

Jewish **STL**

2024 Greater St. Louis Jewish Community Study | **Key Findings**



**Jewish
Federation**
of St. Louis



To our St. Louis Jewish Community,

On behalf of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis, we are proud to present key findings from the *2024 Greater St. Louis Jewish Community Study*. The breadth of this data provides a rich understanding of our community — its diversity, values and aspirations — and provides a foundation for thoughtful planning and collaboration.

Conducted in partnership with the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and NORC at the University of Chicago, this study reflects the voices and experiences of Jewish individuals and families across the Greater St. Louis area. By exploring the ways in which people connect with Jewish life, as well as the challenges they face, the report highlights opportunities to collectively support and strengthen our community.

The findings reveal a vibrant and diverse Jewish population, one shaped by unique expressions of identity and connection. They also show the importance of fostering engagement across all stages of life, building meaningful relationships and addressing barriers that may prevent some individuals from fully participating in Jewish experiences. Most significantly, these insights remind us of the power of community and the shared responsibility we hold to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for all.

We are deeply grateful to the many individuals who contributed to this effort, from the research team to the dedicated community members who shared their perspectives. This study would not have been possible without widespread support and participation.

Similar to previous demographic studies, this work captures a moment in time, shedding light on the work we can do today to serve the present needs of our community while we plan our future with intention. Together, we can strengthen connections, deepen engagement and build a thriving Jewish community. As we turn these insights into action, we invite you to join us in envisioning the future of what it means to be Jewish in St. Louis.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dalia Oppenheimer".

Dalia Oppenheimer
Co-Chair, Community Study

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Greenberg".

John Greenberg
Co-Chair, Community Study

Introduction

The goal of this study, conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and NORC at the University of Chicago, is to promote an understanding of the community and to inform strategic planning, program development and policymaking in a way that supports and enhances Jewish life.

This study is based on an analysis of a rich data set collected from 1,771 respondents in January 2024. Survey respondents were randomly selected from all households in the Greater St. Louis area and through the use of an integrated Address Based Sample with known households on Jewish organizational lists.

As the study was launched only a few months after the October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel, some responses may have been influenced by the extraordinary challenges of the aftermath. The questions, however, were designed to capture the stable characteristics of the community, in line with the objective of a demographic study.

The key findings found here are an overview of the study. The full report can be found at JFedSTL.org/Study



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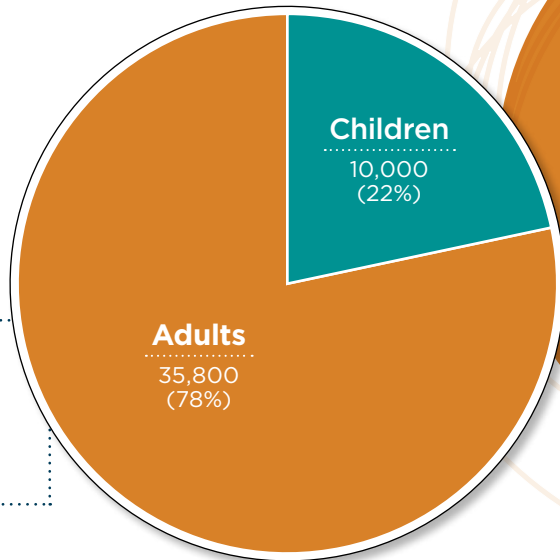
Community Portrait

Jewish Population Estimates

The Greater St. Louis area 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. A Jewish household is defined as a household that includes having at least one Jewish adult. A Jewish adult is defined as an individual who identifies as Jewish and has a Jewish background, which includes having at least one Jewish parent, being raised Jewish or converting to Judaism.

This study used current best-practices and methodologies to extrapolate the overall Jewish population from the sample group. Details of the 2024 survey methods are provided online. Note that in all cases when the total of 100 is shown, the numbers may not add up exactly to 100 due to rounding.

45,800
Total Jews



CONSIDER THIS

52% of Jewish adults in the region were *raised locally* and 23% moved to the area within the last decade, primarily for educational opportunities

PEOPLE IN JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS

	Jewish	Non-Jewish/ Unknown Religion	Total
Adults (Ages 18+)	35,800	12,600	48,400
Children (Under Age 18)	10,000	2,800	12,800
TOTAL	45,800	15,400	61,200

