

2022 COMMUNITY STUDY *of* JEWISH DELAWARE & THE BRANDYWINE VALLEY



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Recommended citation:

Boxer, M., Brookner, M.A., Bankier-Karp, A., Chandler, A., Martin, A., Magidin de Kramer, R., Friedman, I., Feinberg, M., Aronson, J.K., & Saxe, L. (2023). *2022 Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish Community Study*. Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and Steinhardt Social Research Institute, Brandeis University.

www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/community-studies/delaware-report.html

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The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS), founded in 1980, is dedicated to providing independent, high-quality research on issues related to contemporary Jewish life.

The Cohen Center is also the home of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI). Established in 2005, SSRI uses innovative research methods to collect and analyze sociodemographic data on the Jewish community.

JEWISH FEDERATION OF DELAWARE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The **2022 Delaware Jewish Community Study** is a snapshot of the population of Jewish Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. The study will help us understand our strengths, needs, and potential by answering questions about the size and composition of our community, as well as the ways we engage Jewishly. It will form the basis of many critical policy discussions over the coming months and years to make better and more informed decisions about the strategies we choose to keep our community vibrant.

The 2022 Delaware Jewish Community Study was made possible through the generous support of the Jewish Federation of Delaware's Jewish Fund for the Future and the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation. A Steering Committee, carefully chosen to reflect our diverse synagogues, Jewish institutions, and geography, offered input throughout the process. Meetings were also held with leadership from our synagogues, agencies, and organizations to assure that information collected would be helpful. The Study will serve as a valuable resource for Federation, our agencies, local synagogues, and other Jewish organizations to prioritize services, to improve outreach efforts and recalibrate organizationally.

The Study was prepared by a highly experienced, well-trained, and independent professional team from Brandeis University's Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS). Founded in 1980, CMJS provides independent, high-quality research on issues related to contemporary Jewish life. The Cohen Center is also the home of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI). Established in 2005, SSRI uses innovative research methods to collect and analyze sociodemographic data on the Jewish community. They have collectively completed more than 25 studies in other local Jewish communities.

This executive summary includes highlights and key trends that our community leadership and researchers have identified. The complete data set and information, which will be in the public domain, will be analyzed in the years ahead to help our Jewish community take a data-driven approach to build community.

We are confident the information revealed through this study will help us strengthen Jewish life here and enhance connections to Jewish life in our community, in Israel and around the world.

L'Shalom,



Russ Silberglied,
Board Chair



Seth J. Katzen,
President & Chief Executive Officer

2022 Delaware Jewish Community Study

Co-Chairs

Richard Levine
Leslie Newman

Steering Committee

Susan Aaronson
Rabbi Michael Beals
Paul Fine
Jennifer Goldstein
Danny Haas
Jack Jacobs
Arlene Johnson
Robin Karol-Eng
Cindy Konowitz
Michael Longwill
Jesse Miller
Gina Schoenberg
William Wagner

CMJS/SSRI ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The CMJS/SSRI research team is grateful to the Jewish Federation of Delaware for the opportunity to collaborate on the *2022 Community Study of Jewish Delaware and the Brandywine Valley*. We are particularly grateful to Hilary Stiebel, Associate Development Director at the Jewish Federation; Seth Katzen, President and CEO; and Leslie Newman and Richard Levine, study committee co-chairs; who were our partners in every step of the work. Hilary, Seth, Leslie, Richard, and the devoted members of the community study advisory committee helped us learn about the community and ensured that our work would be of the highest quality and utility for the Jewish community in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. They provided valuable input into the study design, questionnaire, and report. We also thank the 1,065 respondents who completed the survey. Without their willingness to spend time answering questions about their lives, there could be no study.

We are grateful for the work of the University of New Hampshire Survey Center, our data-collection partner for this study. Zachary Azem was our main point of contact, survey instrument programmer, and supervisor for data collection. Sean McKinley was instrumental in testing the survey. Robert Durant managed the call-center operation, including training and supervising callers, fielding callbacks, and countless other tasks. We would also like to thank the callers who collected data from respondents; the study would not have been possible without them.

This project also would not have been possible without the assistance of a large team of our colleagues and students at the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University. We are deeply appreciative of their efforts. Elizabeth Tighe, Daniel Nussbaum, and Josh Mandell developed an estimate of the adult Jewish-by-religion population of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley as part of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute's American Jewish Population Project. Daniel Nussbaum also prepared all choropleth maps used in this report and the technical appendices. Jill Smith, Benita Danzing, Hannah Taylor, and Naomi Haser helped code responses to open-ended questions. Deborah Grant and Ilana Friedman provided editorial and design assistance in preparing this report for publication.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures and Tables	iv
Executive Summary	1
Demographic Snapshot	1
Patterns of Jewish Engagement	2
Jewish Children	2
Congregations and Ritual Life	3
Organizations and Philanthropy	3
Community Connections	4
Connections to Israel	5
Financial Well-Being and Health Needs	5
Chapter 1. Introduction	7
History	7
Methodology Overview	8
How to Read This Report	8
Reading Report Tables	9
Comparisons across Subgroups	10
Reporting Qualitative Data	10
Comparisons across Surveys	11
The Impact of COVID-19	11
Report Overview	11
Report Appendices	13
Chapter 2. Demographic Snapshot	14
Chapter Highlights	14
Jewish Population Estimate	15
People in Jewish Households	15
Age and Gender Composition	17
Household Composition	17
Inmarriage and Inter marriage	18
Jewish Denominations	20
Subpopulations	20
Political Views	21
Geographic Distribution	22
Length of Residence and Mobility	24
Chapter 3. Patterns of Jewish Engagement	26
Chapter Highlights	26
Index of Jewish Engagement	27
Background: Classifications of Jewish Engagement	27
Measures of Jewish Engagement	27
Patterns of Jewish Engagement	28
Jewish Behaviors and Jewish Engagement	29
Demographics and Jewish Engagement	31

Jewish Background and Jewish Engagement	32
Attitudes about Meaning of Judaism and Jewish Engagement	33
Chapter 4. Jewish Children.....	40
Chapter Highlights	40
Children in Jewish Households	41
Jewish Schooling.....	43
Jewish Camping	44
Lifecycle Celebrations.....	44
Children’s Programs.....	44
Grandparents’ Assistance.....	44
Chapter 5. Congregations and Ritual Life.....	45
Chapter Highlights	45
Congregation Membership	45
Congregation Types	46
Religious Services	49
Holidays and Rituals	51
Chapter 6. Organizations and Philanthropy	54
Chapter Highlights	54
Jewish Organizations and Programs.....	55
The Impact of COVID-19 on Program Participation.....	56
Informal Cultural Activities	64
Volunteering and Philanthropy	66
Chapter 7. Community Connections	71
Chapter Highlights	71
Feelings of Connection to the Jewish Community	71
Jewish Friends.....	73
Knowledge of Hebrew	76
Concerns about and Experiences with Antisemitism	77
Chapter 8. Connections to Israel.....	80
Chapter Highlights	80
Travel to Israel.....	80
Emotional Attachment to Israel	84
News about Israel.....	85
Chapter 9. Financial Well-Being and Health Needs	88
Chapter Highlights	88
Caregiving.....	88
Health Needs	91
Mental and Emotional Health	92
Older Adults.....	93
Educational Attainment and employment.....	93
Financial Situation and Income.....	94
Financial Vulnerability.....	98
Impact of Finances on Jewish Life	101

Chapter 10. In the Words of Community Members	104
Strengths and Gaps	104
Satisfaction, Joy, and Meaning.....	109
Chapter 11. Conclusions and Recommendations	113
Notes.....	117

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 2.1. Household composition.....	18
Figure 2.2. Political leanings of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley.....	22
Figure 2.3 Geographic distribution of the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community.....	23
Figure 3.1. Engagement groups	29
Figure 3.2. Being Jewish is a part of daily life*	34
Figure 3.3. Remembering the Holocaust.....	35
Figure 3.4. Leading an ethical and moral life	35
Figure 3.5. Working for justice and equality in society*.....	36
Figure 3.6. Caring about Israel*	36
Figure 3.7. Taking care of Jews in need*	37
Figure 3.8. Observing Jewish law*	37
Figure 3.9. Being Jewish is a matter of culture*	38
Figure 3.10. Being Jewish is a matter of ethnicity*	38
Figure 3.11. Being Jewish is a matter of religion*	39
Figure 3.12. Being Jewish is a matter of community*	39
Figure 4.1. Children of inmarried parents	42
Figure 4.2. Children of intermarried parents	42
Figure 6.1. Length willing to travel to attend Jewish program or activity	63
Figure 9.1. Highest level of schooling.....	93

Table 2.1. Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish Community Population Estimates, 2022	15
Table 2.2. Jewish population of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, detail.....	17
Table 2.3. Age of Jewish adults in Delaware and Brandywine Valley compared to all area residents and US Jews	17
Table 2.4. Individual marital status by age (includes partners who live together).....	20
Table 2.5. Denomination of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley and the United States	20
Table 2.6. Jewish ethnicity	21
Table 2.7. Demographic subgroups	21
Table 2.8. Race and ethnicity.....	21
Table 2.9. Distribution of Jewish households and Jewish individuals across geographic regions	24
Table 2.10. Age distribution of Jewish individuals by geographic regions	24
Table 2.11. Length of residence.....	24
Table 2.12. Age of Jewish adults by length of residence.....	25
Table 2.13. Geography of Jewish adults by length of residence	25
Table 3.1. Jewish behaviors	30
Table 3.2. Jewish engagement by age.....	31
Table 3.3. Jewish engagement by region.....	31
Table 3.4 Jewish engagement by household structure.....	32
Table 3.5. Jewish engagement by denomination	32
Table 3.6. Jewish engagement by Jewish parentage.....	33

Table 3.7. Jewish engagement by childhood Jewish education	33
Table 4.1. Children in Jewish households	41
Table 4.2. Ages of Jewish children	41
Table 4.3. Enrollment in early childhood programs, 2021-22.....	43
Table 4.4. Enrollment in K-12 Jewish education, 2021-22.....	43
Table 4.5. Reasons for not attending part-time school in 2021-22	44
Table 5.1. Congregation membership.....	47
Table 5.2. Congregation membership history.....	48
Table 5.3. Reasons for not belonging to a congregation.....	48
Table 5.4. Types of congregations.....	49
Table 5.5. Religious services.....	50
Table 5.6. High Holidays	51
Table 5.7. Ritual practices	52
Table 5.8. Shabbat rituals in the past year	53
Table 6.1. Jewish memberships in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley	56
Table 6.2. Frequency of Jewish program participation	57
Table 6.3. Highest frequency of participation in Jewish programs	58
Table 6.4. Type of participation by program sponsor, past year	59
Table 6.5. Sponsors of Jewish programs, past year.....	60
Table 6.6a. Types of Jewish programs, past year	61
Table 6.6b. Types of Jewish programs, past year	62
Table 6.7. Sources of information about Jewish activities and news	63
Table 6.8a: Individual Jewish activities, past year.....	65
Table 6.8b: Individual Jewish activities, past year	66
Table 6.9. Volunteering in past year.....	67
Table 6.10. Donations in past year.....	68
Table 6.11a. Most important causes of interest for volunteering or donating.....	69
Table 6.11b. Most important causes of interest for volunteering or donating.....	70
Table 7.1. Feeling a sense of belonging to.....	73
Table 7.2. Close Jewish friends.....	74
Table 7.3a. Limits to participation in the Delaware/Brandywine Valley Jewish community	75
Table 7.3b. Limits to participation in the Delaware/Brandywine Valley Jewish community	76
Table 7.4. Knowledge of Hebrew	77
Table 7.5. Antisemitism	79
Table 8.1. Travel to Israel.....	81
Table 8.2. Travel on Birthright	82
Table 8.3a. Interest in federation, synagogue, or solidarity mission to Israel	83
Table 8.3b. Interest in federation, synagogue, or solidarity mission to Israel.....	84
Table 8.4. Emotional attachment to Israel.....	85
Table 8.5a. News about Israel.....	86
Table 8.5b. News about Israel.....	87
Table 9.1a. Caregivers.....	89
Table 9.1b. Caregivers	90
Table 9.2. Caregiving recipients.....	90
Table 9.3. Household health issues, disabilities, or special needs	91
Table 9.4. Types of health issues, special needs, or disabilities.....	92
Table 9.5. Personal support network, among households with mental or emotional health issues	92

Table 9.6. Feelings of loneliness and emotional or mental health difficulties, among households with mental or emotional health issues	93
Table 9.7. Currently working for pay	94
Table 9.8a. Financial situation.....	94
Table 9.8b. Financial situation	95
Table 9.9. Household income	96
Table 9.10. Federal poverty level.....	97
Table 9.11a. Financial confidence.....	97
Table 9.11b. Not at all or not too confident in financial future	98
Table 9.12. Economic insecurity	99
Table 9.13. Type of household hardship.....	100
Table 9.14. Any household hardship	101
Table 9.15. Financial limitations to Jewish life	102
Table 9.16. Any financial limitation to participating in Jewish life.....	103

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Demographic Snapshot

- The Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community numbers approximately 34,000 adults and children, of whom 25,900 are Jewish and living in 12,600 households. These households include:
 - 22,400 Jewish adults
 - 3,500 Jewish children
 - 6,000 non-Jewish adults
 - 2,100 non-Jewish children
- The mean age of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley is 53, and the median age is 58, slightly older than the national median age of Jewish adults, 49. The mean age of all Jewish individuals in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, including children, is 49, and the median age is 55.
- Twenty-three percent of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley include at least one child under age 18.
- The individual intermarriage rate (i.e., the proportion of married Jewish adults with a non-Jewish spouse) is 38%, slightly below the national average of 42%.
- Forty-three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley do not identify with any particular denomination of Judaism. One percent identify as Orthodox, 18% as Conservative, 30% as Reform, and 9% identify with other denominations.
- Three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley identify as LGBTQ. One percent are Israeli citizens.
- Three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley identify as Hispanic or with any racial group other than white. By contrast, 10% of Jewish children are identified as Hispanic or with any racial group other than white.
- Fifty-nine percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley identify politically as very liberal or liberal. Another 18% describe themselves as moderate, and 24% reported they are conservative or very conservative.
- Twenty-nine percent of Jewish households reside in the Brandywine Valley. Twenty-one percent of Jewish households live in Sussex County. Eighteen percent of Jewish households reside in the Wilmington core, 15% in the Newark area, and the remaining 17% of Jewish households are in the Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties.
- A quarter (26%) of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley were raised locally, and 14% have resided in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley their entire lives.
- Forty-two percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have resided in the area for 20 or more years, and another 24% have resided in the area for 10-19 years. Thirty-three percent of Jewish adults moved to the area in the past decade, including 14% who have lived in the area for fewer than five years.

Patterns of Jewish Engagement

- The Index of Jewish Engagement focuses on Jewish behaviors—the ways in which individuals occupy and involve themselves in Jewish life in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley—not on self-identification.
- Engagement groups include people of all ages and denominational identities.
- Demographic characteristics are related to membership in these four engagement groups.
- The Index can be used to identify opportunities to improve communal planning based on people’s different needs and interests.
- Four distinct patterns of behavior emerge from the data.
 - Minimally Involved (38% of Jewish adults): Characterized by involvement in few elements of Jewish life.
 - Holiday (24% of Jewish adults): Characterized by having their highest level of participation in holiday observances and congregation-related activities, but not other Jewish organizations.
 - Personal (19% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high involvement in holiday, ritual, and individual behaviors, but not service attendance.
 - Immersed (19% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high involvement in most elements of Jewish life.

Jewish Children

- Among the 5,600 children who live in Jewish households in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community, 3,500 (62%) are being raised Jewish, either exclusively or with another religion.
- Among the 2,100 children not being raised Jewish, 1,900 are being raised in no religion, fewer than 100 are being raised exclusively in another religion, and 200 have parents who have not yet decided how to raise them or who did not provide enough information to assess their Jewish identities.
- The majority (92%) of children of two Jewish parents in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community are being raised Jewish. The remaining children of two Jewish parents are being raised in no religion.
- Among children of intermarried parents in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community, 67% are being raised Jewish in some way.
- Seventeen percent of Jewish children not yet in kindergarten were enrolled in a Jewish preschool or early childhood program during the 2021-22 school year.
- Twenty percent of Jewish students in grades K-12 were enrolled in some form of Jewish school during the 2021-22 school year. This share includes 1% in a Jewish day school and 19% in a part-time school.
- Sixty-nine percent of age-eligible Jewish children in Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community have had a bar or bat mitzvah, and 13% of age-eligible Jewish children have had a Jewish confirmation.
- Scheduling difficulties (38%) or parents feeling that none of the available options was a good fit (18%) were the most commonly cited reasons for lack of enrollment in a Jewish school.

- Twenty-two percent of Jewish students in grades K-12 attended a Jewish summer camp in the summer of 2021.
- Among Jewish households in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community with at least one child age 12 or younger, 36% received books from PJ Library.
- Of those with grandchildren also living in Delaware or the Brandywine Valley, 1% were helping to pay with costs associated with Jewish education.

