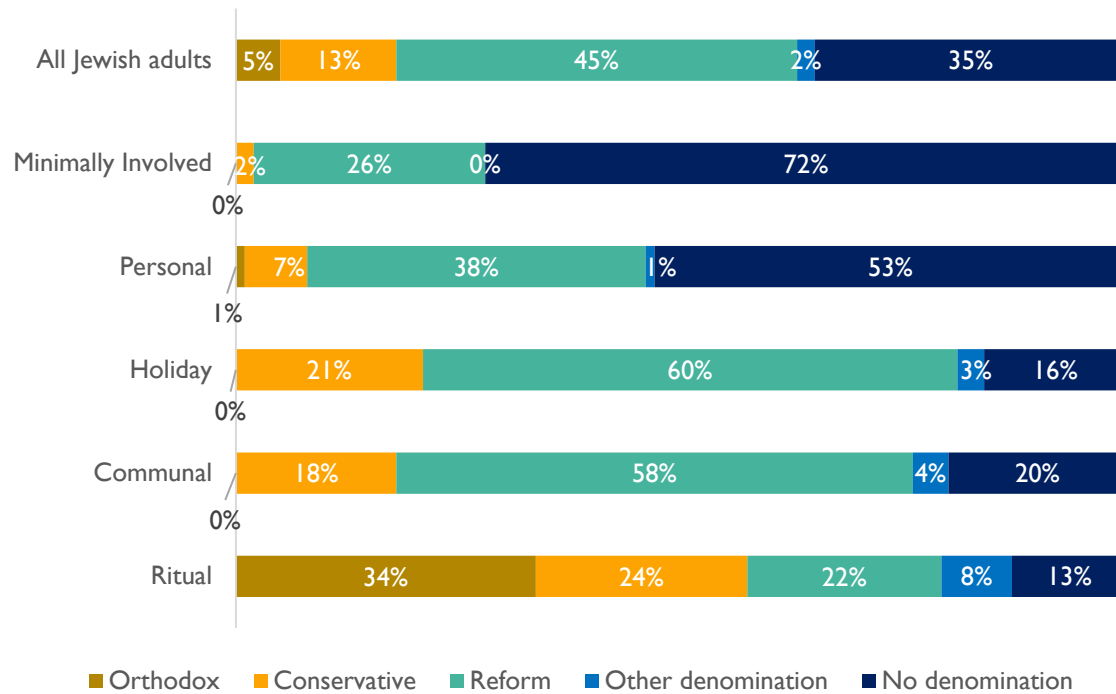


Jewish background and Jewish engagement

The best-known system for categorizing Jewish identity is denominational affiliation. In the past, Jewish denominational categories closely correlated with measures of Jewish engagement, including behavior and attitudes. However, because these labels are self-assigned, their meanings vary from one individual to another. In addition, an increasing number of Jews do not affiliate with a particular denomination—including about one third (35%) of adult Jews in Greater St. Louis. Thus, denominational labels are limited in their ability to convey behavior and attitudes.

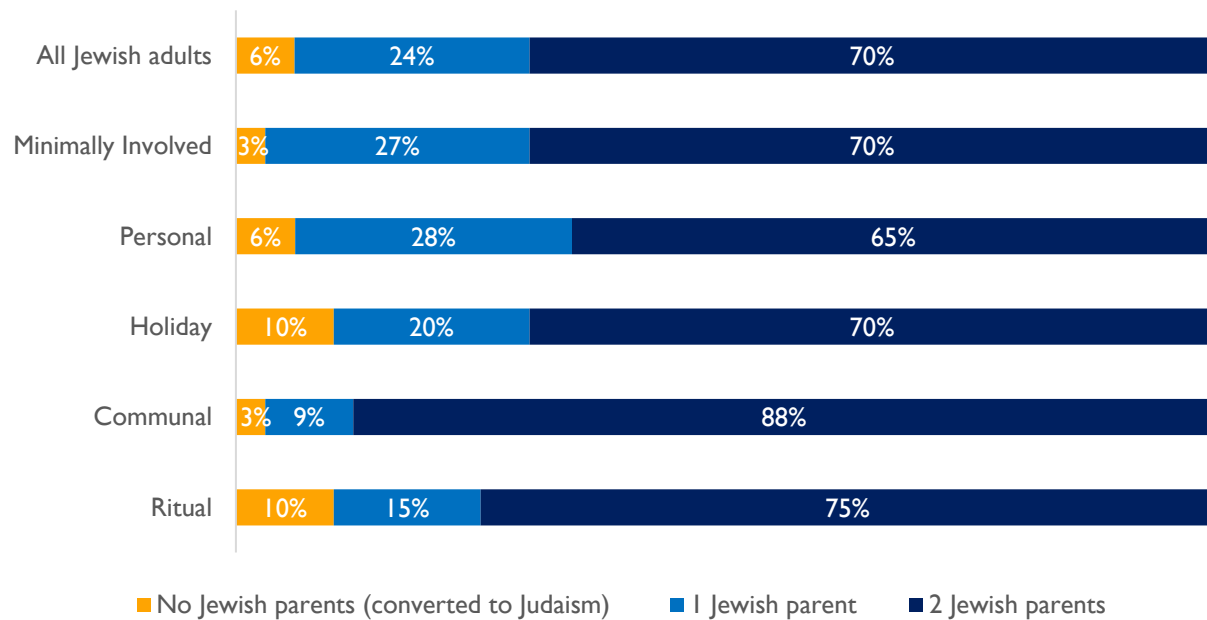
While 45% of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis identify as Reform, 26% of the Minimally Involved group and 38% of the Personal groups identify as Reform (Figure 2.6). Larger shares of those groups do not identify with a denomination (72% and 53%, respectively). While a disproportionately smaller share of the Ritual group identifies as Reform (22%), a larger share of the Ritual group identifies with other denominations, particularly Orthodox (34%) and Conservative (24%).

Figure 2.6. Jewish engagement by denomination*



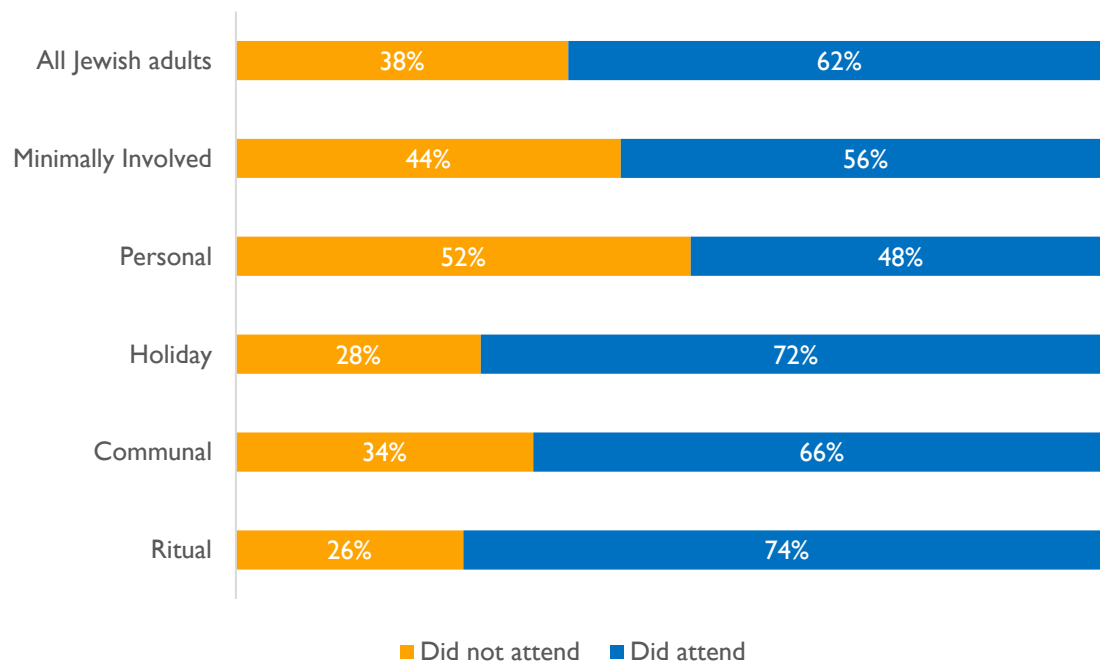
There are no differences in Jewish engagement by Jewish parentage (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7. Jewish engagement by Jewish parentage



Childhood experiences of Jewish education are related to Jewish engagement in adulthood (Figure 2.8). About three quarters of the Holiday (72%) and Ritual (74%) groups attended Jewish school or summer camp when they were children, compared to 56% of the Minimally Involved and 48% of the Personal groups.

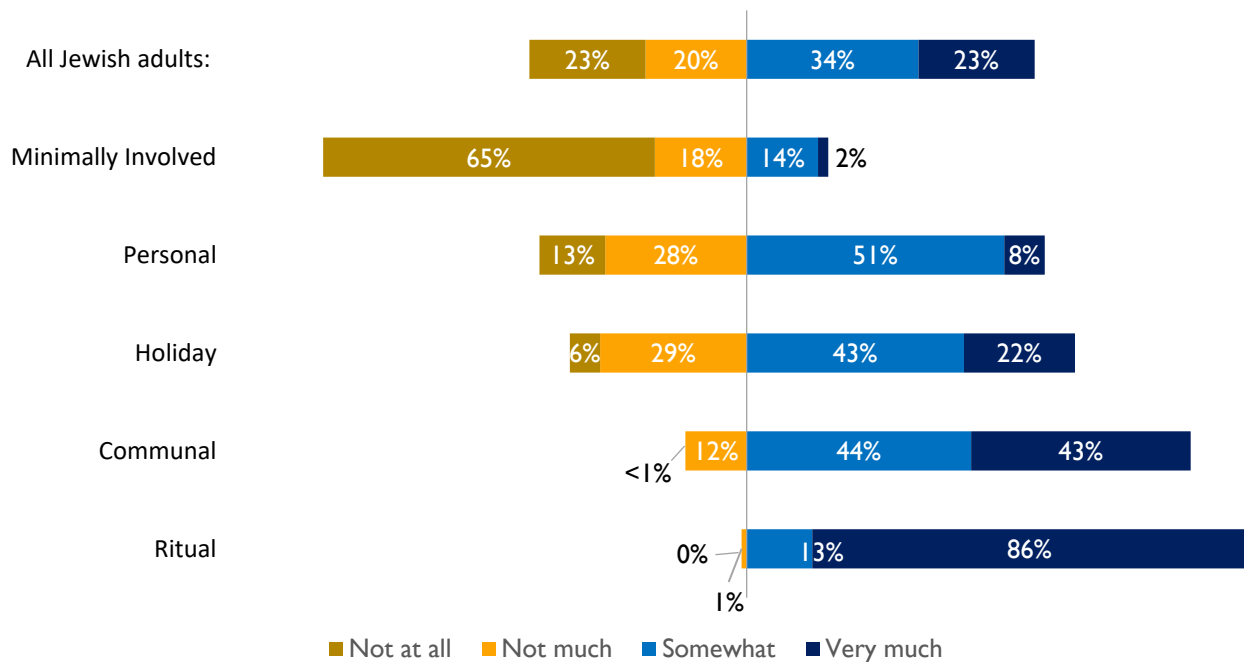
Figure 2.8. Jewish engagement by Jewish childhood education (part-time or full-time Jewish school or Jewish overnight camp)*



Attitudes about being Jewish

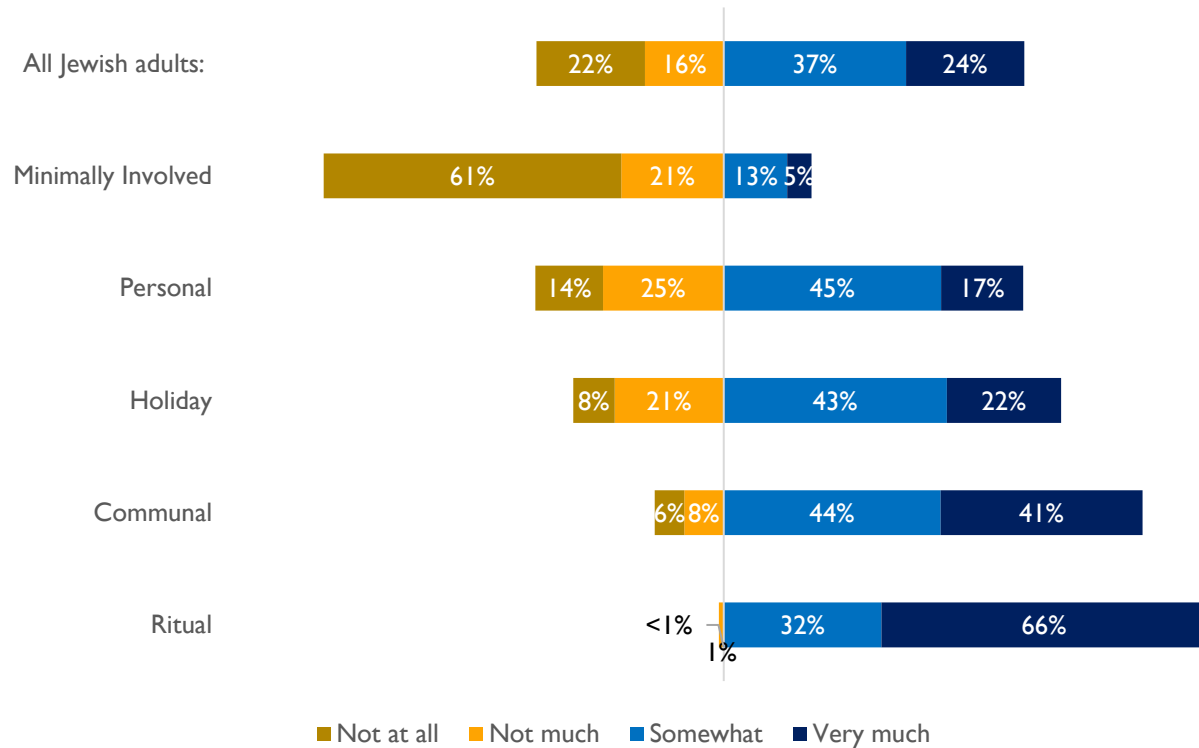
Comparing the attitudes about being Jewish across the engagement groups helps highlight differences and identify commonalities. About one third of Jews in Greater St. Louis (34%) feel that being Jewish is somewhat part of their daily lives, and another quarter (23%) feel it is very much part of their lives (Figure 2.9). The extent to which that is the case, however, varies greatly between the engagement groups. While among the Ritual group the vast majority (86%) feels that being Jewish is very much part of their daily lives, very few (2%) of the Minimally Involved group feel the same.

Figure 2.9. Being Jewish is part of daily life*



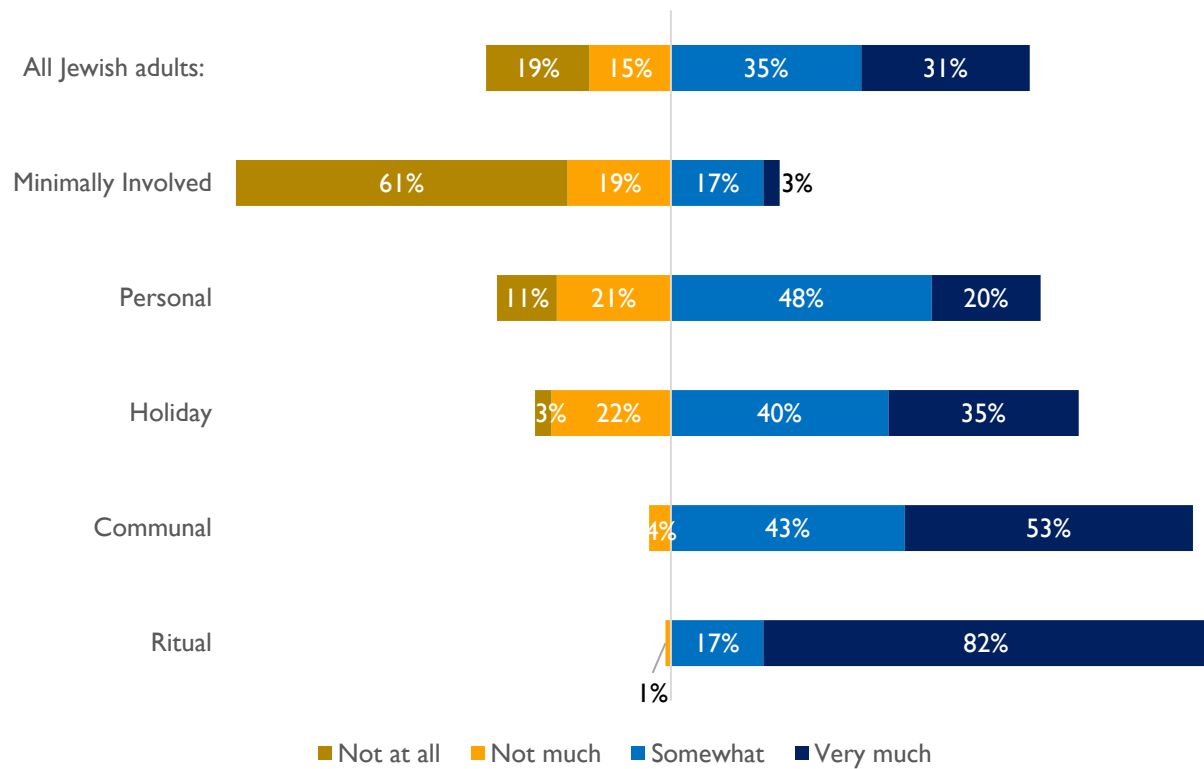
About one quarter of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis (24%) very much believe that being Jewish helps them cope somewhat at times of crisis (Figure 2.10). The majority of Jewish adults in the Minimally Involved group (61%) do not believe being Jewish helps them cope at all, compared to 22% of all Jewish adults.

Figure 2.10. Being Jewish helps cope at times of crisis*



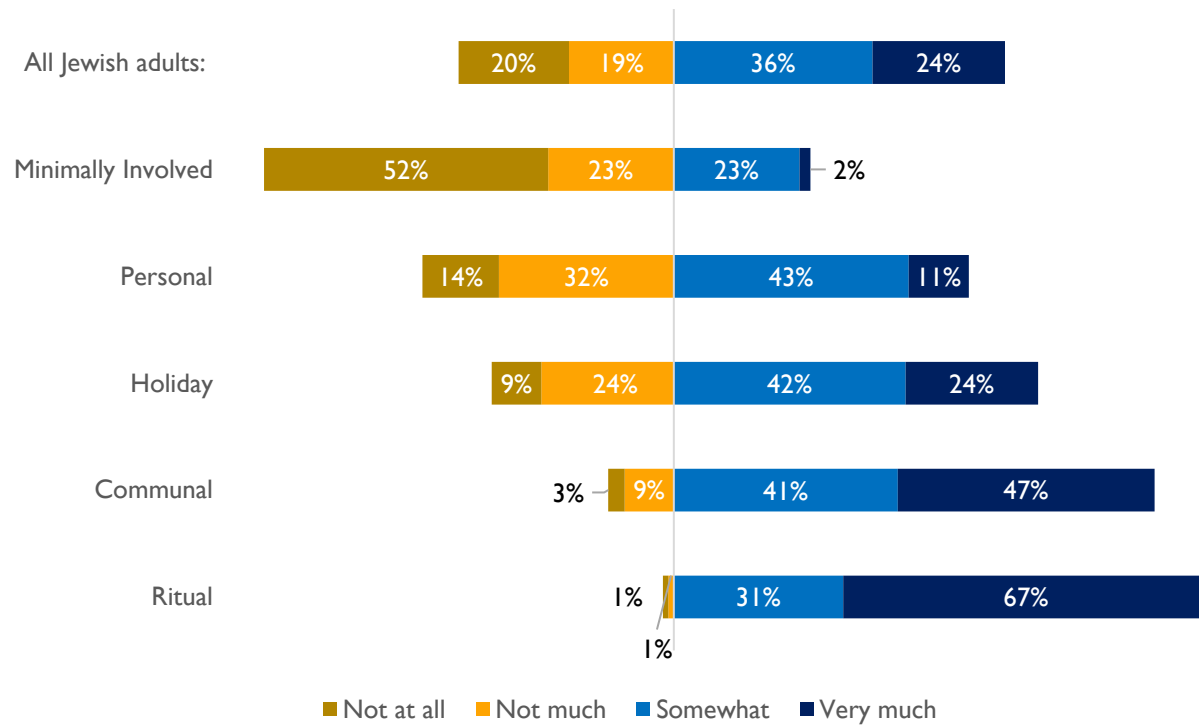
Just as being Jewish can be a resource during a crisis, being Jewish can also be beneficial during times of joy. Nearly one third of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis (31%) believe that being Jewish helps them celebrate at times of joy (Figure 2.11). There are differences between engagement groups, however, with 61% of the Minimally Involved group not at all sharing this belief, and 82% of the Ritual group very much sharing this belief.

Figure 2.11. Being Jewish helps celebrate at times of joy*



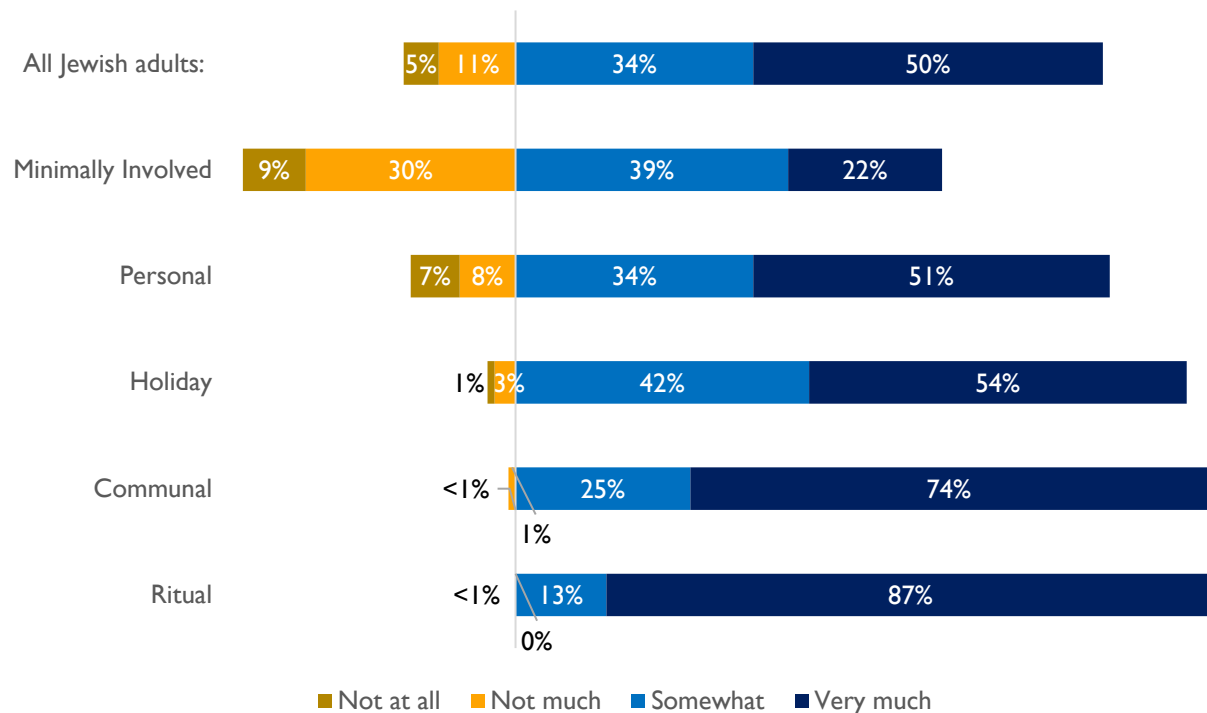
About one quarter of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis (24%) very much believe that being Jewish guides them with major life decisions (Figure 2.12). Half of the Minimally Involved group (52%) does not agree with this sentiment, while two thirds of the Ritual group (67%) very much does.

Figure 2.12. Being Jewish guides major life decisions*



Half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis very much feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people (Figure 2.13). Large majorities of those in the Communal (74%) and Ritual (87%) groups very much feel a sense of belonging. Notably, not in keeping with the pattern described throughout this chapter, just 9% of the Minimally Involved group do *not* at all feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people, compared to 5% of all Jewish adults.

Figure 2.13. Feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people*



CHAPTER 3. CHILDREN AND JEWISH EDUCATION

Chapter highlights

- Of the 12,800 children in Jewish households, 10,000 (78% of all children) are considered Jewish by their parents. More than half of all children are considered Jewish exclusively (7,600 or 59% of all children). Nineteen percent of all children are considered Jewish and another religion.
- Most of the remaining children living in Jewish households who are not considered Jewish are considered to have no religious identity (2,100 or 16% of all children). The remaining children who are not considered Jewish by their parents are either being raised exclusively in another religion (4% of all children), their parents have not determined yet how they will be raised, or the response was not provided.
- Just over half of Jewish children (54%) are being raised by inmarried parents, while a smaller percentage (35%) are being raised by intermarried parents. The remaining 11% of Jewish children are being raised by single parents.
- Of children in inmarried Jewish households, 86% are considered Jewish alone, and 5% are considered Jewish and something else. Less than half of the children of intermarried parents (39%) are considered Jewish alone, and 29% are considered to be Jewish and something else.
- Half of Jewish students in grades K-12 during the 2023-24 school year and summer 2023 were enrolled in some form of Jewish education, including schools, other year-round programs, and camps.
- During the 2023-24 school year, 28% of Jewish children in the Greater St. Louis area not yet in kindergarten were enrolled in an early childhood program run by a Jewish organization.
- Forty-six percent of age-eligible Jewish children have had a bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah, or b-mitzvah ceremony, and an additional 10% plan to have one in the future.

Children in Jewish households

To assess the religious identity of children in Jewish households, parents were asked if they considered their children to be Jewish. Of the 12,800 children who reside in Jewish households in the Greater St. Louis area, 10,000 (78% of all children) are considered Jewish by their parents (Table 3.1). More than half of these children are considered Jewish exclusively (7,600 or 59% of all children). Nineteen percent of all children are considered Jewish and another religion. Of the remaining children living in Jewish households who are not considered Jewish, most are considered to have no religious identity (2,100 or 16% of all children).

The remaining children who are not considered Jewish by their parents are either being raised exclusively in another religion (4% of all children), their parents have not determined yet how they will be raised, or the response was not provided.

In the CDS, 67% of children in Jewish households are considered exclusively Jewish, 11% Jewish and another religion, 14% no religion, 4% exclusively another religion, and 3% undetermined.

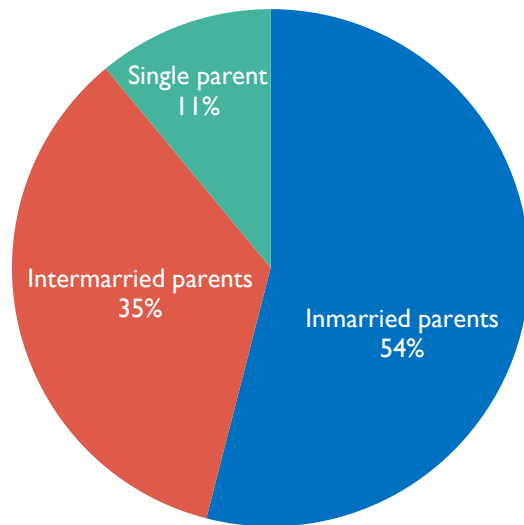
Table 3.1. Children in Jewish households

	Number	All children (%) ↓
Jewish children	10,000	78%
Jewish	7,600	59%
Jewish and another religion	2,400	19%
Not Jewish	2,800	22%
No religion	2,100	16%
Another religion	500	4%
Undetermined*	100	1%
Total	12,800	100%

*For the rest of this chapter, analyses do not include the children whose Jewish identity is undetermined.