CONSIDER THIS

26,700 Jewish Households
comprise 2.4% of
all households
in the St. Louis region

Geographic Household Distribution

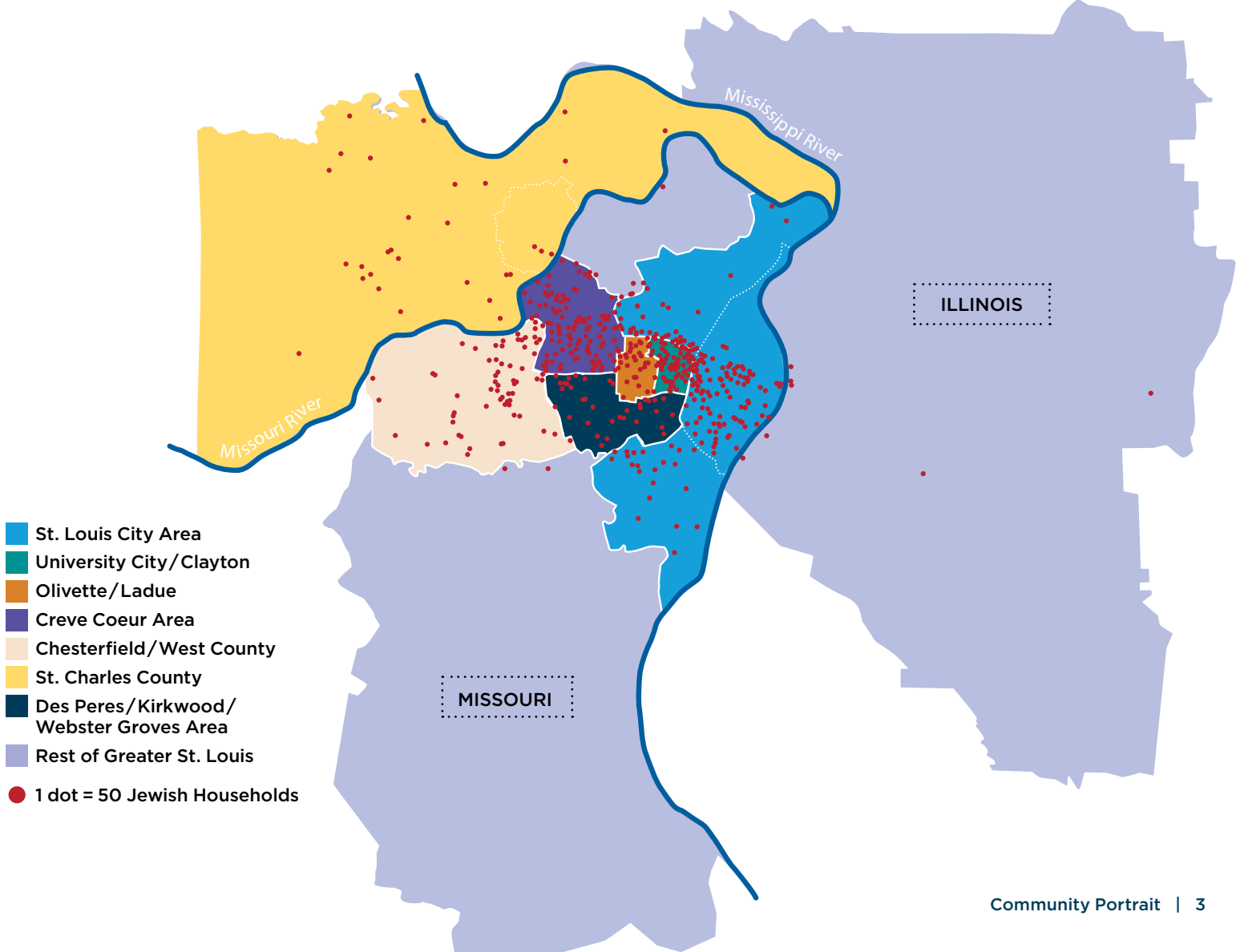
The Geographic Household Distribution of the Jewish community is comprised of eight regions based on county and ZIP codes (not city limits).

JEWISH ADULTS BY REGION

St. Louis City Area	22%
University City/Clayton	21%
Creve Coeur Area	19%
Chesterfield/West County	14%
Olivette/Ladue	10%
St. Charles County	6%
Des Peres/Kirkwood/Webster Groves Area	4%
Rest of Greater St. Louis	4%
TOTAL	100%

CONSIDER THIS

40% of Jewish adults
ages 22-39 and
25% of Jewish adults
ages 40-55
*live in
the City
of St. Louis*



Diversity Snapshot

Age, gender, race and orientation findings illustrate ways in which members of each group identify Jewishly and engage in Jewish life.

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

9% of Jewish adults identify as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning).

And, 92% of Jewish individuals identify solely as white and non-Hispanic. Only 2% identify as a Person of Color and 6% identify as a racial identity that is not white, Hispanic or a Person of Color.