Congregations and Ritual Life

- Congregational affiliation in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley is 31%, which is slightly lower than the national average.
- A large percentage of households (66%) in the Brandywine Valley that affiliate with a congregation choose a congregation outside of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley.
- Twenty-three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley previously belonged to a congregation but do not currently belong to a congregation, and 43% never belonged to a congregation. Among the Minimally Involved group, most have never belonged to a congregation (65%).
- Jewish households with children are more likely to belong to a congregation than households without children and also more likely to belong to every type of congregation (i.e., synagogue, Chabad, independent *minyán*) except for those outside of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley.
- Parents and Jewish households with children are more likely to participate in several aspects of Jewish life than non-parents or households without children, including attending services at all during the past year, attending High Holiday services, lighting Shabbat candles, having a special meal on Shabbat, lighting Hanukkah candles, and fasting on Yom Kippur.
- Thirty percent of Jewish adults who do not currently belong to a congregation still attended services at least once during the past year, but only 15% of this group attended High Holiday services.
- During the 2021 High Holidays, 41% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley attended High Holiday services. Most attended online, either with a congregation within Delaware or the Brandywine Valley (20%) or a congregation outside the area (10%). Eleven percent of Jewish adults attended High Holiday services in person, primarily in Delaware or the Brandywine Valley (10%).
- A majority of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley light Hanukkah candles in a typical year (84%) and attended a seder in 2021 (71%). Twenty-one percent of Jewish adults keep kosher at any level.

Organizations and Philanthropy

- Fourteen percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley belong to a local Jewish organization other than a synagogue or the Siegel JCC. Nine percent of Jewish adults belong to a local informal or grassroots Jewish group.
- In a typical year prior to COVID-19, 67% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley participated in Jewish programs, including 14% participating often. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the proportion that participated in Jewish programs dropped to 43%,

including 18% participating sometimes or often, a share that has remained the same since in-person activities restarted.

- Twenty-seven percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley attended at least one Jewish program in the past year. Nine percent of Jewish adults participated in programs sponsored by the Siegel JCC, 7% participated in programs sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Delaware, 5% participated in programs sponsored by the Jewish Family Service, and 3% participated in programs sponsored by a local Chabad.
- Twenty-two percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley participated in Jewish programs that were primarily religious (aside from services), 15% participated in primarily educational programs, and 7% each participated in primarily spiritual or charitable programs.
- Eighty-three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are willing to travel to attend a Jewish program or activity, including 55% who are willing to travel for up to 30 minutes.
- Many Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley participated in informal Jewish cultural activities in the past year, including discussing Jewish topics (91%), eating Jewish foods (91%), consuming Jewish culture (e.g., reading books, watching movies or TV, or listening to music; 77%), reading publications from Jewish organizations (76%), reading or posting on social media about Jewish life (53%), and studying Jewish texts (38%).
- Twenty percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley volunteered for Jewish organizations in the past month.
- Sixty-two percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley donated to Jewish organizations in the past year, including 8% who donated to the Jewish Federation of Delaware.

Community Connections

- Ninety-three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley feel at least some sense of belonging to the Jewish people, including 52% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Sixty-two percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley feel at least some connection to the local Jewish community, including 16% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Fifty-four percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley feel at least some connection to an online Jewish community, including 10% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Forty-eight percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley say they have at least some close Jewish friends, including 18% who say most or all of their close friends are Jewish.
- The four most common barriers to participation in the Jewish community cited by Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are COVID-19 (25%), not knowing many people (23%), a lack of interesting activities (20%), and the cost of participation (11%).
- Sixty-six percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have some knowledge of Hebrew, including 7% who can understand most or all of what they read.

- Sixty-seven percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are very concerned about antisemitism around the world, and 54% are very concerned about antisemitism in the United States. By contrast, only 30% are very concerned about antisemitism in Delaware or the Brandywine Valley.
- Eighteen percent of Jewish adults personally experienced one or more antisemitic incidents in the past year.

Connections to Israel

- Almost half of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley (47%) have traveled to Israel. This share is similar to that of US Jews in general, of whom 45% have traveled to Israel.
- Over one third (36%) of age-eligible Jewish adults (ages 50 and younger) have been on a Birthright trip to Israel.
- The majority of Jewish adults are emotionally attached to Israel, with 28% feeling very attached and 42% feeling somewhat attached. Taken together, this proportion (70%) is higher than among all US Jewish adults (58%).
- More than half of Jewish adults follow the news on Israel, 9% very closely and 44% somewhat closely.

Financial Well-Being and Health Needs

- Among the 12,600 Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, 18% are serving as primary caregivers for a relative, separate from routine childcare.
- Nineteen percent of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley include at least one person who is limited in their work, school, or activities by some sort of health issue, special need, or disability. The most common health issue is a chronic illness, faced by 10% of households.
- All of the Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley with mental or emotional health issues in their household reported that they have a personal support network. However, 90% said their support network consists of just a few people.
- Two percent of Jewish households do not have access to transportation when needed for medical appointments, meetings, work, or daily tasks some or all of the time.
- Sixty-nine percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have attained at least a bachelor's degree, a slightly higher proportion than in the national Jewish community.
- Close to two thirds (64%) of Jewish adults who are not in high school are working, including 45% working full-time in one job or position, 17% working part-time in one job or position, and 2% working in multiple positions. Thirty-one percent of Jewish adults are retired.
- Fifteen percent of Jewish households say either that they cannot make ends meet (1%) or are just managing to make ends meet (14%).
- While 20% of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have an income of \$200,000 or more, roughly the same proportion (21%) have an income of less than \$75,000, including 6% with an income below \$50,000.

- Eight percent of all Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley experienced a household hardship within the past year, and 5% experienced a household hardship one to three years ago.
- Fourteen percent of all Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley reported that their financial situation limited their participation in Jewish life.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The *2022 Community Study of Jewish Delaware and the Brandywine Valley*, conducted by the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) at Brandeis University and sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Delaware, employed innovative state-of-the-art methods to create a comprehensive portrait of the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of present-day Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewry. Some of the issues explored in the study grew out of conversations surrounding the Pew Research Center's *A Portrait of Jewish Americans* (2013), which pointed to growing and shrinking US Jewish sub-populations, declining affiliation in traditional institutions, new forms of Jewish engagement, a rise of both secular and Orthodox Jews, and a relationship between intermarriage and community growth.¹ A new Pew study, *Jewish Americans in 2020* (2021), published while this study was in its planning phase, reinforced many of the findings of the original Pew study and contributed new insights into the state and character of the American Jewish community. With the Pew studies and the related national discourse as a backdrop, the *2022 Community Study of Jewish Delaware and the Brandywine Valley* seeks to describe the current dynamics of its population.

The principal goal of this study is to provide valid data about the Delaware and Brandywine Valley 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:

- Estimate the number of Jewish adults and children in the community and the number of non-Jewish adults and children who are part of those households
- Describe the community in terms of age and gender, geographic distribution, economic well-being, and other sociodemographic characteristics
- Measure participation in and attitudes toward community institutions, programs, and services
- Understand the multifaceted cultural, communal, and religious expressions of Judaism that constitute Jewish engagement
- Assess attitudes toward Israel and Judaism
- Gauge need and potential need for human services

The *2022 Community Study of Jewish Delaware and the Brandywine Valley* provides a snapshot of today's Jewish population in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley and considers trends and developments that diverge from those of the past.

History

The present study is the second population study about the Delaware Jewish community, and the first to include the Brandywine Valley. The first study, conducted in 1995, identified approximately

13,500 Jews living in 6,800 households across Delaware. That report can be found at the Berman Jewish Data Bank, <<http://www.jewishdatabank.org/studies/us-local-communities.cfm>>.

Methodology Overview

CMJS/SSRI community studies utilize scientific survey methods to collect information from selected members of the community and, from those responses, extrapolate information about the entire community. The *2022 Community Study of Jewish Delaware and the Brandywine Valley* is based on data collected through telephone and internet surveys from February to May 2022 from a total of 1,065 Jewish households residing for at least part of the year in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley area, defined as the state of Delaware plus the parts of Pennsylvania from the Delaware border to West Chester. The response rate for the primary sample was 31.8% (AAPOR RR4).

Households invited to participate in the survey were randomly selected from a combination of contact information provided by local community organizations and purchased lists of likely Jewish households. To ensure that the households were representative of the entire community, we used additional information to develop the estimates of population size and characteristics reported in this study.

We estimated the population size and basic demographic characteristics using an innovative enhancement of the traditional random digit dial (RDD) survey method. Instead of deriving information about the population from a single RDD phone survey of the local area, the enhanced RDD method relies on a synthesis of national surveys, conducted by government agencies and other organizations, that include information about religion. Using that combined data and information collected from Delaware and Brandywine Valley residents, we were able to estimate the Jewish population in the region. See ajpp.brandeis.edu for more information about this approach to Jewish population estimates.

In all studies of the Jewish community, more involved members are more motivated, and therefore more likely, to complete a survey than are less involved members. To minimize the bias that this introduces, we validated all results against known benchmarks of community participation and adjusted as needed. Examples of benchmarks are the total number of synagogue-member households and the total number of children enrolled in Jewish schools.

See Appendix A for more detail about the survey methods used for this study.

How to Read This Report

The present survey of Jewish households is designed to represent the views of an entire community by interviewing a randomly selected sample of households from the community. In order to extrapolate respondent data to the entire community, the data are adjusted (i.e., “weighted”). Each individual respondent is assigned a weight so that their survey answers represent the proportion of the overall community that has similar demographic characteristics. The weighted respondent thus stands in for that segment of the population and not only the household from which it was collected. (See Appendix A for more detail.) Unless otherwise specified, this report presents weighted survey data in the form of percentages or proportions. Accordingly, these data should be read not as the percentage or proportion of respondents who answered each question in a given

way, but as the percentage or proportion of the population that it is estimated would answer each question in that way had each member of the population been surveyed.

No estimate should be considered an exact measurement. The reported estimate for any value, known as a “point estimate,” is the most likely value for the variable in question for the entire population given available data, but it is possible that the true value is slightly lower or slightly higher. Because estimates are extrapolated from data collected from a representative sample of the population, there is a degree of uncertainty. The amount of uncertainty depends on multiple factors, the most important of which is the number of survey respondents who provided the data from which an estimate is derived. The uncertainty is quantified as a set of values that range from some percentage below the reported estimate to a similar percentage above it. This range is known as a “confidence interval.” By convention, the confidence interval is calculated to reflect 95% certainty that the true value for the population falls within the range defined by the confidence interval, but other confidence levels are used where appropriate. (See Appendix A for details about the magnitude of the confidence intervals around estimates in this study.)

Reading 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.

Proportional estimates are rounded to the nearest whole number. 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 category for reporting reliable information, the estimate is shown as “--”.

In some tables, not all response options appear. For example, if the proportion of a group who participated in a Passover seder is noted, the proportion who did not participate will not be shown.

A statistically significant difference between subgroups in a table or figure means that observed differences between groups are likely to reflect real, systematic differences between groups rather than apparent differences that only occur at random. Following the standard practice of social science research, this report relies on a standard of 5% or less chance of random error (i.e., $p \leq .05$), which means we are 95% certain that findings of differences between groups for a particular variable are not the product of chance, but rather a result of real differences between groups.

When size estimates of subpopulations (e.g., Orthodox households) are provided, they are calculated as the weighted number of households or individuals for which the respondents provided sufficient information to classify them as members of the subgroup. When data are missing, those respondents

are counted as if they are not part of the subgroups for purposes of estimation. For this reason, all subpopulation estimates may undercount information on those least likely to complete the survey or answer particular questions. Missing information cannot reliably be imputed in many such cases because the other information that could serve as a basis to impute data is also missing. Refer to the codebook, included as Appendix D, for the actual number of responses to each question.

Comparisons across Subgroups

In the majority of 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. The standard set of table categories is shown for the first time in this report in Table 5.2.

As indicated previously, numbers and percentages should not be understood as exact measurements, but as the most likely estimate within a range. 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. 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. Thus, for example, the asterisk added to the end of the title for Figure 3.2 (page 34) indicates that there are significant differences between engagement groups on the extent to which observing Jewish law is an important part of being Jewish. Where the differences between groups represented in a figure are not statistically significant, no asterisk will be added.

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. Because the last comprehensive Jewish community study of Delaware was conducted in 1995 and did not include the Brandywine Valley, very few comparisons are made to assess change over time. However, in several places throughout the report, data from Pew’s 2020 study, *Jewish Americans in 2020*, are used to show how the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community is similar to or different from the United States Jewish community.

The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic, which first became a subject of public concern in the United States in February and March of 2020, has had a profound impact on every aspect of social, communal, and economic life. The Jewish community was not spared these impacts of the pandemic. Individual lives were disrupted at the same time that organizations and institutions were forced to close, restructure, or refocus their activities and programs. CMJS/SSRI research on the impact of the pandemic conducted in 10 communities around the United States during the summer of 2020, suggests that there may have been a small decline in organizational memberships caused by the pandemic, but people who participated in Jewish programming in person before the pandemic tended to continue participating in programs online during the pandemic. This research also found that the financial impacts were experienced most severely by those who had financial difficulties prior to the pandemic, and that the pandemic had a disproportionate impact on the mental health of young adults.²

Data collection for this study took place between February 14 and May 13, 2022. Consequently, the findings included in this report should be interpreted in the context of the pandemic. To provide the Jewish community of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley with the most useful data possible, CMJS/SSRI modified some survey items to account for the impact of the pandemic. For example, many questions about participation in Jewish life included online participation or asked about what people do in a typical year rather than in the past year. As a result, on different measures, participation might have been lower, higher, or about the same as in typical years.

Nevertheless, we believe that the data reported here should serve as a new baseline from which to understand community engagement. We heard from some organizations that membership, enrollment, or program attendance was depressed because of the pandemic. As more members of the community are vaccinated and boosted and any remaining COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, we recommend that the community track their numbers to see if they are returning to pre-pandemic levels or if the community will need to adjust to a “new normal.”

Report Overview

This report presents key findings about the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community. Beginning with a portrait of the community as a whole, the report continues with a more in-depth look at topics of interest to community members and leaders.

Chapter 2. Demographic Snapshot

The report begins with an overview of the demographic composition of the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community today.

Chapter 3. Patterns of Jewish Engagement

This chapter describes the multifaceted ways in which the Jews of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley 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 to members of the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community.

Chapter 4. Jewish Children

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

Chapter 5. Congregations and Ritual Life

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

Chapter 6. Organizations and Philanthropy

This chapter discusses membership and involvement in organizational, social, and personal Jewish life as well as volunteering and philanthropy.

Chapter 7. Community, Connections, and Concerns

This chapter explores the connections of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley to the Jewish community, barriers that limit their participation in the Jewish community, and the context of their concern about antisemitism.

Chapter 8. Connections to Israel

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

Chapter 9. Financial Well-Being and Health Needs

This chapter examines the living conditions of Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish households, in particular with regard to economic well-being, economic hardship, and health and social service concerns.

Chapter 10. In the Words of Community Members

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

Chapter 11. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes some key findings from the study and makes recommendations, based on the data, to strengthen the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community.

Report Appendices

The appendices, available in a separate document, include:

Appendix A. Methodological Appendix

Details of data collection and analysis

Appendix B. Comparison Charts

Description of detailed cross-tabulations of all survey data for key subgroups of the population

Appendix C. Latent Class Analysis

Details of the latent class analysis method that was used to develop the Index of Jewish Engagement

Appendix D. Survey Instrument and Codebook

Details of survey questions and conditions, along with the original weighted responses

Appendix E. Study Documentation

Copies of the recruitment materials and training documents used with the call center

Appendix F. Maps

Choropleth maps of key findings from the survey

CHAPTER 2. DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

Chapter Highlights

Understanding the character, behavior, and attitudes of the Delaware and the Brandywine Valley Jewish community requires knowledge of the size, geographic distribution, and basic socio-demographic features of the community. The ways in which Jewish individuals and Jewish households, defined as any household that includes at least one Jewish adult, identify and engage with Judaism and the community vary significantly based on who they are, where they live, their household composition, their ages, and their Jewish backgrounds. This chapter provides a demographic overview describing the size of the Delaware and the Brandywine Valley Jewish community and the basic characteristics of its members.

- The Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community numbers approximately 34,000 adults and children, of whom 25,900 are Jewish and living in 12,600 households. These households include:
 - 22,400 Jewish adults
 - 3,500 Jewish children
 - 6,000 non-Jewish adults
 - 2,100 non-Jewish children
- The mean age of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley is 53, and the median age is 58, slightly older than the national median age of Jewish adults, 49. The mean age of all Jewish individuals in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, including children, is 49, and the median age is 55.
- Twenty-three percent of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley include at least one child under age 18.
- The individual intermarriage rate (i.e., the proportion of married Jewish adults with a non-Jewish spouse) is 38%, slightly below the national average of 42%.
- Forty-three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley do not identify with any particular denomination of Judaism. One percent identify as Orthodox, 18% as Conservative, 30% as Reform, and 9% identify with other denominations.
- Three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley identify as LGBTQ. One percent are Israeli citizens.
- Three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley identify as Hispanic or with any racial group other than white. By contrast, 10% of Jewish children are identified as Hispanic or with any racial group other than white.
- Fifty-nine percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley identify politically as very liberal or liberal. Another 18% describe themselves as moderate, and 24% reported they are conservative or very conservative.
- Twenty-nine percent of Jewish households reside in the Brandywine Valley. Twenty-one percent of Jewish households live in Sussex County. Eighteen percent of Jewish households reside in the Wilmington core, 15% in the Newark area, and the remaining 17% of Jewish households are in the Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties.

- A quarter (26%) of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley were raised locally, and 14% have resided in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley their entire lives.
- Forty-two percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have resided in the area for 20 or more years, and another 24% have resided in the area for 10-19 years. Thirty-three percent of Jewish adults moved to the area in the past decade, including 14% who have lived in the area for fewer than five years.

Jewish Population Estimate

There are approximately 12,600 Jewish households in the Delaware and the Brandywine Valley area (Table 2.1). These households include 34,000 individuals, of whom 25,900 are Jewish (see page 23 for definitions).