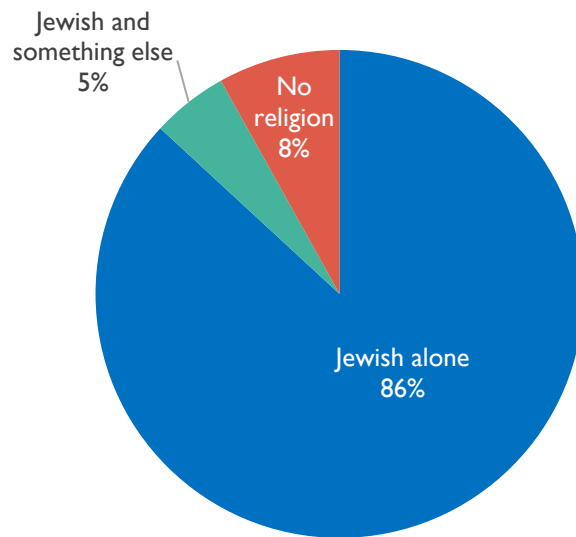
Just over half of Jewish children (54%) are being raised by inmarried parents while a smaller percentage (35%) are being raised by intermarried parents; the remaining 11% of Jewish children are being raised by single parents (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Parents of Jewish children (% of Jewish children)



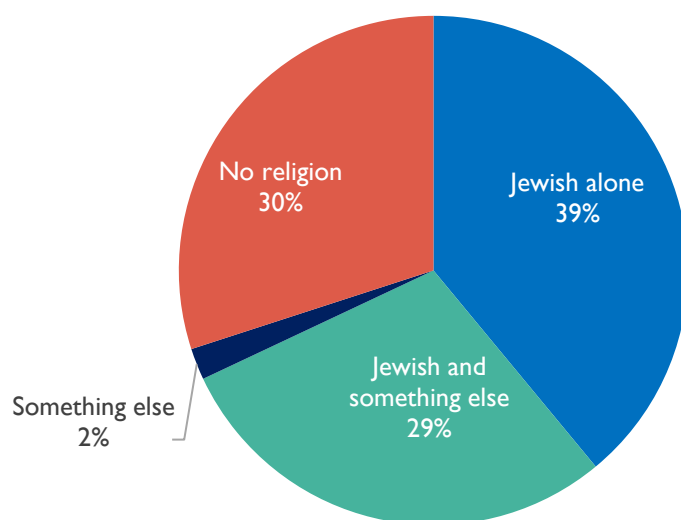
Of children in inmarried Jewish households, 86% are considered Jewish alone, and 5% are Jewish and something else¹³ (Figure 3.2). The remaining 8% are identified as having no religion.

Figure 3.2. Jewish identity of children in inmarried households (% of children)



Among the children of intermarried parents, 39% are considered Jewish alone (Figure 3.3). Over one quarter of children of intermarried parents (29%) are considered to be Jewish and something else, and 2% of children are considered to be of another religion. Thirty percent of children of intermarried parents are being raised with no religion.

Figure 3.3. Jewish identity of children in intermarried households (% of children)



The distribution of Jewish children by age cohort is fairly even. Thirty-one percent of Jewish children are between the ages of 0-5, while 35% are between the ages of 6-12, and 33% are between the ages of 13-17 (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Ages of Jewish children

	Number	All Jewish children (%)
0-5	3,100	31%
6-12	3,500	35%
13-17	3,300	33%
Total	10,000	100

Jewish education

Jewish education occurs in Jewish preschools, formal classroom settings such as day schools and part-time supplementary schools, as well as in informal settings, including camps, youth groups, and peer trips to Israel. Note that for the remainder of the chapter, K-12 Jewish students include adults—ages 18 or 19—who are still in high school.

Half of Jewish students in grades K-12 during the 2023-24 school year and summer 2023 were enrolled in some form of Jewish education (Table 3.3). Twenty-two percent attended some form of Jewish school, either part-time (15%) or a full-time Jewish day school or yeshiva (7%). Twenty-seven percent of Jewish students were enrolled in other Jewish programs. These include youth groups or teen programs (25%), as well as tutoring and private classes (4%). Additionally, nearly one third of Jewish students (32%) attended a Jewish camp in summer 2023.

In the CDS, representing 25 communities whose studies were conducted between 2015-22, 26% of age-eligible Jewish students were enrolled in a formal Jewish educational program, either full- or part-time (not shown in table).

Table 3.3. K-12 Jewish education, 2023-24 and summer 2023

	Jewish students in K-12 (%)
Any Jewish education	50
Formal Jewish school	22
Part-time Jewish school	15
Jewish day school or yeshiva	7
Other Jewish programs	27
Jewish youth group or teen program	25
Tutoring or private classes	4
Any Jewish camp	32
Jewish day camp	20
Jewish overnight camp	13

Note: Students could be enrolled in more than one type of school or program.

A small share of Jewish students ages 12 and older (4%) had previously been involved in either a travel program to Israel or a Jewish immersive travel program (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Past Jewish travel programs, ever

	Jewish students ages 12+ (%)
Any Jewish travel program	4
Travel to Israel	1
Travel on Jewish immersive program	2

Note: Students could have participated on more than one type of program.

Young children and families

In the 2023-24 school year, 28% of Jewish children in the Greater St. Louis area not yet in kindergarten were enrolled in an early childhood program run by a Jewish organization (Table 3.5). Another 16% of age-eligible children were enrolled in a program run by a private non-Jewish or secular organization. Eleven percent attended a daycare at a person's home, and 6% were enrolled in a public preschool or daycare. Forty percent of Jewish children not yet in kindergarten were not enrolled in any of these programs.

In the CDS, 20% of age-eligible Jewish children were enrolled in a Jewish early childhood program (not shown in table).

Table 3.5. Early childhood enrollment and programs, 2023-2024

	Jewish children not yet in kindergarten (%)
Program run by a Jewish organization	28
Program run by a private non-Jewish or secular organization	16
Daycare at a person's home	11
Public preschool or daycare	6
None of these	40

Note: Children could be enrolled in more than one option.

Other Jewish-sponsored programming, outside of early childhood programs and schools, are made available to families with younger children in Greater St. Louis. Nearly half of families with children younger than age 13 (46%) participated in a Tot Shabbat, synagogue-based playgroup, or community family holiday program.

PJ Library and PJ Our Way are programs that send free Jewish children's books to families with children younger than age 13. About one quarter of young families (27%) receive books from the program. Of the remaining households that do not receive books, 25% were not aware of the program, and 48% were aware but did not receive books.

B'nai mitzvah and teen programs

Forty-six percent of age-eligible Jewish children have had a bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah, or b-mitzvah ceremony, and an additional 10% plan to have one in the future.

Of the children who have had or plan to have their b'nai mitzvah ceremonies, 26% had or will have a service under synagogue auspices, 16% had or will have a service or activity not connected to a synagogue, and 11% had or will have a service or an activity led by a rabbi, cantor, or other Jewish educator outside of a synagogue.

CHAPTER 4. CONGREGATIONS AND RITUAL LIFE

Chapter highlights

- Thirty-six percent of Jewish households belong to some type of Jewish congregation located in Greater St. Louis, including synagogues, an independent *minyan* or *chavurah*, Chabad, and other worship communities.
- Congregational membership and synagogue dues payment are lowest in the Rest of Greater St. Louis region, with only 18% belonging to a congregation and 11% paying dues.
- One quarter of all Jewish households (24%) belong to a Reform synagogue or temple, which is equivalent to 66% of all congregation-member households.
- Larger shares of Greater St. Louis Jewish adults attend services than belong to congregations. Although 42% of Jewish adults reside in a congregation-member household, 64% attended a Jewish worship service at least once in the previous year.
- A large majority of Jewish adults ages 22-39 (81%) attended services at least once (a significantly higher share than in other age groups), but there is no significant age difference in monthly service attendance.
- Forty-one percent of Jewish adults who do not belong to a congregation attended a Jewish religious service at least once.
- The majority of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis feel comfortable seeking guidance from a rabbi or another Jewish clergy member. Two thirds feel comfortable seeking guidance from someone in the local community, including 54% who feel comfortable with someone only in Greater St. Louis, and 12% who feel comfortable with someone both in and outside Greater St. Louis.
- In the past year, more than half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis marked Shabbat in any way. Twenty-two percent marked Shabbat every week or almost every week.
- The three most common ways that Greater St. Louis Jewish adults marked Shabbat included lighting candles (45% of all Jewish adults), spending time with family and friends (42% of all Jewish adults), and eating a special meal (40% of all Jewish adults).
- Eighty percent of Jewish adults lit Hanukkah candles in 2023, 70% attended or hosted a Passover seder in 2023, and 44% fasted on Yom Kippur in 2023. About one third of Jewish adults (31%) follow any of the kosher rules.

Congregation membership

In the Greater St. Louis area, more than one third of Jewish households (37%) belong to some type of Jewish congregation (Table 4.1). This category includes synagogues, an independent *minyan* or *chavurah*, Chabad, and other worship communities. Nearly all member households belong to congregations within the Greater St. Louis area (36% of Jewish households, not shown in table). Nearly one quarter of Jewish households (23%) pay dues of any sort to a local Jewish synagogue.

Congregation types

These definitions may not capture the specifics of all congregations, but they provide useful categories for understanding varieties of congregational affiliation.

Synagogue: Typically has its own building, a dues/membership structure (though sometimes without fixed amounts), professional clergy, and programs or amenities commonly available in synagogues (e.g., Hebrew school). Usually targeted to those interested in a specific Jewish denomination or type of practice.

Independent *minyan* or *chavurah*: A group that gathers for prayer or worship without the formal structure of a synagogue. May lack its own building, conventional dues/membership structure, professional clergy, and/or amenities commonly available in synagogues.

Chabad: Jewish center or synagogue run by Chabad-Lubavitch. Often does not have a conventional dues/membership structure. Draws from across the denominational spectrum by emphasizing community outreach. This report uses the language of “membership” for Chabad despite it not always being an appropriate fit.

Certain types of Jewish households in Greater St. Louis have wider gaps between overall congregational membership and dues-paying synagogue membership.

Among the Holiday engagement group, 66% of households belong to any type of congregation, and 34% pay dues to a local synagogue. By contrast, 68% of households in the Communal group belong to any type of congregation, and 61% pay dues to a local synagogue.

The 22-39 age group has the highest proportion of Jewish households with members of any type of congregation, with just over half (55%) belonging to a congregation. In line with all St. Louis area households, however, about one quarter (24%) pay dues to a local synagogue. On the other hand, most of the households with members ages 65-74 that belong to any congregation (35%) pay dues to a local synagogue (31%).

In the Rest of Greater St. Louis region, synagogue membership is significantly lower compared to other areas, with only 18% of Jewish households belonging to a congregation and 11% paying dues. Overall congregational membership is highest in U. City/Clayton, with 56% of households belonging to a congregation. Dues-paying membership in synagogues, however, is highest in Chesterfield/West County, with 40% of households paying synagogue dues.

Congregational membership in single-adult Jewish households (38%) is in line with that of all Jewish households in Greater St. Louis. Greater variation exists between inmarried and intermarried households and all Jewish households, with the share of inmarried households belonging to a congregation higher than all Jewish households, and the share of intermarried households lower than that of all Jewish households. Sixty-one percent of inmarried households belong to a congregation compared to one quarter of intermarried households (23%). With respect to dues,

similar shares of intermarried (15%) and single (16%) Jewish households pay synagogue dues, compared to nearly half of inmarried households (46%).

For a national comparison, among Jewish **adults** in Greater St. Louis, 42% live in a household in which someone is a congregation member, a higher share than among all US Jews (35%).¹⁴

Table 4.1. Membership in Jewish congregations

	Belongs to any congregation (%)	Pays dues to a local synagogue (%)
All Jewish households	37	23
Jewish engagement		
Minimally Involved	1	1
Personal	16	8
Holiday	66	34
Communal	68	61
Ritual	83	60
Age		
22-39	55	24
40-54	34	24
55-64	29	17
65-74	35	31
75+	43	35
Region		
St. Louis City	34	15
U. City / Clayton	56	30
Chesterfield / West County	49	40
Olivette / Ladue	39	31
Creve Coeur area	40	23
Rest of Greater STL	18	11
Relationship status		
Inmarried	61	46
Intermarried	23	15
Not married	38	16
Parent of minor child		
No	35	21
Yes	50	33

Among congregational types, synagogues or temples affiliated with the Reform Movement represent the largest share of Jewish households (24%) in Greater St. Louis; two thirds of congregation-member households (66%) are members of synagogues affiliated with the Reform movement (Table

4.2). Six percent of Greater St. Louis households belong to a conservative synagogue, 4% belong to an Orthodox synagogue, and 3% belong to a Chabad.

Table 4.2. Type of local congregation membership

	All households (%)	Congregation-member households (%)
Any local congregation	36	100
Orthodox synagogue	4	10
Conservative synagogue	6	17
Reform synagogue or temple	24	66
Chabad	3	7
Independent <i>minyan</i> or <i>chavurah</i>	1	2
Other/No denomination synagogue	<1	<1
Something else	1	2

Note: Total exceeds 100 because respondents could select more than one option.

Religious services

Congregational membership is not a pre-requisite for attending services. In fact, a larger share of Greater St. Louis Jewish adults attend services than belong to congregations. Although 42% of Jewish adults reside in a congregation-member household, 64% attended at least one Jewish worship service in the previous year (Table 4.3). Twenty-one percent of Jewish adults attended services at least monthly, and just over half (53%) attended High Holiday services in 2023.

While all members of the Holiday, Communal, and Ritual engagement groups attended services at least once in the previous year, frequent attendance differed between the groups. While 20% of the Holiday and 28% of the Communal groups attended a Jewish service at least once per month, 91% of the Ritual group did so.

A large majority of Jewish adults ages 22-39 (81%) attended services at least once, a significantly higher share than in other age groups, but there is no significant age difference in highly frequent service attendance.

While there are not significant geographic differences concerning attending any service or a High Holiday service, the same share of Jewish adults living in U. City/Clayton and Olivette/Ladue (31%) attend services at least monthly, compared to 9% living in the Rest of Greater St. Louis region.

Nearly all congregation members (96%) attended services at least once, as did 41% of Jewish adults who are not members. One quarter of non-members attended a High Holiday service in 2023.

As in Greater St. Louis, 64% of Jewish adults in the CDS attended services at least once in the previous year; 19% did so at least once per month.

Table 4.3. Jewish worship services during past year

	Services during past year, ever (%)	Services during past year, monthly or more (%)	High Holidays, 2023 (%)
All Jewish adults	64	21	53
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	7	0	<1
Personal	41	5	1
Holiday	100	20	100
Communal	100	28	99
Ritual	100	91	95
Age			
22-39	81	32	66
40-54	56	15	50
55-64	54	17	43
65-74	68	24	55
75+	64	25	58
Region			
St. Louis City	69	13	50
U. City / Clayton	72	31	64
Chesterfield / West County	71	21	62
Olivette / Ladue	56	31	45
Creve Coeur area	68	28	54
Rest of Greater STL	51	9	42
Relationship status			
Inmarried	83	34	73
Intermarried	42	8	28
Not married	63	19	50
Parent of minor child			
No	63	20	53
Yes	71	26	54
Congregation member			
No	41	4	25
Yes	96	45	88

The majority of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis feel comfortable seeking guidance from a rabbi or another Jewish clergy (Table 4.4). Two thirds feel comfortable with someone in the local community, including 54% who feel comfortable with someone only in Greater St. Louis and 12% who feel comfortable with someone both inside and outside Greater St. Louis. Three percent of Jewish adults only feel comfortable with someone outside Greater St. Louis.

While nearly all of the Communal and Ritual engagement groups feel comfortable seeking guidance from a member of Jewish clergy, nearly half of the Ritual group (48%) feel comfortable seeking guidance from a rabbi or clergy member both inside and outside Greater St. Louis, compared to 19% of the Communal group.

Among the age groups, the 22 to 39-year-olds are most flexible with where they will seek the guidance of a clergy member. Twenty-five percent of this group are comfortable seeking guidance from a clergy member inside and outside of Greater St. Louis. The remaining age groups primarily prefer to seek guidance from a clergy member inside the area.

Table 4.4. Comfort seeking guidance from rabbi or other Jewish clergy

	No (%)	In Greater St. Louis (%)	Outside Greater St. Louis (%)	Both in and outside Greater St. Louis (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	31	54	3	12	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	65	34	1	<1	100
Personal	45	47	5	3	100
Holiday	17	68	4	12	100
Communal	4	71	6	19	100
Ritual	8	43	2	48	100
Age					
22-39	15	53	7	25	100
40-54	37	52	5	7	100
55-64	36	57	0	7	100
65-74	33	52	3	12	100
75+	34	59	2	6	100
Region					
St. Louis City	28	50	6	17	100
U. City / Clayton	29	47	3	20	100
Chesterfield / West County	29	62	1	9	100
Olivette / Ladue	23	55	8	14	100
Creve Coeur area	34	55	2	9	100
Rest of Greater STL	45	49	<1	6	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	17	59	4	20	100
Intermarried	38	57	2	2	100
Not married	44	40	4	13	100
Parent of minor child					
No	33	51	3	12	100
Yes	26	55	4	14	100
Congregation member					
No	50	42	4	3	100
Yes	9	65	2	24	100

Shabbat, holidays, and rituals

In the past year, more than half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis marked Shabbat in some way (Table 4.5). About one quarter, 27%, marked Shabbat occasionally, and 11% did so at least monthly, but less than every week. Twenty-two percent marked Shabbat every week or almost every week.

Marking Shabbat every week is more common among adults in the Ritual engagement group (86%), compared to about one quarter of those in the Holiday (26%) or Communal (24%) engagement groups. Larger shares adults in congregation-member households marked Shabbat weekly (43%) than did non-members (7%).

In the CDS, 52% of Jewish adults marked Shabbat at least once during the previous year.

Table 4.5. Frequency of marking Shabbat during past year

	Never (%)	Occasionally (%)	At least once a month (%)	Every week or almost every week (%)	Total
All Jewish adults	41	27	11	22	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	96	4	0	0	100
Personal	42	43	6	9	100
Holiday	21	38	16	26	100
Communal	9	46	21	24	100
Ritual	<1	5	9	86	100
Age					
22-39	25	23	15	37	100
40-54	37	39	3	21	100
55-64	53	22	8	17	100
65-74	45	27	7	21	100
75+	44	32	10	14	100
Region					
St. Louis City	32	35	15	17	100
U. City / Clayton	34	23	11	31	100
Chesterfield / West County	29	37	6	27	100
Olivette / Ladue	38	27	6	29	100
Creve Coeur area	42	24	7	26	100
Rest of Greater STL	61	20	8	10	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	22	30	9	39	100
Intermarried	63	22	8	6	100
Not married	39	32	12	17	100
Parent of minor child					
No	41	27	12	20	100
Yes	33	31	5	31	100
Congregation member					
No	60	25	8	7	100
Yes	13	32	12	43	100

Adults identified multiple ways that they marked Shabbat in person or online, including ritual, communal, and educational activities (Table 4.6). The three most common ways that Greater St. Louis Jewish adults marked Shabbat included lighting candles (45% of all Jewish adults; 76% of Shabbat-marking adults), spending time with family and friends (42% of all Jewish adults), and eating a special meal (40% of all Jewish adults). The 2% of Jewish adults who marked Shabbat in other ways recited prayers or blessings, took a break from work, and sent messages to loved ones.

Table 4.6. Shabbat mark activities, past year

	All Jewish adults (%)	Jewish adults that marked Shabbat (%)
Marked Shabbat	59	100
Light Shabbat candles	45	76
Spend time with family or friends	42	71
Eat special meal	40	67
Attend religious services	26	43
Jewish learning or reading	14	24
Attend Shabbat program other than service	13	23
Meditation or spiritual practice	12	21
Other	2	4

Note: Total exceeds 100 because respondents could select more than one option.

Most Jewish adults in the Greater St. Louis area observe at least one Jewish holiday or ritual (Table 4.7). Eighty percent lit Hanukkah candles in 2023, 70% attended or hosted a Passover seder in 2023, and 44% fasted on Yom Kippur in 2023. About one third of Jewish adults (31%) follows any of the kosher rules.

Nearly all Jewish adults ages 22-39 (92%) and ages 40-54 (93%) lit Hanukkah candles. A similar share of adults ages 22-39 participated in a seder (88%), but for those ages 40-54, 68% participated in a seder. The youngest age cohort includes the largest share (49%) who follow any kosher rules, compared to fewer than one third among all other age groups.

Despite not belonging to a congregation, nearly three quarters (72%) of non-members lit Hannukah candles, over half (54%) participated in a Passover seder, and over one quarter (27%) fasted for at least part of Yom Kippur.

Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis participate in holidays at similar rates as in the CDS, where 81% lit Hanukkah candles, and 71% attended a seder.

Table 4.7. Holidays and rituals

	Hanukkah candles 2023 (%)	Seder 2023 (%)	Fasted on Yom Kippur 2023* (%)	Follow any kosher rules (%)
All Jewish adults	80	70	44	31
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	46	22	1	5
Personal	86	60	35	20
Holiday	94	95	67	43
Communal	97	99	47	39
Ritual	93	98	89	73
Age				
22-39	92	88	56	49
40-54	93	68	55	31
55-64	69	57	33	20
65-74	75	70	42	30
75+	69	66	30	19
Region				
St. Louis City	83	71	45	33
U. City / Clayton	78	76	52	43
Chesterfield / West County	82	80	52	29
Olivette / Ladue	88	72	47	32
Creve Coeur area	78	67	40	28
Rest of Greater STL	85	61	33	27
Relationship status				
Inmarried	94	88	57	46
Intermarried	78	50	30	12
Not married	66	66	42	33
Parent of minor child				
No	79	68	41	31
Yes	88	79	53	30
Congregation member				
No	72	54	27	16
Yes	94	92	66	53

*An additional 10% of Jewish adults did not fast for medical reasons.

CHAPTER 5. JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES

Chapter highlights

- About one quarter of Jewish households (24%) belong to the J, St. Louis' Jewish community center. Membership in the J is highest in the Creve Coeur area, Olivette/Ladue, and Chesterfield/West County.
- In the year prior to the study, about two thirds of Jewish adults (68%) participated in at least one Jewish sponsored program, including 22% who participated rarely, 31% who participated sometimes, and 16% who participated often. The remaining third of Jewish adults (32%) did not participate in any Jewish program.
- Among Jewish adults who never participated in Jewish programs within the past year, nearly one quarter were “somewhat” (22%) or “very much” (1%) interested in participating in programs sponsored by the Greater St. Louis Jewish community. The 39% of non-participants who were not at all interested in Jewish programs comprise 12% of the entire adult Jewish community in Greater St. Louis.
- Among the 88% of Jewish adults who either already participate or are interested in participating in Jewish programs, 72% cite at least one condition that limits their participation. The most common barriers to participation are not knowing many people (31%), programs not occurring during convenient times (30%), and not having found Jewish programs of interest (28%).
- Larger shares of Jewish adults under age 65 cite barriers to Jewish involvement than did older adults, including 84% of adults ages 22-39, 81% of adults ages 40-54, and 78% of adults ages 55-64.
- Almost half of Jewish adults who have moved to Greater St. Louis in the past five years (48%) cite not knowing many people as a barrier to their participation in Jewish programs, compared to 31% of all Jewish adults.
- In Greater St. Louis, 95% of Jewish adults had discussed Jewish topics with family or friends in the past year. Ninety percent ate Jewish foods aside from Shabbat and holiday meals. Additionally, 89% read Jewish publications, including articles, magazines, and newsletters from a Jewish organization. Eighty-five percent read books, watched movies or TV, or listened to music that was Jewish-focused. Fifty-five percent studied or learned Jewish texts.
- Jewish younger adults had more Jewish social media interactions than Jewish older adults, with 82% of Jewish adults ages 22-39 having at least one such interaction.

Membership in Jewish organizations

Members of the Greater St. Louis Jewish community belong to a wide range of Jewish organizations and groups. About one quarter of Jewish households (24%) belong to the J, St. Louis' Jewish community center (Table 5.1). Twenty percent of Jewish households belong to a Jewish organization aside from a congregation or the J, and 10% belong to an informal Jewish group in the area.

The Communal engagement group includes the highest share of households that belong to the J (45%), a Jewish organization (71%), and an informal Jewish group (41%). Membership in the J is highest in the Creve Coeur area, Olivette/Ladue, and Chesterfield/West County, all areas that are closest to the J's two physical campuses.

While larger shares of inmarried households belong to the J and to other Jewish organizations compared to intermarried and single households, similar shares of all types of households belong to informal Jewish groups.

In the CDS, as in Greater St. Louis, 20% of Jewish households are members of a Jewish organization aside from a congregation or JCC.

Table 5.1. Membership in Jewish organizations aside from congregations

Member of the J (%)		Member of any Jewish organization (%)	Member of informal or grassroots Jewish group in Greater St. Louis (%)
All Jewish households		24	10
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	15	4	<1
Personal	14	19	5
Holiday	33	15	9
Communal	45	71	41
Ritual	23	20	20
Age			
22-39	33	27	23
40-54	25	15	6
55-64	16	9	4
65-74	28	21	9
75+	28	38	11
Region			
St. Louis City	10	17	17
U. City / Clayton	13	25	7
Chesterfield / West County	30	23	8
Olivette / Ladue	33	24	7
Creve Coeur area	41	20	12
Rest of Greater STL	23	12	3
Relationship status			
Inmarried	34	31	15
Intermarried	15	15	6
Not married	25	16	10
Parent of minor child			
No	24	21	11
Yes	24	17	7

Examples of informal and grassroots Jewish groups that households belong to include book clubs, study groups or classes, or a minyan or chavurah (Table 5.2). Many respondents indicated that their informal groups operate under the auspices of an organization, such as a chavurah or book club sponsored by a congregation.

Table 5.2. Informal or grassroots Jewish groups

	Number of responses
Under organizational auspices	95
Book club	84
Study group or class	50
Minyan or chavurah	47
Family and friends	41
Something else	70

Participation in Jewish-sponsored programs

In the year prior to the survey, 22% of Jewish adults participated in at least one Jewish-sponsored program rarely, 31% participated sometimes, and 16% participated often (Table 5.3). The remaining third of Jewish adults (32%) did not participate in any Jewish program.

Nearly all members of the Communal and Ritual engagement groups participated in Jewish programs. However, only 12% of Jewish adults in the Minimally Involved group participated in any program, including only 5% who participated sometimes or 1% who participated often.

Significantly greater shares of Jewish adults ages 22-39 (28%) and ages 75 and older (22%) participated in programs often, compared to Jewish adults in other age groups.

Table 5.3 Frequency of Jewish program participation, past year

	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	32	22	31	16	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	88	6	5	1	100
Personal	25	39	29	7	100
Holiday	19	35	39	7	100
Communal	1	5	38	56	100
Ritual	2	23	31	44	100
Age					
22-39	13	29	30	28	100
40-54	28	26	36	10	100
55-64	50	26	17	7	100
65-74	33	23	30	14	100
75+	37	15	27	22	100
Region					
St. Louis City	26	30	30	13	100
U. City / Clayton	31	20	25	25	100
Chesterfield / West County	31	18	33	18	100
Olivette / Ladue	36	14	30	19	100
Creve Coeur area	33	29	25	13	100
Rest of Greater STL	28	27	34	11	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	18	26	30	26	100
Intermarried	45	24	25	5	100
Not married	35	20	32	14	100
Parent of minor child					
No	32	21	29	17	100
Yes	30	23	35	12	100

Among the third of Jewish adults who never participated in Jewish programs within the past year, nearly one quarter were “somewhat” (22%) or “very much” (1%) interested in participated in programs sponsored by the Greater St. Louis Jewish community (Figure 5.1). The 39% of non-participants who are not at all interested in Jewish programs represent 12% of the entire adult Jewish community in Greater St. Louis; that is, 88% of Jewish adults either already participate in Jewish programs or express at least a little interest in doing so.

Figure 5.1. Interest in programs sponsored by Greater St. Louis Jewish community (% Jewish adults who never participated in Jewish program)



Limits to participation

Among the 88% of Jewish adults who either already participate or are interested in participating in Jewish programs, 72% cite at least one condition that limits their participation (Tables 5.4a and 5.4b). The most common barriers to Jewish participation are not knowing many people (31%), programs not occurring during convenient times (30%), and not having found Jewish programs of interest (28%). Eighteen percent of Jewish adults find that programs are not in a convenient location, 12% can't afford programs, 12% are not confident in their Jewish knowledge, 10% are concerned about safety or security, 9% feel unwelcome, and 5% experienced a lack of accessibility.