AGE OF JEWISH ADULTS

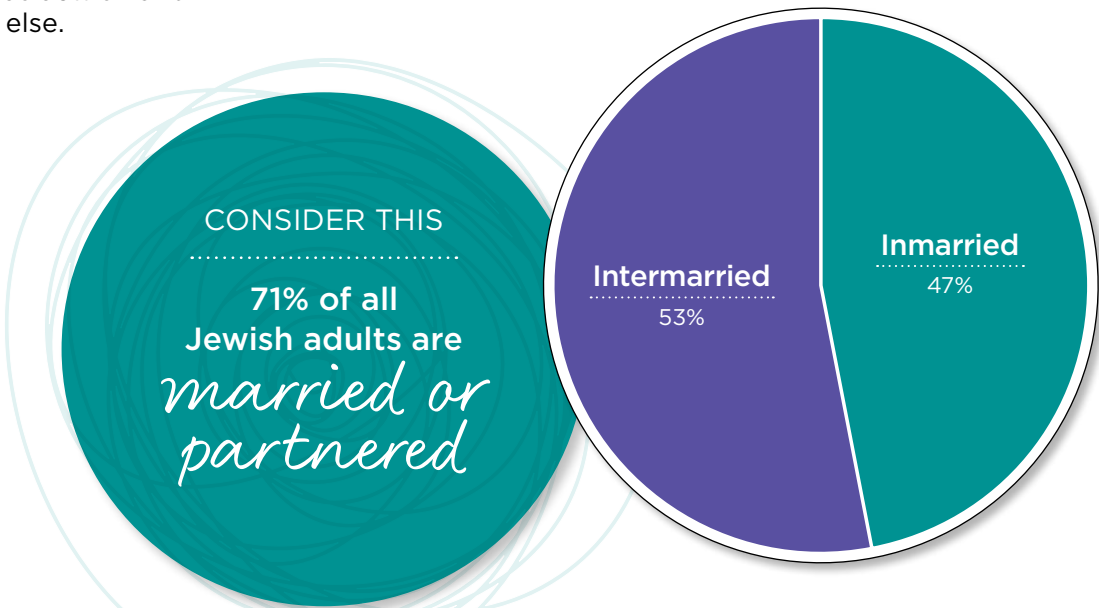
18-21	7%
22-29	8%
30-34	7%
35-39	6%
40-44	5%
45-49	8%
50-54	8%
55-59	6%
60-64	14%
65-69	8%
70-74	7%
75+	14%

Relationship Status

The relationship status among Jewish adults is 53% intermarried, compared to 42% of the Jewish population nationwide.

Of children in intermarried households, 49% do not identify with a religion, or identify as Jewish and something else.

RELATIONSHIP STATUS AMONG JEWISH ADULT COUPLES



DEFINING TERMS

Couples and **Marriages** include married and cohabiting couples.

Intermarried is when one partner is currently Jewish and one partner is not.

Inmarried is when two partners are currently Jewish, regardless of whether they were born Jewish or converted.

INTERMARRIED



INMARRIED



Affiliation & Religious Identity

The Greater St. Louis area has a slightly higher percentage of adults compared to the national average who identify as 'Just Jewish' with no denomination. Identifying with no specific denomination, however, should not be interpreted as the absence of Jewish engagement.

DENOMINATION OF JEWISH ADULTS

	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%
Just Jewish	35%	32%
TOTAL	100%	100%

CONSIDER THIS

45% of Jewish adults
identify as Reform

CONSIDER THIS

3% of the Jewish
Adult Population are
Israeli citizens

Community Engagement

Jewish engagement encompasses the various ways people express their Jewish identity. Their beliefs and feelings about being Jewish shape their actions, and in turn, their actions influence their beliefs. Examining how different groups perceive their Jewish identity reveals both commonalities and differences. Gaining insight into these perspectives can help us find ways to deepen each group's connection to their Jewish identity and create opportunities to strengthen Jewish engagement.

Jewish Engagement Defined

For this study, 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 in the Jewish Engagement Defined section.

The five distinct patterns of Jewish engagement found among Jewish adults in the St. Louis region are **Minimally Involved**, **Personal**, **Holiday**, **Communal** and **Ritual**. These names reflect the distinguishing characteristics of each pattern.

CONSIDER THIS

23% of Jews feel that
being Jewish
is very much
part of their lives

CONSIDER THIS

43% of the Minimally
Involved group light
Hanukkah
candles



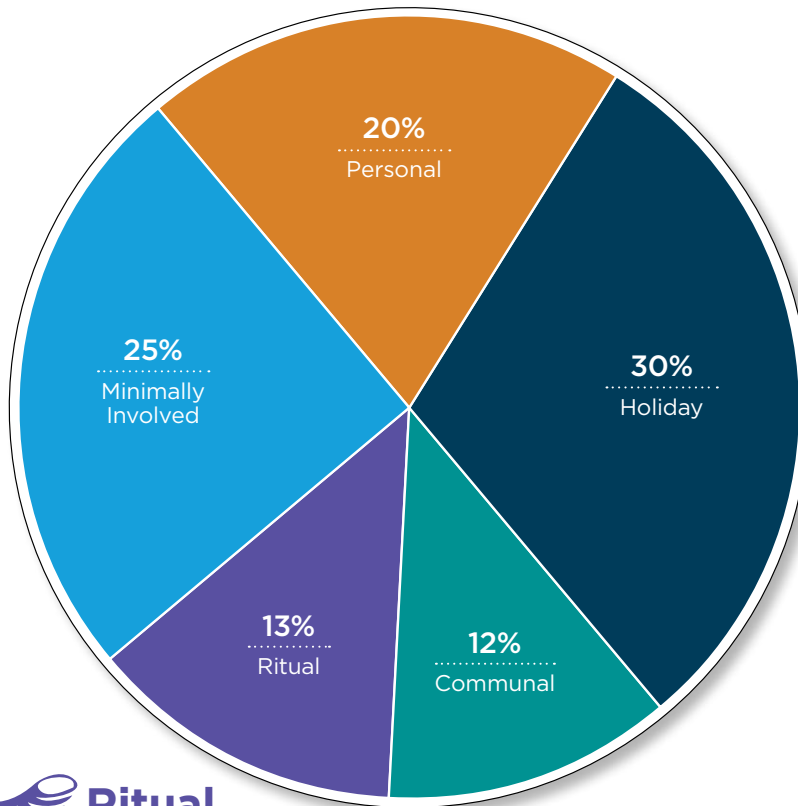
Personal

Engagement in Jewish life is an individual activity



Minimally Involved

Engage in very few Jewish behaviors



Holiday

Participate in High Holiday services, seders and Hanukkah celebrations.