The Jewish population comprises 1.9% of the total number of individuals in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley.³

Table 2.1. Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish Community Population Estimates, 2022

Total people in Jewish households	34,000
Total Jewish households	12,600
Total Jews	25,900
Adults (ages 18+)	28,400
Jewish	22,400
Non-Jewish	6,000
Children (under age 18)	5,600
Jewish	3,500
Non-Jewish or unknown religion	2,100

People in Jewish Households

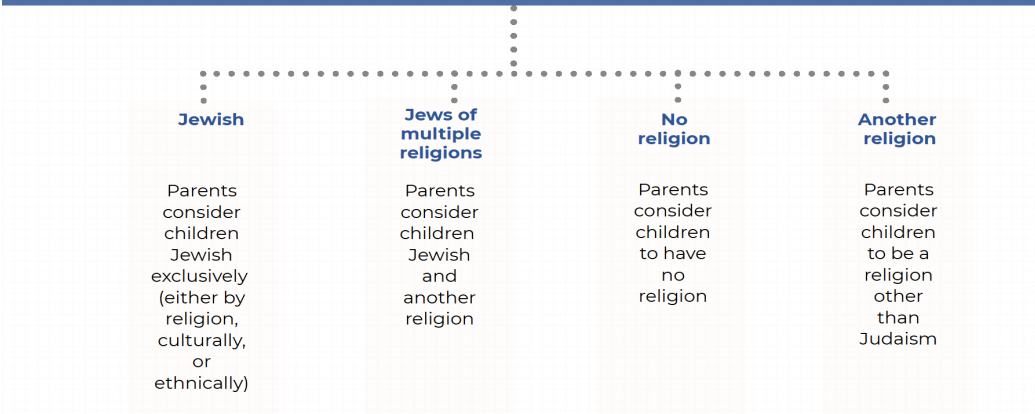
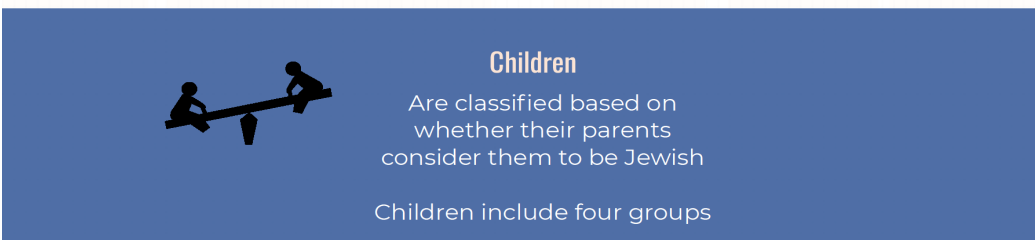
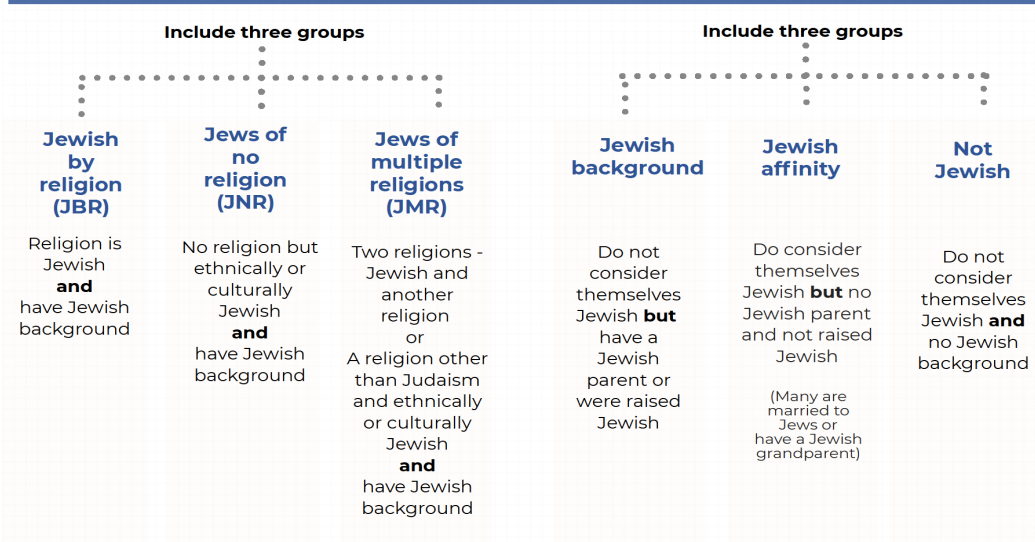
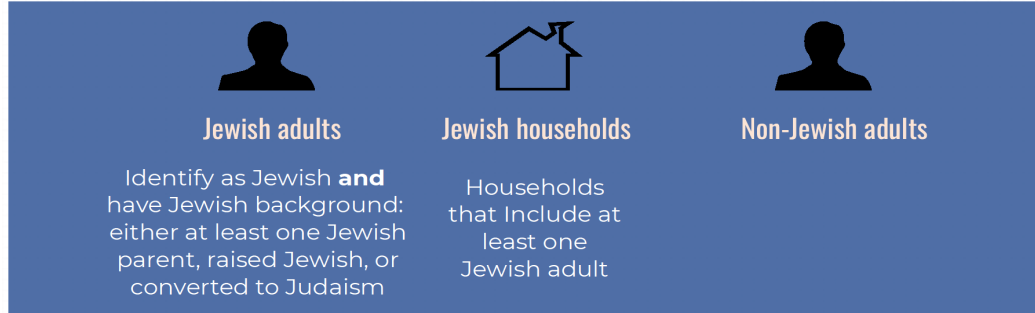
Estimates of the size of the Jewish community rest on a set of fundamental questions about who is Jewish for the purposes of the study. Recent studies, such as the Pew Research Center’s 2013 and 2020 national studies of the US Jewish community, classify respondents according to their responses to a series 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?

Based on the answers to these questions, Jewish adults have been categorized as “Jewish by religion” (JBR) if they respond to a question about religion by stating that they are solely Jewish, or “Jews of no religion” (JNR) if they do not adhere to any religion, but they consider themselves Jewish through 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 Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community could be compared to the population nationwide, 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 both Jewish and another religion; we refer to this category as “Jews of multiple religions” (JMR).

Definitions: Who is a Jew?



Among Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, 77% (17,300 individuals) identify as JBR (Table 2.2). This proportion is similar to the proportion within the overall US Jewish population as reported by Pew (73%).⁴ Of the remaining Jewish adults, 14% identify as JNR (3,100 individuals), and 8% identify as JMR (1,900 individuals).

For more on children in Jewish households, see Chapter 4.

Table 2.2. Jewish population of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, detail (rounded to nearest 100)

Jewish adults	22,400
JBR adults	17,300
JNR adults	3,100
JMR adults	1,900
Non-Jewish adults in Jewish households	6,000
Jewish children in Jewish households	3,500
Exclusively Jewish	2,300
Jewish and something else	1,200
Non-Jewish children in Jewish households	2,100
No religion	1,900
Exclusively another religion	< 100
Undetermined or parents undecided	200

Age and Gender Composition

The Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community is older than both the broader area population and the national Jewish population (Table 2.3).

The mean age of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley is 53, and the median age is 58; in comparison, the national median age of Jewish adults is 49.⁵ Including children in the analysis lowers the mean and median ages. The mean age of all Jewish individuals in the Delaware and the Brandywine Valley area is 49, and the median age is 55.

Table 2.3. Age of Jewish adults in Delaware and Brandywine Valley compared to all area residents and US Jews

	Jewish Delaware/BV (%)	Delaware/BV (ACS 2020; %)	US Jews (Pew; %)
18-44	31	42	43
45-64	32	34	27
65-74	26	14	17
75+	10	10	13
Total	100	100	100

Overall, the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community is 48% male, 51% female, and 1% non-binary or another gender identity.

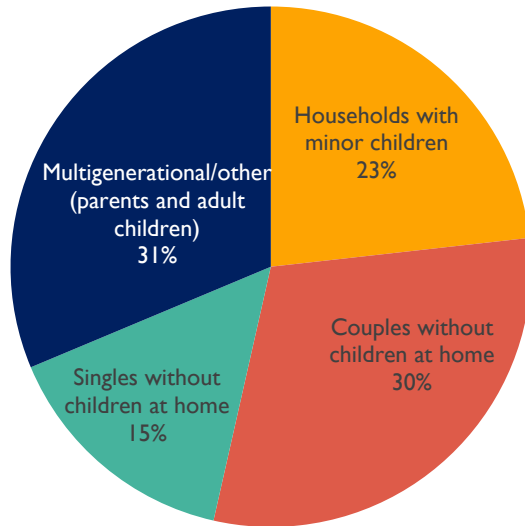
Household Composition

Households with children under age 18 (including single-parent, two-parent, or multigenerational households) make up 23% of Jewish households in Delaware and Brandywine Valley (Figure 2.1).

The mean household size is 2.7 individuals. Among households with children, the mean number of children ages 0-17 is 2.0

Couples without children constitute 30% of households. Multigenerational households, defined as parents and adult children of any age living together, constitute 31% of households. This category can include adults, typically in their 70s or 80s, who have moved in with their adult children, or adults, typically in their 20s, 30s, or 40s, who live in their parents' homes.

Figure 2.1. Household composition



Nineteen percent of Jewish adults ages 35 and older have an adult child who lives in another Delaware or Brandywine Valley household, and 34% have an adult child living outside of the area. Among all of those with adult children, 26% have a grandchild living in Delaware or the Brandywine Valley, and 40% have a grandchild living elsewhere.

Inmarriage and Inter-marriage

Among all Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, 71% include a couple who is married, engaged, or partnered. Of these couples, 44% are inmarried, and 56% are intermarried.

Definitions: Inmarriage and Inter marriage

"Couples" and "marriages" include married and cohabiting 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 household 2: Inmarried



- ▶ **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

The individual intermarriage rate (i.e., the proportion of Jewish adults with a non-Jewish spouse) is 38%, slightly below the national average (42%; Table 2.4).⁶ Although the intermarriage rate is relatively lower in the 18-44 age category, the rate will likely increase because many people in this age group have not married yet.

Table 2.4. Individual marital status by age (includes partners who live together)

	All Jewish adults (%)	Ages 18-44 (%)	Ages 45-64 (%)	Ages 65-74 (%)	Ages 75+ (%)
Married/partnered Jewish adults	80	64	92	85	68
Of married/partnered:					
Inmarried	62	70	59	54	87
Intermarried	38	30	41	46	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Jewish Denominations

Denominational affiliation has historically been one of the primary indicators of Jewish identity and practice. In Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, however, the largest denominational grouping, representing 43% of Jewish adults, is those who do not identify with any particular denomination. The share in this category is slightly higher than the national average (Table 2.5).⁷ Of Jewish adults who do identify with a denomination, the Reform movement claims the largest share, 30%, though this is somewhat smaller than the national average. Delaware and the Brandywine Valley also has a smaller-than-average share of Orthodox Jews (comprise 1% of Jewish adults in the area compared to 9% nationally). Another 18% of Jewish adults identify as Conservative, and 9% identify with another denomination.

Table 2.5. Denomination of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley and the United States⁸

	Delaware/BV 2022 (%)	US Jews 2020 (%)
Orthodox	1	9
Conservative	18	17
Reform	30	37
Other denomination	9	4
Reconstructionist	4	n/a
Traditional	2	n/a
Other	3	n/a
No denomination	43	32

Subpopulations

Seventy-three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley identify as Ashkenazi (i.e., predominantly of Eastern or Central European descent; Table 2.6). Nine percent of Jewish adults have Sephardi heritage (i.e., descended from Spanish or Portuguese Jews), and 1% identify as Mizrahi (i.e., of Middle Eastern Jewish ancestry, such as Persian, Iraqi, or Yemenite Jews). Three percent identify with some other ancestry, and 16% identify with either no particular Jewish ethnicity (4%) or say they do not know their Jewish ethnicity (12%).

Table 2.6. Jewish ethnicity

	Jewish adults (%)	Jewish households (%)
Ashkenazi	73	71
Sephardi	9	4
Mizrachi	1	< 1
Other	3	2
None	4	14
Don't know	12	21

Note: Totals may add up to more than 100% because some respondents or their households identify with multiple categories.

Three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley identify as LGBTQ, and 7% of Jewish households include someone, Jewish or not Jewish, who is LGBTQ (Table 2.7). One percent of Jewish adults are Israeli citizens, while 2% of Jewish households include an Israeli citizen.

Table 2.7. Demographic subgroups

	Jewish adults (%)	Jewish households (%)
LGBTQ	3	7
Israeli citizens	1	2

Eighty-seven percent of Jewish individuals in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley identify solely as white and non-Hispanic (Table 2.8). However, although 12% 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 5% 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.

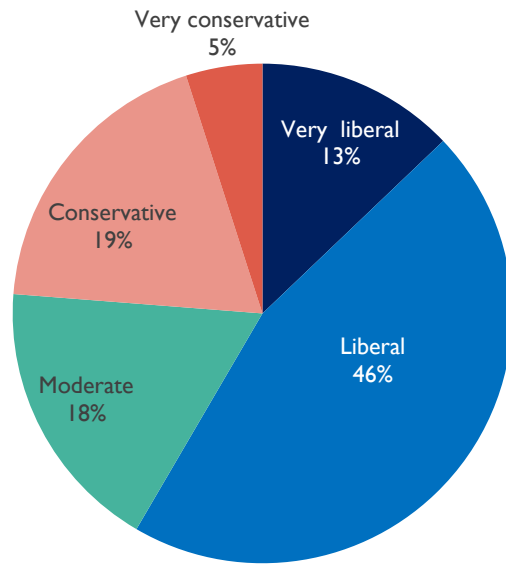
Table 2.8. Race and ethnicity

	All individuals in Jewish households (%)	Jewish individuals (%)	Jewish adults (%)	Jewish children (%)
White only, non-Hispanic	87	88	88	83
White only, Hispanic	1	1	1	4
Non-white, non-Hispanic	10	9	9	7
Non-white, Hispanic	2	2	2	6
Self-identifies as Person of Color	5	5	5	7

Political Views

The majority of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley described their political viewpoints as “very liberal” (13%) or “liberal” (46%; Figure 2.2). Eighteen percent identified as “moderate,” 19% as “conservative,” and 5% reported being “very conservative.”

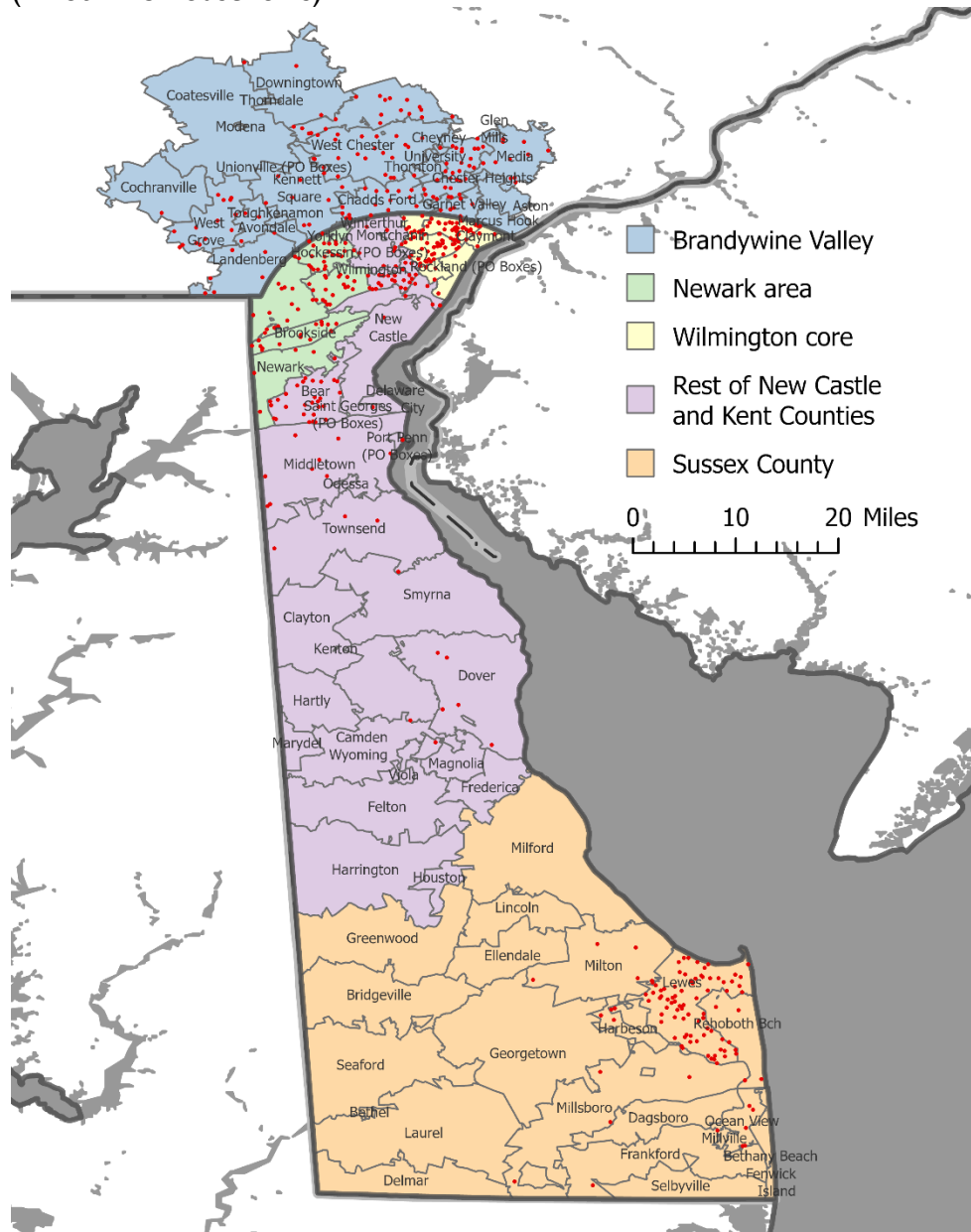
Figure 2.2. Political leanings of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley



Geographic Distribution

The Jewish community of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley can be divided by regions based on county and ZIP code (Figure 2.3). A detailed breakdown of how respondents were classified into regions can be found in the methodological appendix (Appendix A). Throughout this report, these regions will be identified as the Brandywine Valley, the Newark area, the Wilmington core area, Sussex County, and the rest of New Castle County combined with Kent County.