Six percent of Jewish adults who participate or are interested in participating in Jewish programs cite some other barrier to participation. Examples of these include health issues, caring for children or other relatives, and involvement with non-Jewish activities.

Among engagement groups, 85% of adults in the Personal group and 79% of those in the Holiday group cite at least one limitation to participation. Larger shares of Jewish adults younger than age 65 cite barriers to participation compared to older adults (84% of Jewish adults ages 22-39, 81% of Jewish adults ages 40-54, and 78% of Jewish adults ages 55-64). Almost all Jewish adults residing in St. Louis City (94%) cite at least one barrier to participation, significantly higher than those in any other region.

Overall, similar shares of Jewish adults who already participate in Jewish programs and those who are interested in participating in Jewish programs express barriers to their participation. However, they differ on which barriers they consider to be a bigger obstacle. For those interested in Jewish programs, not yet having found a Jewish program of interest is cited by 49% of this group. Not surprisingly, among those who already participate in Jewish programs, only 22% cite this concern. Additional concerns among the interested but not participating group include not being confident in their Jewish knowledge and the accessibility of programs. Participants in Jewish programs are more likely to cite location and affordability as barriers to participation.

Table 5.4a. Barriers to participation in programs sponsored by Greater St. Louis Jewish community

	Any limitation (%)	Don't know many people (%)	Times are not convenient (%)	Haven't found Jewish programs of interest (%)	Location not convenient (%)	Can't afford (%)
Participating or interested Jewish adults	72	31	30	28	18	12
Jewish engagement						
Minimally Involved	--	--	--	--	--	--
Personal	85	33	29	33	22	19
Holiday	79	40	39	33	25	12
Communal	60	13	28	9	18	7
Ritual	64	16	27	12	14	20
Age						
22-39	84	42	40	28	25	21
40-54	81	27	28	34	27	15
55-64	78	36	27	32	11	10
65-74	58	19	25	20	13	9
75+	56	14	15	20	10	7
Region						
St. Louis City	94	39	37	39	30	19
U. City / Clayton	55	11	19	20	9	5
Chesterfield / West County	64	36	27	19	16	11
Olivette / Ladue	74	31	27	30	6	21
Creve Coeur area	71	33	34	29	15	10
Rest of Greater STL	79	23	20	27	27	13
Relationship status						
Inmarried	71	23	28	25	18	12
Intermarried	77	32	33	35	22	8
Not married	74	38	26	26	16	18
Parent of minor child						
No	70	30	27	25	16	15
Yes	84	32	31	36	24	9
Participant in Jewish-sponsored programs						
No, but interested	81	35	19	49	9	5
Yes	71	27	31	22	21	15

Table 5.4b. Barriers to participation in programs sponsored by Greater St. Louis Jewish community

	Not confident in Jewish knowledge (%)	Safety or security concerns (%)	Feel unwelcome (%)	Lack of accessibility (%)	Other (%)
Participating or interested Jewish adults	12	10	9	5	6
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	--	--	--	--	--
Personal	19	18	17	3	10
Holiday	10	8	8	3	6
Communal	1	15	3	2	5
Ritual	7	7	12	6	4
Age					
22-39	9	18	14	<1	7
40-54	16	8	16	1	4
55-64	16	10	5	4	6
65-74	8	8	3	5	4
75+	4	7	1	18	9
Region					
St. Louis City	8	14	11	2	8
U. City / Clayton	7	5	7	4	7
Chesterfield / West County	4	10	8	5	4
Olivette / Ladue	11	20	9	5	3
Creve Coeur area	8	9	4	8	5
Rest of Greater STL	32	6	15	3	4
Relationship status					
Inmarried	6	12	8	1	4
Intermarried	13	6	3	5	8
Not married	19	13	13	9	7
Parent of minor child					
No	10	11	9	6	5
Yes	14	9	8	<1	6
Participant in Jewish-sponsored programs					
No, but interested	20	14	6	10	6
Yes	9	10	10	3	6

Almost half of Jewish adults who have moved to Greater St. Louis in the past five years (48%) cite not knowing many people as a barrier to participation in Jewish programs, compared to 31% of Jewish adults overall (Table 5.5). Additionally, 37% of Jewish adults who have lived in Greater St. Louis between five to nine years cite not knowing many people as a barrier to participation. Notably, there are not statistically significant differences in feeling unwelcome by length of residence in Greater St. Louis.

Table 5.5. Barriers to participation in programs sponsored by Greater St. Louis Jewish community by number of years in Greater St. Louis

	Don't know many people (%)	Feel unwelcome (%)
Participating or interested Jewish adults	31	9
Length of residence		
0-4 years	48	17
5-9 years	37	7
10-19 years	16	10
20+ years	27	7

About half of financially struggling Jewish adults (51%) cite affordability as a barrier to participation in Jewish programs, significantly higher than more financially comfortable Jewish adults (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6. Financial barriers to participation in programs sponsored by Greater St. Louis Jewish community

	Can't afford (%)
Participating or interested Jewish adults	12
Financial situation	
Struggling	51
Have enough	7
Have some extra	7
Well-off	< 1

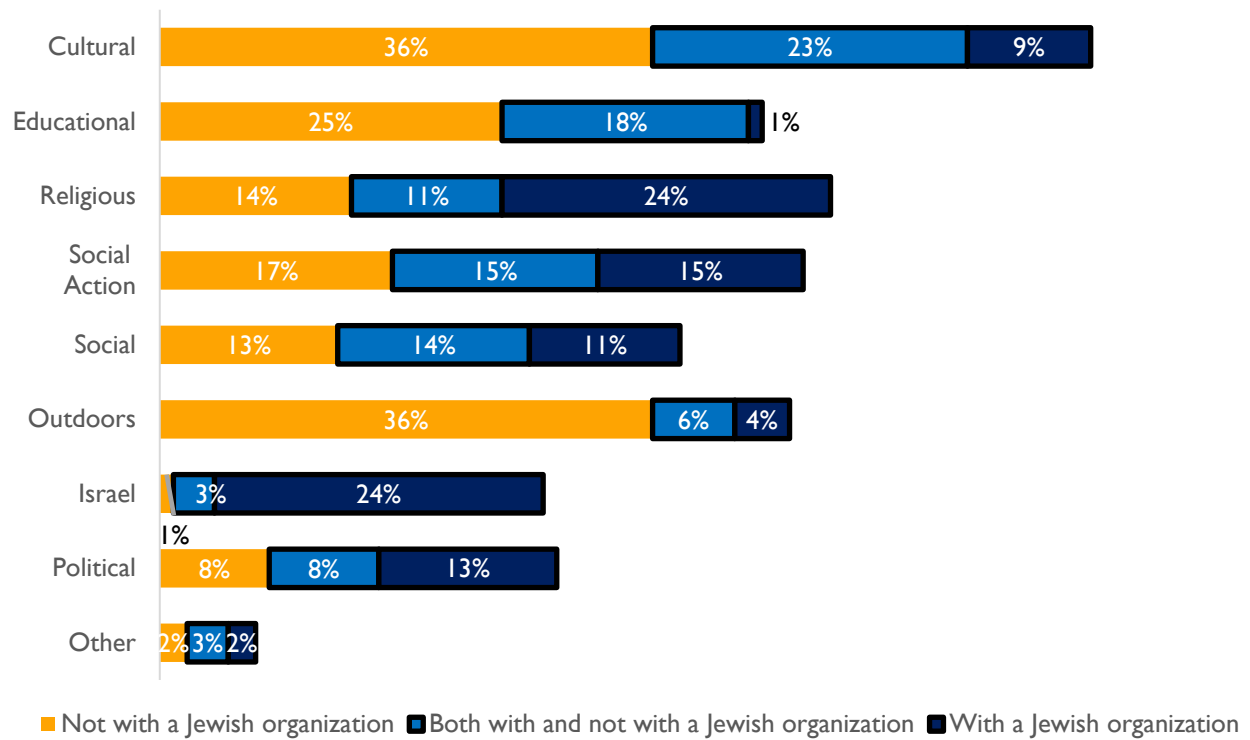
Program types and sponsorship

Members of the Greater St. Louis Jewish community participate in programs and activities both sponsored and not sponsored by the Jewish community (Figure 5.2, Tables 5.7a and 5.7b). The most commonly attended programs overall were primarily cultural ones, with 69% participating in cultural programs sponsored by Jewish or non-Jewish organizations. More than half of Jewish adults attended primarily educational programs, including 19% who attended ones sponsored by a Jewish organization. About half of Jewish adults (49%) attended primarily religious programs, including 35% who attended programs sponsored by Jewish organizations.

Twenty-eight percent of Jewish adults attended Israel-related programs, including 24% who attended programs exclusively sponsored by Jewish organizations and 3% who attended both those sponsored by Jewish organizations and those sponsored by non-Jewish organizations.¹⁵

Six percent of Jewish adults cite some other type of programs sponsored by Jewish organizations. Examples of these include programs for people with special needs and travel-based programs.

Figure 5.2. Sponsorship of programs or activities by type, past year (% Jewish adults)



While the Ritual engagement group has the largest share of groups with members attending most types of programs sponsored by a Jewish organization, the Communal group has the largest share who attended cultural (71%) and social action (87%) programs.

Table 5.7a. Types of programs or activities with a Jewish organization, past year

	Religious (%)	Educational (%)	Cultural (%)	Social Action (%)	Israel (%)
All Jewish adults	35	33	32	30	27
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	3	3	4	3	<1
Personal	23	21	31	19	26
Holiday	41	32	28	26	21
Communal	72	72	71	87	61
Ritual	83	75	63	64	70
Age					
22-39	57	45	47	43	38
40-54	35	30	29	30	28
55-64	22	20	22	24	22
65-74	32	41	37	32	28
75	28	36	34	31	20
Region					
St. Louis City	48	37	40	27	29
U. City / Clayton	45	37	36	39	35
Chesterfield / West County	38	32	35	38	24
Olivette / Ladue	31	34	29	36	33
Creve Coeur area	30	33	27	28	22
Rest of Greater STL	25	34	37	31	28
Relationship status					
Inmarried	51	45	40	45	42
Intermarried	18	18	25	18	12
Not married	36	36	36	28	25
Parent of minor child					
No	34	38	36	33	28
Yes	39	25	30	30	27

Table 5.7b. Types of programs or activities with a Jewish organization, past year

	Social (%)	Political (%)	Outdoors (%)	Other (%)
All Jewish adults	25	20	9	6
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	0	1	<1	1
Personal	13	22	3	4
Holiday	28	12	9	6
Communal	50	42	25	10
Ritual	55	53	32	21
Age				
22-39	56	25	19	12
40-54	16	19	6	1
55-64	11	17	4	3
65-74	16	22	14	12
75	17	16	9	8
Region				
St. Louis City	23	17	7	5
U. City / Clayton	27	28	13	3
Chesterfield / West County	19	15	14	8
Olivette / Ladue	30	35	13	15
Creve Coeur area	27	15	9	6
Rest of Greater STL	28	17	7	6
Relationship status				
Inmarried	37	27	15	10
Intermarried	15	9	4	4
Not married	19	22	9	4
Parent of minor child				
No	23	21	10	7
Yes	31	18	8	6

The St. Louis Jewish community includes many organizations that sponsor programs for its members (Table 5.8). Thirty-seven percent of Jewish adults participated in a program (not including religious services) sponsored by a congregation. Twenty-nine percent of Jewish adults participated in a program sponsored by the Jewish Federation of St. Louis, 27% participated in a program sponsored by the J, 17% participated in a program sponsored by a Chabad within Greater St. Louis, and 10% participated in a program sponsored by a Jewish young-adult organization.

A larger share of the Ritual engagement group attended congregation- (87%) and Chabad- (44%) sponsored programs than did other groups, whereas a larger share of the Communal group participated in Federation and other programs compared to other groups. Similar shares of the Communal and Ritual groups participated in programs at the J and young-adult organizations.

Larger shares of inmarried Jewish adults participated in programs sponsored by congregations (58%) and the Jewish Federation (40%) than among intermarried or unmarried adults.

Table 5.8. Jewish program sponsorship by organization, past year

	A congregation (aside from religious services) (%)	Jewish Federation of St. Louis (%)	The J (%)	Any Chabad in Greater St. Louis (%)	Jewish young-adult organization (%)	Another Jewish organization (%)
All Jewish adults	37	29	27	17	10	22
Jewish engagement						
Minimally Involved	6	9	8	6	5	7
Personal	17	19	24	12	6	27
Holiday	45	26	28	19	12	13
Communal	74	74	44	12	9	62
Ritual	87	44	40	44	12	30
Age						
22-39	58	36	32	32	34	33
40-54	38	31	28	15	n/a	21
55-64	26	22	15	5	n/a	14
65-74	39	31	32	18	n/a	21
75+	30	26	29	4	n/a	24
Region						
St. Louis City	37	28	21	14	13	31
U. City / Clayton	31	35	23	15	13	26
Chesterfield / West County	45	33	22	12	5	25
Olivette / Ladue	45	23	30	20	2	16
Creve Coeur area	44	28	31	13	3	18
Rest of Greater STL	32	24	33	30	17	17
Relationship status						
Inmarried	58	40	33	22	8	27
Intermarried	21	17	17	8	7	18
Not married	27	25	26	17	13	22
Parent of minor child						
No	35	30	27	15	12	24
Yes	47	27	29	21	2	20

Sources of information

Jewish adults access many sources of information about local Jewish activities, news, and events (Table 5.9). Fifty-seven percent of Jewish adults get their information about Jewish events from *The St. Louis Jewish Light* publication, and a similar share rely on family or friends for this information. Half of Jewish adults obtain this information from a Jewish organization's website, newsletter, or email. Thirty-five percent of Jewish adults get this information from a Jewish organization's social media.

Table 5.9. Sources of information about local Jewish activities, news, and events

	All Jewish adults (%)
The St. Louis Jewish Light	57
Family or friends	57
Jewish organization website, newsletter, or email	50
Jewish organization's social media	35

Note: Total exceeds 100 because respondents could select more than one option.

Individual Jewish activities

Jewish activities also include those that are not necessarily sponsored or facilitated by Jewish organizations, such as discussing Jewish topics, eat Jewish foods, or reading Jewish books (Tables 5.10a and 5.10b). In Greater St. Louis, 95% of Jewish adults discussed Jewish topics with family or friends in the past year, including 48% who did so often. Ninety percent of Jewish adults ate Jewish foods aside from Shabbat and holiday meals, including 31% who did so often. Additionally, 89% of Jewish adults read Jewish publications, including articles, magazines, and newsletters from a Jewish organization, including 39% who did so often. Eighty-five percent of Jewish adults read books, watched movies or TV, or listened to music that was Jewish-focused, including 25% who did so often. Fifty-five percent of Jewish adults studied or learned Jewish texts, including 11% who did so often.

Almost two thirds of Jewish adults ages 22-39 (65%) discussed Jewish topics with family and friends. Nearly all inmarried adults engaged in all of the Jewish activities at least once in the previous year, and for most of the activities, they did so often in a larger share than among intermarried or unmarried adults.

Table 5.10a. Individual Jewish activities, past year

	Talked with family or friends about Jewish topics		Ate Jewish foods, aside from Shabbat and holiday meals		Read Jewish publications including articles, magazines, and newsletters from a Jewish organization	
	Ever (%)	Often (%)	Ever (%)	Often (%)	Ever (%)	Often (%)
All Jewish adults	95	48	90	31	89	39
Jewish engagement						
Minimally Involved	84	16	69	4	63	3
Personal	98	53	97	25	98	55
Holiday	99	47	95	20	98	15
Communal	100	82	100	65	100	90
Ritual	100	68	100	75	100	92
Age						
22-39	96	65	93	42	95	41
40-54	99	41	95	22	91	40
55-64	88	40	83	26	85	35
65-74	96	44	91	36	91	45
75+	99	48	91	25	87	48
Region						
St. Louis City	98	60	92	38	92	43
U. City / Clayton	94	52	82	31	86	41
Chesterfield / West County	99	40	92	34	91	39
Olivette / Ladue	99	46	93	26	98	47
Creve Coeur area	91	52	93	26	87	37
Rest of Greater STL	93	29	92	19	90	34
Relationship status						
Inmarried	98	55	98	36	97	52
Intermarried	97	42	86	27	85	27
Not married	91	44	84	23	87	35
Parent of minor child						
No	95	48	90	29	91	41
Yes	96	49	92	31	89	38

Table 5.10b. Individual Jewish activities, past year

Read books, watched movies or TV, or listened to music or a podcast that is Jewish-focused			Studied or learned Jewish texts	
	Ever (%)	Often (%)	Ever (%)	Often (%)
All Jewish adults	85	25	55	11
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	51	6	15	0
Personal	100	27	54	3
Holiday	92	7	63	<1
Communal	100	62	78	19
Ritual	99	59	93	50
Age				
22-39	87	26	69	9
40-54	84	23	61	8
55-64	85	28	47	11
65-74	91	27	53	13
75+	86	25	40	8
Region				
St. Louis City	98	30	73	9
U. City / Clayton	79	29	41	13
Chesterfield / West County	88	31	56	8
Olivette / Ladue	85	19	52	7
Creve Coeur area	87	21	54	13
Rest of Greater STL	73	17	47	4
Relationship status				
Inmarried	95	32	65	14
Intermarried	75	18	45	5
Not married	84	21	50	6
Parent of minor child				
No	87	27	52	8
Yes	84	20	62	12

Sixty-four percent of Jewish adults had at least one Jewish social media interaction in the past year (Table 5.11). The most common social media interaction was reading or viewing content about Jewish life (62%). One third of Jewish adults (34%) belonged to an online group with Jewish content, and a similar share (33%) followed an influencer who posts content about Jewish life. Twenty-eight percent of Jewish adults posted about Jewish life on social media.

Younger adults had more Jewish social media interactions than older adults, with 82% of Jewish adults ages 22-39 having at least one Jewish interaction on social media, including 40% posting about Jewish life.

Table 5.11. Jewish social media use, past year

	Any Jewish social media interaction (%)	Read or view content about Jewish life on social media (%)	Belong to an online group with Jewish content (%)	Follow an influencer who posts content about Jewish life (%)	Post about Jewish life on social media (%)
All Jewish adults	64	62	34	33	28
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	31	29	5	5	7
Personal	71	68	35	39	23
Holiday	78	77	36	41	30
Communal	73	71	54	50	49
Ritual	75	63	48	52	36
Age					
22-39	82	77	49	56	40
40-54	73	73	39	45	35
55-64	55	54	24	25	18
65-74	56	51	28	20	22
75+	37	32	11	11	8
Region					
St. Louis City	75	72	35	43	47
U. City / Clayton	59	57	31	31	21
Chesterfield / West County	56	54	34	29	19
Olivette / Ladue	76	64	37	33	14
Creve Coeur area	55	52	32	30	21
Rest of Greater STL	70	69	26	39	26
Relationship status					
Inmarried	70	66	40	43	29
Intermarried	61	59	22	29	22
Not married	62	58	32	29	28
Parent of minor child					
No	63	60	31	31	28
Yes	69	64	36	43	26

CHAPTER 6. VOLUNTEERING AND PHILANTHROPY

Chapter highlights

- Over half of Jewish adults (55%) volunteered somewhere in the past year, with 12% volunteering exclusively for or with Jewish organizations, 22% volunteering exclusively for or with non-Jewish organizations, and 21% volunteering for or with both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations.
- Eighty percent of Jewish households made a charitable contribution in the past year. This share includes 54% who gave to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, 6% who gave only to Jewish organizations, and 19% who gave only to non-Jewish organizations.
- Larger shares of intermarried (26%) and unmarried (21%) households gave exclusively to non-Jewish organizations than did inmarried households (4%).
- Seventeen percent of Jewish households donated to a congregation or synagogue in Greater St. Louis. Sixteen percent of Jewish households donated to a Jewish school or camp in Greater St. Louis, while the same share donated to a Chabad in Greater St. Louis or to a Jewish organization focused outside of Greater St. Louis. Fifteen percent of Jewish households donated to a Jewish human services organization in Greater St. Louis, 14% to the J, and 12% to the Jewish Federation of St. Louis.
- Causes related to Jewish identity, education, and engagement were the most popular for volunteering or philanthropy among Jewish adults (46%). Jewish adults also care about causes related to general education (42%), social justice (41%), health and human services (40%), combating antisemitism or promoting Holocaust awareness and education (39%), congregations (38%), and Israel (34%).

Volunteering

In the Greater St. Louis Jewish community, over half (55%) of Jewish adults volunteered somewhere in the past year. This includes 12% who volunteered exclusively for or with Jewish organizations, 22% who volunteered exclusively for or with non-Jewish organizations, and 21% who volunteered for or with both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations (Table 6.1).

Among the engagement groups, the Communal group had the largest share that volunteered, with over half (57%) volunteering with both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations and another third (34%) volunteering exclusively with Jewish organizations. About one quarter each of Jewish adults in the Minimally Involved (25%), Personal (24%), and Holiday (25%) engagement groups volunteered with exclusively non-Jewish organizations. However, nearly three quarters of the Minimally Involved group (73%) did not volunteer at all.

Table 6.1. Volunteer activities, past year

	Yes, both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations (%)	Yes, Jewish organizations only (%)	Yes, non-Jewish organizations only (%)	Did not volunteer/Don't know (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	21	12	22	45	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	1	1	25	73	100
Personal	15	6	24	56	100
Holiday	22	7	25	46	100
Communal	57	34	2	7	100
Ritual	31	19	12	37	100
Age					
22-39	21	20	15	44	100
40-54	20	12	33	34	100
55-64	15	4	19	62	100
65-74	26	8	17	49	100
75+	27	14	13	47	100
Region					
St. Louis City	16	12	21	51	100
U. City / Clayton	28	13	20	39	100
Chesterfield / West County	27	14	17	43	100
Olivette / Ladue	22	7	25	45	100
Creve Coeur area	20	7	16	57	100
Rest of Greater STL	14	17	25	44	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	27	16	15	43	100
Intermarried	11	7	29	52	100
Not married	23	10	18	50	100
Parent of minor child					
No	22	13	20	45	100
Yes	19	8	28	45	100

Philanthropy

Within the Greater St. Louis Jewish community, 80% of households made a charitable contribution in the past year, including 60% who gave to at least one Jewish organization (Table 6.2). Fifty-four percent of Jewish households gave to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, 6% gave only to Jewish organizations, and 19% gave only to non-Jewish organizations. Nationally, 48% of US **Jewish adults** donated to any Jewish charity or cause in the past 12 months.¹⁶

Nearly all households in the Communal and Ritual engagement groups made at least one donation, although majorities of the other groups did so as well. A higher share of the Communal engagement households gave to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations (78%), whereas households in the

Ritual group had the largest share that gave exclusively to Jewish organizations (29%). The Minimally Involved households had the largest share that gave exclusively to non-Jewish organizations (39%).

Almost two thirds of inmarried households (65%) gave to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. Larger shares of intermarried (26%) and unmarried (21%) households gave exclusively to non-Jewish organizations.

Table 6.2. Charitable giving, past year

	Yes, to Jewish and non-Jewish organizations (%)	Yes, to Jewish organizations only (%)	Yes, to non-Jewish organizations only (%)	No charitable donations/Don't know (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish households	54	6	19	20	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	28	1	39	32	100
Personal	52	3	16	29	100
Holiday	61	5	13	21	100
Communal	78	17	<1	5	100
Ritual	68	29	1	2	100
Age					
22-39	51	12	13	24	100
40-54	54	6	15	26	100
55-64	44	4	28	24	100
65-74	60	6	17	17	100
75+	71	9	12	8	100
Region					
St. Louis City	50	2	21	28	100
U. City / Clayton	56	11	20	14	100
Chesterfield / West County	55	7	5	32	100
Olivette / Ladue	50	17	24	9	100
Creve Coeur area	54	6	19	21	100
Rest of Greater STL	59	4	15	21	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	65	10	4	21	100
Intermarried	55	1	26	18	100
Not married	42	10	21	27	100
Parent of minor child					
No	53	7	21	20	100
Yes	59	5	16	20	100

Among Jewish households, 17% donated between 1-24% of their charitable donations to Jewish organizations, and another 12% made between 25-49% of their giving to Jewish causes (Table 6.3). Ten percent of all households donated between 50-74% and 10% between 75-99% of all their giving

to Jewish organizations. As noted in Table 6.2 above, 6% of Jewish households made all of their donations to Jewish organizations.

Table 6.3. Percentage of charitable donations to Jewish organizations

	None or don't know (%)	1-24% (%)	25-49% (%)	50-74% (%)	75-99% (%)	100%	Total (%)
All Jewish households	45	17	12	10	10	6	100
Jewish engagement							
Minimally Involved	77	15	3	1	3	1	100
Personal	50	20	15	8	4	3	100
Holiday	41	18	14	11	11	5	100
Communal	9	7	14	33	20	17	100
Ritual	12	3	14	13	31	27	100
Age							
22-39	38	8	13	14	15	12	100
40-54	43	20	12	9	11	6	100
55-64	57	15	9	9	6	4	100
65-74	41	20	13	8	11	6	100
75+	33	17	11	14	15	10	100
Region							
St. Louis City	50	14	15	14	5	2	100
U. City / Clayton	42	12	11	12	11	11	100
Chesterfield / West County	41	15	12	15	11	7	100
Olivette / Ladue	39	17	11	10	8	16	100
Creve Coeur area	46	15	13	7	14	6	100
Rest of Greater STL	47	21	8	3	16	4	100
Relationship status							
Inmarried	28	13	14	17	19	10	100
Intermarried	48	23	14	8	5	1	100
Not married	57	10	8	7	8	10	100
Parent of minor child							
No	47	16	10	10	10	7	100
Yes	39	19	17	8	12	5	100

The types of Jewish organizations that received donations in the past year varied widely (Tables 6.4a and 6.4b). Seventeen percent of Jewish households donated to a congregation or synagogue in Greater St. Louis. Sixteen percent donated to a Jewish school or camp in Greater St. Louis, while the same share donated to a Chabad in Greater St. Louis or to a Jewish organization focused outside of Greater St. Louis. Fifteen percent of Jewish households donated to a Jewish human services organization in Greater St. Louis, 14% to the J, and 12% to the Jewish Federation of St. Louis.

Among engagement groups, the Communal and Ritual households had the largest shares who donated to various Jewish organizations. The Communal households had a larger share that

donated to congregations (42%), to Jewish schools or camps (35%), to Chabad (34%), and to Jewish organizations focused outside of Greater St. Louis (44%). The Ritual households had the largest share that donated to Jewish human service organizations (39%), to the J (37%), and to the Jewish Federation of St. Louis (29%).

Eleven percent of Jewish households donated to some other Jewish organization in St. Louis. Examples of these organizations include the Anti-Defamation League, WashU Hillel, the Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and the *St. Louis Jewish Light*.