Ritual

Regularly participate in holiday rituals and attend religious services, and are inclined to keep kosher at home.



Communal

Attend Jewish programs, donate to Jewish causes, read Jewish books, listen to Jewish music, watch Jewish-themed movies and TV shows, attend services and celebrate most holidays.

Key Finding:

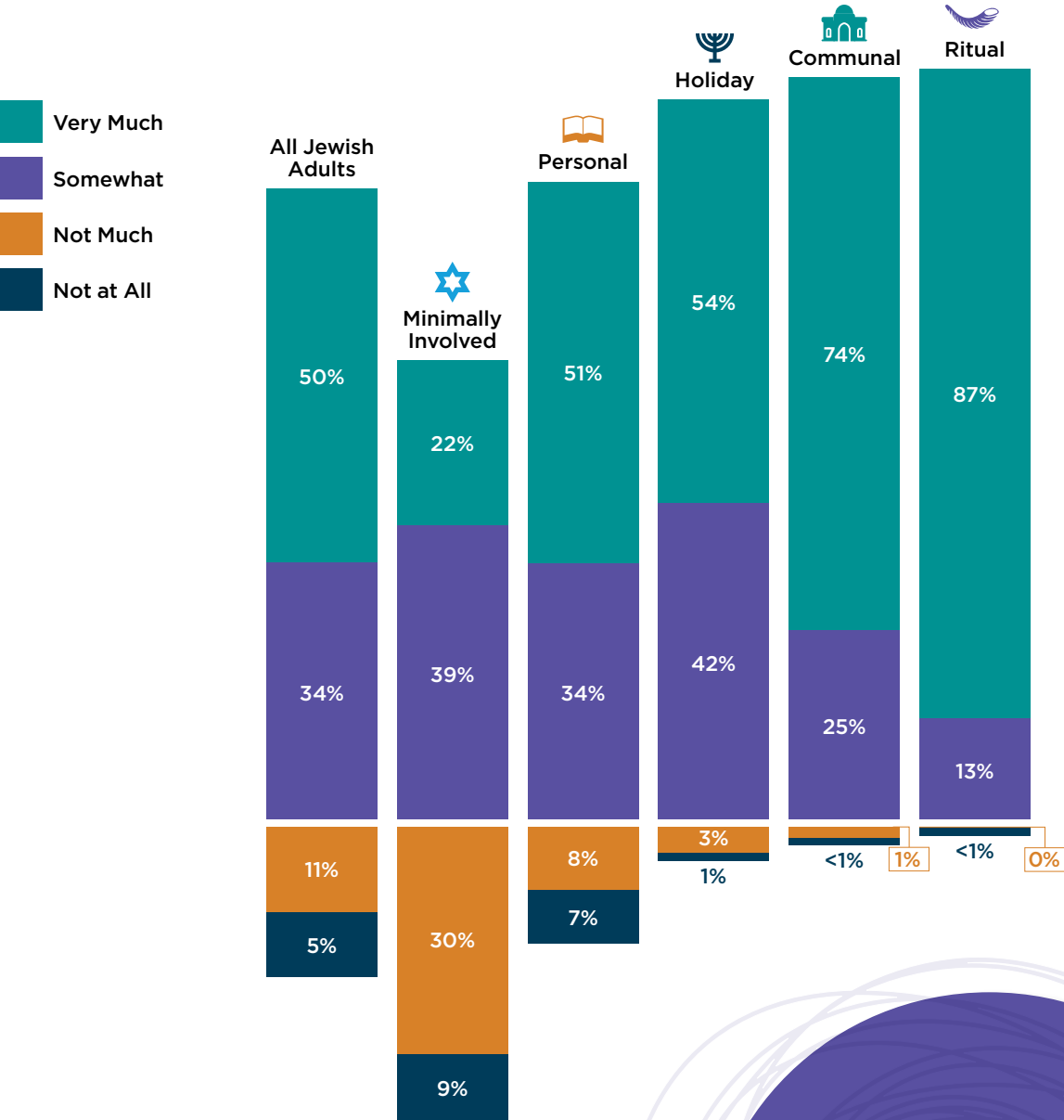
- Childhood experiences of Jewish education are related to Jewish engagement in adulthood. About three-quarters of the Holiday (72%) and Ritual (74%) groups attended Jewish school or summer camp when they were children, compared to 56% of the Minimally Involved and 48% of the Personal groups.
- About one-quarter of Jews (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 and very few of the Minimally Involved group (2%) feels the same.
- 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.

Belonging

Being Jewish is not only about positive values and attitudes but about a sense of belonging to the Jewish community. Half of Jewish adults ‘very much’ feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people. In addition, a large majority of

those in the Communal (74%) and Ritual (87%) groups ‘very much’ feel a sense of belonging. While 9% of Minimally Involved Jewish adults do not feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people.