Figure 2.3 Geographic distribution of the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community (1 dot = 25 households)



Jewish households are fairly evenly distributed across the five key regions of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley (Table 2.9). Fifteen percent of Jewish households are in the Newark area, and 18% live in the Wilmington core region. The rest of New Castle and Kent Counties include 17% of Jewish households, and Sussex County is home to 21% of Jewish households. Twenty-nine percent of households are located across the state border in the Brandywine Valley. Notably, while Jewish households are similarly distributed, Jewish individuals are not; approximately one third of Jews live in the Brandywine Valley, compared to 13-18% in each of the four other regions.

Table 2.9. Distribution of Jewish households and Jewish individuals across geographic regions

	Jewish households (%)	Jewish individuals (%)
Newark area	15	13
Wilmington core	18	16
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	17	18
Sussex County	21	18
Brandywine Valley	29	35
Total	100	100

There are also differences in the geographic distribution of the population by age (Table 2.10). The largest share of children, 33%, reside in the Brandywine Valley, which is also home to the largest proportion (51%) of Jewish adults ages 45-64.

Table 2.10. Age distribution of Jewish individuals by geographic regions

	All Jewish individuals (%)	Ages 0-17 (%)	Ages 18-44 (%)	Ages 45-64 (%)	Ages 65-74 (%)	Ages 75+ (%)
Newark area	13	3	27	12	3	24
Wilmington core	16	19	12	9	8	11
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	18	20	35	11	45	22
Sussex County	18	24	7	17	22	30
Brandywine Valley	35	33	19	51	21	23
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Length of Residence and Mobility

Many Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have longstanding ties to the area. A quarter (26%) were raised in the area, and 14% have lived in the area for their entire lives, other than for college and/or graduate studies. Nearly half of Jewish adults (42%) have lived in the area for 20 years or longer, and another 24% have lived in the area between 10-19 years (Table 2.11). However, there are also many newcomers; 33% of Jewish adults have moved to Delaware or the Brandywine Valley within the past decade, including 14% who have resided in the area for fewer than five years.

Table 2.11. Length of residence

	All Jewish adults (%)
0-4 years	14
5-9 years	19
10-19 years	24
20+ years	42
Total	100

Fewer than one quarter (23%) of Jewish adults ages 45 to 64 are newcomers to Delaware and the Brandywine Valley (Table 2.12); by contrast, almost half of those ages 75+ (49%) and ages 18-44 (45%) arrived in the past decade. New arrivals of the past decade comprise 56% of the Jewish adult population of the Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties region, compared to 18% in the Newark area and 24% of Wilmington core (Table 2.13). On the other end of the scale, although just a third of Jewish adults in the Sussex County (32%) and Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties (33%)

regions have resided in the area for 20 years or longer, in the Newark area, these long-term residents represent 61% of Jewish adults.

Table 2.12. Age of Jewish adults by length of residence

	Ages 18-44 (%)	Ages 45-64 (%)	Ages 65-74 (%)	Ages 75+ (%)
0-9 years	45	23	33	49
10-19 years	31	25	13	15
20+ years	24	52	55	36
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.13. Geography of Jewish adults by length of residence

	Newark area (%)	Wilmington core (%)	Rest of New Castle and Kent (%)	Sussex (%)	Brandywine Valley (%)
0-9 years	18	24	56	42	22
10-19 years	22	18	11	27	34
20+ years	61	58	33	32	44
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Nine percent of households have a second home. Among those with multiple homes, their Delaware or Brandywine Valley residence is the primary residence for 63%, a seasonal home for 34%, and a vacation home for 3%.

Twenty-two percent of households plan to move from their homes in the next five years. Among them, few plan to stay in the area. Almost all (86%) plan to move to another part of the United States, and 2% plan to move to another country. Four percent plan to move a new home in the Brandywine Valley, and 8% to a new home in New Castle County.

CHAPTER 3. PATTERNS OF JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

Chapter Highlights

Members of the Jewish community of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley exhibit a variety of types of Jewish identification and means of engagement in Jewish life. Examining the ways that Jewish adults not only view, but also enact their Jewish identities is necessary to understand the population and the ways in which Jewish life in the region can be enhanced. This chapter introduces and discusses an “Index of Jewish Engagement,” created uniquely for the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community.

In this chapter, we recommend that readers focus on the behaviors and attitudes typical of each engagement group. Later chapters and Appendix C will provide details regarding how these groups differ across various survey items. One difference between the groups, however, merits special attention here. The largest engagement group, representing 38% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, has nearly no engagement with Jewish organizations at all. Members of this group may nevertheless participate in a wide variety of Jewish activities on their own or with close friends and family. Members of the other three engagement groups, which together represent 62% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, are far more commonly present in Jewish communal spaces, but not necessarily in the same ways. This dynamic, which significantly affects the Delaware and the Brandywine Valley Jewish community, is explored throughout this report.

- The Index of Jewish Engagement focuses on Jewish behaviors—the ways in which individuals occupy and involve themselves in Jewish life in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley—not on self-identification.
- Engagement groups include people of all ages and denominational identities.
- Demographic characteristics are related to membership in these four engagement groups.
- The Index can be used to identify opportunities to improve communal planning based on people’s different needs and interests.
- Four distinct patterns of behavior emerge from the data.
 - Minimally Involved (38% of Jewish adults): Characterized by involvement in few elements of Jewish life.
 - Holiday (24% of Jewish adults): Characterized by having their highest level of participation in holiday observances and congregation-related activities, but not other Jewish organizations.
 - Personal (19% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high involvement in holiday, ritual, and individual behaviors, but not service attendance.
 - Immersed (19% of Jewish adults): Characterized by high involvement in most elements of Jewish life.

Index of Jewish Engagement

One of the purposes of the Index is to demonstrate the full range of Jewish engagement in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community. Throughout the remainder of this report, we present data about individual measures of Jewish engagement, such as synagogue membership, program participation, and altruistic behaviors. One subgroup of the population, such as parents with children, may have high levels of participation in one type of Jewish behavior (e.g., lighting Shabbat candles) but lower participation in another (e.g., donating to Jewish organizations), and another subgroup, such as young adults, may have the opposite pattern. By identifying the patterns that develop around measures of Jewish engagement, we can better understand the unique ways Jewish individuals express their Jewish identities and the potential constituencies that exist for different types of Jewish connections.

In Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, we identified four predominant categories of Jewish engagement that describe distinct patterns of participation in Jewish life. This chapter explains how we created these categories and describes the most prevalent Jewish behaviors and attitudes that characterize each grouping.

Background: Classifications of 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 meaning varies from one individual to another. In addition, an increasing number of Jews do not affiliate with any particular denomination—including, as noted in Chapter 2, 43% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. Thus, denominational labels are limited in their ability to convey behavior and attitudes.

Measures of Jewish Engagement

We specifically designed the Index of Jewish Engagement to identify opportunities for increased engagement for groups with different needs and interests.⁹ The Index focuses on behaviors—the ways in which individuals spend their time and involve themselves in Jewish life. Such behaviors are concrete and measurable expressions of Jewish identity. Behaviors, in many cases, correlate with demographic characteristics, backgrounds, and attitudes, but also cut across them. 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 skill and resources that enable them to participate, and the opportunities available and known to them.

To develop the Index, we selected a range of Jewish behaviors that were included in the survey instrument. The set of Jewish behaviors used to develop this typology are 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: family holiday celebrations, ritual practices, organizational activities, and personal activities. The behavioral measures include:

- **Family holiday celebrations:** Family holiday celebrations, such as attending or hosting a Passover seder and lighting Hanukkah candles, are practiced by many US Jews for religious and other reasons (e.g., social, familial, cultural, and ethnic). In contrast to High Holiday services, these activities can be practiced at home, without institutional affiliation or association.
- **Ritual practices:** Lighting Shabbat candles or having special meals on Shabbat, attending religious services, attending High Holiday services, keeping any kosher rules.
- **Organizational activities:** Belonging to a synagogue, belonging to Jewish organizations, belonging to informal Jewish groups, participating in Jewish programs in the past year, volunteering for Jewish organizations in the past year, donating to Jewish organizations in the past year.
- **Individual activities:** Eating Jewish foods often, studying Jewish texts sometimes or often, reading Jewish publications sometimes or often, engaging with Jewish-focused culture sometimes or often, following news about Israel very closely.

We employed a statistical tool, latent class analysis (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 four unique patterns of Jewish engagement.

How we developed these categories

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

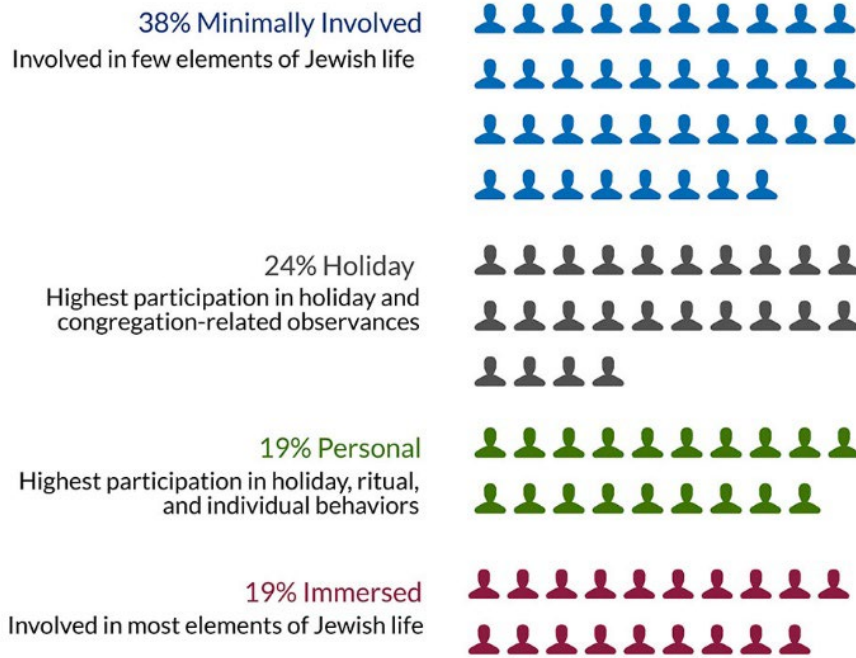
The LCA analysis presented here is unique to the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community. Both the set of classifications and their names are derived directly from data collected for this study.

Using LCA, each Jewish adult in the community was classified into one of the four engagement groups according to the pattern that most closely matches the individual’s participation in different types of Jewish behaviors. For purposes of this report, the names of the engagement groups will be used to refer to the groups of Jewish adults who most closely adhere to each pattern. The names of the groups are intended to highlight the behaviors that distinguish each group from the others.

Patterns of Jewish Engagement

Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley can be clustered into one of four groups, each with similar patterns of behavior. The patterns are summarized in Figure 3.1 and described below. For each pattern, Table 3.1 illustrates the level of participation in each of the 18 behaviors that were used to construct the Index of Jewish Engagement. As shown in Figure 3.1, the groups vary widely in size, with the largest group, encompassing 38% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, consisting of those who have little to no interaction with Jewish organizations.

Figure 3.1. Engagement groups



Jewish Behaviors and Jewish Engagement

The four patterns differ in degree and types of engagement with a broad set of Jewish behaviors. As shown in Table 3.1, the Jewish behaviors across the four 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 engages in the listed behavior. In this table, the darker the box, the higher the proportion of people that engages in that behavior.

The greatest number of Jewish adults (38%) fall into the **“Minimally Involved”** group. They tend to engage in very few Jewish behaviors, with the most common behaviors among this group—lighting Hanukkah candles in a typical year and attending a seder—requiring no connection to the Jewish community. However, about one third of the members of this group donated to Jewish organizations in the past year. Another 24% of Jewish adults are in the **“Holiday”** group. Most of the members of this group reported attending a Passover seder either in person or online in 2021, nearly all light Hanukkah candles in a typical year, and most fast on Yom Kippur. These individuals also celebrate Jewish holidays (all having attended High Holiday services in 2021), donate to Jewish organizations (81% in the past year), and belong to congregations (67%).

The remaining Jewish adult population is split between the **“Personal”** group (19%) and the **“Immersed”** group (19%). The Immersed group tends to have the highest share (or nearly so) of participation in every behavior measured in the Index of Jewish Engagement. Participation in Jewish life is critically important to their daily lives, but they do not necessarily engage in every item measured in this Index. Adults in the Personal group have high participation in home-based holidays and individual behaviors, but a relatively lower share of those attending Jewish services and belonging to congregations.

Table 3.1. Jewish behaviors

	Minimally Involved	Holiday	Personal	Immersed
Holiday Behaviors				
Attended seder, 2021	41	84	98	100
Lit Hanukkah candles, 2021	68	97	83	99
Fast on Yom Kippur, 2021	17	84	30	72
Ritual Behaviors				
Shabbat meal/candles in past year, ever	10	55	60	95
--almost always or always	2	7	18	50
Services in past year, ever	1	100	38	100
--monthly or more	0	8	0	51
Attended High Holiday services, 2021	0	100	0	98
Follow any kosher rules	1	17	20	65
Organization Behaviors				
Congregation member	0	67	27	91
Member of Jewish organization	0	22	29	26
Member of informal Jewish group	0	1	11	20
Participated in program, ever	26	92	87	99
--often	1	2	23	49
Volunteered for Jewish organization in past year	0	14	27	65
Donated to Jewish organization in past year	33	81	79	95
Individual Behaviors				
Study Jewish texts (sometimes/often)	0	16	25	68
Eat Jewish foods (often)	10	2	18	51
Read Jewish publications (sometimes/often)	12	36	82	93
Engage with Jewish-focused culture (sometimes/often)	16	31	79	99
Follow news about Israel (very closely)	3	5	11	31

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

The patterns of engagement are associated with respondents' demographic characteristics. Tables 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 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 demographic category within 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 where each engagement group differs from the overall population.

The age distribution is fairly uniform across most engagement groups, with several exceptions (Table 3.2). For example, the Minimally Involved group has a greater share that is ages 18-44 (39%), but the other groups have similar proportions of adults in that age range (21-29%).

Table 3.2. Jewish engagement by age

	18-44 (%)	45-64 (%)	65-74 (%)	75+ (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	31	32	26	10	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	39	12	36	12	100
Holiday	23	46	23	8	100
Personal	21	43	20	17	100
Immersed	29	40	22	9	100

There are some regional differences across the engagement groups. For example, more Jews from the Newark area are represented in the Immersed group than is their share of the population (Table 3.3). Jews from the Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties region are over-represented in the Minimally Involved group, and Jews from the Brandywine Valley make up nearly two thirds of those from the Holiday group.

Table 3.3. Jewish engagement by region

	Newark area (%)	Wilmington core (%)	Rest of New Castle and Kent (%)	Sussex (%)	Brandywine Valley (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	13	9	27	16	35	100
Jewish engagement						
Minimally Involved	15	7	40	13	25	100
Holiday	9	6	14	9	62	100
Personal	7	16	31	8	38	100
Immersed	23	13	14	21	28	100

More Jews who are inmarried are represented in the Holiday, Personal, and Immersed groups than is their share of the population, and those who are not married are over-represented in the Personal and Immersed groups (Table 3.4). There are no significant differences between the engagement groups by parent status.

Table 3.4 Jewish engagement by household structure

	Parent of minor child	Inmarried	Intermarried	Not married	Total
All Jewish adults	19	49	30	20	100
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	11	40	43	17	100
Holiday	29	57	32	11	100
Personal	4	63	9	28	100
Immersed	22	54	10	35	100

Jewish Background and Jewish Engagement

The following tables describe the Jewish identity and Jewish backgrounds of those in each Jewish engagement category. Jewish denomination is related to Jewish engagement but is not identical (Table 3.5). Adults of nearly all denominations are represented in each of the engagement groups, with the exception that no Orthodox Jews are in the Minimally Involved group. More Conservative Jews are represented in the Immersed group than is their share of the population, Reform Jews are over-represented in the Holiday group, more Jews with a denomination other than Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform are in the Immersed group, and Jews with no denomination make up nearly three quarters of those in the Minimally Involved group.

Table 3.5. Jewish engagement by denomination

	Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Other denom.	No denom.	Total
All Jewish adults	1	18	30	9	43	100
Jewish engagement						
Minimally Involved	0	7	20	1	72	100
Holiday	1	15	55	12	17	100
Personal	<1	20	32	5	42	100
Immersed	4	42	21	24	9	100

An individual's Jewish parentage (Table 3.6) is associated with Jewish engagement in adulthood. Majorities of all Jewish adults were raised by two Jewish parents; however, those in the Minimally Involved and Immersed groups were less likely to have been raised by two Jewish parents than members of the Holiday and Personal groups. Notably, the Immersed and Holiday groups have the largest share of Jewish adults with no Jewish parents (12% and 13% respectively).

Table 3.6. Jewish engagement by Jewish parentage

	No Jewish parents	One Jewish parent	Two Jewish parents	Total
All Jewish adults	7	15	77	100
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	<1	25	75	100
Holiday	13	3	83	100
Personal	3	15	82	100
Immersed	12	18	70	100

Childhood Jewish education is associated with Jewish engagement in adulthood. The engagement group with the largest share who participated in any Jewish education during childhood is the Holiday group (Table 3.7).