Table 6.4a. Charitable donation by organization, past year

	Congregation or synagogue in Greater St. Louis (%)	Jewish school or camp in Greater St. Louis (%)	Chabad in Greater St. Louis (%)	Jewish organization focused outside Greater St. Louis (%)
All Jewish households	17	16	16	16
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	4	6	5	5
Personal	14	7	15	8
Holiday	14	23	16	15
Communal	42	35	34	44
Ritual	30	33	31	30
Age				
22-39	17	18	16	16
40-54	15	18	17	14
55-64	13	13	14	12
65-74	19	19	19	18
75+	27	22	21	23
Region				
St. Louis City	9	13	6	11
U. City / Clayton	18	18	20	19
Chesterfield / West County	22	22	22	21
Olivette / Ladue	18	14	17	15
Creve Coeur area	21	17	16	15
Rest of Greater STL	15	20	25	13
Relationship status				
Inmarried	25	31	27	22
Intermarried	13	13	11	12
Not married	12	9	12	14
Parent of minor child				
No	18	16	18	16
Yes	14	18	12	14

Table 6.4b. Charitable donation by organization, past year

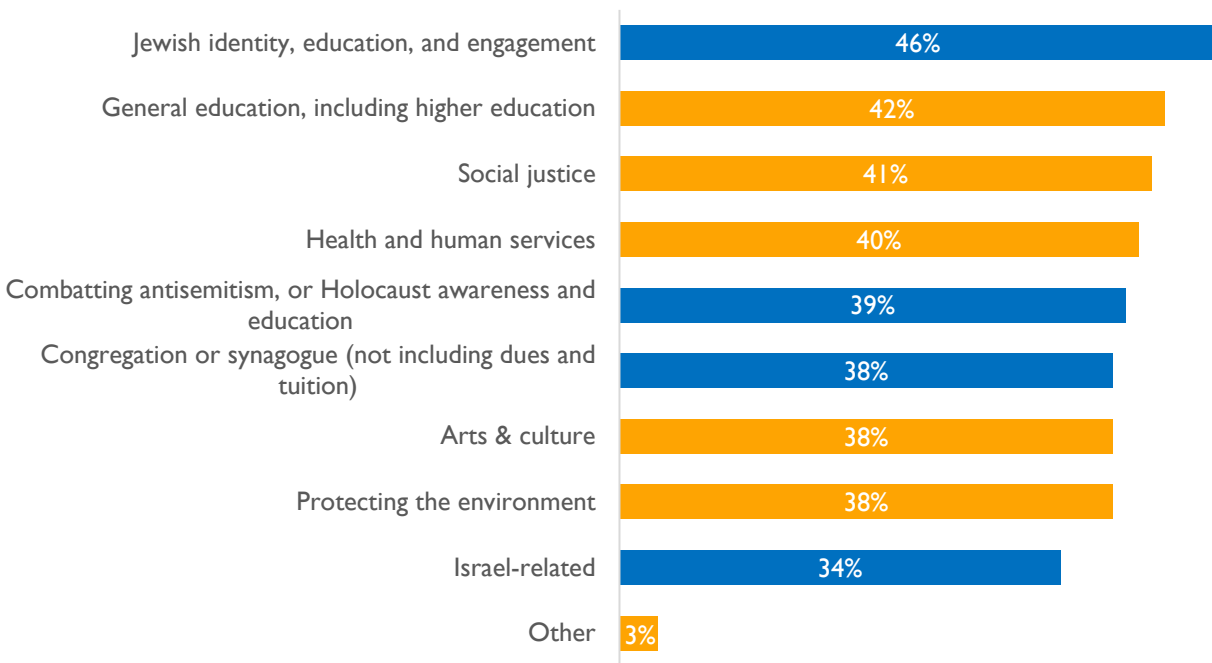
	Jewish human service organization in Greater St. Louis (%)	The J (%)	Jewish Federation of St. Louis (%)	Another Jewish organization in Greater St. Louis (%)
All Jewish households	15	14	12	11
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	4	3	<1	5
Personal	11	7	9	10
Holiday	15	19	12	9
Communal	30	28	28	35
Ritual	39	37	29	14
Age				
22-39	17	13	9	19
40-54	12	12	10	4
55-64	8	11	10	7
65-74	20	20	16	13
75+	21	23	21	24
Region				
St. Louis City	10	9	7	9
U. City / Clayton	30	12	18	13
Chesterfield / West County	15	23	21	11
Olivette / Ladue	10	16	15	14
Creve Coeur area	13	16	15	9
Rest of Greater STL	12	12	2	13
Relationship status				
Inmarried	23	26	23	16
Intermarried	9	7	5	9
Not married	14	11	12	9
Parent of minor child				
No	17	15	13	14
Yes	10	12	11	4

Causes of interest

Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis support a plethora of humanitarian, social, and Jewish causes (Figure 6.1). Causes related to Jewish identity, education, and engagement (46%) are the most popular for volunteering or philanthropy. Jewish adults also express interest in causes related to general education (42%), social justice (41%), health and human services (40%), combating antisemitism or promoting Holocaust awareness and education (39%), congregations (38%), and Israel (34%).

Three percent of Jewish adults supported some other cause with their time and money, such as animal welfare, political groups or campaigns, and recreational sports.

Figure 6.1. Causes of interest (% Jewish adults)



Note: Jewish-focused causes are shown in blue

For the most part, demographic groups support causes to a similar extent, with some exceptions (Tables 6.5a and 6.5b). There are some significant differences between the engagement groups. For example, members of the Holiday (56%), Communal (63%), and Ritual (55%) engagement groups more commonly support causes related to Jewish identity, education, and engagement. The Personal group prioritizes causes related to social justice (55%) and health and human services (50%). The Minimally Involved group most heavily supports causes related to Health and Human Services (25%) and arts and culture (25%). A larger share of the Communal group supports Israel-related causes (63%) compared to the other engagement groups.

Inmarried Jewish adults (57%) prefer causes related to Jewish identity, education, and engagement in larger shares than do intermarried (38%) and unmarried (42%) Jewish adults. Notably, support of other Jewish-focused causes does not differ based on relationship status.

Table 6.5a. Causes of interest

	Jewish identity, education, and engagement (%)	General education, including higher education (%)	Social justice (%)	Health and human services (%)	Combatting antisemitism, or Holocaust awareness and education (%)
All Jewish adults	46	42	41	40	39
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	33	34	8	25	29
Personal	35	41	52	50	44
Holiday	56	44	46	39	38
Communal	63	44	55	52	35
Ritual	55	46	48	47	42
Age					
22-39	52	28	35	42	35
40-54	49	49	46	36	37
55-64	45	52	37	39	37
65-74	47	41	45	42	39
75+	42	41	32	48	43
Region					
St. Louis City	48	49	44	47	34
U. City / Clayton	46	40	40	47	41
Chesterfield / West County	58	46	42	45	41
Olivette / Ladue	54	34	50	41	38
Creve Coeur area	40	37	31	34	32
Rest of Greater STL	39	36	37	29	44
Relationship status					
Inmarried	57	45	44	41	36
Intermarried	38	39	32	34	46
Not married	42	38	42	49	32
Parent of minor child					
No	45	40	39	44	38
Yes	52	44	44	34	41

Tale 6.5b. Causes of interest

	Congregation or synagogue (not including dues and tuition) (%)	Arts & culture (%)	Protecting the environment (%)	Israel-related (%)	Other (%)
All Jewish adults	38	38	38	34	3
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	37	25	30	23	3
Personal	35	45	29	30	2
Holiday	37	32	39	34	2
Communal	42	54	50	61	5
Ritual	46	47	49	33	5
Age					
22-39	33	51	41	32	2
40-54	35	38	34	31	1
55-64	35	27	35	32	4
65-74	45	34	39	39	8
75+	47	37	33	33	2
Region					
St. Louis City	36	43	42	37	3
U. City / Clayton	53	36	37	39	2
Chesterfield / West County	34	36	39	34	4
Olivette / Ladue	42	36	38	43	2
Creve Coeur area	33	30	31	26	2
Rest of Greater STL	33	47	38	26	4
Relationship status					
Inmarried	37	40	40	37	2
Intermarried	40	44	41	32	4
Not married	40	30	29	33	3
Parent of minor child					
No	42	41	36	35	4
Yes	30	28	39	31	<1

CHAPTER 7. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Chapter highlights

- Nearly one quarter of Jewish adults (24%) in Greater St. Louis very much feel a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live. By contrast, 13% of Jewish adults very much feel a sense of belonging to another Jewish community.
- Large majorities of Jewish adults living in Olivette/Ladue (93%), the Creve Coeur area (90%), and Chesterfield/West County (88%) feel at least some sense of belonging to a local Jewish community, compared to 60% of Jewish adults living in the Rest of Greater St. Louis region.
- Twenty-five percent of Jewish adults *only* feel some level of belonging to a Jewish community where they live, and 3% feel some level of belonging *only* to another Jewish community. Over half of Jewish adults (54%) feel at least some sense of belonging to Jewish communities both where they live and elsewhere, whereas 18% feel no sense of belonging to any Jewish community.
- The majority of Jewish adults feel part of at least one community anywhere within Greater St. Louis, whether Jewish or not. Just 10% of Jewish adults do not feel at all part of a local community.
- Sixteen percent of the Minimally Involved group do not feel at all connected to any local Jewish community, compared to 1-5% of the Holiday, Communal, and Ritual groups.
- Despite newcomers feeling part of at least one Jewish community to a similar degree as the rest of the Jewish population, a smaller share report having community with local friends (58%) or family (35%).
- Forty-four percent of Jewish adults feel part of a community in Greater St. Louis through a Jewish organization or group, such as a synagogue or minyan, The J, or a chavurah. Within this group, the Jewish organization or group is the primary or only local community for 13% of Jewish adults and is a secondary community for 32%.
- Among those who do not have a local Jewish community, most are not deeply interested in finding a Jewish community in Greater St. Louis. One third of Jewish adults (32%) are somewhat interested in finding a Jewish community, and 14% are very interested.

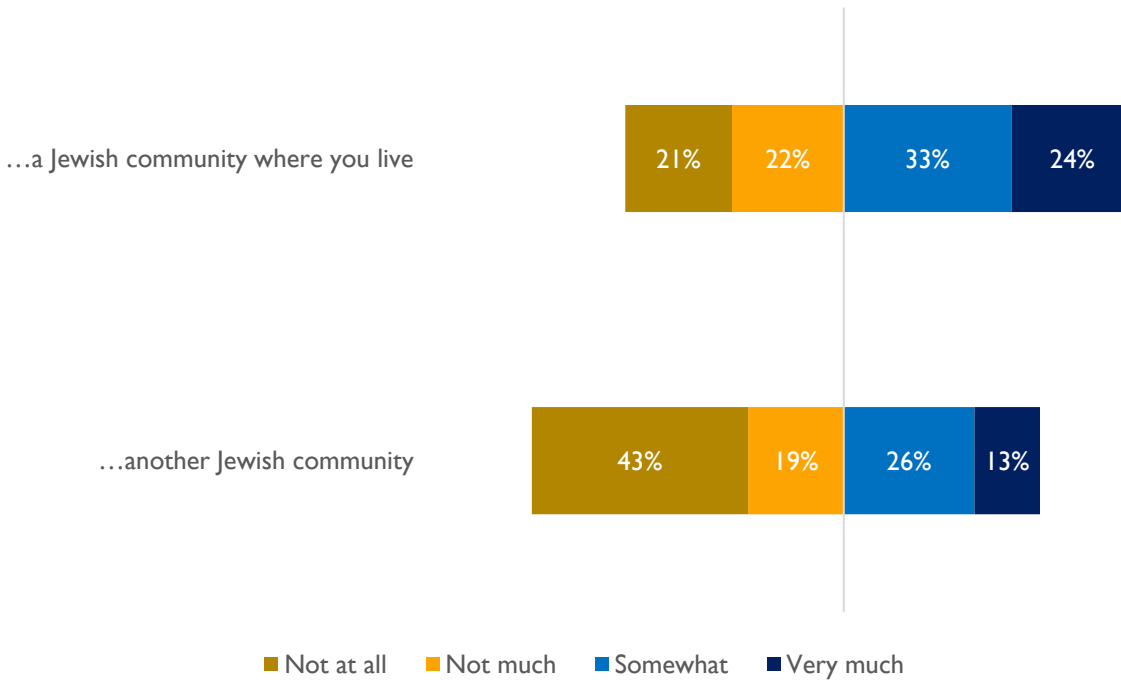
One goal of the *2024 Greater St. Louis Jewish Community Study* is to ascertain how and where Jews find connection in their lives, not only within specifically Jewish spaces, but also with other Jews in general or in non-Jewish spaces. Between family, friends, clubs, their children, Jewish organizations, and their neighborhoods, people have many options for fostering a feeling of community: defined in the study as a group people see regularly, to whom they feel emotionally connected, and who welcome, include, and value them.

Feelings of belonging to a Jewish community

Nearly one quarter of Jewish adults (24%) in Greater St. Louis very much feel a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live, and a similar share (21%) do not feel any sense of belonging

to a Jewish community where they live (Figure 7.1). Thirteen percent of Jewish adults very much feel a sense of belonging to another Jewish community.

Figure 7.1. Feel a sense of belonging to... (% Jewish adults)



Although the majority of Jewish adults feel a sense of belonging to one or more Jewish communities, there are noteworthy differences by Jewish engagement, age, family status, and geography (Table 7.1). Large majorities of Jewish adults living in Olivette/Ladue (93%), the Creve Coeur area (90%), and Chesterfield / West County (88%) feel at least some sense of belonging to a local Jewish community compared to 60% of Jewish adults living in the Rest of Greater St. Louis region.

While feelings of belonging to a local community do not differ by length of residence in Greater St. Louis, 83% of those who have lived in Greater St. Louis for 0-4 years feel a sense of belonging to another Jewish community, compared to about half of Jewish adults (48%) who have lived in Greater St. Louis for 20 years or longer.

Table 7.1. Feel a sense of belonging to...

...a Jewish community where you live			...another Jewish community	
	Any sense of belonging (%)	Very much (%)	Any sense of belonging (%)	Very much (%)
All Jewish adults	79	24	57	13
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	46	4	26	0
Personal	79	8	57	12
Holiday	95	23	62	14
Communal	98	54	81	20
Ritual	99	59	92	31
Region				
St. Louis City	78	18	66	15
U. City / Clayton	77	37	54	21
Chesterfield / West County	88	21	66	13
Olivette / Ladue	93	33	54	6
Creve Coeur area	90	22	55	10
Rest of Greater STL	60	19	52	10
Age				
22-39	94	39	72	12
40-54	76	13	62	12
55-64	77	15	51	9
65-74	73	24	49	15
75+	77	31	41	8
Relationship status				
Inmarried	91	35	72	16
Intermarried	65	12	41	6
Not married	82	21	56	15
Parent of minor child				
No	79	27	58	16
Yes	85	18	54	6
Length of residence				
0-4 years	82	35	83	25
5-9 years	81	27	57	7
10-19 years	85	30	81	15
20+ years	80	21	48	10

Overall, 25% of Jewish adults *only* feel some level of belonging to a Jewish community where they live, and 3% feel some level of belonging *only* to another community (Table 7.2). More than half of Jewish adults (54%) feel at least some sense of belonging to communities both where they live and elsewhere, whereas 18% of Jewish adults feel no sense of belonging to any Jewish community.

Similar shares of the Minimally Involved engagement group feel only a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live (22%) and to a Jewish community where they live and elsewhere (24%). For all other engagement groups, far larger shares feel belonging to Jewish communities where they live and elsewhere.

Few newcomers to Greater St. Louis—just 4%—feel only a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live, although 78% feel a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live and elsewhere. Among those who have lived in the area for 20 years or longer, 34% feel a sense of belonging where they live.

Table 7.2. Any sense of belonging to a Jewish community...

	Where you live (%)	Elsewhere (%)	Both where you live and elsewhere (%)	Nowhere (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	25	3	54	18	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	22	2	24	52	100
Personal	28	6	51	15	100
Holiday	37	3	58	2	100
Communal	18	2	80	< 1	100
Ritual	7	1	92	< 1	100
Region					
St. Louis City	18	6	60	16	100
U. City / Clayton	22	< 1	54	23	100
Chesterfield / West County	23	2	64	10	100
Olivette / Ladue	40	1	53	6	100
Creve Coeur area	37	3	52	8	100
Rest of Greater STL	16	6	45	34	100
Age					
22-39	24	2	70	4	100
40-54	22	8	54	16	100
55-64	28	1	49	22	100
65-74	26	2	47	26	100
75+	36	2	39	22	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	22	3	69	6	100
Intermarried	26	2	39	33	100
Not married	31	5	52	13	100
Parent of minor child					
No	23	2	56	19	100
Yes	32	5	53	10	100
Length of residence					
0-4 years	4	5	78	13	100
5-9 years	26	2	55	17	100
10-19 years	12	9	73	7	100
20+ years	34	2	46	19	100

Belonging to Jewish communities outside of Greater St. Louis

As noted in Figure 7.1, over half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis feel at least some sense of belonging to another Jewish community apart from where they live. These respondents were invited to share what kind of Jewish communities those were (Table 7.3). The most common response was

another specifically named Jewish community in the United States (190). Within that category, 50 further noted that the Jewish community was where they grew up, and another 20 mentioned a Jewish community that they had previously lived in as adults. Seventy-two respondents mentioned Israel or a city in Israel.

Many respondents listed organizations and groups connected to their childhoods as their source of community. The most common of these was a Jewish summer camp, mentioned by 77 respondents. A collegiate group such as Hillel, Chabad, or a Jewish fraternity/sorority was listed by 49 respondents. Another 29 respondents mentioned a Jewish educational institution, such as their former day school/yeshiva, part-time school, or youth group.

Congregations, including synagogues and Chabad houses, were sources of Jewish community mentioned by 115 respondents. Other Jewish organizations, such as JCCs, Israel advocacy groups, or national groups such as Hadassah, were mentioned by 89 respondents.

Many respondents mentioned personal connections as a source of Jewish community. Sixty described their Jewish community as being family living elsewhere, such as parents or adult children, 47 mentioned friends living elsewhere, and 30 mentioned an online community of Jews such as a Facebook group.

Other Jewish communities listed by 69 respondents included Jewish professional groups (e.g., clergy, educator), a demographic group (e.g., Israelis, queer Jews), study groups, the Jewish people as a whole, a political advocacy group, and respondents' now-adult children's Jewish educational institutions.

Table 7.3. Other Jewish communities

	Number of responses
Former home	
Somewhere else in the United States	190
Specifically from childhood	50
Specifically from adulthood	20
Israel	72
Childhood connections	
Jewish camp	77
College/graduate school	49
Other Jewish education	29
Organizations	
Congregation (synagogue, Chabad)	115
Jewish organization	89
Personal connections	
Family	60
Friends	47
Online community	30
Something else	69

Connections to local community and groups

To understand more about where people find their community, we consider the many types of local groups (Jewish and non-Jewish) to which people might feel connections. The majority of Jewish adults feel part of at least one community anywhere within Greater St. Louis (Table 7.4). Just 10% do not feel at all part of a local community, whereas 39% feel very much part of one.

Aside from differences by Jewish engagement—where 16% of the Minimally Involved group feel not at all connected, compared to 1-5% of the Holiday, Communal, and Ritual groups—there are no significant differences by other demographic groups. Notably, there are not differences by length of residence in Greater St. Louis.

Table 7.4. Feel part of a community in Greater St. Louis

	Not at all (%)	A little (%)	Somewhat (%)	Very much (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	10	21	30	39	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	16	28	29	27	100
Personal	10	21	30	39	100
Holiday	4	23	40	33	100
Communal	1	7	32	61	100
Ritual	5	15	25	55	100
Region					
St. Louis City	5	20	34	41	100
U. City / Clayton	8	17	25	49	100
Chesterfield / West County	8	30	29	33	100
Olivette / Ladue	6	12	38	43	100
Creve Coeur area	5	24	41	30	100
Rest of Greater STL	18	18	25	39	100
Age					
22-39	3	22	26	48	100
40-54	9	25	34	32	100
55-64	12	22	35	31	100
65-74	13	18	36	33	100
75+	6	15	35	43	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	4	15	36	45	100
Intermarried	12	21	34	34	100
Not married	9	29	26	37	100
Parent of minor child					
No	10	22	29	39	100
Yes	10	19	33	37	100
Length of residence					
0-4 years	5	34	21	40	100
5-9 years	2	40	22	36	100
10-19 years	7	12	34	46	100
20+ years	10	17	35	38	100

Where Jewish adults find community differs (Table 7.5). About three quarters of Jewish adults (77%) find community among their friends. This share includes 13% of Jewish adults whose friends are their only community, 44% whose friends are their primary community out of the multiple they belong to, and 20% whose friends are one of their communities, but not their primary or only one (referred to as a “secondary” community). For all groups other than friends, more Jewish adults consider them secondary rather than primary communities.

Among parents of minor children, 54% are part of a community connected to their children’s activities or schools (this represents 15% of all Jewish adults, including non-parents), but for most of these parents it is their secondary community.

Examples of other communities where Jewish adults find community include work or professional affinity groups (e.g., a bar association), identity groups (e.g., LGBTQ+), and school or university alumni networks.

Additionally, 61% of Jewish adults report their families as one of their communities in Greater St. Louis, although the study did not distinguish primary community from secondary for families.

Table 7.5. Groups where Jewish adults find community (% Jewish adults)

	Part of this community (%)	Only community (%)	Primary community, of multiple (%)	Secondary community (%)
Friends	77	13	44	20
Family	61	*	*	*
Children’s activities or school (of parents)	54	1	10	43
Jewish organization or group	44	4	8	32
Club, interest group, or activity	34	2	6	26
Neighborhood or town	30	2	2	25
Something else	10	1	3	6

Despite newcomers feeling part of at least one Jewish community to a similar degree as the rest of the Jewish population (Table 7.4 above), a smaller share report having community with local friends (58%) or family (35%) (Table 7.6).

Larger shares of Jewish adults living in U. City/Clayton and Olivette/Ladue (43% each) feel part of a community in their neighborhood or town, compared to Jewish adults living elsewhere—especially those living in the Rest of Greater St. Louis (13%).

Table 7.6. Groups where Jewish adults find community (% Jewish adults)

	Friends (%)	Family (%)	Children's activities or school (parents) (%)	Club, interest group, or activity (%)	Neighborhood or town (%)	Something else (%)
All Jewish adults	77	61	54	34	30	10
Jewish engagement						
Minimally Involved	63	61	--	27	22	6
Personal	83	57	--	34	38	12
Holiday	80	66	34	38	23	11
Communal	88	73	--	49	30	5
Ritual	65	50	--	29	39	5
Region						
St. Louis City	76	46	--	34	27	21
U. City / Clayton	80	57	--	36	43	2
Chesterfield / West County	78	69	--	28	25	4
Olivette / Ladue	74	64	--	25	43	10
Creve Coeur area	77	72	--	39	22	9
Rest of Greater STL	69	70	--	41	13	1
Age						
22-39	75	62	53	28	27	18
40-54	81	58	62	43	32	6
55-64	74	68	--	30	25	7
65-74	74	61	--	29	29	5
75+	72	63	--	43	34	3
Relationship status						
Inmarried	77	69	59	33	27	5
Intermarried	76	55	--	34	33	18
Not married	77	58	--	37	27	4
Parent of minor child						
No	77	62	n/a	37	28	10
Yes	75	59	100	29	32	10
Length of residence						
0-4 years	58	35	--	29	18	15
5-9 years	85	36	--	27	30	9
10-19 years	84	67	--	43	30	15
20+ years	78	70	41	35	32	6

Local Jewish community and groups

Forty-four percent of Jewish adults feel part of a community in Greater St. Louis through a Jewish organization or group, such as a synagogue or minyan, The J, or a chavurah (Table 7.7). Within this group, the Jewish organization or group is the primary or only local community for 13% of Jewish adult and is a secondary community for 32%.

There are notable differences between engagement groups over the extent to which they have community through Jewish organizations or groups. While similar shares of the Holiday and Communal groups have a Jewish organization as their primary community in Greater St. Louis (12% and 13%), a larger majority of the Ritual group sees community with a Jewish organization as their primary community (55%).

Table 7.7. Part of community with Jewish organization or group in Greater St. Louis

Community with Jewish org (%)		Primary or only (%)	Secondary (%)
All Jewish adults		13	32
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	3	2	1
Personal	33	4	29
Holiday	58	12	47
Communal	81	13	68
Ritual	86	55	31
Region			
St. Louis City	44	8	36
U. City / Clayton	50	15	35
Chesterfield / West County	52	17	35
Olivette / Ladue	51	19	32
Creve Coeur area	46	16	30
Rest of Greater STL	38	8	30
Age			
22-39	65	22	42
40-54	44	8	36
55-64	31	12	20
65-74	45	14	31
75+	43	12	31
Relationship status			
Inmarried	66	20	46
Intermarried	24	3	21
Not married	41	14	27
Parent of minor child			
No	43	15	28
Yes	46	10	36
Length of residence			
0-4 years	56	29	28
5-9 years	44	5	39
10-19 years	57	11	47
20+ years	42	11	31

For those whose primary/only community in Greater St. Louis is not a Jewish organization or group, most have a primary/only community that includes at least some Jews (Table 7.8). Just 5% of these Jewish adults say that none, and 21% that hardly any, of the community members they are closest to are Jewish. Close to half of Jewish adults (46%) say that some of their closest community members are Jewish, another quarter (24%) say most of them are Jewish, and 3% that all of them are Jewish.

Table 7.8. About how many members of the community you are closest to are Jewish?

Jewish adults whose primary community is not a Jewish org. (%) ↓	
None of them	5
Hardly any of them	21
Some of them	46
Most of them	24
All of them	3
Total	100

To assess feelings of Jewish community belonging in Greater St. Louis, we created four categories based on Tables 7.4, 7.5, and 7.8, as displayed in Table 7.9.

1. Those whose primary type of community is a Jewish organization or group (13% of Jewish adults)
2. Those with another primary type of community, with membership that includes at least some Jews (59% of Jewish adults)
3. Those with another primary type of community, with membership that includes no or hardly any Jews (18% of Jewish adults)
4. Those who do not feel part of any community in Greater St. Louis (10% of Jewish adults)

Notably, despite having little involvement with Jewish life, 63% of the Minimally Involved engagement group have a community with at least some Jewish members, and 2% have a primary community with a Jewish organization. A majority of this engagement group, then, has some connection to a Jewish community, even though the group does not widely participate in many Jewish behaviors.

In the City of St. Louis, 37% of Jewish adults have a primary community that is not with a Jewish organization, with a membership that includes no or hardly any Jews. This is double the share (18%) of the Jewish adults overall. In the Rest of Greater St. Louis, 18% of Jewish adults feel they have no community in Greater St. Louis, more than in any other region.

Higher shares of Jewish younger adults feel a sense of belonging to communities with no or hardly any Jews: 26% of those ages 22-39 and 20% of those ages 40-54 feel a sense of belonging to communities with no or hardly any Jews, as compared to 9% of Jewish adults ages 65 and older.

Table 7.9. Categories of Jewish community belonging in Greater St. Louis

	Primary community is Jewish organization or group (%)	Other primary community, at least some members are Jewish (%)	Other primary community, none or hardly any are Jewish (%)	Not part of any community in Greater St. Louis (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	13	59	18	10	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	2	63	19	17	100
Personal	4	59	26	11	100
Holiday	12	67	17	4	100
Communal	13	77	7	1	100
Ritual	55	37	2	5	100
Region					
St. Louis City	8	50	37	5	100
U. City / Clayton	15	69	7	8	100
Chesterfield / West County	17	66	8	9	100
Olivette / Ladue	19	60	14	6	100
Creve Coeur area	16	71	7	5	100
Rest of Greater STL	8	56	18	18	100
Age					
22-39	22	49	26	3	100
40-54	8	63	20	9	100
55-64	12	63	13	12	100
65-74	14	63	9	13	100
75+	12	71	9	7	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	21	65	9	4	100
Intermarried	4	58	27	12	100
Not married	14	61	16	9	100
Parent of minor child					
No	15	57	19	10	100
Yes	10	65	16	10	100
Length of residence					
0-4 years	23	47	24	6	100
5-9 years	5	65	28	2	100
10-19 years	11	73	9	7	100
20+ years	12	64	15	10	100

The four categories of Jewish community in Greater St. Louis relate to the extent to which people feel a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live (Table 7.10; see also Figure 7.1 and Table 7.1 above). Nearly everyone whose primary community is a Jewish organization feels a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live, including 59% of them who very much feel a

sense of belonging. For those whose primary community is not a Jewish organization but includes at least some Jews, on the other hand, 26% very much feel a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live.

Table 7.10. Feel a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where you live

	Not at all (%)	Not much (%)	Somewhat (%)	Very much (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	21	22	33	24	100
Jewish community belonging					
Primary Jewish organization	2	6	32	59	100
Other primary, some Jewish members	12	18	44	26	100
Other primary, few Jewish members	35	39	23	4	100
No community	61	35	3	< 1	100

Interest in finding a Jewish community

Among those who do not have a local Jewish community—the 18% whose community has no or hardly any Jews plus the 10% without any local community—almost half have some interest in finding a Jewish community in Greater St. Louis: One third (32%) are somewhat interested, and 14% are very interested in finding a Jewish community (Table 7.11).