FEELING A SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE



CONSIDER THIS

24% of Jewish adults believe that being Jewish guides them with major life decisions

Community Connections

To understand where people find community, we look at the different local groups, both Jewish and non-Jewish, that they feel connected to.

Most Jewish adults feel part of at least one community, while 10% do not feel connected at all and 39% feel strongly connected.

Jewish adults find community in different places, with friends being the most common. About 77% say they find community among their friends:

- 13% say friends are their only community.
- 44% say friends are their main community, but they belong to others too.
- 20% see friends as a secondary community, meaning they have another primary one.

For other types of communities, more Jewish adults view them as secondary rather than primary.

CONSIDER THIS

43% of Jewish adults living
in U. City/Clayton and
43% in Olivette/Ladue feel

*part of
a community*

in their neighborhood or town,
compared to 13% living in
the rest of St. Louis

WHERE JEWISH ADULTS FIND COMMUNITY

TYPES OF COMMUNITIES	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%

Congregational Membership

In most St. Louis congregations, membership is not a pre-requisite for attending services. In fact, more Jewish adults attend services than belong to a congregation. 42% of Jewish adults live in a household with congregation members. 64% of Jewish adults attended at least one Jewish worship service, with 21% attending services monthly, and 53% attending during the High Holidays.

Nearly all congregation members (96%) attended services at least once, as did 41% of Jewish adults who are not members.

CONGREGATION TYPES

Synagogue: Typically has its own building, a dues/membership structure, professional clergy and programs or amenities commonly available in synagogues. 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.*

TYPE OF LOCAL CONGREGATION MEMBERSHIP

	Congregation-Member Households
Orthodox Synagogue	10%
Conservative Synagogue	17%
Reform Synagogue or Temple	66%
Chabad	7%
Independent Minyan or Chavurah	2%
Other/No Denomination Synagogue	<1%
Something Else	2%

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

CONSIDER THIS

55% of Jewish Households
ages 22-39

*belong to a
congregation*

Jewish Organizations & Programs Aside from Congregations

		Member of the J	Member of Any Jewish Organization not including the J or a Congregation	Member of Informal or Grassroots Jewish Group
All Jewish Households		24%	20%	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%

Limits to Participation

Of the 88% of Jewish adults who either participate in or are interested in Jewish programs, 72% face at least one barrier to participation. The most common challenges include not knowing many people (31%), inconvenient program times (30%) and difficulty finding programs of interest (28%).

Key Finding: 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.

BARRIER TO PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS BY NUMBER OF YEARS OF LIVING IN THE ST. LOUIS REGION

Interested Jewish Adult	
Barrier: Don't Know Many People	31%
Length of Residence	
0-4 Years	48%
5-9 Years	37%
10-19 Years	16%
20+ Years	27%

Jewish & Generational Engagement

Nearly all members of the Communal and Ritual engagement groups took part in Jewish programs. In contrast, only 12% of Jewish adults in the Minimally Involved group participated, with just 5% attending occasionally and only 1% attending often.

Among the one-third of Jewish adults who did not participate in any Jewish programs last year, nearly a quarter showed interest in doing so — 22% were 'somewhat' interested, and 1% were 'very much' interested in programs offered.

Meanwhile, 39% of non-participants had no interest in Jewish programs, representing 12% of the entire adult Jewish community. This means that 88% of Jewish adults either already participate in Jewish programs or have at least some interest in engaging with them.