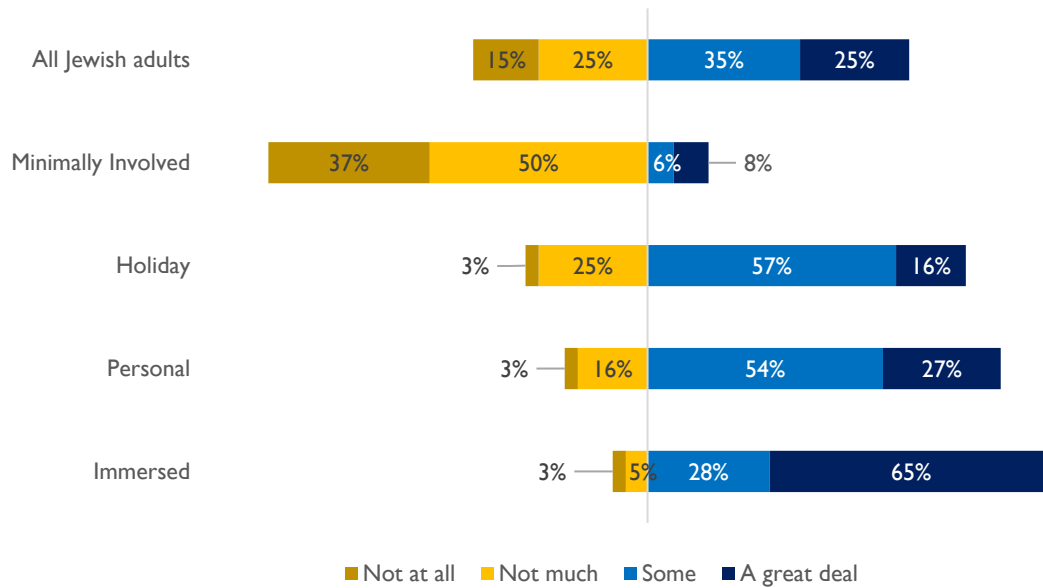
Table 3.7. Jewish engagement by childhood Jewish education

	Any Jewish education	Day school or yeshiva	Part-time school	Jewish day camp	Jewish overnight camp	Youth group
Jewish adults with a Jewish parent or raised Jewish	79	11	64	16	25	26
Minimally Involved	63	6	52	7	14	8
Holiday	94	10	82	23	31	60
Personal	82	3	69	17	35	24
Immersed	75	11	61	34	28	35

Attitudes about Meaning of Judaism and Jewish Engagement

As Figure 3.2 illustrates, the majority in each group feels that being Jewish is part of their daily lives, at least to some degree, but the extent to which that is the case varies between groups. Whereas among the Immersed group, 65% say being Jewish is “a great deal” part of their daily lives, just 8% in the Minimally Involved group agree.

Figure 3.2. Being Jewish is a part of daily life*



There is widespread agreement between the engagement groups on certain aspects of Judaism and views of being Jewish (Figures 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5). It is nearly universal among the engagement groups that leading an ethical and moral life and remembering the Holocaust are important or essential aspects of being Jewish. Notably, however, a smaller share of the Holiday group believes that working for justice and equality in society is essential to being Jewish (45%), compared to larger shares of the other engagement groups.

Figure 3.3. Remembering the Holocaust

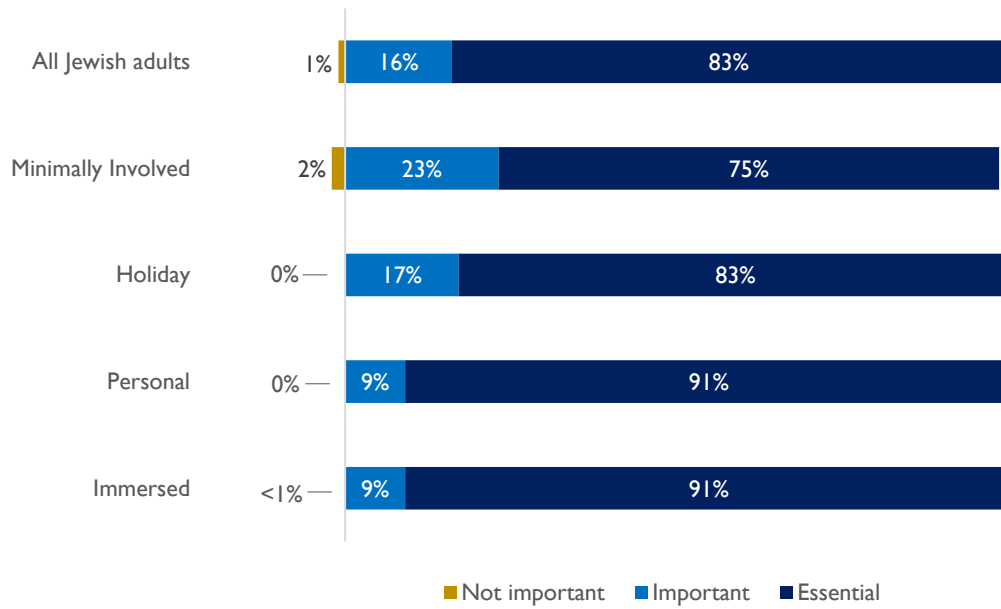


Figure 3.4. Leading an ethical and moral life

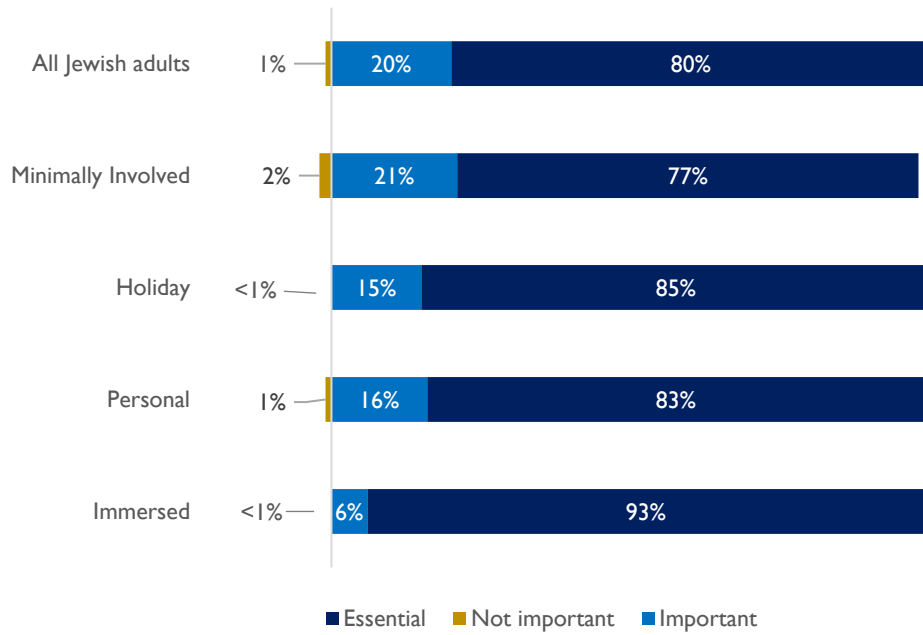
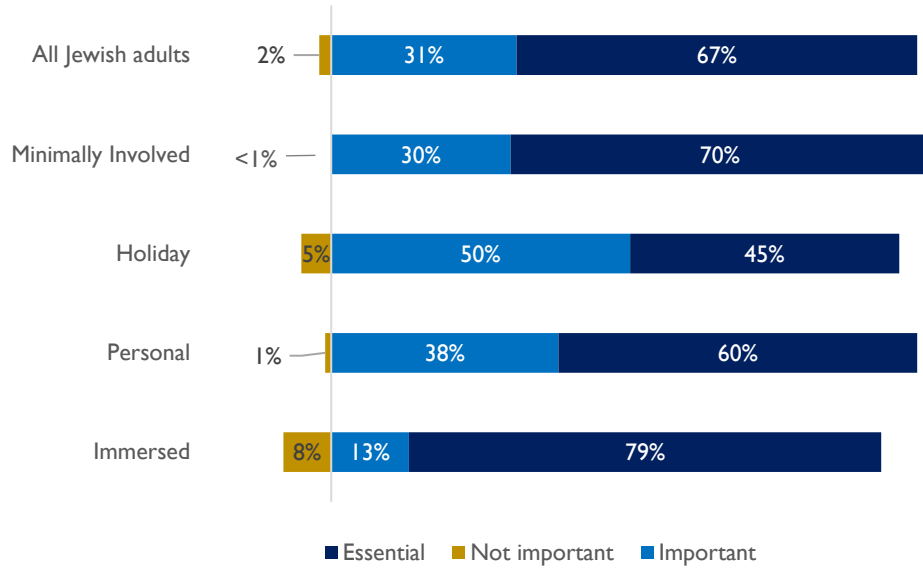


Figure 3.5. Working for justice and equality in society*



By contrast, there is greater variation on other measures. Close to three quarters of those in the Immersed group describe caring for Israel as an essential component of Judaism (Figure 3.6), compared to 39% of those in the Holiday group. Similarly, three quarters of Jewish adults in the Immersed group believe that taking care of Jews in need is an essential part of being Jewish (Figure 3.7), compared with 20% of Jewish adults in the Minimally Involved group.

Figure 3.6. Caring about Israel*

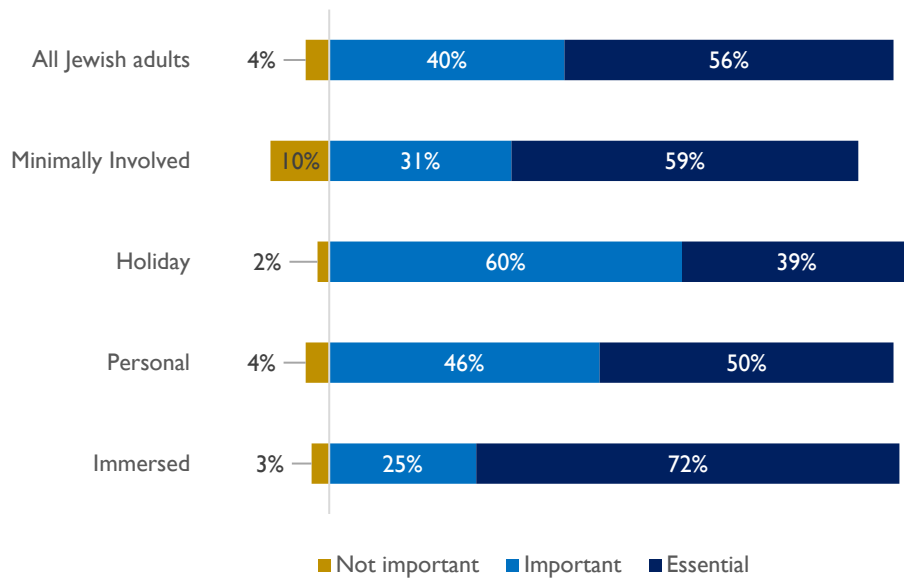
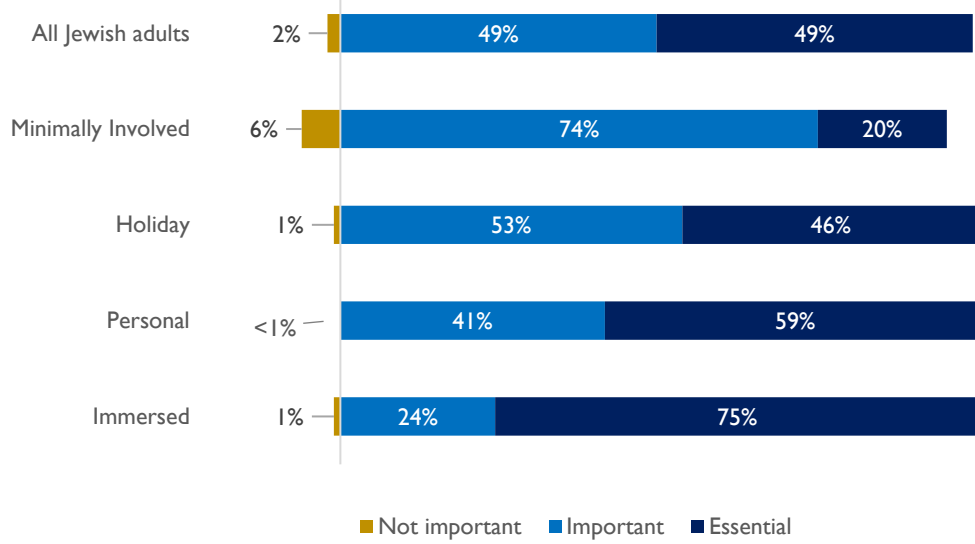
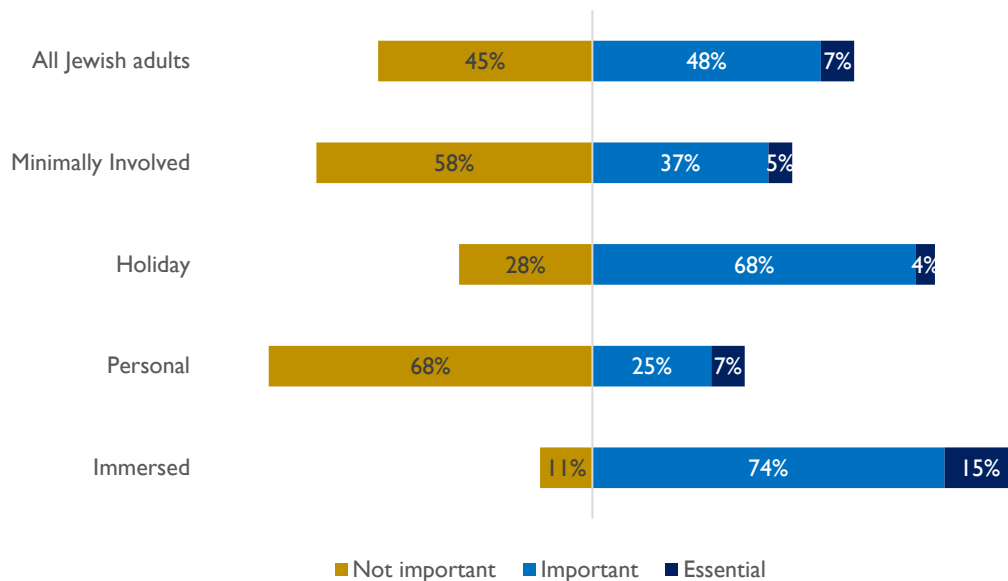


Figure 3.7. Taking care of Jews in need*



Members of different engagement groups vary most in their perception of the importance of observing Jewish law (Figure 3.8). In total, 89% of the Immersed group and 72% of the Holiday group said that observing Jewish law is either important or essential to being Jewish, compared with 42% of the Minimally Involved and 32% of the Personal groups.

Figure 3.8. Observing Jewish law*



As Figure 3.9 illustrates, 80% or more of the members of each engagement group consider being Jewish to be at least somewhat a matter of culture, with near-universal agreement among members of the Holiday, Personal, and Immersed groups. Figures 3.10, 3.11, and 3.12 show that majorities of Jewish adults in each engagement group also consider being Jewish to be at least somewhat a matter

of ethnicity, religion, and community. In each case, members of the Holiday, Personal, and Immersed groups have larger shares who strongly agree with these items than do members of the Minimally Involved group (though the Holiday group has somewhat larger shares strongly agreeing about the aspects of ethnicity, religion, and community compared to the Minimally Involved group).