Table 7.11. Interest in finding a Jewish community in Greater St. Louis

	Jewish adults without Jewish community (%)
	↓
Not at all	24
A little	30
Somewhat	32
Very much	14
Total	100

Those who are not at all interested in finding a Jewish community were invited to share why not. Reasons include simply not being interested in a specifically Jewish community, not being interested in having community in general, and feeling that they do not fit in for demographic characteristics or political beliefs (not shown in table).

Those who are at least a little interested in finding a Jewish community were invited to share the reasons they have not yet found a Jewish community in Greater St. Louis, and 167 respondents provided answers (Table 7.12).

Table 7.12. Reasons for not finding a Jewish community in Greater St. Louis

	Number of responses
Have other priorities	32
Age or life stage	31
Don't fit in	29
Geographic barriers	28
Previous bad experience	27
Difficult socially	22
Another reason	38

The most common response is that people have other priorities, despite their interest in Jewish community. As one respondent wrote:

I'm pretty busy with my other life activities...where I've found a community like me.

Age or life stage is cited by 31 people. Two example responses include:

I have struggled to find a Jewish community that is close to my age.

I was much more involved as a young, single adult. After having a child shortly after we got married, my time and energy feel more limited.

Some respondents do not believe they fit in with what is being offered by the Jewish community:

I would be interested in a Jewish community that is more progressive, queer, nontraditional, and not focused on Israel. There are some groups where I've found this, but either their programming is sparse or not always what I'm interested in doing.

Folks don't easily identify me as Jewish so they don't include me. Even at a synagogue I attended with my non-Jewish husband, the rabbi only spoke to him. I have never felt 'Jewish enough' for other Jews.

Some respondents shared social challenges they have faced trying to find Jewish community:

I am not considered to be a part of the St. Louis Jewish community since I was not born here and have only lived here 33 years.

Can be siloed, hard to break into a new group, hard to make new friends.

Respondents also cite being a relatively new resident of the area, affordability concerns, and dissatisfaction with organizations they have tried out as additional reasons they have not found Jewish community.

CHAPTER 8. CONNECTIONS TO ISRAEL

Chapter highlights

- More than two thirds of Jewish adults feel some level of emotional attachment to Israel, with 35% feeling somewhat attached and 38% feeling very attached. Taken together, the proportion who are somewhat or very attached to Israel (73%) is a larger share than is found among all US Jewish adults (58%).
- More than half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis have been to Israel, including 24% who have visited once, 25% who have visited more than once, and 6% who have lived in Israel.
- Seventy percent of Jewish adults who are not all attached or not too attached to Israel have never visited. By contrast, among those who are very attached to Israel, 27% have never visited Israel.
- About half of Jewish adults ages 22-39 in Greater St. Louis have visited Israel on a Birthright trip.
- Eighty-eight percent of Jewish adults strongly agree with the statement “I consider it important that for Israel to be a democratic state,” and 76% strongly agree with “I consider it important that “Israel should exist as a refuge for the Jewish people, now and in the future.”
- Less than half of Jewish adults agree with the statement “I consider myself to be a Zionist,” (18% somewhat agree, and 27% strongly agree), while 19% were unsure or held no opinion.
- Almost one quarter of Jewish adults (22%) were unsure or held no opinion on the statement “I often feel my views about Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings,” while another quarter (24%) strongly disagree. Still, 28% of Jews ages 22-39 strongly *agree* with the statement, compared to 2-8% of older Jews.
- While across the political spectrum there is consensus that Israel should be a democratic state, there is more disagreement by political orientation regarding whether Israel should be a Jewish state and whether American Jews have the right to criticize Israel’s government.

It is impossible to write about Jewish life in 2024 without acknowledging the impact of the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel and the resultant war that, as of this writing, is still ongoing. Some members of the St. Louis Jewish community were directly affected, having lost loved ones and colleagues in the attacks and subsequent fighting. In the aftermath of October 7, the Jewish community nationally and locally have engaged in many internal and external debates about a number of related subjects—the conduct of the war; the meaning of Zionism, anti-Zionism and antisemitism; and the place of Israel within American Jewish life.

The *2024 Greater St. Louis Jewish Community Study* began interviews in early January 2024, three months after the Israel-Hamas war began, and completed the interviews in early April, just before the protest movement on US college campuses emerged on a large scale. The field period also coincided with the 2024 presidential primary election and ongoing primary campaigns for other statewide and federal offices (although the survey ended months before voting in those elections). The attitudes about Israel discussed in this chapter, and concerns about antisemitism discussed in

Chapter 9, therefore, reflect community members' opinions in the first months of 2024, and may have changed alongside events over the subsequent year.

Emotional attachment to Israel

More than two thirds of Jewish adults feel some level of emotional attachment to Israel, with 35% feeling somewhat attached and 38% feeling very attached (Table 8.1). Taken together, the proportion who are somewhat or very attached to Israel (73%) is more than is found among all US Jewish adults (58%).¹⁷

Differences in Israel attachment vary significantly across the Jewish engagement groups. Less than half of the Minimally Involved group are somewhat (25%) or very (15%) attached to Israel, compared to nearly all of the Ritual group, of whom 27% are somewhat attached, and 71% are very attached.

There are no meaningful differences in attachment to Israel by age. While half of inmarried Jews (52%) feel very attached to Israel, relatively similar shares of intermarried (31%) and single (25%) Jews feel as strongly.

About one quarter of Jewish adults who have never been to Israel feel not at all attached to it (26%). Another quarter who have never been feel very attached (24%). By contrast, just 1-4% of those who have previously traveled to Israel feel not at all attached.

Table 8.1. Emotional attachment to Israel

	Not at all attached (%)	Not too attached (%)	Somewhat attached (%)	Very attached (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	14	13	35	38	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	43	18	25	15	100
Personal	7	15	37	41	100
Holiday	4	12	47	37	100
Communal	2	20	31	47	100
Ritual	2	1	27	71	100
Region					
St. Louis City	15	24	31	30	100
U. City / Clayton	13	9	41	37	100
Chesterfield / West County	3	18	28	51	100
Olivette / Ladue	7	7	52	35	100
Creve Coeur area	13	11	39	37	100
Rest of Greater STL	25	9	22	44	100
Age					
22-39	16	10	34	40	100
40-54	12	20	31	38	100
55-64	18	13	27	41	100
65-74	14	10	39	37	100
75+	3	15	41	41	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	3	13	32	52	100
Intermarried	22	15	33	31	100
Not married	18	15	42	25	100
Parent of minor child					
No	14	13	38	35	100
Yes	9	16	28	46	100
Travel to Israel					
Never	26	18	31	24	100
Once	4	17	38	40	100
More than once	2	8	42	48	100
Lived in Israel	1	0	13	86	100

Travel to Israel

More than half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis have been to Israel, including 24% who have visited once, 25% who have visited more than once, and 6% who have lived in Israel (Table 8.2). The share of Greater St. Louis Jews who have been to Israel is higher than that among all US Jewish adults, of whom 45% have been to Israel.¹⁸

Israel travel varies significantly by Jewish engagement. About three quarters of the Minimally Involved engagement group (77%) have never been to Israel, compared with one quarter of the Ritual group (22%).

Larger shares of inmarried Jewish adults have traveled to Israel, compared to their intermarried counterparts. The majority of inmarried Jews have been to Israel, either once (32%), multiple times (32%), or have lived there (7%). Fewer than half of intermarried Jewish adults have been to Israel, on the other hand, whether it was once (22%), multiple times (12%), or having lived there (4%).

There is a strong and expected connection between travel to Israel and emotional attachment. Seventy percent of Jewish adults who are not all attached or not too attached to Israel have never visited. By contrast, among those who are very attached to Israel, just 27% have never been.

Table 8.2. Travel to Israel

	Never (%)	Once (%)	More than once (%)	Lived in Israel (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	44	24	25	6	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	77	11	11	1	100
Personal	45	24	25	7	100
Holiday	33	41	23	3	100
Communal	17	30	43	10	100
Ritual	22	9	51	17	100
Region					
St. Louis City	34	29	27	9	100
U. City / Clayton	37	14	37	12	100
Chesterfield / West County	36	38	23	3	100
Olivette / Ladue	39	16	39	5	100
Creve Coeur area	54	20	22	5	100
Rest of Greater STL	57	32	11	1	100
Age					
22-39	28	28	34	10	100
40-54	42	33	17	8	100
55-64	52	20	24	4	100
65-74	54	19	23	4	100
75+	39	27	31	3	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	29	32	32	7	100
Intermarried	62	22	12	4	100
Not married	44	18	31	8	100
Parent of minor child					
No	43	25	27	5	100
Yes	47	23	25	8	100
Connection to Israel					
Not at all/not too attached	70	20	10	0	100
Somewhat attached	38	27	32	2	100
Very attached	27	26	33	14	100

Greater St. Louis Jewish adults have traveled to Israel on a range of types of organized trips, including Birthright Israel (31% of age-eligible participants), a mission or Jewish organization-sponsored tour (19%), an educational trip lasting shorter than six months (15%) or longer than six months (5%), or another kind of trip (29%) (Table 8.3).

About half of Jewish adults ages 22-39 in Greater St. Louis participated in Birthright Israel.

Table 8.3. Types of trips to Israel

	Birthright (age < 52) (%)	Mission or tour sponsored by Jewish org. (%)	Educational program or volunteer trip < 6 months (%)	Educational program or volunteer trip > 6 months (%)	Other kind of trip (%)
All Jewish adults	31	19	15	5	29
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	--	2	8	0	16
Personal	--	10	7	6	30
Holiday	36	25	20	2	26
Communal	--	50	33	3	44
Ritual	--	25	19	28	53
Region					
St. Louis City	--	19	19	2	27
U. City / Clayton	--	28	24	6	40
Chesterfield / West County	--	18	10	7	34
Olivette / Ladue	--	19	9	13	43
Creve Coeur area	--	19	14	2	30
Rest of Greater STL	--	14	15	8	8
Age					
22-39	51	24	24	9	26
40-54	10	17	8	7	31
55-64	n/a	16	20	3	28
65-74	n/a	13	7	7	31
75+	n/a	28	8	1	41
Relationship status					
Inmarried	33	29	19	10	36
Intermarried	31	6	9	2	15
Not married	--	19	18	3	35
Parent of minor child					
No	36	22	16	5	31
Yes	26	14	14	7	29
Travel to Israel					
Once	51	22	9	5	39
More than once	48	46	43	9	58
Lived in Israel	--	33	34	33	83
Connection to Israel					
Not at all/not too attached	--	8	6	0	16
Somewhat attached	44	20	16	5	30
Very attached	36	28	22	10	40

News about Israel

Nearly half of Greater St. Louis Jewish adults seek out news about Israel at least daily (Tables 8.4a and 8.4b). Twenty-two percent of Jewish adults seek out news about Israel once a day, and another 23% do so more than once a day. About half of the Ritual engagement group (49%) seek out news about Israel more than once a day, compared to 9% of the Minimally Involved engagement group.

Nearly three quarters of Jewish adults who previously lived in Israel (73%) seek out news about Israel more than once a day, compared to 16% of Jewish adults who have never traveled to Israel.

Table 8.4a. Seek news about Israel in past month

	Never (%)	Once or twice (%)	Once a week (%)	Every few days (%)	Once a day (%)	More than once a day (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	9	11	7	27	22	23	100
Jewish engagement							
Minimally Involved	25	25	3	33	5	9	100
Personal	1	5	13	29	22	29	100
Holiday	9	10	8	33	28	12	100
Communal	1	2	9	22	29	38	100
Ritual	<1	5	3	17	25	49	100
Region							
St. Louis City	8	13	9	36	16	18	100
U. City / Clayton	8	14	2	28	25	23	100
Chesterfield / West County	7	3	12	23	26	29	100
Olivette / Ladue	3	1	8	40	24	24	100
Creve Coeur area	14	17	7	20	22	20	100
Rest of Greater STL	9	11	8	26	17	29	100
Age							
22-39	8	12	10	35	13	22	100
40-54	12	7	12	26	19	24	100
55-64	11	14	6	23	17	29	100
65-74	8	11	6	27	27	21	100
75+	2	5	3	31	37	23	100
Relationship status							
Inmarried	6	5	7	25	24	33	100
Intermarried	11	11	11	33	23	11	100
Not married	10	19	6	30	16	19	100
Parent of minor child							
No	5	14	6	31	22	22	100
Yes	18	3	13	23	18	25	100

Table 8.4b. Seek news about Israel in past month

	Never (%)	Once or twice (%)	Once a week (%)	Every few days (%)	Once a day (%)	More than once a day (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	9	11	7	27	22	23	100
Travel to Israel							
Never	15	14	8	30	16	16	100
Once	8	5	14	30	27	16	100
More than once	<1	13	3	29	26	28	100
Lived in Israel	<1	<1	0	11	15	73	100
Connection to Israel							
Not at all/not too attached	25	20	9	36	6	5	100
Somewhat attached	1	14	11	35	32	7	100
Very attached	4	2	4	18	22	51	100

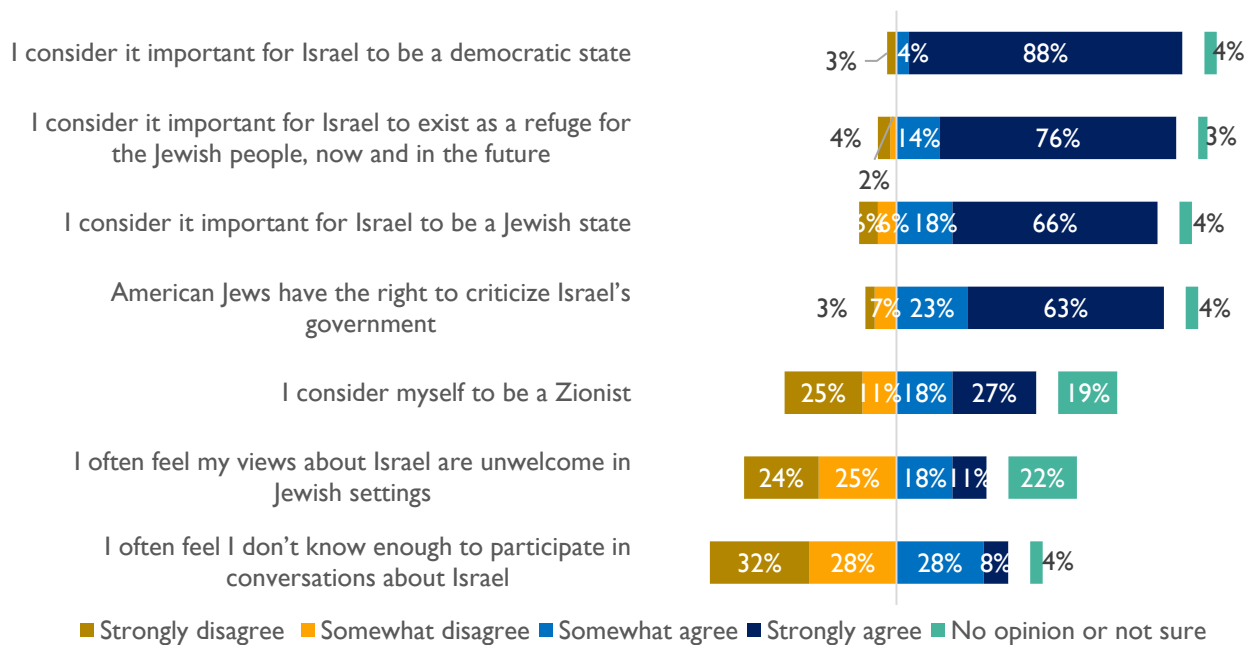
Views about Israel

Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis hold a wide variety of views about Israel. There are some areas of shared agreement among Jewish adults, while for other issues, there is a greater diversity of opinions (Figure 8.1). The highest level of consensus is in response to the statement “I consider it important for Israel to be a democratic state” (4% of Jewish adults somewhat agree and 88% strongly agree). There is nearly as high agreement with the statement that “Israel should exist as a refuge for the Jewish people, now and in the future” (14% somewhat agree and 76% strongly agree).

The Greater St. Louis Jewish community has the widest range of opinion over identification with Zionism and the perception that their views on Israel would be accepted in Jewish settings. Less than half of Jewish adults agree with the statement “I consider myself to be a Zionist” (18% somewhat agree and 27% strongly agree), while 19% are unsure or hold no opinion. Almost one quarter of Jewish adults (22%) are unsure or hold no opinion on the statement “I often feel my views about Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings,” while another quarter (24%) strongly disagree.

By contrast, the largest share of *disagreement* is expressed in response to the statement “I often feel I don’t know enough to participate in conversations about Israel” (28% somewhat disagree and 32% strongly disagree). Even still, 28% of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis somewhat agree and 8% strongly agree that they don’t know enough to talk about Israel.

Figure 8.1. Views about Israel



The engagement groups differ with respect to the extent to which they strongly agree with many of these views about Israel (Tables 8.5a, 8.5b, 8.6a, and 8.6b). Compared to all Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis, of whom 88% strongly agree, 73% of the Ritual group strongly agrees with the statement “I consider it important for Israel to be a democratic state.” Conversely, 43% of the Minimally Involved group strongly agrees with the statement “I consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state,” compared to 66% of all Jewish adults. Only 9% of the Minimally Involved group strongly agree with the statement “I consider myself to be a Zionist,” while more than 40% each of the Communal and Ritual groups strongly agree.

While there are relatively few differences across age groups, smaller shares of Jewish adults ages 22-39 (52%), compared to older adults (62%-80%) strongly agree that “I consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state.” The other difference by age concerns the statement “I often feel my views about Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings.” Twenty-eight percent of Jews ages 22-39 strongly agree with this statement, compared to 2-8% of older Jews.

Greater proportions of Jewish adults who are very attached to Israel strongly agree with the statements “I consider it important for Israel to exist as a refuge for the Jewish people, now and in the future” and “I consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state,” compared to Jewish adults who are not at all, not too, or somewhat attached to Israel. Conversely, larger shares of Jewish adults who are not at all, not too, or somewhat attached to Israel strongly agree with the statements “I often feel my views about Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings,” “I often feel I don’t know enough to participate in conversations about Israel,” and “American Jews have the right to criticize Israel’s government” compared to Jewish adults who are very attached to Israel.

Political views are associated with relative strength of agreement with many of the statements (see Figure 1.3 for an overview of the community’s political views). While across the political spectrum there is similar degree of agreement that Israel should be a democratic state, smaller proportions of those with liberal views, as opposed to conservative, strongly agree that Israel should exist as a refuge for the Jewish people and that Israel should be a Jewish state. Just 21% of those with conservative or very conservative views strongly agree that American Jews have the right to criticize Israel’s government, compared to 63% of the overall Greater St. Louis Jewish community. About one quarter of those with very liberal views strongly agree that their views about Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings, compared to 11% of the overall community.

There are no significant differences in views about Israel by relationship status or parent status.

Table 8.5a. Views about Israel, strongly agree

	I consider it important for Israel to be a democratic state (%)	I consider it important for Israel to exist as a refuge for the Jewish people, now and in the future (%)	I consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state (%)	American Jews have the right to criticize Israel's government (%)
All Jewish adults	88	76	66	63
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	91	63	43	71
Personal	94	77	68	48
Holiday	85	84	71	62
Communal	96	78	73	69
Ritual	73	80	82	61
Region				
St. Louis City	92	62	52	74
U. City / Clayton	87	72	64	70
Chesterfield / West County	87	88	87	47
Olivette / Ladue	94	87	73	62
Creve Coeur area	88	84	62	54
Rest of Greater STL	83	75	66	57
Age				
22-39	90	66	52	70
40-54	89	79	70	59
55-64	86	73	62	55
65-74	87	83	72	54
75+	93	88	80	65
Relationship status				
Inmarried	87	83	72	58
Intermarried	92	72	60	70
Not married	86	71	61	60
Parent of minor child				
No	88	74	65	59
Yes	90	84	68	67

Table 8.5b. Views about Israel, strongly agree

	I consider it important for Israel to be a democratic state (%)	I consider it important for Israel to exist as a refuge for the Jewish people, now and in the future (%)	I consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state (%)	American Jews have the right to criticize Israel's government (%)
All Jewish adults	88	76	66	63
Travel to Israel				
Never	88	69	51	59
Once	89	85	74	72
More than once	89	82	79	65
Lived in Israel	80	72	75	26
Connection to Israel				
Not at all/not too attached	88	43	25	74
Somewhat attached	88	86	74	63
Very attached	88	91	86	51
Political views				
Very liberal	96	53	38	85
Liberal	88	84	69	65
Moderate	87	84	76	57
Conservative/ Very conservative	81	92	90	21

Table 8.6a. Views about Israel, strongly agree

I consider myself to be a Zionist (%)		I often feel my views about Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings (%)	I often feel I don't know enough to participate in conversations about Israel (%)
All Jewish adults		11	8
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	9	11	13
Personal	29	9	7
Holiday	21	11	6
Communal	41	18	6
Ritual	46	3	5
Region			
St. Louis City	23	22	10
U. City / Clayton	33	10	5
Chesterfield / West County	28	2	5
Olivette / Ladue	30	4	5
Creve Coeur area	19	2	10
Rest of Greater STL	21	5	11
Age			
22-39	28	28	6
40-54	26	8	7
55-64	32	2	9
65-74	18	5	13
75+	21	4	6
Relationship status			
Inmarried	31	10	4
Intermarried	20	10	8
Not married	21	11	12
Parent of minor child			
No	22	12	8
Yes	33	7	6

Table 8.6b. Views about Israel, strongly agree

I consider myself to be a Zionist (%)		I often feel my views about Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings (%)	I often feel I don't know enough to participate in conversations about Israel (%)
All Jewish adults		11	8
Travel to Israel			
Never	15	8	11
Once	22	12	4
More than once	37	14	6
Lived in Israel	61	5	7
Connection to Israel			
Not at all/not too attached	3	23	15
Somewhat attached	13	7	7
Very attached	52	5	3
Political views			
Very liberal	17	27	3
Liberal	22	8	12
Moderate	32	2	6
Conservative/Very conservative	36	1	10

CHAPTER 9. CONCERNS ABOUT ANTISEMITISM

Chapter highlights

- Twenty-eight percent of Jewish adults were personally targeted by an antisemitic incident within the past year, primarily by antisemitic remarks rather than actions.
- Relatively fewer Jews ages 75 and older were targeted by antisemitism, compared to Jews younger than 75.
- About half of Jewish adults (51%) avoid activities out of a fear of antisemitism. Thirty-six percent avoid mentioning Israel either in person or online, and 26% say they avoid posting Jewish content online that would identify them as a Jew. Twenty-eight percent say they avoid wearing or displaying objects that would identify them as a Jew, and 24% say they avoid going to certain places or events.
- Three quarters of Jewish adults ages 22-39 (77%) say they avoid activities out of a fear of antisemitism, compared to half or less of older Jews.
- Most Jewish adults are very concerned about antisemitism around the world (79%). They are less concerned about antisemitism in Greater St. Louis (47%).

Experiences with and concerns about antisemitism

Twenty-eight percent of Jewish adults were personally targeted by an antisemitic incident during the past year (Table 9.1). Twenty-one percent were targeted by an antisemitic remark from someone they did not know, and 19% were targeted by an antisemitic remark from someone they did know. Three percent of Jewish adults were targeted by an antisemitic act of vandalism, and 2% were targeted by an antisemitic physical attack or the threat of attack.

Table 9.1. Targeted by antisemitic incidents

	All Jewish adults (%)
Any antisemitic incident	28
An antisemitic remark from someone you don't know	21
An antisemitic remark from someone you know	19
An antisemitic act of vandalism	3
An antisemitic physical attack or threat of attack	2

The Ritual (37%) and Personal (35%) groups had the largest shares of Jewish adults who were targeted by an antisemitic incident in the last year (Table 9.2). Relatively fewer Jews ages 75 and older were targeted by antisemitism, compared to Jews younger than age 75.

Table 9.2. Targeted by antisemitic incidents

Any incident (%)	
All Jewish adults	28
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	16
Personal	35
Holiday	31
Communal	23
Ritual	37
Region	
St. Louis City	31
U. City / Clayton	28
Chesterfield / West County	34
Olivette / Ladue	23
Creve Coeur area	21
Rest of Greater STL	31
Age	
22-39	30
40-54	33
55-64	28
65-74	33
75+	12
Relationship status	
Inmarried	25
Intermarried	27
Not married	33
Parent of minor child	
No	30
Yes	22

About half of Jewish adults (51%) avoid activities out of a fear of antisemitism (Table 9.3). Thirty-six percent avoid mentioning Israel either in person or online, and 26% say they avoid posting Jewish content online that would identify them as a Jew. Twenty-eight percent say they avoid wearing or displaying objects that would identify them as a Jew, and 24% say they avoid going to certain places or events.

Among the engagement groups, Jewish adults in the Holiday (65%) and Personal (62%) groups avoid activities out of fear of antisemitism in larger shares than do other Jewish adults. Three quarters of Jewish adults ages 22-39 (77%) say they avoid activities out of a fear of antisemitism, compared to half or less of older Jews. The main behavior younger Jews avoid is mentioning Israel, with 71% of them refraining from mentioning Israel. For the other activities avoided, there are much smaller gaps between Jewish adults ages 22 to 39 and those ages 40 and older.

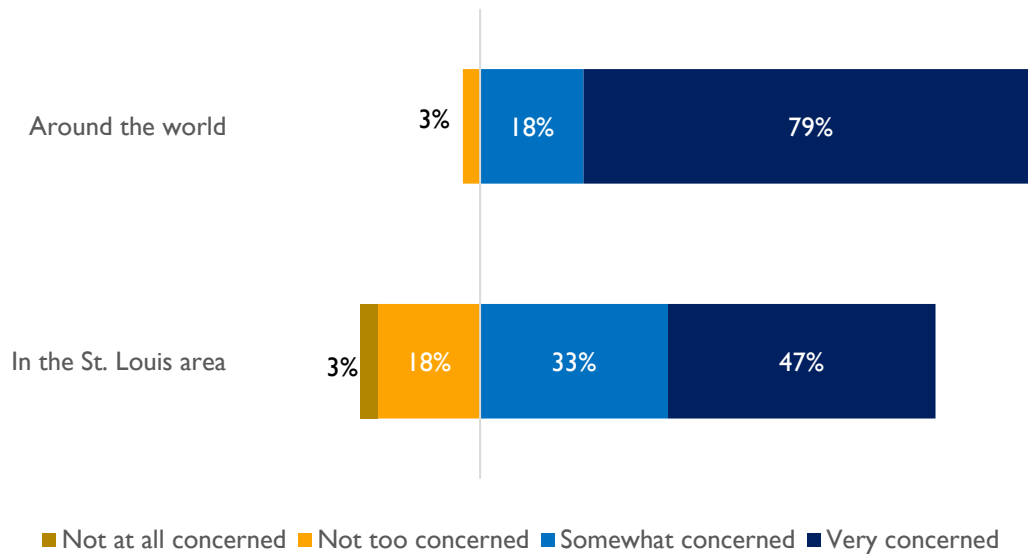
Sixty-three percent of Jewish adults who personally experienced an antisemitic incident say they avoid certain activities, compared to 48% of those who had not experienced antisemitism. Interestingly, relatively similar shares of individuals targeted and not targeted by antisemitism avoid mentioning Israel; it is other activities that a larger share of the targeted individuals avoid.