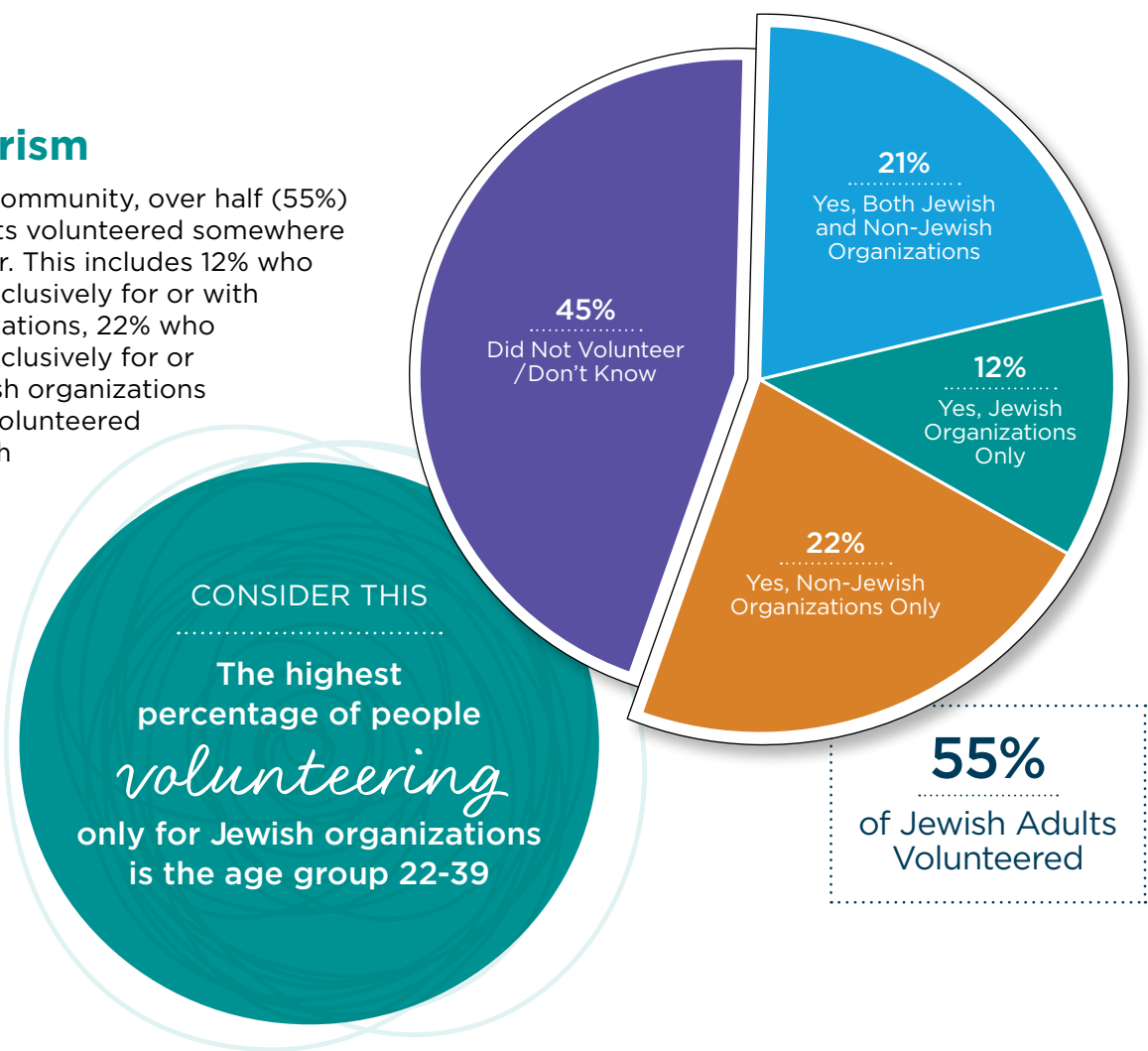


FREQUENCY OF JEWISH PROGRAM PARTICIPATION THIS PAST YEAR

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
All Jewish Adults		32%	22%	31%	16%
Jewish Engagement					
Minimally Involved		88%	6%	5%	1%
Personal		25%	39%	29%	7%
Holiday		19%	35%	39%	7%
Communal		1%	5%	38%	56%
Ritual		2%	23%	31%	44%
Age					
22-39		13%	29%	30%	28%
40-54		28%	26%	36%	10%
55-64		50%	26%	17%	7%
65-74		33%	23%	30%	14%
65-74		37%	15%	27%	22%

Volunteerism

In the 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.



Philanthropy

In the Jewish community, 80% of households made a charitable contribution in the past year, including 60% who gave to at least one Jewish organization. 54% 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 per the *Pew Research Center, Jewish Americans in 2020*.

CHARITABLE GIVING THIS 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
All Jewish Households	54%	6%	19%	20%
Age				
22-39	51%	12%	13%	24%
40-54	54%	6%	15%	25%
55-64	44%	4%	28%	24%
65-74	60%	6%	17%	17%
75+	71%	9%	12%	8%

CONSIDER THIS
80% of households made a charitable contribution in the past year

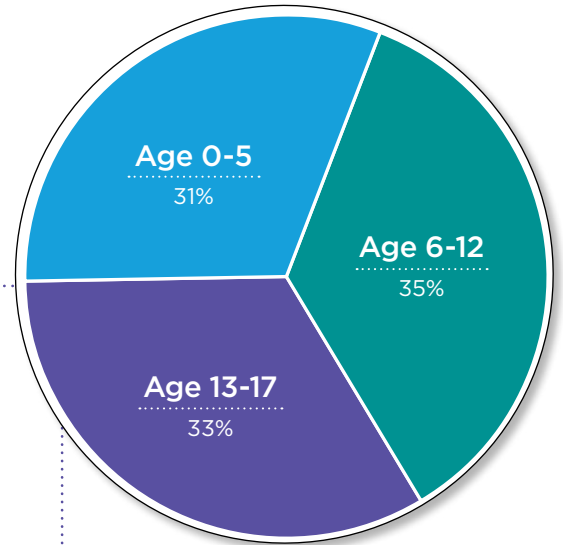
Jewish Education

Jewish education takes place in a variety of settings, including Jewish preschools, formal classroom environments like day schools and part-time supplementary schools and informal experiences such as camps, youth groups and peer trips to Israel.

In the 2023-24 school year, 28% of Jewish children who were not yet in kindergarten attended an early childhood program run by a Jewish organization. Additionally, 16% were enrolled in a private, non-Jewish or secular program, 11% attended a home-based daycare and 6% went to a public preschool or daycare. Meanwhile, 40% of Jewish children in this age group were not enrolled in any of these programs.

For national comparison, 20% of age-eligible Jewish children were enrolled in a Jewish early childhood program.