Figure 3.9. Being Jewish is a matter of culture*

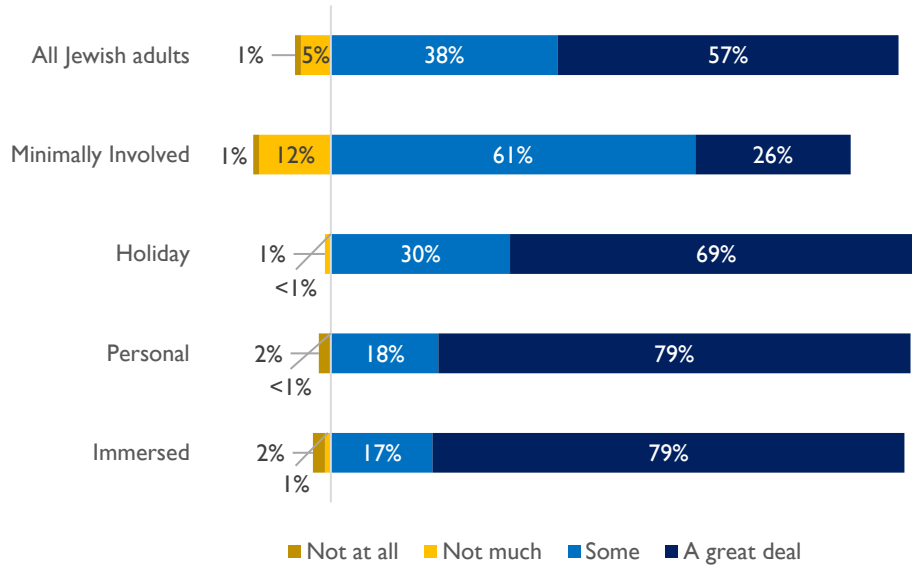


Figure 3.10. Being Jewish is a matter of ethnicity*

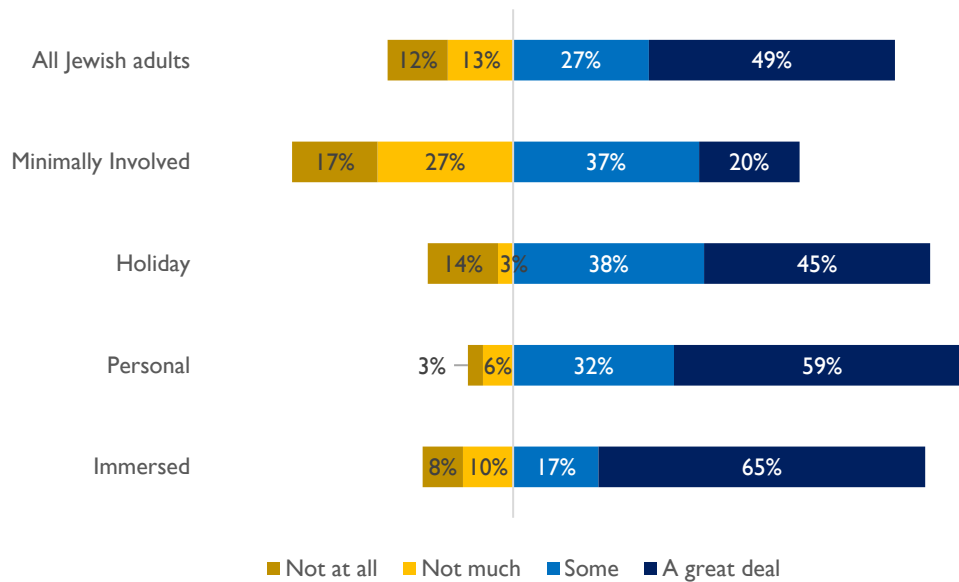


Figure 3.11. Being Jewish is a matter of religion*

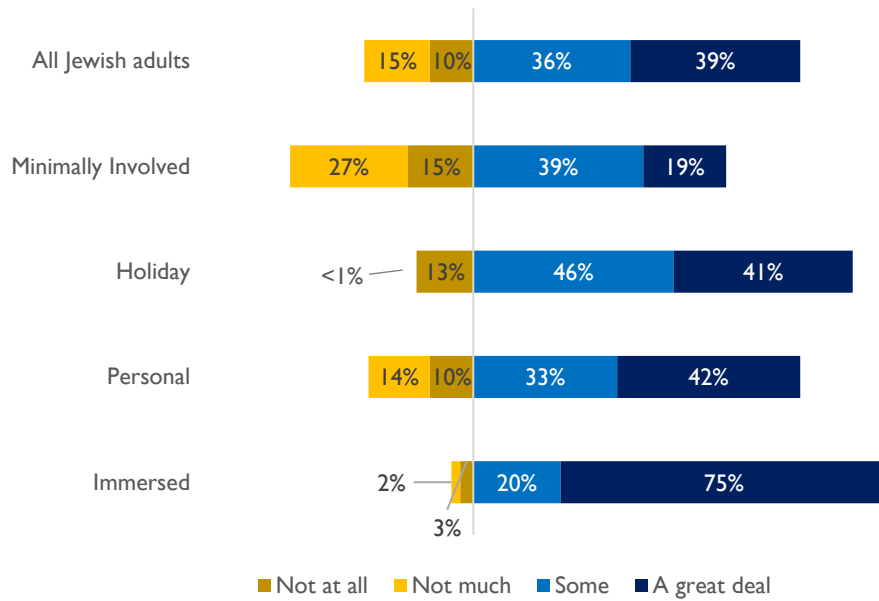
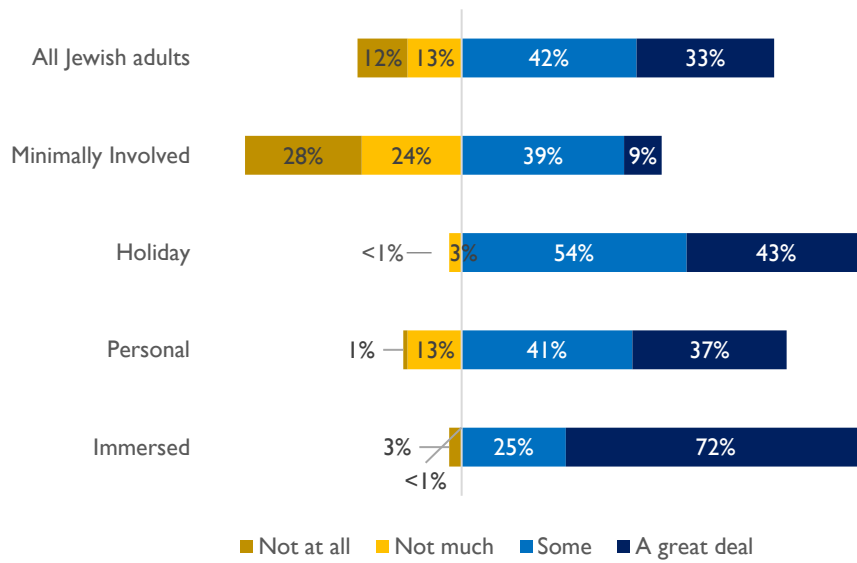


Figure 3.12. Being Jewish is a matter of community*



CHAPTER 4. JEWISH CHILDREN

Chapter Highlights

This chapter focuses on the choices parents make about how to raise their children and how they take advantage—or not—of Jewish educational opportunities available in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community. The goal is to describe the landscape of educational programs, including Jewish preschools; formal Jewish education programs, both part-time and full-time; and informal Jewish educational programs, including camp, youth groups, and others.

- Among the 5,600 children who live in Jewish households in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community, 3,500 (62%) are being raised Jewish, either exclusively or with another religion.
- Among the 2,100 children not being raised Jewish, 1,900 are being raised in no religion, fewer than 100 are being raised exclusively in another religion, and 200 have parents who have not yet decided how to raise them or who did not provide enough information to assess their Jewish identities.
- The majority (92%) of children of two Jewish parents in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community are being raised Jewish. The remaining children of two Jewish parents are being raised in no religion.
- Among children of intermarried parents in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community, 67% are being raised Jewish in some way.
- Seventeen percent of Jewish children not yet in kindergarten were enrolled in a Jewish preschool or early childhood program during the 2021-22 school year.
- Twenty percent of Jewish students in grades K-12 were enrolled in some form of Jewish school during the 2021-22 school year. This share includes 1% in a Jewish day school and 19% in a part-time school.
- Sixty-nine percent of age-eligible Jewish children in Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community have had a bar or bat mitzvah, and 13% of age-eligible Jewish children have had a Jewish confirmation.
- Scheduling difficulties (38%) or parents feeling that none of the available options was a good fit (18%) were the most commonly cited reasons for lack of enrollment in a Jewish school.
- Twenty-two percent of Jewish students in grades K-12 attended a Jewish summer camp in the summer of 2021.
- Among Jewish households in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community with at least one child age 12 or younger, 36% received books from PJ Library.
- Of those with grandchildren also living in Delaware or the Brandywine Valley, 1% were helping to pay with costs associated with Jewish education.

Children in Jewish Households

Of the 5,600 children living in Jewish households in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community, there are 3,500 (62% of all children) who are Jewish in some way (Table 4.1). These children are considered by their parents to be exclusively Jewish (2,300, or 42% of all children) or Jewish and another religion (1,200, or 21% of all children).

The remaining 2,100 children who are not considered Jewish by their parents either have no religion (34% of all children), are being raised exclusively in another religion (<1% of all children), or their parents have not determined yet how they will be raised or did not provide enough information to assess their Jewish identities (4% of all children).

Table 4.1. Children in Jewish households

	Number	All children (%)
Jewish children	3,500	62%
Jewish	2,300	42%
Jewish and another religion	1,200	21%
Not Jewish	2,100	38%
No religion	1,900	34%
Another religion	< 100	<1%
Undetermined*	200	4%
Total	5,600	100%

* The remainder of the chapter does not include the children with undetermined Jewish identity in the analysis.

The largest share of Jewish children (50%) are between the ages of 6-12 (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Ages of Jewish children

	All Jewish children (%)
0-5	20
6-12	50
13-17	31
Total	100

Note: Children whose ages are unknown are excluded from the analysis.

Many children considered Jewish by their parents share certain household characteristics (not shown). Far greater shares of children in synagogue-member households are considered Jewish than are children in non-member households. Nearly all children of unmarried parents are considered Jewish, compared to two thirds of children of intermarried parents.

Among all Jewish children, 43% of have inmarried parents, 52% have intermarried parents, and 4% have single parents.

The majority of children of inmarried parents are Jewish: 91% of them are Jewish alone (Figure 4.1). By contrast, two thirds of children of intermarriage are Jewish: 52% are Jewish alone, and another 15% are Jewish and another religion (Figure 4.2). Another 25% of children with intermarried parents have no religion. Nationally, 69% of the children of intermarried parents are being raised Jewish in some way, similar to Delaware and the Brandywine Valley.¹⁰

Figure 4.1. Children of inmarried parents

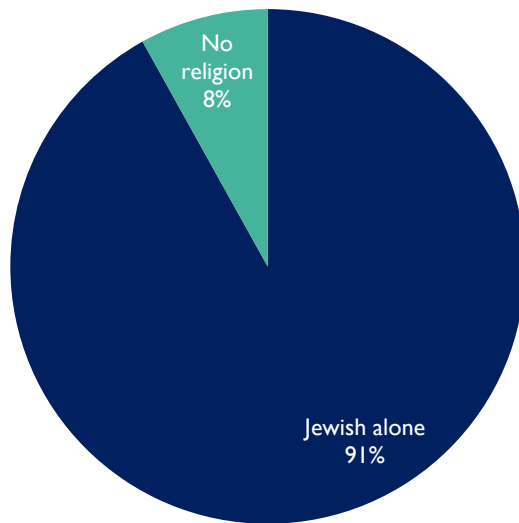
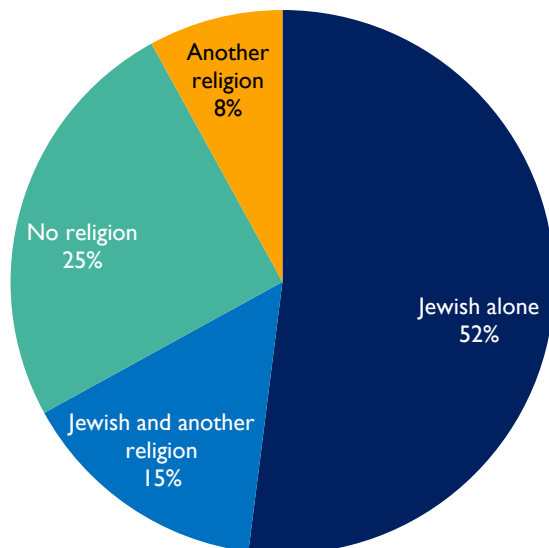


Figure 4.2. Children of intermarried parents



Jewish Schooling

Jewish education occurs in the context of Jewish preschools; formal classroom settings, such as day schools and part-time supplementary schools; and informal settings, including camps, youth groups, and peer trips to Israel.

Table 4.3 shows the early childhood programs of Jewish children not yet in kindergarten during the 2021-22 school year. Seventeen percent of preschool-aged Jewish children attended Jewish early childhood or preschool programs.¹¹ Most (72%) were in a non-Jewish program or home setting.

Table 4.3. Enrollment in early childhood programs, 2021-22

	Age-eligible Jewish children (%)
Jewish program	17
Non-Jewish program or home setting	72
No program	11
Total	100

Unlike the tables and figures earlier in this chapter, which focused only on children who are not yet age 18, the analysis of K-12 Jewish education includes 18- and 19-year-old children who are still in high school. Because the vast majority of children in Jewish education are being raised Jewish in some way, the analysis below is restricted to those children.

Of Jewish children in grades K-12 during the 2021-22 school year, 20% were enrolled in a formal Jewish school (Table 4.4). Part-time Jewish schools were attended by 19% of age-eligible Jewish children, and another 1% were enrolled in a full-time Jewish day school.¹² Four percent of Jewish K-12 students took private classes or were tutored in Jewish topics, and 7% took an online Jewish class. Among Jewish students in grades 6-12, 23% participated in a Jewish youth group. In total, 38% of K-12 Jewish children received some form of Jewish education during the 2021-22 school year.

Table 4.4. Enrollment in K-12 Jewish education, 2021-22

	Jewish children in K-12 (%)
Formal Jewish schooling	20
Part-time school	19
Full-time school	1
Other Jewish programs	
Private classes or tutoring	4
Online classes	7
Jewish youth group, grades 6-12	23
Any Jewish education	38

Parents of K-12 students whose children were not enrolled in either a Jewish day school or a Jewish part-time school were asked about the reasons why their children did not attend a Jewish part-time school. One third (38%) indicated that their children did not attend because the hours did not work with their schedule (Table 4.5). Eighteen percent of students did not attend because their parents did not believe available programs were a good fit. Sixteen percent did not attend because of lack of transportation, 13% because their families did not belong to a synagogue, and 9% due to cost. A

small number of children did not attend because of COVID-19 or because their parents were not satisfied with the quality of available options.

Table 4.5. Reasons for not attending part-time school in 2021-22

	Jewish children not in part-time school (%)
Hours do not work with schedule	38
Not a good fit	18
Lack of transportation	16
No synagogue affiliation	13
Cost	9
COVID-19	1
Parents not satisfied with quality	< 1
None of the above	31

Note: Totals add up to more than 100% because some respondents selected more than one reason.

Jewish Camping

Twelve percent of Jewish K-12 students in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley attended a Jewish day camp in summer 2021, and 10% attended an overnight camp.

Lifecycle Celebrations

Sixty-nine percent of age-eligible Jewish children have had a bar or bat mitzvah ceremony, and an additional 1% will have one in the future. A Jewish confirmation ceremony was celebrated by 13% of age-eligible children.

Children’s Programs

In addition to formal and informal education, family program options outside of school or preschool included Tot Shabbat, synagogue-based playgroups, or family holiday programs. Thirty-two percent of Jewish households attended at least one of these programs in the past year; 8% did so in-person, 1% online, and 22% did both.

The PJ Library and PJ Our Way programs send Jewish books to households with at least one child ages 12 or younger. Among eligible households, 36% said they currently receive books.

Grandparents’ Assistance

One percent of Jewish households with a grandchild living in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community area help pay the costs of their grandchildren’s Jewish education.

CHAPTER 5. CONGREGATIONS AND RITUAL LIFE

Chapter Highlights

Congregational life has long been central for Jews in the United States, and membership in a congregation is one important way Jews affiliate with the Jewish community. However, regardless of congregational membership status, many Jews participate in religious rituals on a regular or intermittent basis at home. Religious and ritual observance constitute one means by which Jews in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley express their Jewish identities.

- Congregational affiliation in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley is 31%, which is slightly lower than the national average.
- A large percentage of households (66%) in the Brandywine Valley that affiliate with a congregation choose a congregation outside of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley.
- Twenty-three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley previously belonged to a congregation but do not currently belong to a congregation, and 43% never belonged to a congregation. Among the Minimally Involved group, most have never belonged to a congregation (65%).
- Jewish households with children are more likely to belong to a congregation than households without children and also more likely to belong to every type of congregation (i.e., synagogue, Chabad, independent *minyan*) except for those outside of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley.
- Parents and Jewish households with children are more likely to participate in several aspects of Jewish life than non-parents or households without children, including attending services at all during the past year, attending High Holiday services, lighting Shabbat candles, having a special meal on Shabbat, lighting Hanukkah candles, and fasting on Yom Kippur.
- Thirty percent of Jewish adults who do not currently belong to a congregation still attended services at least once during the past year, but only 15% of this group attended High Holiday services.
- During the 2021 High Holidays, 41% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley attended High Holiday services. Most attended online, either with a congregation within Delaware or the Brandywine Valley (20%) or a congregation outside the area (10%). Eleven percent of Jewish adults attended High Holiday services in person, primarily in Delaware or the Brandywine Valley (10%).
- A majority of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley light Hanukkah candles in a typical year (84%) and attended a seder in 2021 (71%). Twenty-one percent of Jewish adults keep kosher at any level.

Congregation Membership

In Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, 31% of Jewish households include someone who currently belongs to a Jewish congregation,¹³ whether a synagogue, independent *minyan* or *chavurah*, Chabad, or

other worship community (Table 5.1). Nationally, 35% of Jewish households include a member of a Jewish congregation.¹⁴

Eighty-nine percent of the Immersed group belong to one or more congregations, as do 62% of members of the Holiday group. By contrast, only 25% of the Personal group and almost none of the Minimally Involved group are members of congregations.

Fifty-one percent of inmarried households belong to a congregation compared to 20% of intermarried households and 24% of not married households. This represents a higher portion of intermarried households compared to the national average (13%), but a lower portion of both inmarried households (60%) and not married households (29%).

Seven percent of households that belong to at least one congregation belong to multiple congregations in Delaware or the Brandywine Valley (not shown in table).

Congregation Types

Synagogue: Typically has its own building, a conventional dues/membership structure, professional clergy, and programs or amenities commonly available in synagogues (e.g., Hebrew school). Usually appeals to a relatively narrow range of the denominational spectrum.

Independent *minyan* or *chavurah*: May lack its own building, conventional dues/membership structure, professional clergy, and/or amenities commonly available in synagogues.

Chabad: Typically has its own building, professional clergy, and programs or amenities commonly available in synagogues. Usually does not have a conventional dues/membership structure. Draws from across the denominational spectrum.

Table 5.1. Congregation membership

	Congregation member	Delaware or Brandywine Valley congregation member
All Jewish households	31	17
Jewish engagement		
Minimally Involved	<1	<1
Holiday	62	30
Personal	25	12
Immersed	89	58
Region		
Newark area	30	24
Wilmington core	25	23
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	19	16
Sussex County	33	23
Brandywine Valley	40	8
Age		
18-44	15	14
45-64	39	19
65-74	27	18
75+	33	22
Marital status		
Inmarried	51	24
Intermarried	20	13
Not married	24	16
Child in household		
No	29	15
Yes	37	24

In addition to current members, 23% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley belonged to a Jewish congregation at some point in their adult lives, while 43% of Jewish adults never belonged to a congregation (Table 5.2). About two thirds (65%) of Jews in the Minimally Involved engagement group never belonged to a congregation, while 35% previously belonged to a congregation. Thirty-one percent of the Personal group have never belonged to a congregation while 42% previously belonged to a congregation.