Table 9.3. Avoided activities out of a fear of antisemitism

Any activity (%)		Mentioning Israel, in person or online (%)	Wearing or displaying objects that would identify you as a Jew (%)	Posting Jewish content online that would identify you as a Jew (%)	Going to certain places or events (%)	Other (%)	
All Jewish adults		51	36	28	26	24	6
Jewish engagement							
Minimally Involved	31	16	19	16	14	<1	
Personal	62	48	45	45	30	7	
Holiday	65	47	32	31	28	12	
Communal	48	38	23	15	21	4	
Ritual	50	25	25	19	27	3	
Region							
St. Louis City	66	59	28	23	27	5	
U. City / Clayton	53	37	31	31	17	2	
Chesterfield / West County	45	19	26	22	32	7	
Olivette / Ladue	47	35	33	33	28	12	
Creve Coeur area	50	23	30	29	25	13	
Rest of Greater STL	48	36	31	30	15	1	
Age							
22-39	77	71	34	37	35	17	
40-54	49	38	31	28	20	3	
55-64	48	17	32	26	30	2	
65-74	42	21	27	23	17	5	
75+	25	9	15	9	11	3	
Relationship status							
Inmarried	55	35	29	23	23	9	
Intermarried	45	34	24	22	21	1	
Not married	56	39	36	38	28	9	
Parent of minor child							
No	54	35	33	30	28	6	
Yes	51	39	22	22	16	8	
Targeted by antisemitic incident							
No	48	33	24	22	18	4	
Yes	63	44	45	41	39	11	

Most Jewish adults are very concerned about antisemitism around the world (79%) (Figure 9.1; Table 9.4). Fewer are concerned about antisemitism in Greater St. Louis, although nearly half are very concerned.

Figure 9.1. Concern about antisemitism...



Concern about antisemitism around the world is highest among those Jewish adults in the Personal (86%) and Holiday (84%) engagement groups, and lowest amongst those in the Minimally Involved group (62%).

Older Jewish adults are more concerned about antisemitism around the world and in the St. Louis area than younger adults, despite fewer of them being targeted by antisemitism (see Table 9.2, above) or avoiding certain activities out of fear (see Table 9.3, above). Almost all Jewish adults ages 75 and older (93%) are very concerned about antisemitism around the world, and 65% of these adults are very concerned about antisemitism in Greater St. Louis.

Ninety percent of Jewish adults who were personally targeted in an antisemitic incident say they are very concerned about antisemitism around the world, and 61% of these adults say they are very concerned about antisemitism in Greater St. Louis.

Table 9.4. Very concerned about antisemitism...

Around the world (%)		In the St. Louis area (%)
All Jewish adults		79
Jewish engagement		47
Minimally Involved	62	38
Personal	86	48
Holiday	84	47
Communal	81	42
Ritual	77	53
Region		
St. Louis City	70	35
U. City / Clayton	74	38
Chesterfield / West County	91	57
Olivette / Ladue	82	50
Creve Coeur area	83	54
Rest of Greater STL	71	41
Age		
22-39	64	28
40-54	78	42
55-64	82	52
65-74	81	60
75+	93	65
Relationship status		
Inmarried	80	41
Intermarried	78	49
Not married	76	47
Parent of minor child		
No	79	50
Yes	77	34
Targeted by antisemitic incident		
No	73	39
Yes	90	61

CHAPTER 10. FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

Chapter highlights

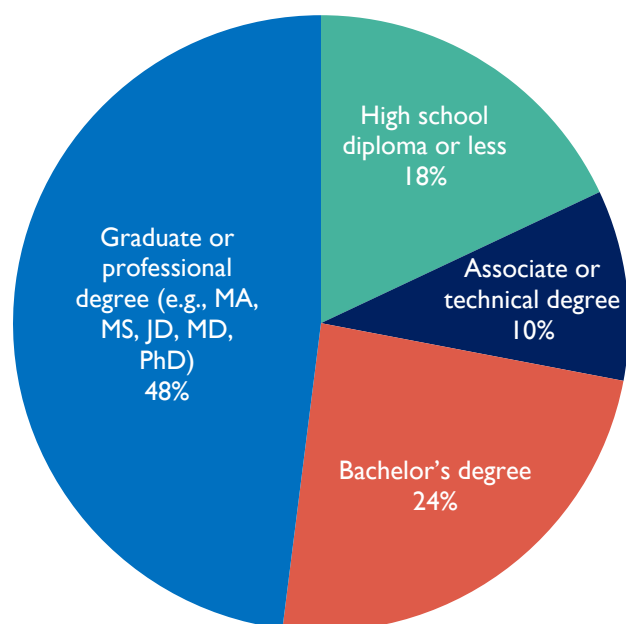
- The Jewish community in Greater St. Louis is highly educated. Of Jewish adults ages 25 and older, 72% have at least a bachelor's degree. Among all Greater St. Louis residents ages 25 and older, 41% have at least a bachelor's degree. Among Jews in the United States, 58% have a bachelor's degree.
- One percent of Greater St. Louis Jewish households report they cannot make ends meet, and another 17% indicate they are just managing to make ends meet. More than one third of households (36%) have enough money, one quarter (25%) have extra money, and one fifth (20%) describe themselves as well-off.
- Three percent of Jewish households have incomes below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, and 12% of Jewish households earn below 250% FPL.
- Debt is held by 41% of Jewish households, including 25% with student loans, 20% with credit card debt, and 16% with medical debt.
- Among the Jewish households with debt, for 67% of them it is a source of financial stress, including 13% for whom it is often and 9% for whom it constantly a source of stress.
- Twenty-seven percent of non-retired Jewish adults think their retirement savings plan is not on track. Among Jewish retirees, 4% are not at all confident they will have enough money for their retirement, and another 4% are not too confident.
- Twelve percent of Jewish households receive a public benefit, 17% of Greater St. Louis Jewish households **do not** have sufficient funds to cover three months of expenses, and 7% are **unable** to pay in full an unexpected \$400 emergency expense.
- Eleven percent of Jewish households in Greater St. Louis were unable to pay for at least one necessity within the past year, and another 5% were unable to pay for at least one necessity between one to three years ago. Larger shares of younger Jewish households faced financial hardships than older ones, with 31% of Jewish households with members ages 22-39 having difficulty paying for at least one necessity, compared to 5-8% of households with members ages 65 and older.
- Overall, 6% of Jewish households receive at least one financial service from a Jewish provider, and 14% receive at least one from a non-Jewish provider.
- Nineteen percent of Jewish households had to limit or change their involvement in Jewish life due to their financial situation. The most frequent limitation faced by Jewish adults was being unable to contribute as much to Jewish causes as they wished, with 16% of households limited in this way.

Educational attainment and employment

The Jewish community in Greater St. Louis is highly educated. Of Jewish adults ages 25 and older, 72% have at least a bachelor's degree, including 48% who earned a graduate or professional degree (Figure 10.1). Among all Greater St. Louis residents ages 25 and older, 41% have at least a bachelor's degree, including 17% who have a graduate or professional degree.¹⁹

Among Jews in the United States, 58% have a bachelor's degree, including 28% with a postgraduate degree.²⁰

Figure 10.1. Educational attainment, Jewish adults ages 25+



Two thirds of Greater St. Louis Jewish adults who are not in high school are employed, either full-time (51%), part-time (10%), or in multiple positions (5%; Table 10.1). Twenty-two percent of Jewish adults are retired.

Table 10.1. Employment status

All Jewish adults not in high school (%)	
	↓
Working	66
Full-time in one job	51
Part-time in one job	10
Working in multiple positions	5
Not working	34
Retired	22
Not working for pay and not looking for work	8
Not working for pay but looking for work	2
On temporary leave	2
Total	100

Household finances

One measure of financial well-being is a subjective assessment of a household’s financial situation. One percent of Greater St. Louis Jewish households report they cannot make ends meet, and another 17% indicate they are just managing to make ends meet (Table 10.2). These two groups are combined for purposes of this report into a single category referred to as “struggling” and constitute 19% of Jewish households (due to rounding). More than one third of Jewish households (36%) believe they have enough money, one quarter (25%) feels they have extra money, and one fifth (20%) describe themselves as well-off.

Table 10.2. Financial situation

Report category	Response option	Jewish households (%)
		↓
Struggling	Cannot make ends meet	1
	Just managing to make ends meet	17
Enough	Have enough money	36
Extra	Have extra money	25
Well-off	Well-off	20
Total		100

Jewish household financial status differs by region and marital status (Table 10.3). These differences are particularly apparent with respect to well-off households. Only eight percent of St. Louis City households consider themselves to be well-off, compared to 32% of Olivette/Ladue households, and 38% of U. City / Clayton households. Differences by marital status are most apparent in the struggling financial status category. Thirty percent of single households are struggling, compared to 15% of inmarried and 9% of intermarried households.

Table 10.3. Financial situation

	Struggling (%)	Enough (%)	Extra (%)	Well-off (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish households	19	36	25	20	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	7	50	26	17	100
Personal	22	31	31	16	100
Holiday	23	34	26	16	100
Communal	20	22	19	39	100
Ritual	26	33	14	26	100
Region					
St. Louis City	19	41	31	8	100
U. City / Clayton	10	32	20	38	100
Chesterfield / West County	19	48	16	17	100
Olivette / Ladue	14	25	29	32	100
Creve Coeur area	19	37	26	18	100
Rest of Greater STL	30	26	29	15	100
Age					
22-39	26	35	20	19	100
40-54	20	36	30	14	100
55-64	16	31	33	20	100
65-74	18	33	23	26	100
75+	13	42	20	25	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	15	34	22	29	100
Intermarried	9	40	35	17	100
Not married	30	35	20	14	100
Parent of minor child					
No	21	35	25	19	100
Yes	12	39	26	22	100

Income is another measure of financial well-being. Seven percent of Greater St. Louis Jewish households have an income of less than \$25,000, and another 8% have incomes between \$25,000-49,999 (Table 10.4). At the other end of the income spectrum, 11% of Jewish households have an income of \$250,000 or more. While 20% of Jewish households declined to provide their income and 2% did not know that information, most of these households are financially comfortable: Just 9% of those who did not report income consider their household financial situation to be “struggling,” 43% report they had “enough” money, 18% indicate they had “extra” money, and 30% say they are “well-off” (not shown in table).

Household income is complicated by the need to account for household size. To address this, the US Department of Health and Human Services determines the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) annually, using a formula based on household income and household size.²¹ Using that formula, 3%

of Greater St. Louis Jewish households have incomes below 100% FPL, and 12% of Jewish households earn below 250% FPL.

Table 10.4. Household income and Federal Poverty Level

All Jewish households (%)	
Income	↓
Less than \$25,000	7
\$25,000 to \$49,999	8
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10
\$200,000 to \$250,000	8
\$250,000 or more	11
Don't know	2
Prefer not to answer	20
Total	100
Federal Poverty Level	
< 100% of FPL	3
100-149% of FPL	3
150-249% of FPL	6
Total < 250% of FPL	12

Even when income and household size are accounted for, the picture of financial well-being is still incomplete, as it does not account for savings and financial obligations. While most financially struggling households have lower incomes, including half of them with incomes under \$50,000, there are still 5% with incomes above \$200,000 (Table 10.5a). Conversely, about 5% of well-off households have incomes of under \$100,000.

Table 10.5a. Household income by financial situation

	<\$50,000 0 (%)	\$50,000 to \$99,999 (%)	\$100,000 to \$149,999 (%)	\$150,000 to \$199,999 (%)	\$200,000 to \$249,999 (%)	\$250,000 or more (%)	Don't know / prefer not to say (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish households	14	19	16	10	8	11	22	100
Financial situation								
Struggling	49	29	5	2	5	< 1	10	100
Enough	12	17	23	13	5	5	25	100
Extra	2	22	22	16	11	10	17	100
Well-off	< 1	5	7	9	13	31	36	100

Across regions, Jewish households in the City of St. Louis have disproportionately smaller incomes than the rest of the community (Table 10.5b). There, 20% of households earn less than \$50,000, 23% earn between \$50,000-\$99,999, and another 23% earn between \$100,000-149,999. As noted in Table 1.12, Jews ages 22-39 disproportionately live in the City of St. Louis, and their lower incomes are related to their relative youth compared to the Jewish community as a whole.

Indeed, across the entirety of Greater St. Louis, younger households have smaller incomes compared to middle-aged households, and single households have smaller incomes than married ones, whether they are unmarried or intermarried.

Table 10.5b. Household income

	<\$50,000 (%)	\$50,000 to \$99,999 (%)	\$100,000 to \$149,999 (%)	\$150,000 to \$199,999 (%)	\$200,000 to \$249,999 (%)	\$250,000 or more (%)	Don't know / prefer not to say (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish households	14	19	16	10	8	11	22	100
Jewish engagement								
Minimally	9	15	12	15	13	11	25	100
Involved								
Personal	18	20	17	9	4	11	22	100
Holiday	17	22	17	8	8	9	20	100
Communal	10	22	12	13	8	15	21	100
Ritual	17	15	9	9	4	12	32	100
Region								
St. Louis City	20	23	23	15	7	7	5	100
U. City / Clayton	11	13	10	12	6	12	36	100
Chesterfield / West County	6	10	27	4	4	12	36	100
Olivette / Ladue	7	10	15	6	12	20	31	100
Creve Coeur area	17	29	11	8	4	6	25	100
Rest of Greater STL	15	13	10	14	21	13	14	100
Age								
22-39	26	18	17	19	8	8	4	100
40-54	1	29	22	7	12	17	13	100
55-64	10	15	16	10	8	11	30	100
65-74	21	13	7	10	6	9	34	100
75+	16	17	15	7	6	7	32	100
Relationship status								
Unmarried	4	17	17	16	11	14	21	100
Intermarried	1	13	26	15	14	18	13	100
Not married	32	24	7	2	2	2	31	100
Parent of minor child								
No	18	21	14	9	7	7	24	100
Yes	3	10	22	13	12	21	19	100

Thirty-six percent of struggling Jewish households and 12% of households making enough money earn below 250% FPL (Table 10.6).

Table 10.6. Federal Poverty Level by financial situation

	< 250% FPL (%)	< 100% FPL (%)	100-149% FPL (%)	150-249% FPL (%)
All Jewish households	12	3	3	6
Jewish engagement				
Struggling	36	12	16	9
Enough	12	3	1	8
Extra	4	0	< 1	3
Well-off	0	0	0	0

Debt and financial stress

The consideration of a household's debt burdens completes the snapshot of financial health. Debt is held by 41% of Jewish households, including 25% with student loans, 20% with credit card debt, and 16% with medical debt (Table 10.7).

Jewish households in the City of St. Louis and the Rest of Greater St. Louis have the highest levels of any debt (54% and 59%, respectively) compared to other regions. Notably, these regions also have the highest shares of young adults ages 22-39.

A larger share of older households hold debts compared to younger ones. While 41% of all Jewish households have debt, 57% of households with members ages 22-39 and 62% of households with members ages 40-54 do. For the youngest households, this is largely driven by student loan debt: About half of the 22-39 age group (49%) has student loan debt, compared to one quarter of all Jewish households. While 33% of households ages 40-54 also carry student loan debt, more of them have other types of debt as well, with 32% holding credit card debt and 27% holding medical debt.

As would be expected, far larger shares of financially struggling households carry debt than do other better off households.

Among the 41% of Jewish households that carry debt, 27% have just one type, 9% have two types, and 5% have all three (not shown in table).

Table 10.7. Household debt

	Any (%)	Student loan (%)	Credit card (%)	Medical care (%)
All Jewish households	41	25	20	16
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	40	25	23	9
Personal	40	21	22	19
Holiday	52	33	17	20
Communal	26	10	17	14
Ritual	48	27	23	24
Region				
St. Louis City	54	41	26	14
U. City / Clayton	27	15	12	7
Chesterfield / West County	42	16	24	20
Olivette / Ladue	29	17	12	11
Creve Coeur area	37	19	21	22
Rest of Greater STL	59	31	24	27
Age				
22-39	57	49	16	20
40-54	62	33	32	27
55-64	43	19	25	15
65-74	21	5	15	14
75+	12	3	7	4
Relationship status				
Inmarried	36	21	18	16
Intermarried	48	30	23	13
Not married	40	19	20	20
Parent of minor child				
No	38	22	17	16
Yes	54	31	31	19
Financial situation				
Struggling	79	36	40	51
Enough	47	31	24	12
Extra	34	17	17	10
Well-off	11	9	2	< 1

Among the 41% of Jewish households with debt, 67% report debt is a source of financial stress for them, including 13% for whom debt is often stressful and 9% for whom debt is constantly stressful (Table 10.8). For nearly all financially struggling households with debt, the debt is a source of stress, including 21% for whom debt is a constant source of stress and 25% for whom debt is often a source of stress. There are no differences in stress levels based on the type of debt held by households.

Table 10.8. Debt-related stress

	Constant source of financial stress (%)	Often a source of financial stress (%)	Sometimes a source of financial stress (%)	Not a source of financial stress (%)	Total (%)
Jewish households with debt	9	13	45	33	100
Financial situation					
Struggling	21	25	41	13	100
Enough	3	6	66	25	100
Extra or well off	< 1	9	15	76	100
Type of debt					
Student loan debt	8	13	45	34	100
Credit card debt	15	15	44	26	100
Medical care debt	11	17	46	26	100

Retirement planning

As noted above in Table 10.1, 22% of Jewish adults are retired, and 78% are not. Twenty-seven percent of non-retired Jewish adults think their retirement savings plan is not on track (Table 10.9). Among Jewish adults younger than age 65, 33% do not feel their retirement plan is on track, compared to 7% of working Jewish adults ages 65 and older, who are presumably closer to retiring.

Nearly half of non-retired Jewish adults whose financial situations are “struggling” and “enough” feel that they are not on track with their retirement savings (49% and 46% respectively). Among “struggling” Jewish adults, an additional 32% say they do not know if their plans are on track, the largest share in this category. By contrast, almost all “well-off” Jewish adults and those with “extra” report being on track for their retirement (96% and 83% respectively).

Table 10.9. Retirement savings plan on track

	No (%)	Yes (%)	Don't know (%)	Don't have retirement plan (%)	Total (%)
Non-retired Jewish adults	27	60	9	4	100
Age					
22-64	33	56	7	4	100
65+	7	85	5	3	100
Financial situation					
Struggling	49	12	32	8	100
Enough	46	41	8	5	100
Extra	15	83	2	1	100
Well-off	1	96	3	1	100

Among those Jewish adults who have already retired, 63% are very confident they will have enough money for retirement, and an additional 28% say they are somewhat confident (Table 10.10). Ten percent of those who are financially struggling or have enough financial resources are not at all confident in having enough money for retirement. By contrast, most retirees who have extra resources or who are well-off are very confident they will have enough money for retirement (73% and 95% respectively).

Table 10.10. Confidence in having enough money for retirement by financial situation

	Not at all (%)	Not too (%)	Somewhat (%)	Very (%)	Total (%)
Retired Jewish adults	4	4	28	63	100
Financial situation					
Struggling or Enough	10	8	50	32	100
Extra	0	1	26	73	100
Well-off	0	0	5	95	100

Economic insecurity

As markers of economic insecurity, 17% of Greater St. Louis Jewish households *do not* have sufficient funds to cover three months of expenses, and 7% are *unable* to pay in full an unexpected \$400 emergency expense (Table 10.11). Larger shares of younger than older households have insufficient funds to cover three months of expenses.

Among financially struggling households, nearly one third (31%) cannot afford a \$400 emergency expense and about two thirds (65%) do not have sufficient funds to cover three months of expenses.

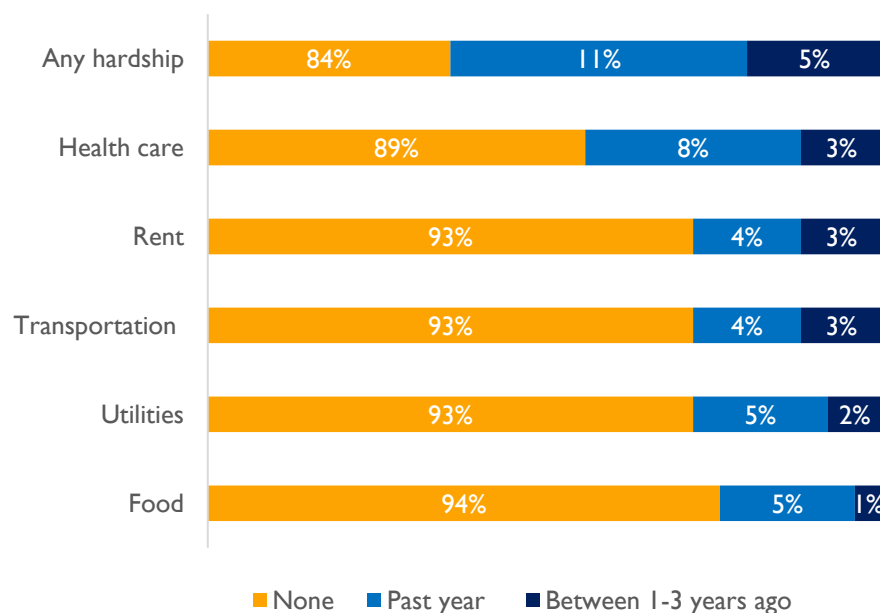
Table 10.11. Economic insecurity

	Insufficient funds to cover three months of expenses (%)	Cannot afford unexpected \$400 expense (%)
All Jewish households	17	7
Jewish engagement		
Minimally Involved	17	4
Personal	21	7
Holiday	19	6
Communal	14	1
Ritual	18	16
Region		
St. Louis City	22	4
U. City / Clayton	10	7
Chesterfield / West County	16	9
Olivette / Ladue	11	2
Creve Coeur area	14	7
Rest of Greater STL	30	11
Age		
22-39	23	8
40-54	32	7
55-64	13	9
65-74	9	2
75+	7	3
Relationship status		
Inmarried	13	1
Intermarried	16	4
Not married	23	13
Parent of minor child		
No	17	8
Yes	19	2
Financial situation		
Struggling	65	31
Enough	18	2
Extra	2	< 1
Well-off	< 1	< 1

Financial hardships and services

Eleven percent of Jewish households in Greater St. Louis were unable to pay for at least one necessity within the past year, and another 5% were unable to pay for at least one necessity between one to three years ago (Figure 10.2). These necessities include needed medical care or medicine; food; rent or mortgage payment; and utility payments such as water, electricity, or heat.

Figure 10.2. Financial hardships



In total, 16% of Jewish households experienced at least one financial hardship within the past three years (Table 10.12). Larger shares of younger households faced financial hardships within the previous three years than older ones, with 31% of households with members ages 22-39 having difficulty paying for at least one necessity, compared to 5-8% of households with members ages 65 and older. About three quarters of struggling households (76%) encountered a financial hardship, compared to < 1% of households that have extra financial resources or are well-off.

Table 10.12. Financial hardships, past three years

Any financial hardship in past three years (%)	
All Jewish households	16
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	5
Personal	22
Holiday	23
Communal	7
Ritual	23
Region	
St. Louis City	19
U. City / Clayton	7
Chesterfield / West County	18
Olivette / Ladue	13
Creve Coeur area	16
Rest of Greater STL	26
Age	
22-39	31
40-54	21
55-64	14
65-74	8
75+	5
Relationship status	
Inmarried	17
Intermarried	9
Not married	23
Parent of minor child	
No	19
Yes	9
Financial situation	
Struggling	76
Enough	7
Extra	< 1
Well-off	< 1

While 79% of Jewish households did not require financial services in the previous year, 9% needed a financial service but did not receive one (Table 10.13). Three percent of Jewish households received a service only from a Jewish provider, 12% only from a non-Jewish provider, and 4% from both Jewish and non-Jewish providers. The most required financial service was paying for medical care.

Table 10.13. Received services, past year

	None needed (%)	Needed but not received (%)	Received from a Jewish provider only (%)	Received from a non-Jewish provider only (%)	Received from a Jewish and non-Jewish provider (%)	Total
All Jewish households						
Any service	79	9	3	12	4	*
Paying for medical care	84	5	0	9	1	100
Food needs	93	2	1	3	1	100
Financial support	93	4	1	2	1	100
Transportation	94	1	0	3	1	100
Employment assistance	95	3	1	1	1	100
Housing	96	1	1	2	0	100

*Note: Row does not add to 100% as households may have needed or received multiple services.

Overall, 6% of Jewish households received at least one financial service from a Jewish provider, and 14% received at least one from a non-Jewish provider (Table 10.14). Twenty-one percent of households in the Ritual engagement group received a financial service from a Jewish provider, compared to 2-6% of the other engagement groups. Compared to other Jewish households, larger shares of financially struggling households both needed but did not receive services and received services from any provider.

Table 10.14. Needed and received services, past year

	Any needed but not received (%)	Any received from a Jewish provider (%)	Any received from a non-Jewish provider (%)
All Jewish households	9	6	14
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	5	2	12
Personal	12	6	12
Holiday	10	5	14
Communal	3	5	10
Ritual	9	21	21
Region			
St. Louis City	9	6	15
U. City / Clayton	6	5	9
Chesterfield / West County	5	11	16
Olivette / Ladue	5	5	10
Creve Coeur area	9	4	15
Rest of Greater STL	17	3	11
Age			
22-39	16	7	9
40-54	7	3	3
55-64	6	6	19
65-74	9	6	13
75+	6	8	21
Relationship status			
Inmarried	9	3	10
Intermarried	5	5	9
Not married	11	8	19
Parent of minor child			
No	9	7	15
Yes	6	2	8
Financial situation			
Struggling	39	16	28
Enough	6	7	15
Extra	< 1	2	11
Well-off	0	< 1	0

Twelve percent of Jewish households receive a publicly provided benefit. Ten percent receive Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits, and 3% receive food assistance, subsidized housing, or utility assistance (Table 10.15).

Table 10.15. Receipt of public benefits

	All Jewish households (%)
Any public benefit	12
SSI or SSDI benefits	10
Assistance with food, housing, or utilities (e.g., SNAP, WIC+)	3
Children's Health Insurance Program	1
Unemployment benefits	1

Note: Household could receive more than one type of public benefit.

One quarter of households ages 75 and older receive at least one public benefit, compared to 1-2% of households ages 22-54 (Table 10.16). A larger share of single households (15%) receive a benefit compared to coupled households (5% intermarried and 5% inmarried households).

Table 10.16. Receive at least one public benefit

Receive any public benefit (%)	
All Jewish households	12
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	13
Personal	5
Holiday	8
Communal	12
Ritual	8
Region	
St. Louis City	8
U. City / Clayton	4
Chesterfield / West County	4
Olivette / Ladue	7
Creve Coeur area	11
Rest of Greater STL	14
Age	
22-39	1
40-54	2
55-64	10
65-74	16
75+	25
Relationship status	
Inmarried	5
Intermarried	5
Not married	15
Parent of minor child	
No	10
Yes	4
Financial situation	
Struggling	21
Enough	11
Extra	4
Well-off	0

Impact of finances on Jewish life

Nineteen percent of Jewish households had to limit or change their involvement in Jewish life due to their financial situation (Table 10.17). The most frequent limitation was being unable to contribute as much to Jewish causes as they desired, with 16% of households limited in this way.

Table 10.17. Limits on participation in Jewish life

	All Jewish households (%)
Any limitation	19
Unable to contribute to Jewish causes as much as desired	16
Unable to participate in some Jewish activities	8
Discontinued synagogue membership	3
Required dues relief or financial assistance to maintain synagogue membership (of members)	3
Did not enroll children in Jewish education, camp, or activities (of parents)	2
Required financial assistance to enroll children in Jewish education, Jewish camp, or activities (of parents)	1
Other	1

Note: Household could face more than one limit to participation in Jewish life.

Just 4% of the Minimally Involved engagement group experienced a financial limitation to Jewish life—not because they are better off, but because few of them actively and regularly participate in Jewish activities (Table 10.18).