JEWISH CHILDREN BY AGE



Key Findings:

- Out of 12,800 children in Jewish households, 10,000 (78%) are considered Jewish by their parents. More than half (7,600 or 59%) are exclusively Jewish, while 19% are identified as both Jewish and another religion.
- Just over half (54%) of Jewish children are raised by inmarried parents, 35% by intermarried parents and 11% by single parents.

CONSIDER THIS

42% of age-eligible Jewish children have had a
*bar / bat / b
mitzvah*

Jewish Education K-12

In 2023, many Jewish students in grades K-12 participated in Jewish educational experiences across various settings. 22% attended a Jewish school, with 15% enrolled in part-time programs and 7% in full-time Jewish day schools or yeshivas. Beyond formal schooling, 27% took part in other Jewish programs, such as youth groups or teen programs (25%) and private tutoring or classes (4%). Additionally, 32% attended a Jewish camp during the summer. These participation rates highlight the diverse ways Jewish students engage with their heritage and community outside the home.

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

K-12 Jewish students include adults — ages 18 or 19 — who are still in high school.

CONSIDER THIS

One half of Jewish students in grades K-12 are involved in *Jewish day school* or supplementary religious school

CONSIDER THIS

32% of Jewish youth are involved in a *Jewish camp*

Community Feelings

Feelings About Israel

Jewish adults 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.

VIEWS ABOUT ISRAEL

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



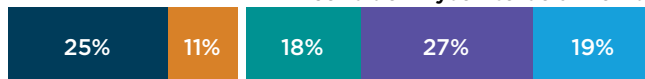
I consider it important for Israel to be a Jewish state



American Jews have the right to criticize Israel's government



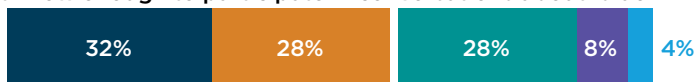
I consider myself to be a Zionist



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



Key Findings: More than half of Jewish adults have been to Israel, including 24% who have visited once, 25% who have visited more than once and 6% who have lived in Israel.

The share of St. Louis area Jews who have been to Israel is higher than that among all US Jewish adults, of whom 45% have been to Israel per the Pew Research Center, *Jewish Americans in 2020*.

Antisemitism

With antisemitism rising globally, concerns within the Jewish community are also growing. Among Jewish adults who have personally experienced an antisemitic incident, 90% are very concerned about antisemitism worldwide, while 61% are very concerned about antisemitism in the St. Louis region.

VERY CONCERNED ABOUT ANTISEMITISM

		Around the World	In the St. Louis Area
All Jewish Adults		79%	47%
Jewish Engagement			
Minimally Involved		62%	38%
Personal		86%	48%
Holiday		84%	47%
Communal		81%	42%
Ritual		77%	53%
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%

About half of Jewish adults (51%) avoid activities out of a fear of antisemitism. 36% avoid mentioning Israel either in person or online, and 26% say they avoid posting Jewish content online that would identify them as a Jew. 28% 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.

CONSIDER THIS

28% of Jewish adults were personally targeted by an antisemitic incident within the past year

CONSIDER THIS

51% of Jewish adults say they have avoided activities out of a fear of antisemitism

Community Well-Being

Financial

An indicator of financial insecurity is having insufficient funds to cover three months of expenses; another is the inability to pay an unexpected \$400 expense.

12% of Jewish households receive a public benefit, 17% of 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.

The age groups 22-39 and 40-54 both have higher percentage rates of having insufficient funds to cover three months of expenses.

CONSIDER THIS

17% of all Jewish households are *struggling* to make ends meet

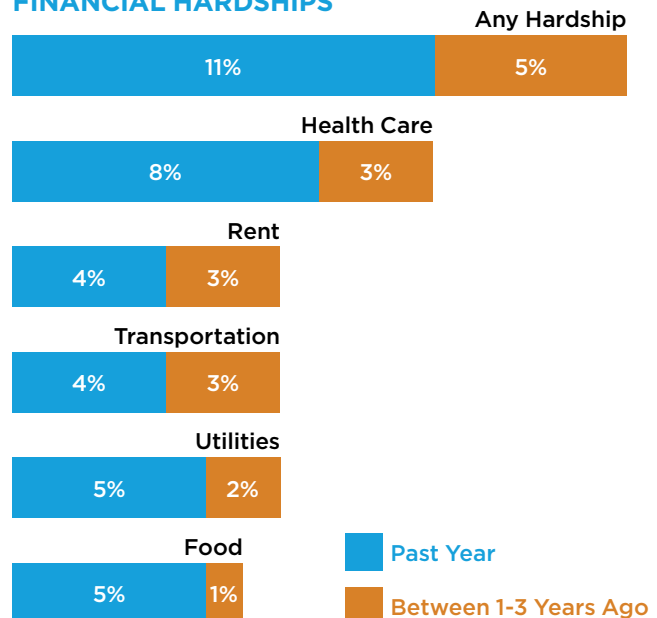
ECONOMIC INSECURITY BY AGE

Age	Insufficient Funds to Cover Three Months of Expenses	Cannot Afford Unexpected \$400 Expense
22-39	23%	8%
40-54	32%	7%
55-64	13%	9%
65-74	9%	2%
75+	7%	3%

Key Findings: Of Jewish adults ages 25 and older, 72% have at least a bachelor's degree, including 48% who earned a graduate or professional degree.