Among former congregation members, 27% last belonged to a congregation 0-4 years ago, 21% between 5-9 years ago, 19% between 10-19 years ago, and 33% 20+ years ago (not shown in table).

Table 5.2. Congregation membership history

	Current members	Former members	Never members
All Jewish adults	34	23	43
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	<1	35	65
Holiday	67	9	24
Personal	27	42	31
Immersed	91	8	1
Region			
Newark area	43	30	26
Wilmington core	37	17	45
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	16	32	52
Sussex County	40	31	29
Brandywine Valley	51	24	25
Age			
18-44	21	26	53
45-64	53	31	16
65-74	35	26	40
75+	40	15	45
Marital status			
Inmarried	44	28	27
Intermarried	25	30	45
Not married	42	22	35
Parent status			
No	35	25	40
Yes	49	41	10

Approximately one quarter (28%) of congregation non-member households do not belong to a congregation because it is not a priority for them; however, about half of those who used to be members cited this reason (Table 5.3). Among those that never belonged to a congregation, the most commonly cited reason for not belonging was that there was no good fit.

Table 5.3. Reasons for not belonging to a congregation

	All congregation non-member households	Former congregation members	Never congregation members
Not a priority	28	51	21
No children at home	13	19	6
Cost	14	29	9
Location	16	16	10
No good fit	39	26	40

Note: Columns do not total to 100% as more than one option could be selected.

Forty-seven percent of Jewish households that belong to a congregation pay dues to a synagogue located within Delaware or the Brandywine Valley, while 31% belong to a congregation outside of the area (Table 5.4). The remaining 8% of member households either belong to a local synagogue

without dues or belong to an independent *minyan* or *chavurah*, or Chabad. The membership in out-of-area congregations is primarily driven by households within the Brandywine Valley that belong to congregations in the Philadelphia area,¹⁵ as well as seasonal residents who belong to congregations where they have their other homes (see chapter 2).

Table 5.4. Types of congregations

	Synagogue, pays dues	Synagogue, no dues	Chabad	Independent minyan	Outside of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley
Congregation-member households	47	1	3	4	31
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	--	--	--	--	--
Holiday	45	1	1	1	39
Personal	35	6	1	5	0
Immersed	54	5	11	2	13
Region					
Newark area	51	3	4	6	<1
Wilmington core	70	9	12	<1	5
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	74	4	3	2	0
Sussex County	67	1	1	0	2
Brandywine Valley	18	0	0	1	66
Age					
18-44	71	16	5	1	<1
45-64	38	6	6	7	41
65-74	62	<1	2	0	2
75+	59	1	3	1	11
Marital status					
Inmarried	43	1	6	1	33
Intermarried	49	4	10	8	12
Not married	54	5	3	6	5
Child in household					
No	46	2	3	1	32
Yes	50	10	7	11	28

Religious Services

Participation in congregational life is not limited only to membership. Fifty-two percent of Jewish adults attended a Jewish religious service at least once in the past year, either in person or online (Table 5.5). This includes 30% of Jewish adults who are not currently congregational members. Twelve percent of Jewish adults attended services at least once a month, and 41% attended on the High Holidays in 2021. Seventy-eight percent of parents attended a Jewish religious service at least once in the past year, compared to 47% of non-parents.

Only 15% of Jewish adults who are not congregational members attended during High Holidays 2021, compared with 86% of those who are currently congregational members. More Jewish adults reported attending services online, either with a local congregation or a non-local congregation, than attended services in-person (Table 5.6).

Table 5.5. Religious services

	Services during past year, ever	Services during past year, monthly	High Holidays, 2021
All Jewish adults	52	12	41
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	1	0	0
Holiday	100	8	100
Personal	38	<1	0
Immersed	100	51	98
Region			
Newark area	55	15	48
Wilmington core	58	14	39
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	33	9	23
Sussex County	64	15	39
Brandywine Valley	59	11	55
Age			
18-44	49	5	38
45-64	67	12	52
65-74	44	12	37
75+	41	17	31
Marital status			
Inmarried	53	17	48
Intermarried	45	4	31
Not married	62	12	45
Parent status			
No	47	13	38
Yes	78	10	56
Congregation member			
No	30	<1	15
Yes	89	31	86

Table 5.6. High Holidays

	All Jewish adults
In person, in Delaware/Brandywine Valley	10
In person, outside of Delaware/Brandywine Valley	1
Online, with Delaware/Brandywine Valley congregation	20
Online, with a congregation outside of Delaware/Brandywine Valley	10

Holidays and Rituals

Most Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley celebrate Jewish holidays and observe some Jewish rituals. Eighty-four percent of Jewish adults light Hanukkah candles in a typical year, and almost three quarters (71%) attended or hosted a Passover seder in 2021 (Table 5.7). Twenty-one percent of Jewish adults keep any of the laws of kashrut, and 45% fasted on Yom Kippur in 2021.

Table 5.7. Ritual practices

	Hanukkah candles, typical year	Seder, 2021	Fasted Yom Kippur, 2021*	Keeps kosher, any level
All Jewish adults	84	71	45	21
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	68	41	17	1
Holiday	97	84	84	17
Personal	83	98	30	20
Immersed	99	100	72	65
Region				
Newark area	76	54	48	33
Wilmington core	80	75	46	21
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	79	75	25	18
Sussex County	91	61	27	20
Brandywine Valley	90	77	64	17
Age				
18-44	88	73	45	25
45-64	87	75	56	21
65-74	76	75	30	16
75+	81	52	23	13
Marital status				
Inmarried	92	87	46	23
Intermarried	75	43	37	7
Not married	78	72	54	36
Parent status				
No	81	73	40	23
Yes	96	57	59	14
Congregation member				
No	80	58	28	11
Yes	92	92	72	36

*There were an additional 11% of Jewish adults who could not fast for medical reasons.

Fewer Jewish households mark Shabbat by lighting candles or having special meals (Table 5.8). Jewish households with children were more likely to always or almost always light Shabbat candles (23%) or have a special meal for Shabbat (15%) than households without children. Overall, 37% of Jewish households ever lit Shabbat candles in the past year, and 14% lit Shabbat candles always or almost always. Similarly, 36% of Jewish households ever had a special meal for Shabbat in the past year, and 8% had a special meal for Shabbat always or almost always.

Table 5.8. Shabbat rituals in the past year

	Light Shabbat candles		Have special meal for Shabbat	
	Ever	Always or almost always	Ever	Always or almost always
All Jewish households	37	14	36	8
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	6	2	10	2
Holiday	51	7	45	1
Personal	48	11	46	9
Immersed	94	54	90	29
Region				
Newark area	46	16	57	12
Wilmington core	29	13	28	9
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	49	9	43	9
Sussex County	31	16	32	5
Brandywine Valley	35	16	28	6
Age				
18-44	36	13	37	13
45-64	44	16	40	9
65-74	28	13	32	6
75+	34	13	32	6
Marital status				
Inmarried	52	19	43	11
Intermarried	32	13	33	7
Not married	30	12	34	6
Child in household				
No	36	12	35	6
Yes	42	23	39	15
Congregation member				
No	22	5	24	4
Yes	73	36	64	16

CHAPTER 6. ORGANIZATIONS AND PHILANTHROPY

Chapter Highlights

The Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community offers a wide range of opportunities for adults and families to engage in Jewish communal life. Jews join organizations and programs in-person and online, attending cultural, educational, religious, and social programmatic offerings. They volunteer their time and donate their money to Jewish and non-Jewish causes.

This chapter describes the many ways in which Jews in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley interact and participate with their fellow community members and organizations.

- Fourteen percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley belong to a local Jewish organization other than a synagogue or the Siegel JCC. Nine percent of Jewish adults belong to a local informal or grassroots Jewish group.
- In a typical year prior to COVID-19, 67% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley participated in Jewish programs, including 14% participating often. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the proportion that participated in Jewish programs dropped to 43%, including 18% participating sometimes or often, a share that has remained the same since in-person activities restarted.
- Twenty-seven percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley attended at least one Jewish program in the past year. Nine percent of Jewish adults participated in programs sponsored by the Siegel JCC, 7% participated in programs sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Delaware, 5% participated in programs sponsored by the Jewish Family Service, and 3% participated in programs sponsored by a local Chabad.
- Twenty-two percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley participated in Jewish programs that were primarily religious (aside from services), 15% participated in primarily educational programs, and 7% each participated in primarily spiritual or charitable programs.
- Eighty-three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are willing to travel to attend a Jewish program or activity, including 55% who are willing to travel for up to 30 minutes.
- Many Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley participated in informal Jewish cultural activities in the past year, including discussing Jewish topics (91%), eating Jewish foods (91%), consuming Jewish culture (e.g., reading books, watching movies or TV, or listening to music; 77%), reading publications from Jewish organizations (76%), reading or posting on social media about Jewish life (53%), and studying Jewish texts (38%).
- Twenty percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley volunteered for Jewish organizations in the past month.

- Sixty-two percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley donated to Jewish organizations in the past year, including 8% who donated to the Jewish Federation of Delaware.

Jewish Organizations and Programs

The Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community participates in a wide range of organizations and activities. Fourteen percent of Jewish households belong to a local Jewish organization aside from the JCC or synagogues, and 9% of Jewish households belong to an informal or grassroots group in the area (Table 6.1). Significantly more households from the Holiday (35%) and Immersed (31%) groups belong to Jewish organizations aside from the JCC or synagogues, compared to the Personal (21%) group. More residents of the Wilmington core region belong to an informal or grassroots group (28%) than the residents of any other region.

Four percent of all households belong to the Siegel Jewish Community Center; the share is highest in the Wilmington core, where the building is located. Significantly greater shares of Jewish adults ages 18 to 44 belong to the JCC (12%) than do older adults.

Table 6.1. Jewish memberships in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley

	Jewish organizations aside from the JCC or synagogues	Informal or grassroots group	Siegel Jewish Community Center
All Jewish households	14	9	4
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	0	0	1
Holiday	35	5	5
Personal	21	4	5
Immersed	31	24	7
Region			
Newark area	16	9	1
Wilmington core	20	28	12
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	14	5	3
Sussex County	8	4	<1
Brandywine Valley	16	4	4
Age			
18-44	13	1	9
45-64	17	7	3
65-74	9	16	2
75+	21	11	4
Marital status			
Inmarried	22	8	6
Intermarried	9	3	3
Not married	14	18	2
Child in household			
No	14	11	2
Yes	16	5	8
Congregation member			
No	6	6	3
Yes	34	16	6

The Impact of COVID-19 on Program Participation

In a typical year prior to COVID-19, 67% of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley participated in Jewish programs, 14% participating often (Table 6.2). During the COVID-19 crisis, the proportion participating in programs dropped to 43%, including 6% participating often. Since many in-person activities have restarted, the proportion participating often (6%) and sometimes (12%) remained the same as it was during COVID-19, while the proportion who never participate increased (65%) and the proportion who participate rarely shrank (18%).

Thirty-five percent of Jewish adults never participated in Jewish programs, whether in a typical year before the pandemic, during the pandemic, or now that many activities are taking place in person again. Twenty-eight percent of Jewish adults did not change their frequency of participation in

Jewish programs over the past few years, 6% increased their participation, and 30% decreased their participation (not shown in table).

Table 6.2. Frequency of Jewish program participation

	Typical year prior to COVID-19	During COVID-19 crisis	Since many in-person activities restarted	Most frequent level of participation
Never	33	57	65	35
Rarely	38	25	18	31
Sometimes	15	12	12	20
Often	14	6	6	14
Total	100	100	100	100

Note: Program participation frequency in the remainder of the report uses the most frequent level among the three time frames.

Using the most frequent program participation period for analysis (before the pandemic, during the height of the crisis, and more recent time periods), 65% of Jewish adults participated in Jewish programs, 14% participating often—either at one time or throughout the past few years (Table 6.3). Among the Jewish engagement groups, the Minimally Involved group has the largest share that never participated (74%), compared with the Immersed group, of whom 1% never participated and 49% participated often. The Wilmington core (20%) and Sussex (20%) regions have the largest shares that participated in Jewish programs often. Similarly, congregation members had a significantly larger share, compared to non-members, who participated in programs at all (96% versus 46%) and often (23% versus 9%).

Table 6.3. Highest frequency of participation in Jewish programs

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
All Jewish adults	35	31	20	14
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	74	22	3	1
Holiday	8	54	36	2
Personal	13	27	36	23
Immersed	1	23	27	49
Region				
Newark area	20	49	19	12
Wilmington core	39	22	19	20
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	56	17	15	12
Sussex County	53	11	16	20
Brandywine Valley	16	42	29	13
Age				
18-44	33	37	17	13
45-64	24	30	28	18
65-74	51	18	17	14
75+	50	13	24	12
Marital status				
Inmarried	32	24	26	18
Intermarried	52	31	14	4
Not married	18	42	19	21
Parent status				
No	38	27	20	14
Yes	28	40	19	13
Congregation member				
No	54	24	14	9
Yes	4	40	33	23

Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley participated in programs sponsored by a number of local organizations. Table 6.4 looks at the type of participation by program sponsor: in-person, online only, and both. Twenty-seven percent of Jewish adults participated in a program sponsored by a local Jewish congregation, including 14% who participated both in-person and online. Seven percent of Jewish adults participated in a program sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Delaware, including 6% who participated online only. Fifteen percent of Jewish adults under age 40 participated in a local student organization; of these, 13% participated in-person only.

Table 6.4. Type of participation by program sponsor, past year

	In-person only	Online only	Both	Did not participate
All Jewish adults				
Local Jewish congregation	3	10	14	73
Siegel JCC	5	2	2	91
Jewish Federation of Delaware	<1	6	<1	93
Jewish Family Service	2	3	<1	95
Local Chabad	1	1	1	97
Jewish adults ages <40				
Local Jewish student organization (e.g., Hillel)	13	0	2	85
Local Jewish young professional organization (e.g., Connect)	<1	<1	<1	>99

Table 6.5 looks at program participation and sponsoring organization by subgroups. Overall, 27% of Jewish adults attended programs run by a synagogue in Delaware or the Brandywine Valley, 9% attended a program sponsored by the Siegel JCC, 7% attended a program sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Delaware, 5% attended a program sponsored by Jewish Family Service, and 3% attended programming through a local Chabad.

Table 6.5. Sponsors of Jewish programs, past year

	Local Jewish congregation	Siegel JCC	Jewish Federation of Delaware	Jewish Family Service	Local Chabad
All Jewish adults	27	9	7	5	3
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	0	1	0	<1	0
Holiday	47	10	7	11	4
Personal	7	10	10	7	<1
Immersed	75	25	17	8	15
Region					
Newark area	38	27	4	2	1
Wilmington core	17	20	17	6	10
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	12	4	6	5	1
Sussex County	25	0	4	10	4
Brandywine Valley	36	7	7	4	5
Age					
18-44	33	17	4	1	2
45-64	21	7	12	10	6
65-74	30	6	3	2	4
75+	14	2	7	9	3
Marital status					
Inmarried	26	6	10	3	5
Intermarried	18	3	2	8	3
Not married	41	26	7	6	3
Parent status					
No	27	9	7	3	3
Yes	24	6	2	8	6
Congregation member					
No	9	5	3	2	1
Yes	56	15	12	10	9

Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley participated in a variety of types of programs in the past year (Table 6.6a). Twenty-two percent of Jewish adults participated in primarily religious programs (aside from services), 15% in programs that were primarily educational, and 7% each in programs that were primarily spiritual or charitable. The Immersed group had the largest share attending primarily educational programs (49%), while the Personal group had the smallest share (12%). The Immersed group also had the largest share attending primarily spiritual programs (31%), the Holiday group (4%) having comparatively lowest attendance. The Sussex County region had the largest share participating in primarily spiritual programs (17%), followed by Brandywine Valley (10%) and the Wilmington core (6%).

Table 6.6a. Types of Jewish programs, past year

	Primarily religious (aside from services)	Primarily educational	Primarily spiritual	Primarily charitable
All Jewish adults	22	15	7	7
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	1	1	0	<1
Holiday	45	16	4	10
Personal	9	12	1	1
Immersed	54	49	31	29
Region				
Newark area	20	10	1	8
Wilmington core	22	16	6	14
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	12	11	1	4
Sussex County	22	20	17	12
Brandywine Valley	33	20	10	8
Age				
18-44	20	9	5	2
45-64	35	18	7	13
65-74	17	22	6	9
75+	16	11	4	7
Marital status				
Inmarried	31	15	9	8
Intermarried	14	14	3	9
Not married	17	21	9	7
Parent status				
No	19	16	7	6
Yes	41	16	9	15
Congregation member				
No	10	6	2	1
Yes	43	31	15	20

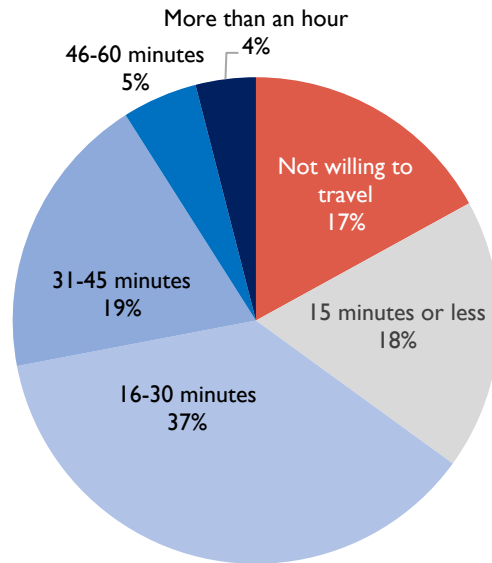
Jewish adults from Delaware and the Brandywine Valley also participated in other types of programs, albeit in smaller proportions. Four percent participated in programs that were primarily cultural, 3% in programs that were primarily social, and 2% each in programs that were primarily outdoors or active, or in political programs (Table 6.6b).