Table 10.18. Limits on participation in Jewish life

Any limitation on Jewish life (%)	
All Jewish adults	19
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	4
Personal	25
Holiday	28
Communal	23
Ritual	23
Region	
St. Louis City	26
U. City / Clayton	8
Chesterfield / West County	23
Olivette / Ladue	11
Creve Coeur area	22
Rest of Greater STL	21
Age	
22-39	29
40-54	21
55-64	15
65-74	20
75+	14
Relationship status	
Inmarried	22
Intermarried	13
Not married	23
Parent of minor child	
No	21
Yes	16
Financial situation	
Struggling	60
Enough	17
Extra	8
Well-off	2

CHAPTER 11. HEALTH NEEDS

Chapter highlights

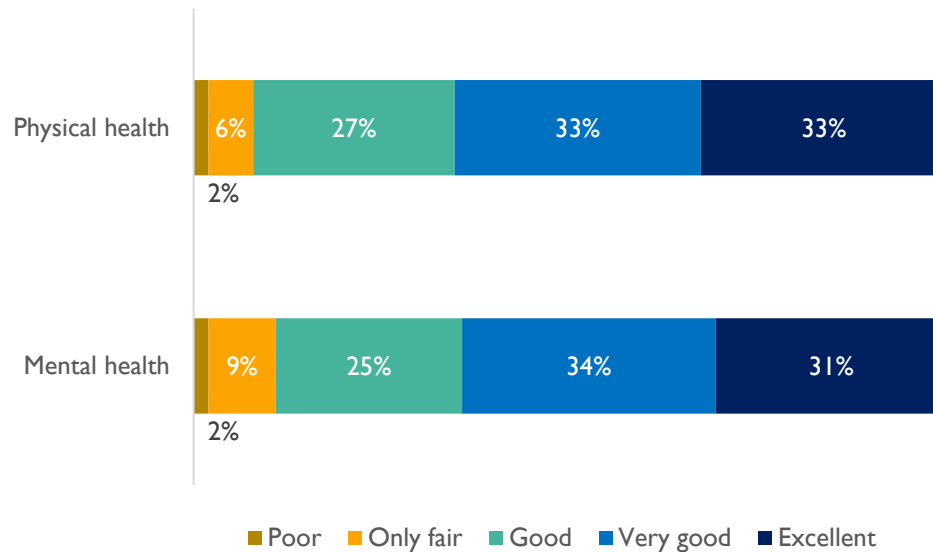
- Most Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis report being in good mental and physical health. About two thirds describe their mental health as very good (34%) or excellent (31%), and a similar share describe their physical health as very good (33%) or excellent (33%).
- Nearly one quarter (23%) of younger adults ages 22-39 report having fair or poor mental health, compared to 11% of all Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis.
- One third of financially struggling Jewish adults (33%) describe either their physical or mental health as fair or poor.
- Twenty-six percent of Jewish households include a member with a chronic health issue, disability, or other need that affects their participation in work, school, or other activities. More than half of financially struggling Jewish households (58%) have at least one member with a chronic health issue or disability.
- Twenty-two percent of Jewish households require services to manage health issues, special needs, mental health issues, or disabilities. Eighteen percent of these households report that the received services were adequate, and 4% feel the received services were not adequate to manage their health needs.
- Among Jewish households in Greater St. Louis, 15% manage or personally provide care for close relatives or friends on a regular basis, aside from routine childcare.
- In Jewish households with someone age 65 or older, 16% include someone who requires assistance with daily tasks, such as doing housework, preparing meals, dressing and undressing, or walking up and down stairs.
- Sixty percent of Jewish adults say it is either somewhat easy (35%) or very easy (25%) to find information they need about services and supports provided in the Greater St. Louis Jewish community.
- Forty-two percent of Jewish adults have either no one (3%) or just a few people (39%) in their nearby personal support networks.

Physical and mental health

Most Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis are mentally and physically healthy (Figure 11.1). About two thirds describe their mental health as very good (34%) or excellent (31%), and a similar share describe their physical health as very good (33%) or excellent (33%). There are, however, 11% of Jewish adults who describe their mental health as only fair (9%) or poor (2%), and 8% who describe their physical health as only fair (6%) or poor (2%).

Altogether, 15% of Jewish adults report that either their mental or physical health is fair or poor (not shown in figure; see Table 11.1). This includes 3% whose mental and physical health were *both* fair or poor, 4% with *only* fair or poor physical health, and 8% with *only* fair or poor mental health.

Figure 11.1. Mental and physical health (% Jewish adults)



Nearly one quarter of younger adults ages 22-39 (23%) have fair or poor mental health, compared to 11% of all Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis (Table 11.1). Larger shares of older adults, on the other hand, have fair or poor physical health, with 15% ages 65-74 and 75 and older reporting fair or poor physical health.

One third of financially struggling Jewish adults (33%) describe either their physical or mental health as fair or poor, including 24% who describe their mental health as fair or poor and 21% who describe their physical health as fair or poor.

Table 11.1. Health is fair or poor

	Mental or physical health (%)	Mental health (%)	Physical health (%)
All Jewish adults	15	11	7
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	18	13	6
Personal	10	7	7
Holiday	15	10	6
Communal	8	2	6
Ritual	21	16	19
Region			
St. Louis City	16	12	7
U. City / Clayton	8	5	5
Chesterfield / West County	24	17	13
Olivette / Ladue	8	6	7
Creve Coeur area	13	6	9
Rest of Greater STL	23	19	4
Age			
22-39	23	23	3
40-54	12	9	5
55-64	9	5	6
65-74	17	10	15
75+	17	4	15
Relationship status			
Inmarried	15	11	6
Intermarried	13	10	4
Not married	19	12	13
Parent of minor child			
No	18	12	10
Yes	9	8	1
Financial situation			
Struggling	33	24	21
Enough	19	15	8
Extra	7	2	6
Well-off	9	7	2

Health and disability

Twenty-six percent of Jewish households include a member with a chronic health issue, disability, or other need that affects participation in work, school, or other activities (Table 11.2). More than half of financially struggling Jewish households (58%) have at least one member with a chronic health issue or disability.

In the CDS, 22% of Jewish households include a member with a chronic health issue, disability, or health need (not shown in table).

Table 11.2. Chronic health issue, disability, or health need

All Jewish households (%)	
All Jewish households	27
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	22
Personal	27
Holiday	32
Communal	21
Ritual	31
Region	
St. Louis City	26
U. City / Clayton	23
Chesterfield / West County	31
Olivette / Ladue	21
Creve Coeur area	21
Rest of Greater STL	39
Age	
22-39	28
40-54	18
55-64	21
65-74	30
75+	40
Relationship status	
Inmarried	31
Intermarried	20
Not married	28
Parent of minor child	
No	30
Yes	16
Financial situation	
Struggling	58
Enough	19
Extra	19
Well-off	19

The most common limiting health issues in Jewish households are chronic illness (14% of all households, 52% of households with a health issue), physical disability (12% of all households, 46% of households with a health issue), and mental or emotional health issues (10% of all households, 39% of households with a health issue) (Table 11.3).

Table 11.3. Specific health issues

	All Jewish households (%)	Jewish households with a limiting chronic health issue, disability, or special need (%)
Any health issue	27	100
Chronic illness	14	52
Physical disability	12	46
Mental or emotional health issues	10	39
Developmental or intellectual disability	4	17
Dementia	1	5
Complications related to COVID-19	1	5
Substance abuse or addiction	<1	1
Other	1	3

Note: Total exceeds 100 because respondents could select more than one option.

Support services

Twenty-two percent of Jewish households required services in the previous year to manage health issues, special needs, mental health issues, or disabilities (Table 11.4). This includes 18% of Jewish households that felt the received services were adequate and 4% that felt the received services were not adequate to manage their health needs. Among the households with a member who has a health issue, special need, mental health issue, or disability, 67% received adequate services, and 13% did not (not shown in table).

Age and household finances are related to service need. Between 81-85% of households younger than age 65 did not require health services, while 63% of households ages 75 and older did not require them.

In terms of finances, 47% of struggling Jewish households receiving services (37% felt the services were adequate and 10% felt they were inadequate).

Examples of inadequacies in the services include shortages of doctors or therapists, long waitlists for specialists, not being able to schedule appointments during convenient times, and lack of affordable options.

Table 11.4. Adequacy of health issue services received

	Services were adequate (%)	Services were not adequate (%)	No services needed (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish households	18	4	79	100
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	12	1	87	100
Personal	17	5	78	100
Holiday	23	5	72	100
Communal	12	<1	88	100
Ritual	16	7	77	100
Region				
St. Louis City	13	5	82	100
U. City / Clayton	19	3	78	100
Chesterfield / West County	14	4	82	100
Olivette / Ladue	17	2	81	100
Creve Coeur area	15	2	84	100
Rest of Greater STL	22	6	72	100
Age				
22-39	11	7	81	100
40-54	14	4	83	100
55-64	13	2	85	100
65-74	21	2	77	100
75+	35	2	63	100
Relationship status				
Inmarried	22	3	75	100
Intermarried	14	2	83	100
Not married	17	4	78	100
Parent of minor child				
No	20	4	76	100
Yes	10	3	87	100
Financial situation				
Struggling	37	10	53	100
Enough	11	2	86	100
Extra	14	<1	85	100
Well-off	15	3	82	100

Among the 18% of Jewish households that received adequate services, 5% exclusively received health services from a Jewish organization, and another 16% received services from both Jewish and non-Jewish providers.

Support services and personal networks

Among Jewish households in Greater St. Louis, 15% manage or personally provide care for close relatives or friends on a regular basis, aside from routine childcare (Table 11.5). This includes 6% that personally provide care, 4% who manage care provided by others, and 5% who do both.

Managing or providing care for others is much more common in households with members ages 55 and older compared to households with members younger than age 55. Just 3%-8% of households under age 55 manage or provide care, as opposed to 20-26% of households ages 55 and older.

Table 11.5. Manage or provide care to close relatives or friends on a regular basis

Provide or manage care (%)	
All Jewish households	15
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	17
Personal	7
Holiday	14
Communal	21
Ritual	24
Region	
St. Louis City	11
U. City / Clayton	16
Chesterfield / West County	32
Olivette / Ladue	14
Creve Coeur area	13
Rest of Greater STL	7
Age	
22-39	3
40-54	8
55-64	26
65-74	20
75+	22
Relationship status	
Inmarried	20
Intermarried	16
Not married	10
Parent of minor child	
No	16
Yes	13
Households with someone over age 64	
No	10
Yes	26

Of those Jewish households in which someone is managing or providing care, 54% are caring for parents or in-laws, 16% for a spouse, 15% for an adult child, less than 1% for a child under 18 with special needs, and 22% for someone else (Table 11.6).

Table 11.6. Person(s) who receive regular care

	Jewish households that provide or manage care (%)
A parent or in-law	54
Your spouse	16
An adult child age 18 or older	15
A child under age 18 with special needs	< 1
Someone else	22

Note: Total exceeds 100 because respondents could select more than one option.

In Jewish households with someone age 65 or older, 16% include someone who requires assistance with daily tasks, such as doing housework, preparing meals, dressing and undressing, or walking up and down stairs (Table 11.7).

Thirty percent of households with someone age 65 or older in Olivette / Ladue include a member who requires help with daily activities.

One third (32%) of financially struggling age-eligible households include someone that needs help with daily activities, as do 19% of age-eligible households that make just enough money.

Table 11.7. Household member typically need help with daily activities

Household member requires help with daily activities (%)	
Jewish households with someone age 65 or older	16
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	--
Personal	16
Holiday	11
Communal	13
Ritual	17
Region	
St. Louis City	--
U. City / Clayton	7
Chesterfield / West County	21
Olivette / Ladue	30
Creve Coeur area	16
Rest of Greater STL	--
Age	
22-39	--
40-54	--
55-64	--
65-74	11
75+	24
Relationship status	
Inmarried	18
Intermarried	17
Not married	14
Parent of minor child	
No	15
Yes	--
Financial situation	
Struggling	32
Enough	19
Extra	6
Well-off	5

Sixty percent of Jewish adults report it was either somewhat easy (35%) or very easy (25%) to find information they need about services and supports provided in the Greater St. Louis Jewish community (Figure 11.2). There were no significant differences between adults living in households that needed a health service and adults not living in such households (not shown in figure).

Figure 11.2. Find information about services



Forty-two percent of Jewish adults have either no one (3%) or just a few people (39%) in their nearby personal support networks (Table 11.8). Among the engagement index, the Personal group has the highest share of people saying they have either no one (2%) or just a few people (54%) in their personal support network.

Jewish adults ages 22-39 have the highest share of support networks with a lot of people (39%).

Table 11.8. Personal support network

	A lot of people (%)	A fair number of people (%)	Just a few people (%)	No one (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	22	36	39	3	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	13	43	42	2	100
Personal	20	23	54	2	100
Holiday	22	36	39	4	100
Communal	42	38	20	1	100
Ritual	21	37	35	7	100
Region					
St. Louis City	32	27	38	3	100
U. City / Clayton	26	40	29	5	100
Chesterfield / West County	13	39	42	6	100
Olivette / Ladue	20	28	51	1	100
Creve Coeur area	12	44	43	1	100
Rest of Greater STL	25	29	44	2	100
Age					
22-39	39	27	31	3	100
40-54	21	29	48	2	100
55-64	13	42	41	4	100
65-74	12	42	44	2	100
75+	14	40	41	5	100
Relationship status					
Inmarried	24	39	35	1	100
Intermarried	26	31	39	4	100
Not married	15	33	47	4	100
Parent of minor child					
No	21	34	42	3	100
Yes	25	36	36	2	100
Financial situation					
Struggling	14	33	43	10	100
Enough	19	35	43	3	100
Extra	27	32	39	2	100
Well-off	25	38	36	1	100

CHAPTER 12. IN THE WORDS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

To provide an additional layer of insight into the thoughts and feelings of members of the Greater St. Louis Jewish community, the survey closed with two open-ended questions:

1. Based on your own experience, what do you consider to be the strengths and gaps of the Greater St. Louis Jewish community? (1,026 responses)
2. What gives you the most satisfaction, joy, or meaning to your life as a Jewish person? (1,168 responses)

The responses to these questions reinforce the themes presented throughout the report and provide further evidence of the needs of and opportunities available to the community.

This chapter summarizes the responses to these two questions about strengths and weaknesses of the Jewish community and about satisfaction, joy, or meaning in Jewish life. Many respondents touched on multiple themes and may be included in more than one category. Where relevant, quantitative data have been added, to provide additional context for the comments.

The numbers in this chapter reflect the number of respondents who mentioned each theme being addressed. Unlike in previous chapters, these responses are not weighted to be representative of the full Jewish community. Some quotations have been edited for clarity or to preserve the anonymity of the respondent.

Community Characteristics

Size and geography

The Jewish community of Greater St. Louis is made up of 45,800 Jews living in 26,700 households, concentrated in suburban St. Louis County as well as the City of St. Louis. Respondents commented on the ways that the geography (76 responses) and size (59 responses) shaped their experiences with the Jewish community. There are 39 comments that focused on the advantages that come with a community the size of Greater St. Louis.

For being a smaller big city, we have an active Jewish community with lots of events and resources. Male, 33, U. City/Clayton

This is a reasonably sized Jewish community with a steady or shrinking Jewish population, I think, and because of the size, we should be able to creatively meet the needs of the Jews in our area. Female, 77, U. City/Clayton

Many Jews have moved outside of the traditional suburban core into the City of St. Louis and exurban counties, primarily St. Charles County, MO. Sixty-six comments indicated disappointment or frustration with Jewish organizational offerings in these areas.

There are many different types of opportunities available in the Greater St. Louis Jewish community. However, many of them are not conveniently located for individuals living in St. Louis city, or really, anywhere other than Creve Coeur/West County. Female, 33, St. Louis City

The lack of any presence or really even much of any acknowledgement of Jews on the Illinois side is disappointing. Male, 34, Rest of Greater St. Louis

Cohesion and silos

The Greater St. Louis Jewish community includes members with an array of Jewish practices, political orientations, and more. The cohesion of the community, or lack thereof, was mentioned in 176 responses.

I think there's too much infighting among the different denominations of Jews in town. The competition is silly. We should not always be reinventing the wheel; we should be banding together with much more solidarity. Female, 55, Chesterfield/West County

I think as a Jewish community we have to figure out how to be together in community in a changing world - politically, economically, religiously, etc...We need to focus on what we have in common and lift it up. Too often we are focused on what divides us, and it causes our community to splinter into multiple groups. Female, 50, Chesterfield/West County

For the most part, Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform get along nicely with each other and sometimes participate in and support each other's events. Especially since October 7, it seems that we have all been supportive of each other, which is phenomenal. Female, 72, U. City/Clayton

Tight-knit or cliquish

About half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis (52%) were raised locally, two thirds (66%) have lived in the area for at least 20 years, and 57% of Jewish households have a parent or child living in another area household. That so many community members have long-lasting ties to the area, to each other, and to Jewish institutions is viewed as a source of pride by many respondents. However, for some—even the same respondents—this is a source of ambivalence or even negativity (111 respondents).

*A strength would be that the community is close-knit. People know one another and help one another. However, the community can feel unwelcoming to those who did not grow up in Saint Louis. We can do more to invite these people to volunteer on committees and boards and get involved. Female, 44, Olivette/Ladue
People have known each other for generations, and it's hard to break in if you don't fit into a certain box. That's both its strength and weakness. Female, 49, Rest of Greater St. Louis*

The St. Louis Jewish community ALMOST has everything that a large city with a strong Jewish population has. However, the transparency for transplants is terrible, and this is not the most welcoming place. Once you're 'in' this is a great place to raise kids and find a strong Jewish home, but many times people are segmented when it is not always necessary. Female, 35, U. City/Clayton

Having lived in other communities, the St. Louis Jewish community is more united and cohesive in serving the community than other cities. Not always easy for a new person to get engaged, and can be cliquish for those that didn't grow up/go to high school here, but pros far outweigh the cons. Female, 63, Creve Coeur area

Diverse needs by age and life stage

Family, children, and teens

About one quarter of Jewish households in Greater St. Louis (26%) include children under the age of 18. Many respondents (88) focused on the needs of families, young children, and teens. Many comments advocated that there be ways for children from across the community to meet and interact.

Build stronger opportunities for children ages 8-18 to get to know other Jewish kids from other schools. Female, 39, Chesterfield/West County

I don't think kids growing up Jewish in St Louis know a lot of other Jewish kids unless they go to the same school. I don't think our Sunday schools and Hebrew schools do anything to bring kids together. Female, 67, Creve Coeur area

We live outside the core Jewish area. Hard to connect with other Jews, especially for kids in religious school. Female, 50, St. Louis City

Young adults

Over one quarter of the Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis (28%) are young adults (under age 40). Many of these young adults face challenges in integrating with the community due to their limited finances, geographic concentration, or perceived disinterest in legacy institutions like synagogues and the J. Fifty-seven comments related to young adults called for more welcoming attitudes and age-appropriate activities.

Sometimes you don't fit neatly into a 'box' for a specific organization, then where do you go? People in their 30s need more organizations geared specifically to us. Female, 33, St. Louis City

There are no groups/ events for young professionals especially in 30s/40s, and also no events for singles to help meet each other. That has been extremely frustrating as I've tried with various organizations to have some type of singles events and have always been told no. There are many Jewish singles in the STL area and no way to get together or meet easily, especially once you get past college age. Female, 36, Creve Coeur area

Concern about programs and experiences for young adults goes beyond those who are themselves young adults. Many older adults considered programs for this demographic to be one of the community's top priorities.

Engagement of those between the very young professional age and younger families seems to be low. Female, 33, U. City/Clayton

The community needs to find new ways to reach out to and affect younger adults and young families, to show them the benefits of belonging to the Jewish community and its organizations. Female, 74, U. City/Clayton

Speaking as a mother of a single 30 something son...there should be more opportunities for younger single Jewish people to meet and mingle with each other, as they are usually not active in a synagogue until after they are in a committed relationship. Female, 61, U. City/Clayton

Seniors

Adults ages 65 and older constitute 29% of the Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis. Forty respondents commented on the needs of seniors. Those comments related to senior service needs, including Jewish-sponsored senior housing, more welcoming attitudes to make seniors feel more welcome in communal life, and outreach to maintain their connections to Jewish life.

Our low-income senior population is growing and greatly underserved. The facilities we built with [Department of Housing and Urban Development] subsidies are largely housing more and more non-Jewish seniors. Female, 64, Creve Coeur area

It is a horror that there is no longer a Jewish nursing home in St. Louis. I am still paying off many years of elder care debt for all the years we were caregivers for my parents—which is an isolating and crushing experience. I wish our community was less country club/ bourbon tasting focused and maybe did more to value our elders and their caregivers. Female, 60, Creve Coeur area

I quit the temple I used to belong to because there was no place for an 88-year-old retired lady that wanted to be involved. Female, 88, Creve Coeur area

Jewish communal institutions

Synagogues and congregations

In Greater St. Louis, 37% belong to some type of Jewish congregation, whether a synagogue, independent minyan or chavurah, Chabad, or another worship community. Two hundred and sixty-one respondents commented on congregations (219) or religious leadership (42). Most wrote positively about their experiences with their congregation and the range of options within the community.

Our small community allows for close connections within a synagogue. Female, 37, Olivette/Ladue

The Jewish community in St. Louis includes a rich and varied synagogue experience. Female, 48, Rest of Greater St. Louis

The Chabad in St. Charles County is doing good things. Male, 66, U. City/Clayton

There were 35 respondents, however, who indicated they wished to see more collaboration between synagogues.

I think there is a great variety of Jewish synagogues. It would be wonderful to see even more opportunities for socialization and activities between them. Female, 42, Creve Coeur area

The St. Louis Jewish community is not often united. People are loyal to their own congregation or community within the larger Jewish community. Female, 56, Chesterfield/West County

The community has become more inclusive and less insular than it was when we came here 45 plus years ago. I think that there should be more dialogue between the Orthodox and other Jews, but things like the food festival and the events sponsored by the Jewish Community of St. Charles are bridging that gap. I also think that even stronger bonds among Reform congregations, such as transferable or reciprocal memberships, would help keep families together when grown children adopt a different congregation than the grandparents. Female, 70, Creve Coeur area

Other respondents (42) noted areas in which individual congregations could improve, primarily by lowering financial barriers associated with membership and High Holiday services.

As in many communities, St. Louis Jews who for whatever reason don't want to commit to joining a congregation and struggle with how to stay connected spiritually and secure the assistance of clergy for lifecycle needs. Many Jews in this category probably don't know there are options for them to remain connected with a Jewish congregation...or that some congregations will accept as members individuals who cannot pay dues. The traditional membership business model for congregations continues to be problematic for many Jews, especially younger people. There are only a handful of affluent Jewish community members who have the resources to sustain congregations and the expenses of maintaining a congregation and synagogue. This is not a problem that will go away. It needs serious thought and action. Male, 71, Olivette/Ladue

Cost is an issue for temple membership. We pay dues but are not big donors. So, we seem to feel left out of opportunities to be more involved in our temple. We attend virtual services almost weekly, but no one really knows us except for one of the Rabbis. I feel a connection to them, however, if I saw them in the community, they won't know who I am. Female, 71, Creve Coeur area

Twenty-one respondents commented on the perceived centrality of the congregations within Greater St. Louis, noting that it does leave non-members and secular Jews feeling outside the fold.

There are preconceived notions of who you are based on the congregation you belong to (or don't belong to). Female, 43, Creve Coeur area

Synagogue affiliation is still king. Articles in the Jewish Light always refer to synagogue affiliation when recognizing people. Not everyone wants or needs a synagogue, and it shouldn't be the only way to be Jewish. Female, 51, U. City/Clayton

It's difficult to break into the Jewish Community of St. Louis if you don't belong to a synagogue. Female, 70, U. City/Clayton

Jewish education

The Greater St. Louis Jewish community provides a range of Jewish educational offerings. Half of Jewish K-12 students received some type of Jewish education during the 2023-24 academic year, including 22% who attended either full- or part-time school. Forty-six respondents commented on existing schools and camps, their reputations, and the support they receive from the community.

Would be wonderful to see more Jewish day school/ rigorous Jewish education for high school-age kids. Female, 47, Chesterfield/ West County

St. Louis offers excellent Jewish education opportunities, including religious schools, preschools, and day camps. But there is a lack of central support for these organizations through the Federation. Day schools are well supported, but supplementary schools and camps that serve a much larger population seem to get much less support. Female, 36, Creve Coeur area

Jewish communal life

Twenty percent of Jewish households belong to a Jewish organization, and 60% donated to at least one Jewish organization in the past year. Of the general comments about Jewish organizations (153), 90 were positive, complimenting the variety of organizations, their collaboration, and the breadth of their offerings.

We are a tightly networked community with lots of strong relationships at both the organizational and individual level. There are thriving community organizations with lots of activities across age ranges and interests. Female, 50, Chesterfield/ West County

We have good cooperation among congregations, the Federation, and other Jewish organizations. Female, 71, Chesterfield/ West County

Other comments (60) suggested areas for improvement, including those who thought there was not enough collaboration.

There are huge gaps in cooperation between institutions. People tend to be siloed in their own community or social groups and do not venture out or nurture connections with people who think, live, or behave differently from them. Male, 40, U. City/ Clayton

There's a sense of organizations competing more than collaborating in a meaningful way. There's a lack of comprehensive planning to be cost-efficient and forward thinking in how we engage people of all ages. They're great at planning big community events with no plan for follow up to engage attendees. Female, 67, Chesterfield/ West County

Outreach to diverse segments of the community

One area of concern for 114 respondents is the need for outreach to members of the community. There was a particular emphasis on making sure that all segments of the community feel welcome and are represented.

More creative ways need to be developed and implemented which effectively reach unaffiliated Jews in the community, particularly millennials. Hidden Jews—drug and substance abusers, unhoused, uninsured, LGBTQ—need to be a higher priority in the community. Male, 75, Chesterfield/ West County

There's a lack of support for adults and young people with disabilities for housing, employment in the Jewish community, inclusion, and social activities. No one is inviting people with disabilities to participate in services or even attend. Female, 76, St. Louis City

We need to support low income and BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, Person of Color] Jewish community members more. Unknown gender, 20, Chesterfield/West County

Not nearly enough resources or connections or community for intermarried families—we don't fit in anywhere. Because I am married to a non-Jew, despite trying to be involved in many Jewish organizations, I always feel like an outsider, like I'm less-than. Female, 51, U. City/Clayton

Jewish organizations

The J

Twenty-four percent of all households in Greater St. Louis belong to the J. Ninety-four respondents commented on the J, 65 of whom noted the center's centrality to the community, range of cultural programs and activities, and accessibility.

The community offers something for everyone. New Jewish Theatre brings wonderful plays to the community. The J's book and film festivals involve the community. Female, 90, Olivette/Ladue

The Jewish Community Center offers a broad assortment of services and programs, and its facilities offer a central meeting place for gatherings. Male, 71, Olivette/Ladue

Some commenters (21), however, criticized the high cost of membership, expressed sadness at living too far away, or voiced concern that the J is more of a gym than a true community center.

Human service agencies

Supporting human services is important to the Greater St. Louis Jewish community, with 40% listing it as a cause they care about, and 15% of households having donated to a local Jewish human service agency (such as Jewish Family Services, Covenant Place, and the Crown Center). Of the 196 comments that referred to human services and the agencies that provide them, 74 discussed their effectiveness in providing assistance to members of the community.

I think the Jewish community works very hard to offer help and areas for people to go to for help and anything else. Female, 81, Chesterfield/West County

There appears to be support services for most needs if one asks and knows where to go. Those struggling, however, are often too embarrassed to ask for help. Male, 73, Rest of Greater St. Louis

One hundred and sixteen respondents, however, identified areas for further improvement, most of which related to the need for centralized human service offerings, shorter wait times, and dedicated housing for Jewish seniors.

Jewish social service organizations...continue to miss the mark in providing coordinated services for the community. They seem to be more concerned with preserving organizational structure and hierarchies, than with providing service. Female, 68, Creve Coeur area

Phone calls asking about services at JFS have been unanswered after multiple attempts/messages. Female, 71, U. City/Clayton

We need an independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing residence, specifically focused on the Jewish community. Female, unknown age, Olivette/Ladue

I wish there were more options for Jewish continuing care or life care communities here. Female, 68, Chesterfield/West County

Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Relations Council

The Jewish Federation of St. Louis and the Jewish Community Relations Council are among the pillars of the local Jewish community. Of the 103 comments about the Federation or JCRC, 47 praised these organizations' support of other Jewish organizations and advocacy for the interests of the Jewish community.

I think the Jewish Community Relations Council does an admirable job in bringing people of different faiths and backgrounds together. It's the one organization in which my Catholic [spouse] and I can comfortably participate together. Female, 72, Rest of Greater St. Louis

I think organizations like the Jewish Federation and JCRC have done a lot to connect with non-Jewish organizations in our region to increase connection and engagement, which I think has helped increase understanding and support for the Jewish community in St. Louis. Female, 51, Creve Coeur area

Fifty comments expressed concerns that the Federation and JCRC emphasize the wrong areas for advocacy, do not meet their potential as central institutions, and are overly focused on wealthier community members.