Among Jews in the United States, 58% have a bachelor's degree, including 28% with a postgraduate degree according to the Pew Research Center, *Jewish Americans in 2020*.

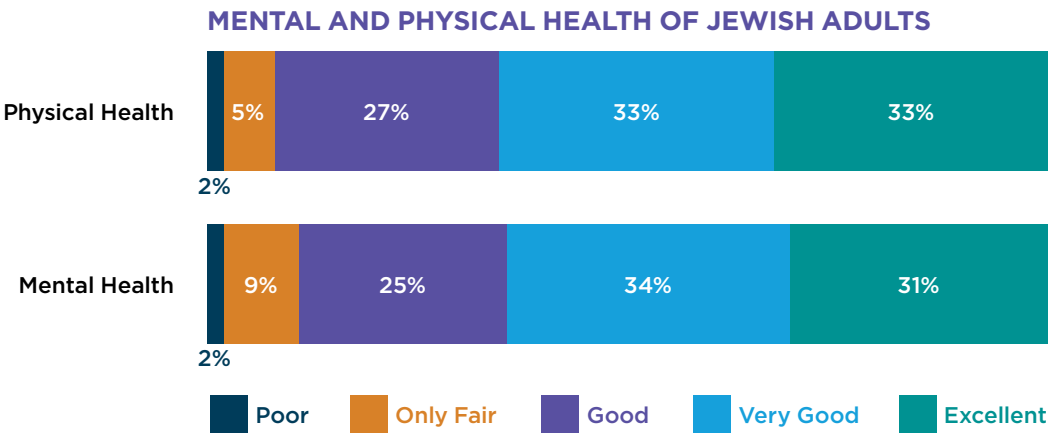
FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS



Health Needs

Most Jewish adults are mentally and physically healthy. 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. Among Jewish adults ages 22-39, 23% report their mental health as only fair or poor. Chronic health issues, disability or other needs impact 26% of Jewish households with at least one member who fits this category causing an inability to attend school or work.



CONSIDER THIS

60% of Jewish Adults (18+) say it is either somewhat easy or very easy to

find information

they need about health services and support

CONSIDER THIS

One third of financially struggling Jewish adults describe either their

physical or mental health

as fair or poor

Conclusion

Takeaways

The Greater St. Louis Jewish community is diverse, encompassing individuals from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, living in different household types and holding varying levels of connection to Judaism.

Gaining insight into the community's composition and needs is essential — not only to enhance individual well-being and deepen Jewish engagement but also to strengthen the community as a whole.

Key Findings:

Antisemitism Remains a Concern:

- 79% of Jewish adults are deeply worried about the global rise in antisemitism, and 47% share similar concerns about the Greater St. Louis area.
- 63% of those who have experienced antisemitic incidents avoid certain activities as a result, compared to 48% of those who have not.

Strong but Uneven Community Engagement:

- 68% of Jewish adults attended at least one Jewish-sponsored event in the past year.
- A quarter of respondents are minimally involved, highlighting opportunities to expand engagement.

Participation Trends and Barriers:

- Jewish programming sees the highest participation among adults ages 22–39 and those 75 and older.
- 48% of newcomers (within the past five years) cite limited social connections as a barrier to involvement.

Support for Israel and Diverging Views:

- 90% agree that Israel remains an essential refuge for Jewish people.
- However, 29% feel their views on Israel are unwelcome in Jewish settings.

Sense of Belonging:

- 77% of Jewish adults in St. Louis report feeling a strong sense of community among their friends.

To access the full report, visit JFedSTL.org/study



Acknowledgments

The 2024 Greater St. Louis Jewish Community Study is funded in part by The Lubin-Green Foundation, a supporting Foundation of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis, the Weinberg Foundation and community donors.

JEWISH FEDERATION OF ST. LOUIS PROJECT STAFF

Karen Sher, Chief Impact Officer
Scott Berzon, Director, Community Impact
Nava Kantor, Community Impact Manager
of the St. Louis Jewish Community Study

Andy Tevlin, Manager, Organizational Development
Amanda Miller, VP, Communications
David Stetter, Director of Marketing

JEWISH FEDERATION OF ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY STUDY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dalia Oppenheimer, Co-Chair
John Greenberg, Co-Chair
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RESEARCHERS

Dr. Matthew A. Brookner,
Professor Leonard Saxe and
Dr. Janet Aronson, Cohen Center
for Modern Jewish Studies
at Brandeis University

Dr. David Dutwin and **Evan**
Herring-Nathan, NORC at the
University of Chicago

We thank our research team, which brings together two preeminent research institutions: the **Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University** and **NORC at the University of Chicago**. This team, led by Dr. Matthew A. Brookner, Dr. Janet Aronson and Professor Leonard Saxe at Brandeis University, and Dr. David Dutwin and Evan Herring-Nathan at NORC, combines CMJS's extensive experience conducting dozens of Jewish community studies over the last two decades with NORC's expertise using the most advanced research methodologies. We are grateful for the contributions of our research partners whose comprehensive data collection and analysis has shone a light on the demographics, identities, needs, attitudes and engagement of our Jewish community.

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