I wonder why JCRC has not focused more on antisemitism and the Israel-Hamas war—seems too focused on other legislative issues that aren't as urgent. Female, 58, Creve Coeur area

I was surprised by the 'limited' capacity of the St. Louis Jewish Federation. I was spoiled by the extensive and broad scope of the federation [in my hometown]. Female, 91, Olivette/Ladue

Funding, resources, and philanthropy

Ninety-seven respondents addressed community funding, communal resources, and philanthropy. Of those, 40 spoke positively about the funding that makes community activities possible, as well as other examples of economic support.

Our Federation [is able to] distribute capital to assist the Jewish community organizations in fundraising efforts from a small community population. Unknown gender, 38, St. Louis City

The Jewish community in St. Louis seems to be a thriving community with resources and support for not only the Jewish community, but St. Louis residents as well. The contributions of the

Jewish community to St. Louis in the areas of art, culture, and social support are significant. Female, 44, St. Louis City

I think there are a lot of Jewish organizations that help the St. Louis community. I feel the Jewish community is very charitable and is willing to help Jewish and non-Jewish people. Female, 61, U. City/Clayton

Of the respondents (37) who expressed worry that Jewish organizations are increasingly reliant upon fewer donors, some identified the need to broaden the donor pool, while others expressed concern that the fewer, wealthier donors might dictate community investments based on their particular interests.

The Federation does not seek to represent the diversity of the community but rather gives undue preference to those voices that represent the majority opinion and/or the largest donors. Male, 65, Creve Coeur area

There is a very small pool of mega-donors, who do too much of their spending on Holocaust education at the expense of children's education. Female, 49, U. City /Clayton

Affluent donors are dying, and the next generation is not motivated or inspired to support the community in the same way. Jewish organizations are struggling to raise the dollars necessary to fulfill their missions. Male, 54, U. City/Clayton

Organizations seem to rely on 'known' families to support....do not realize the possibilities of non-known individuals. Household money (for donations) seems most important to organizations instead of finding out how someone can BRING money to an organization. People not 'known' are not given a chance to be involved in meaningful ways. Female, 56, Rest of Greater St. Louis

The community relies greatly on 'social connections' and wealth in order to work at Jewish organizations/ synagogues, participate on organizational boards and committees, be invited to events, seminars, and leadership/professional development. Female, 49, Creve Coeur area

Leadership

Forty-four respondents mentioned issues concerning professional and lay leadership. Comments recommended diversifying leadership and developing young future leaders.

I believe our community has gaps in attracting and retaining community members who are diverse and/or of marginalized identities, and our boards and leadership do not reflect community diversity. Unknown gender, 38, St. Louis City

The Jewish Federation could do a better job recognizing other ways in which people give, besides money. If younger adults were recognized and appreciated for their time, I know they would be more willing to be money donors in the future. The Federation lost my support because my time was not appreciated, and leadership treated me differently in public. I would rather donate to organizations directly. Female, 38, Creve Coeur area

Jewish community programs and offerings

About two thirds of Jewish adults (68%) participated in at least one Jewish-sponsored program in the past year. Of the respondents who discussed programs in general (130), 63 appreciated the range of offerings and those that fostered a sense of community across the diversity of the Greater St. Louis community.

They have many programs for people of all ages and backgrounds, regardless of their abilities and financial backgrounds. Female, 73, Creve Coeur area

There are numerous programs supporting Jewish life in St. Louis and supporting the Jewish community. Male, 85, Chesterfield/West County

I think our strength is that we have a unique cross-denominational community. All the rabbis know each other...and many work together on community-wide programs, as well as smaller cultural or spiritual activities (such as music and art events). Female, 61, U. City/Clayton

Other respondents (67), however, provided critical feedback and suggested that participation in programs would increase if they were more appealing or scheduled more conveniently.

The assumption seems to be that every household has one parent who either doesn't work or whose schedule is extremely flexible. Things are frequently scheduled at impossible times, and childcare is almost invariably unavailable. Male, 35, U. City/Clayton

Many activities that I am interested in are in the evening, and I no longer drive at night. I wish there was some sort of volunteer driving pool that might be available. Often these activities are sponsored by the Federation or area temples, and I don't know anyone who is planning on attending who could take me. Female, 82, Creve Coeur area

Cultural activities mostly take place at the J rather than in parts of the city like Downtown, Grand Center, the Central West End, or Forest Park. These are all locations where other cultural activities of interest to all groups take place. Many of the Jewish cultural activities that take place at the J are very much cultural activities of interest to ALL groups who have any interest in cultural activities. By limiting the location of these activities to the J, the St. Louis community's approach tends to cut itself off from larger cultural community. Male, 75, St. Louis City

The most frequent comments about types of programs related to educational programs (84), cultural programs (76), and social programs (35).

Community concerns

Politics

Concerns about politics—US politics in general as well as political divisions within the Jewish community—were mentioned by 47 respondents. Many of the comments highlighted ways in which strong political opinions impede cohesiveness within the community.

The community is too focused on politics and not community. Male, 33, Creve Coeur area

Seems like the louder voices are coming from the left and right fringes (10% on each side). We should stop catering to them and instead aim at the silent 80% that are less engaged, less informed, and likely turned off by the fringes. Certain rabbis and community organizations (on the left and right) are nurturing these fringes in violation of their non-partisan status. Female, 59, Creve Coeur area

I think that the general divisiveness in the country is reflected here and exacerbated by the ongoing war in Israel. Female, 77, U. City/Clayton

Other comments expressed frustration with Jews who have different political opinions or those occasions when their own views are ignored and delegitimized.

Sadly, the Jewish community, whether it's in St. Louis or across the United States, is blinded by politics...We get dismissed by the liberal Jews...I wish we could educate the Jewish community that sometimes liberalism is not a good thing. Male, 65, Creve Coeur area

I do not like Missouri's overall political and social climate, and the Jewish community in which I live seems to be getting more conservative in all senses of the word. Female, 42, U. City/Clayton

The St. Louis Jewish Light seems to ignore or is not that interested in covering the views of Jewish moderates or Jewish conservatives. It simply does not cover issues from both sides and treats Judaism mostly as a cultural social group rather than a religious group. It is clearly one-sided and refuses to engage in a fair conversation on issues from both sides. Male, 74, Creve Coeur area

When I have been around many [politically] conservative Jews they are generally judgmental of others, including the Jewish Federation. They demonstrate similar traits and behaviors as Christian fundamentalists-conservatives, e.g., self-righteous, opinionated, biased, black and white thinkers. Male, 70, U. City/Clayton

Israel

There are diverse and strongly held views among members of the Greater St. Louis Jewish community about Israel—both in general and in the context of the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel and the resulting war. While nearly three quarters of Jewish adults feel some level of emotional attachment to Israel, with 35% feeling somewhat attached and 38% feeling very attached, the remaining quarter of the community includes 14% who feel not at all attached, and 13% who feel not too attached.

The 100 comments that mentioned Israel focused on Israel's actions during the war, responses from different groups within the United States, and the ways in which Israel should—or should not—feature in community discourse.

Eighteen responses expressed admiration for how the community rallied together in the months immediately after October 7, 2023.

It's been very inspiring to see the community come together after October 7. Female, 52, Chesterfield/West County

Our community is solidly behind Israel's right to exist. Paradoxically, our community does not agree on how Israel should defend herself. Female, 76, Rest of Greater St. Louis

Twenty-nine percent of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis somewhat (18%) or strongly (11%) agree that their views about Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings. Thirty-one comments expressed pain, alienation, and anger over not feeling accepted for their disagreement with Israel's government in particular or its treatment of Palestinians in general.

The Jewish leadership continues to present it to non-Jews as monolithic on Israel-Palestine, which threatens the safety of Jews everywhere. Male, 27, St. Louis City

I find St. Louis Jewish institutions to be remarkably out of step with my generation. The richness of my Jewish life comes from other places—family, friends, networks nationally, political organizations, collective care networks, Jewish study at home and with friends, etc. We have spoken, and you have not listened. And your support for Israel and the ongoing genocide is making you bleed interested people by the dozen...Israel is the lynchpin that will crack the relationship of thriving, committed Jews to archaic institutions. Female, 38, St. Louis City

The Jewish Light and Federation are overly hawkish regarding Israel, and it keeps me away. Female, 40, U. City/Clayton

I wish there were more opportunities for engagement that did not require tacit support of Israel. Female, 33, St. Louis City

For 25 respondents, there has not been sufficient expressions of support for Israel and its backers from enough of the Jewish community or the institutions that claim to represent it.

There is not enough positive news/information about Israel, and not enough dissemination of good news about Israel and the Jewish people. Male, 85, U. City/Clayton

[The community is] not a strong, solid backer of Israel. Too many in the area are apologetic. We as a community must strongly and vocally...support all moves Israel makes for [its] safety. Female, 64, Creve Coeur area

There is a radical-left JCRC that does nothing to support Israel despite tons of Federation funding for that purpose. The organized Jewish community often talks about commitment to Jewish education and supporting Israel, but those in the trenches can tell it takes a back seat to diversity initiatives and trying to maintain a focus that leans further and further away from Jewish tradition and values. Male, 47, U. City/Clayton

Eighteen respondents commented on the need for organizations to secure support for Israel through advocacy with other religious and ethnic groups.

Our community is in crisis. We are creating 'out groups' of people who want a ceasefire. Our Jewish identity is becoming more and more about Israel and less and less about being Jews and Americans. We are inserting ourselves into politics when we should not drive the conversation. We are exacerbating tensions with our neighbors instead of being in a relationship with our neighbors. Female, 35, St. Louis City

I would like to see either the Federation or the JCRC take a leading role in Israel advocacy. The lack of Israel advocacy is a significant gap in our community. Female, 58, Chesterfield/West County

There has been a lack of steadfast non-Jewish community partners/supporters (especially regarding Israel and October 7). Female, 53, Creve Coeur area

Antisemitism

Twenty-three respondents mentioned concerns about antisemitism or the importance of countering antisemitism. As noted earlier in the report, 28% of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis felt targeted by antisemitism in the previous year, 51% avoided certain behaviors out of fear of antisemitism, and 47% were very concerned about antisemitism in the St. Louis area. The comments provided by these respondents further detail these concerns.

**Real* threats of antisemitism exist in this country, but they are coming from white supremacist groups, not from people advocating for a free Palestine. Unknown gender, 43, St. Louis City*

We appreciate when Jewish leaders come together with a united voice to address antisemitic opinions from certain politicians. Female, 54, Olivette/Ladue

The Jewish community's connection to the gentile community seems to have been stronger in the past. These relationships are critical for both combatting antisemitism and connecting the Jewish community to issues in our own back yard. Male, 41, St. Louis City

Satisfaction, joy, and meaning

Family

Four hundred and seventy respondents mentioned family as the source of greatest satisfaction, joy, or meaning in their Jewish lives. This view encompasses spending holidays and lifecycle celebrations together, seeing their children and grandchildren form their own connections to being Jewish, and maintaining connections to deceased relatives through Jewish traditions.

That my children are continuing the Jewish religion with themselves and my first grandchild. My dad was a Holocaust survivor, so this is important to me! Female, 69, Creve Coeur area

Celebrating the holidays with my family and teaching my young child about Jewish culture and practices (e.g., weekly celebrating Shabbat together). Female, 35, Chesterfield/West County

My family means everything to me and is the source of the Jewish part of my identity. I associate many positive things from my life with that. Male, 45, Olivette/Ladue

My parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. They are my best examples and bastions of the meaning of life as a Jew. While my experience is very different from theirs, their memory reminds me that life can be difficult, but we have all we need to overcome most obstacles. Male, 52, Creve Coeur area

Holidays and Shabbat

One third of Greater St. Louis Jewish adults mark Shabbat either once a month (11%) or every week (22%), and large majorities lit Hanukkah candles (80%) or attended a Passover seder (70%) in 2023. Jewish holidays, including Shabbat, were mentioned as the source of Jewish satisfaction, joy, and meaning by 342 respondents.

Welcoming in Shabbat, celebrating all Jewish holidays, and baking the best Hamantaschen this side of the Mississippi (and, quite frankly, the other side, too). Female, 62, Chesterfield/West County

When Jews get together to celebrate a holiday...that's a great feeling of community and shared joyousness. Male, 71, Olivette/Ladue

My family and I enjoy celebrating the holidays in our own way and enjoy knowing that others in our neighborhood are doing the same—carrying on the traditions of thousands of years. Female, 67, U. City/Clayton

The full array of traditions around Yom Kippur (services, fasting, reviewing the state of my personal relationships). Male, 80, St. Louis City

I love the beautiful light on the last night on Hanukkah. Female, 55, Chesterfield/West County

Sense of community

More than half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis feel a sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live, including 33% who feel a sense of belonging somewhat and 24% who feel it very much. Additionally, nearly three quarters of Jewish adults (72%) are part of a community based in a Jewish organization or group, or part of a community that includes other Jews. There are 195 respondents who mentioned finding satisfaction, joy, or meaning in their sense of belonging to the Jewish community, both locally and around the world.

Being part of a community of people who share Jewish values and who seek to make the world a better place. Male, 74, St. Louis City

Being with the Jewish community makes me feel what I imagine God's presence is like. To know that I am surrounded by people that I am tied to through centuries of history is surreal. I cherish the wisdom of my Jewish elders and love to meet other Jewish people my age. Unknown gender, 22, Chesterfield/West County 18698742

I love the feeling of oneness with the Jewish community while also accepting the open dialogue of differing opinions. I love the rituals, traditions, and familiarity of prayers and Torah. Even when we disagree, it is understood that we all want the very best. Female, 76, Rest of Greater St. Louis

Jewish organizations

Many households in the St. Louis Jewish community are deeply connected to local Jewish institutions. Among K-12 students, 22% attended a Jewish school during the 2023-24 academic year, and 32% attended a Jewish camp in summer 2023. Almost half of Jewish adults attended a Jewish

program sometimes (31%) or often (16%) during the previous year. There were 157 comments about how Jewish programs and organizations provided Jewish satisfaction, joy, and meaning.

Our children are now out of college, but we appreciated the many opportunities they had as children to engage Jewishly in St. Louis. Female, 54, U. City/Clayton

Knowing that sending my children to Jewish camp was such an impact in their lives. They have such strong memories, and a strong Jewish identity, as a result. Female, 73, Creve Coeur area

Serving on the board of trustees of [my congregation], continuous formal and informal learning opportunities, opportunities to contribute financially to organizations and activities that support and enhance Jewish life. Female, 74, U. City/Clayton

Jewish culture

Engaging in Jewish cultural practices is deeply important to the Greater St. Louis Jewish community. In the past year, 31% of adults often ate traditional Jewish foods, and 25% often read books, watched movies or TV, or listened to music or a podcast that is Jewish-focused. Jewish culture created satisfaction, joy, or meaning for 177 respondents.

Jewish culture—Israeli folk dancing, music, theater, movies, lectures on Jewish topics, food, museums/exhibits. All aspects of Jewish culture—just not anything religious. Female, 60, Chesterfield/West County

I enjoy ritual, reading, wearing symbols of Judaism in jewelry, and making Judaic art. Female, 67, Olivette/Ladue

I am interested in the arts, culture, and politics well beyond Israel and the Middle East but reading, lectures and all kinds of information about Israel or Jewish peoplehood (not religion), I'll 'devour' it with pleasure. Female, 59, Creve Coeur area

Jewish music and poetry lead to a deeper sense of spirituality for me. And the camaraderie of sitting in a circle singing with people is very uplifting. Female, 63, U. City/Clayton

Being with and celebrating our culture and history in all its forms. Learning about all the different ways Jews have lived is interesting, and it's wonderful to be in a community of both Jews and non-Jews and share in our rich tradition. Male, 34, St. Louis City

Helping others and *tikkun olam*

Over half of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis (55%) volunteered in the previous year, including 33% who volunteered for or through Jewish organizations. There were 212 respondents who mentioned helping others as one of the ways they find satisfaction, joy, and meaning in being Jewish.

I find joy and meaning as a Jewish person when I use my beliefs to help others—in my work, as a volunteer, and just in my daily life. Female, 30, U. City/Clayton

For me, it is our belief system. Doing good because it's the right thing to do and not just to get yourself an eternal reward, and the belief of leaving the world better off than what you started with. Male, 60, Chesterfield/West County

I do volunteer at the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry, and although very few of the clients seem to be Jewish, I do feel a sense of satisfaction in helping others there. I do give a lot to various charities, so I feel that I am doing my small part for tikkun olam. Female, 77, Creve Coeur area

CHAPTER 13. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The findings that are presented in this report provide a detailed portrait of the Jewish community of Greater St. Louis, including community members' demographic characteristics; their participation in Jewish communal life and private Jewish activities; and their attitudes about Judaism, Israel, antisemitism, and the local Jewish community. This chapter summarizes some of the themes emerging from the data that community organizations can use as their starting point for planning for the future.

Reach out beyond the geographic core of the community

The majority of Greater St. Louis' Jewish communal infrastructure is physically located in U. City/Clayton and the Creve Coeur area regions, which together are home to 42% of the area's Jewish households. However, the City of St. Louis and the Rest of Greater St. Louis regions (in particular, St. Charles County), between them include a near equivalent of 35% of the Jewish community's households. Moreover, Jewish adults who live there are disproportionately younger—with more than half of the community's 22 to 39-year-olds living in the two regions, compared to about one third of all Jewish adults.

There are few synagogues, schools, and social and cultural resources in the St. Louis City and Rest of Greater St. Louis regions. Those residents report feeling as though they must choose between long commutes for Jewish life and making do closer to home without institutional support. In the Rest of Greater St. Louis region, 60% of Jewish adults report feeling any sense of belonging to a Jewish community where they live, compared to, for example, 90% in the Creve Coeur area.

Bringing more programs to St. Louis City and outlying areas within Greater St. Louis, keeping and making more programs and activities available online, and promoting stronger ties between Jewish organizations in the historic core and the rest of the community, can help to expand the community's reach.

Balance the needs of newcomers and long-time residents

The Jewish community in Greater St. Louis has longstanding ties to the area. Two thirds of Jewish adults have lived in the area for 20 years or longer, and half were raised locally, including 30% who have spent their entire lives in Greater St. Louis. Furthermore, there is a strong multigenerational component to the community, with more than half of Jewish households having either an adult child or a parent living in a different St. Louis-area household.

Despite these longstanding local connections, nearly one quarter of Jewish adults moved to the area within the past decade. Those who have lived in Greater St. Louis for fewer than five years are less likely to have local friends and family who might connect them to Jewish events, institutions, and people. Many newcomers feel frustrated by what they perceive as a community that is hard to break into. It may be helpful to introduce new residents to their options for synagogues, Jewish schools, Jewish cultural programs and activities, and to create opportunities to meet other Jews who share their interests.

Foster community through organizations and individuals

The importance of community for people's mental and physical well-being has long been documented.²² The majority of Jews in Greater St. Louis do indeed have strong sense of attachment and connection to their community, whether Jewish or otherwise. Sixty-nine percent of Jewish adults agree somewhat or very much that they feel part of any community in Greater St. Louis. Still, not all Jewish adults have community nearby, with 21% agreeing only a little that they feel part of a community, and 10% agreeing not at all.

Despite the large share who feel connected to some community, about one quarter of Jewish adults do not have any local **Jewish** community. This includes those who have no local community at all (10% of Jewish adults) as well as those whose community has few or no Jewish members (18% of Jewish adults). Among these 28% of Jewish adults, nearly half have some interest in finding a Jewish community in Greater St. Louis: One third (32%) are somewhat interested and 14% are very interested in finding a Jewish community.

The study explored barriers to participation in Jewish life, and some of these might be the same barriers to building community. The most common barrier to participation that is cited by Jewish adults is not knowing many people (31%). This limitation is particularly pronounced for younger Jews ages 22-39, of whom 42% report this as a barrier. A feeling of being unwelcome is a barrier for 14% of younger Jews.

Meet people where they are in their Jewish journeys

The study introduces a typology of five patterns of Jewish engagement. They include a broad set of ritual, communal, and cultural Jewish behaviors that go beyond traditional measures of Jewish engagement, such as synagogue membership. For some, being Jewish is about celebrating holidays or observing Jewish rituals. For others, it means participating in community organizations. For still others, it means engaging in private or personal behaviors outside of group and communal auspices. While many members of each engagement group participate in most or all common Jewish behaviors, their overall patterns of behavior suggest their different interests in and needs for Jewish life. A better understanding of current Jewish behaviors, and the interests and barriers for those in each engagement group, can suggest entry points for strengthening and expanding Jewish involvement in the community.

Of those in the Minimally Involved engagement group who do have local community, a smaller share compared to other groups make community with friends; a club, interest group, or activity; or their neighborhoods or towns. This pattern suggests that this group's lower involvement in Jewish life may have less to do with avoiding Jewish life and more with their greater disinclination toward community involvement. Nevertheless, half of this group engages in Jewish culture, such as reading books or watching movies or TV shows. Arts and cultural programs, therefore, may be attractive to members of this group.

Most members of the Personal engagement group—despite their most common Jewish behaviors not requiring an institution—do have some involvement and interest in communal life. Still, this group is the most likely of all groups to cite as limitations to their desired involvement in Jewish life that they could not find Jewish programs of interest (33%); they are not being confident in their

Jewish knowledge (19%); and they feel unwelcome in Jewish spaces (17%). Finding ways to lower perceived barriers of entry and acceptance will be central to enticing members of this group into Jewish spaces.

The Holiday engagement group enacts their Jewish lives through holiday observances. All or nearly all members of this group attend a Passover seder, light Hanukkah candles, mark Shabbat, and attend a High Holiday service. Majorities also, though not often, attend Jewish programs and events, read Jewish publications, and engage with Jewish culture. Programs based in holiday celebrations may be more likely to appeal to this group

The Communal engagement group most highly participates in Jewish life through organizational settings. While most observe Jewish holidays and belong to Jewish congregations, more than 90% attend Jewish programs, volunteer for Jewish causes, and donate to Jewish organizations. Of this group, 45% of households belong to the J, a higher share than any other engagement group. The Communal group has the largest share of members ages 75 or older (24%), compared to 15% of the overall Jewish community. Of the types of Jewish activities attended by the Communal group, the most common are social action (87%), religious (72%), educational (72%), and cultural (71%).

The Ritual engagement group has the highest levels of participation across the most common Jewish ritual behaviors. Large majorities mark Shabbat weekly, attend services at least monthly, and fast on Yom Kippur. For nearly all members of this group, being Jewish helps them cope at times of crisis, celebrate at times of joy, and make major life decisions. When they are involved with organizational life, it is through religious institutions: Members of this group are most likely to attend Jewish programs sponsored by a local synagogue or Chabad, for example.

By understanding the patterns of Jewish engagement and the demographic profile of each engagement group, Jewish organizations will be better able to meet the needs of specific populations as well as design programs that bring diverse groups together over shared interests and concerns.

Address human service needs

Twenty percent of Jewish households describe their financial situations as well-off, and 19% say they cannot make ends meet or are just managing to make ends meet (referred to in this report as “struggling”). In total, 11% of Jewish households were unable to pay for at least one necessity within the past year, and another 5% were unable to pay for at least one necessity between one to three years ago. These necessities included rent or mortgage payments; medical care or medicine; food; and payments or utilities such as water, electricity, or heat.

Nineteen percent of Jewish households had to limit or change their involvement in Jewish life due to their financial situation, including 8% who were unable to participate in some Jewish activities due to financial constraints. Among Jewish adults who did not attend Jewish programs but were interested in doing so, 15% indicated that affordability was a barrier to participation.

Jewish organizations look to provide for the health needs of its community members. Over one quarter of Jewish households include a member whose work, school, or activities is limited by a chronic health issue, special need, or disability, and this share is even higher (58%) among households that are financially struggling.

Of Jewish households with a member who has a limiting health issue, special need, or disability, 13% did not receive adequate services to manage the need. The relationship between financial hardship and service needs is evident. Nearly half of financially struggling households required a health service, including 10% who received inadequate services.

Jewish organizations may wish to increase their outreach to members of the community to ensure that all who wish to access their services are able to do so: About 15% of Jewish adults find it difficult to learn about health services provided by Jewish organizations.

Facilitate communal dialogue about Israel

The Greater St. Louis Jewish community has strong ties to Israel. Nearly three quarters of Jewish adults in the community feel somewhat or very attached to Israel, and over half have visited Israel at least once. Strong majorities of Jewish adults in the community believe it is important for Israel to exist as a refuge for the Jewish people, that it be a democratic state, and that it be a Jewish state.

Yet within that consensus, there is also deep division. Only 27% of Jewish adults in Greater St. Louis strongly agree that they consider themselves Zionists, with an equivalent 25% strongly disagreeing. Many respondents used the open-ended questions on the survey to criticize those in the community with different views about Israel and the war in Gaza, and to argue that Jews and Jewish organizations in Greater St. Louis should mirror that respondent's preferred approach. Some believe that the community's failure to engage in constructive dialogue alienates Jews who are committed to their Jewish identity but are troubled by current Israeli policies. Others wish that the community would throw its unequivocal support behind Israel, regardless of its domestic or foreign policy actions.

Conversations about Israel are particularly fraught for younger adults ages 22-39. Among this age group, 28% strongly agree that their views about Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings, the highest of any age group. In addition, younger Jewish adults face challenges related to Israel outside of the Jewish community, with 71% report avoiding mentioning Israel out of fear of antisemitism.

Educational programs and facilitated discussions may help to foster greater mutual respect and understanding among members of the Greater St. Louis Jewish community.

Conclusion

These findings emerge from data collected systematically from a representative sample of 1,771 members of the community between January and April 2024. This study is part of a long tradition of using the tools of social science to assess the size, character, interests, needs, and concerns of a local Jewish community. The study measures participation in communal and individual Jewish practices, institutional engagement, unmet needs, and many other aspects of Jewish life in Greater St. Louis. We hope that this snapshot of the community will stimulate discussion about how best to enhance the lives of community members and strengthen the community as a whole.

NOTES

¹ Leonard Saxe, Theodore Sasson, and Janet Krasner Aronson, “Pew’s Portrait of American Jewry: A Reassessment of the Assimilation Narrative,” in *American Jewish Year Book 2014*, ed. A. Dashefsky and I. Sheskin (New York, NY: Springer International Publishing, 2015), 78–81.

² Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020” (Washington DC: Pew Research Center, 2021).
<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>

³ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

⁴ <https://ajpp.brandeis.edu/>

⁵ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

⁶ Reports and details about each study can be found at <https://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/community-studies/index.html>

⁷ US Census Bureau. (2024). *2023: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. Retrieved from
<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2023.DP05?t=Populations%20and%20People&g=050XX00US17119,17163,29099,29183,29189,29510&y=2023&moe=false>

⁸ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

⁹ US Census Bureau. (2024). *2023: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. Retrieved from
<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2023.S0101?t=Age%20and%20Sex&g=050XX00US17119,17163,29099,29183,29189,29510&y=2023&moe=false>

¹⁰ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

¹¹ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

¹² See also Janet Krasner Aronson et al., “A New Approach to Understanding Contemporary Jewish Engagement,” *Contemporary Jewry* 39 (2018): 91–113.

¹³ Inmarried parents with children who are Jewish and something else appear to be second marriages.

¹⁴ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

¹⁵ Respondents who did not participate in any Jewish programs were assumed not to have participated in Israel-related programming outside of Jewish sponsorship.

¹⁶ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

¹⁷ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

¹⁸ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

¹⁹ US Census Bureau. (2024). *2023: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. Retrieved from
<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2023.S1501?g=050XX00US29510,29189,29183,29099,17119,17163>.

²⁰ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

²¹ See <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines/prior-hhs-poverty-guidelines-federal-register-references/2021-poverty-guidelines#thresholds>

²² Stewart, K., & Townley, G. (2020). How far have we come? An integrative review of the current literature on sense of community and well-being. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 66(1-2), 166-189.