Table 6.6b. Types of Jewish programs, past year

	Primarily cultural	Primarily social	Primarily outdoors or active	Primarily political	Something else
All Jewish adults	4	3	2	2	2
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	<1	1	<1	<1	<1
Holiday	5	1	1	1	1
Personal	4	2	<1	1	2
Immersed	18	15	7	7	3
Region					
Newark area	5	4	<1	1	<1
Wilmington core	9	6	4	1	4
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	7	2	<1	1	2
Sussex County	7	5	1	6	<1
Brandywine Valley	3	4	3	1	4
Age					
18-44	3	2	1	1	1
45-64	6	7	4	2	1
65-74	5	3	1	3	7
75+	9	4	1	2	2
Marital status					
Inmarried	5	5	3	2	1
Intermarried	4	1	1	<1	<1
Not married	9	6	1	2	10
Parent status					
No	6	3	1	2	3
Yes	2	16	6	1	<1
Congregation member					
No	3	1	<1	<1	3
Yes	10	8	4	4	2

Participating in the programs offered by the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community generally requires a commute to program venues. Seventeen percent of people are not prepared to travel at all in order to participate in programs or activities, and 55% are willing to travel no more than 30 minutes to attend (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1. Length willing to travel to attend Jewish program or activity



Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley access many sources of information about local Jewish activities, news, and events—the majority through technological or social means. Forty-six percent learn about local Jewish activities, news, and events via the internet or social media, 42% via synagogue or organization newsletters/email, and 30% via family or friends.

For news about the Jewish world outside of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, 56% turn to American news media, 35% use social media or blogs, and 18% read the Jewish Federation’s regular e-blast or j-VOICE.

Table 6.7. Sources of information about Jewish activities and news

Local Jewish activities, news, and events	
Internet or social media	46
Synagogue or organization newsletter/email	42
Family or friends	30
Local Jewish periodical (e.g., j-VOICE)	17
Rabbi or Jewish community leader	14
Jewish world outside of Delaware and Brandywine Valley	
American news media	56
Social media or blogs	35
Jewish Federation e-blast or j-VOICE	18
Advocacy organization	17
Israeli news media	16
Other Jewish media	15

Informal Cultural Activities

Informal cultural activities include those Jewish activities that are not necessarily sponsored or facilitated by Jewish organizations, such as discussing Jewish topics, eating Jewish foods, or reading Jewish books (Tables 6.8a and 6.8b), each of which attracts different demographics. Of all Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, 91% discussed Jewish topics in the past year, including 29% who discussed them often. The same proportion (91%) ate Jewish foods, including 23% who did so often, and 77% read books, watched movies or TV, or listened to music, including 20% who consumed these aspects of Jewish culture often.

Members of the Holiday (12%) and Minimally Involved (13%) groups have smaller shares of those who discussed Jewish topics often, compared to members of the Personal (43%) and Immersed (64%) groups. Of the regions, the Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties (99%) and Brandywine Valley (98%) have larger shares of Jewish adults who discussed Jewish topics compared to the residents of Sussex County (63%).

Table 6.8a: Individual Jewish activities, past year

	Talk about Jewish topics		Eat Jewish foods		Read books, watch movies or TV, listen to music	
	Ever	Often	Ever	Often	Ever	Often
All Jewish adults	91	29	91	23	77	20
Jewish engagement						
Minimally Involved	87	13	85	1	55	3
Holiday	99	12	87	2	73	6
Personal	100	43	98	18	94	24
Immersed	100	64	100	51	100	51
Region						
Newark area	94	40	91	30	86	28
Wilmington core	90	36	90	29	88	24
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	99	18	97	6	60	11
Sussex County	63	18	88	41	83	42
Brandywine Valley	98	32	90	18	78	14
Age						
18-44	98	32	96	16	81	16
45-64	84	37	87	28	80	30
65-74	90	14	91	9	56	19
75+	98	13	96	47	92	13
Marital status						
Inmarried	98	31	93	20	76	15
Intermarried	75	20	85	16	66	20
Not married	97	32	96	31	91	35
Parent status						
No	95	27	93	19	75	18
Yes	75	31	84	32	79	31
Congregation member						
No	86	19	91	18	67	16
Yes	99	42	92	25	91	28

During the past year, about three quarters of Jewish adults (76%) in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley read Jewish publications, including 20% who did so often (Table 6.8b). Fifty-three percent of Jewish adults read or posted on social media about Jewish life, including 9% who did so often. Finally, 38% of Jewish adults studied Jewish texts, including 12% who did so often. The Immersed and Personal groups have the largest shares that often read Jewish publications (59% and 36% respectively) and often read or posted on social media about Jewish life (26% and 15% respectively). The Immersed group is also the only group with a large minority (27%) that studied Jewish texts often. Among the regions, Newark has the largest share that often read or posted on social media about Jewish life (30%), compared to Sussex County (9%) and Brandywine Valley (4%).

Table 6.8b: Individual Jewish activities, past year

	Read Jewish publications		Read or post on social media about Jewish life		Study Jewish texts	
	Ever	Often	Ever	Often	Ever	Often
All Jewish adults	76	20	53	9	38	12
Jewish engagement						
Minimally Involved	50	1	33	3	5	<1
Holiday	76	2	49	<1	29	4
Personal	95	36	72	15	49	3
Immersed	99	59	72	26	89	27
Region						
Newark area	90	29	75	30	51	28
Wilmington core	81	23	54	14	41	7
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	56	13	48	4	28	5
Sussex County	80	18	58	9	38	3
Brandywine Valley	81	19	48	4	39	10
Age						
18-44	62	23	73	19	39	12
45-64	84	19	63	3	37	8
65-74	68	13	36	8	28	12
75+	90	21	35	9	64	6
Marital status						
Inmarried	77	24	51	4	40	8
Intermarried	63	5	43	1	22	8
Not married	88	29	74	29	56	17
Parent status						
No	72	21	53	11	39	12
Yes	90	14	60	4	29	3
Congregation member						
No	64	12	53	6	26	3
Yes	93	31	55	14	57	20

Volunteering and Philanthropy

In the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community, almost half (43%) of Jewish adults volunteered somewhere in the past month, with 5% volunteering exclusively for or with Jewish organizations, 15% volunteering for or with both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, and 22% volunteering exclusively for or with non-Jewish organizations (Table 6.9).

The types and extent of participation in volunteer activities differs based on respondent characteristics. Members of the Immersed and Personal groups volunteered the most with exclusively Jewish causes (13% respectively), Immersed group members volunteered the most with both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations (52%), and the Holiday group volunteered the most with

organizations that were non-Jewish only (39%). While congregation members were more likely (8%) than non-members (4%) to volunteer solely with Jewish organizations, non-members (24%) were more likely than congregation members (18%) to volunteer only with non-Jewish organizations.

Table 6.9. Volunteering in past year

	Both Jewish and non-Jewish	Jewish only	Non-Jewish only	Did not volunteer or don't know
All Jewish adults	15	5	22	57
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	<1	0	15	85
Holiday	12	2	39	48
Personal	14	13	14	59
Immersed	52	13	10	25
Region				
Newark area	35	1	12	52
Wilmington core	12	10	28	50
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	6	8	7	79
Sussex County	23	1	40	36
Brandywine Valley	12	5	27	55
Age				
18-44	18	5	22	55
45-64	17	9	28	45
65-74	14	3	13	69
75+	9	2	16	73
Marital status				
Inmarried	11	6	16	67
Intermarried	11	2	32	55
Not married	32	10	18	40
Parent status				
No	14	5	21	60
Yes	21	5	26	48
Congregation member				
No	5	4	24	66
Yes	32	8	18	43

Seventy-nine percent of Jewish households reported making a charitable contribution in the past year (Table 6.10). Sixty-one percent gave to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, 1% gave only to Jewish organizations, and 17% gave only to non-Jewish organizations. Members of the Minimally Involved (29%) and Holiday (13%) engagement groups had larger shares who donated only to non-Jewish organizations, compared to the Personal (6%) and Immersed groups (2%). Members of the Immersed, Personal, and Holiday engagement groups had larger shares who donated to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations (93%, 86%, and 81%, respectively), compared to members of the Minimally Involved group (34%). Only 4% of Jewish adults ages 65 to 74 donated exclusively to non-Jewish organizations, a far lower proportion than in all other age groups.

Table 6.10. Donations in past year

	Both Jewish and non-Jewish	Jewish only	Non-Jewish only	Did not donate or don't know	Jewish Federation of Delaware
All Jewish households	61	1	17	21	8
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	34	<1	29	36	1
Holiday	81	1	13	5	10
Personal	86	1	6	6	11
Immersed	93	3	2	2	19
Region					
Newark area	70	1	24	5	9
Wilmington core	54	1	32	14	16
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	62	3	13	22	10
Sussex County	71	1	22	6	2
Brandywine Valley	72	<1	10	18	5
Age					
18-44	37	1	32	29	6
45-64	62	1	22	15	7
65-74	83	1	4	12	7
75+	71	3	24	2	15
Marital status					
Inmarried	75	2	8	15	13
Intermarried	55	<1	27	18	4
Not married	50	1	15	33	6
Child in household					
No	60	1	16	23	8
Yes	62	<1	23	14	7
Congregation member					
No	49	<1	23	28	4
Yes	86	2	5	7	16

Regardless of their status as volunteers or donors, respondents were asked about the most important causes for which they might volunteer or to which they might donate (Table 6.11a and 6.11b). A larger share of Jewish adults reported caring about non-Jewish and secular causes than about Jewish ones—63% prioritize causes related to health and human services, 42% social justice, 33% arts and culture, and 30% the environment (Table 6.11a). By contrast, smaller shares of Jewish adults prioritize causes related to congregations or synagogues (30%), Israel (29%), Jewish education (20%; other than tuition), and other forms of education (e.g., early childhood, camp, day schools, college, or clubs; 29%; Table 6.11b).

Table 6.1 | a. Most important causes of interest for volunteering or donating

	Health and human services	Social justice	Arts and culture	Environment
All Jewish adults	63	42	33	30
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	57	41	54	25
Holiday	70	57	19	43
Personal	54	40	20	28
Immersed	70	38	31	33
Region				
Newark area	76	47	33	42
Wilmington core	68	41	32	45
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	43	29	49	15
Sussex County	72	34	32	29
Brandywine Valley	63	54	23	33
Age				
18-44	49	56	43	41
45-64	68	35	18	34
65-74	69	24	43	20
75+	74	65	44	19
Marital status				
Inmarried	50	43	30	33
Intermarried	77	34	38	20
Not married	66	49	33	35
Parent status				
No	61	40	38	29
Yes	67	55	20	31
Congregation member				
No	56	44	42	30
Yes	71	39	20	31
Donations				
No Jewish causes	70	37	53	23
Jewish cause	56	45	22	34
Volunteering				
No Jewish causes	61	41	36	29
Jewish cause	65	45	22	36

Table 6.11b. Most important causes of interest for volunteering or donating

	Jewish congregation	Israel	Jewish education	Other education
All Jewish adults	30	29	20	29
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	7	40	8	37
Holiday	46	20	10	31
Personal	19	16	12	8
Immersed	67	39	38	18
Region				
Newark area	37	26	29	31
Wilmington core	24	22	15	25
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	14	46	27	24
Sussex County	28	19	11	38
Brandywine Valley	42	25	15	28
Age				
18-44	21	18	13	29
45-64	40	24	22	27
65-74	29	50	28	36
75+	22	19	10	8
Marital status				
Inmarried	36	31	17	21
Intermarried	19	29	23	52
Not married	31	28	20	17
Parent status				
No	28	31	20	26
Yes	40	28	15	40
Congregation member				
No	8	29	17	34
Yes	65	31	23	21
Donations				
No Jewish causes	8	17	15	33
Jewish cause	43	37	22	26
Volunteering				
No Jewish causes	26	31	16	32
Jewish cause	46	24	30	17

CHAPTER 7. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Chapter Highlights

Jews in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have multiple ways of expressing their connection to the Jewish community. A sense of connection might appear as a feeling of belonging to the worldwide or local Jewish community, to an online community, or to Jewish friends. Some might express their connection by speaking or reading Hebrew. At times, however, barriers exist that prevent desired participation in the Jewish community. Jewish adults are also concerned about antisemitism in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, the United States, and the wider world. This chapter explores connections to the Jewish community and Jewish friends, knowledge of Hebrew, perceived barriers to participation in the local Jewish community, and concerns about antisemitism.

- Ninety-three percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley feel at least some sense of belonging to the Jewish people, including 52% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Sixty-two percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley feel at least some connection to the local Jewish community, including 16% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Fifty-four percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley feel at least some connection to an online Jewish community, including 10% who feel this connection a great deal.
- Forty-eight percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley say they have at least some close Jewish friends, including 18% who say most or all of their close friends are Jewish.
- The four most common barriers to participation in the Jewish community cited by Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are COVID-19 (25%), not knowing many people (23%), a lack of interesting activities (20%), and the cost of participation (11%).
- Sixty-six percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have some knowledge of Hebrew, including 7% who can understand most or all of what they read.
- Sixty-seven percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are very concerned about antisemitism around the world, and 54% are very concerned about antisemitism in the United States. By contrast, only 30% are very concerned about antisemitism in Delaware or the Brandywine Valley.
- Eighteen percent of Jewish adults personally experienced one or more antisemitic incidents in the past year.

Feelings of Connection to the Jewish Community

Nearly all Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley (93%) feel at least some sense of belonging to the Jewish people, including about half (52%) who feel a great deal of connection (Table 7.1). By contrast, 62% of Jewish adults feel some sense of belonging to the Delaware or Brandywine Valley Jewish community specifically, including 16% who feel a great deal of

connection. Smaller shares of Jewish adults feel very connected to an online Jewish community: 54% feel some connection, including 10% who feel a great deal of connection.

A sense of belonging varies by Jewish engagement. Almost all (90%) of the Immersed group feel a great deal of belonging to the Jewish people, compared with 25% of the Minimally Involved group. In addition, 52% of the Immersed group feels a great deal of belonging to the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community, compared to 2% of the Personal group and less than 1% of the Minimally Involved group.

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

	the Jewish people		the Delaware/Brandywine Valley Jewish community		an online Jewish community	
	Any connection	A great deal	Any connection	A great deal	Any connection	A great deal
All Jewish adults	93	52	62	16	54	10
Jewish engagement						
Minimally Involved	85	25	25	<1	14	<1
Holiday	100	61	84	24	76	4
Personal	96	50	71	2	62	1
Immersed	97	90	91	52	94	37
Region						
Newark area	97	43	90	32	59	30
Wilmington core	94	48	79	20	64	7
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	81	47	37	8	37	6
Sussex County	96	70	65	7	68	8
Brandywine Valley	99	53	64	19	59	3
Age						
18-44	99	58	65	25	54	12
45-64	96	55	75	14	73	9
65-74	97	53	47	9	37	4
75+	98	43	57	8	52	8
Marital status						
Inmarried	98	55	57	20	55	6
Intermarried	82	45	59	5	54	2
Not married	99	56	80	24	54	24
Parent status						
No	91	50	58	17	52	12
Yes	99	66	72	9	65	6
Congregation member						
No	90	44	50	6	37	1
Yes	99	66	83	32	85	21

Jewish Friends

Nearly half (48%) of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have at least some close friends who are Jewish, including 18% who say that most or all of their close friends are Jewish (Table 7.2). About two thirds of the members of the Minimally Involved (67%) and Personal (61%)

engagement groups say they have no Jewish friends; by contrast, 46% of the members of the Immersed group and 23% of the members of the Holiday group say most or all of their close friends are Jewish. Eighty-seven percent of intermarried adults have no or hardly any close Jewish friends, compared to 46% of those who are not married and 34% of those who are inmarried.

Table 7.2. Close Jewish friends

	None or hardly any	About half	Most or all of them
All Jewish adults	53	30	18
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	67	32	1
Holiday	48	30	23
Personal	61	20	19
Immersed	15	38	46
Region			
Newark area	38	33	29
Wilmington core	45	26	30
Rest of New Castle and Kent	50	44	6
Sussex	69	15	16
Brandywine Valley	55	25	20
Age			
18-44	45	40	15
45-64	54	25	21
65-74	55	31	14
75+	59	12	30
Marital status			
Inmarried	34	43	23
Intermarried	87	9	4
Not married	46	27	27
Parent status			
No	48	34	19
Yes	73	15	12
Congregation member			
No	63	31	6
Yes	36	27	37

Table 7.3a illustrates reported conditions that limit Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley from participating more in the community. Over half (56%) of Jewish adults indicated they have at least one barrier to participating more. One quarter (25%) of Jewish adults feel limited in their ability to participate in the community because of COVID-19, including close to half of the Immersed (46%) and Holiday (42%) groups. Twenty-three percent of Jewish adults feel limited in their ability to participate in the community because they do not know many people, including 47%

of the Holiday group and 25% of the Personal group. Twenty percent of Jewish adults have not found activities that interest them, and 11% say the community’s offerings are too expensive.

Table 7.3a. Limits to participation in the Delaware/Brandywine Valley Jewish community

	Any limiting condition	COVID-19	Don't know many people	Haven't found interesting activities	Too expensive
All Jewish adults	56	25	23	20	11
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	29	5	14	12	3
Holiday	91	42	47	32	20
Personal	76	34	25	34	12
Immersed	57	46	8	9	13
Region					
Newark area	44	17	16	17	4
Wilmington core	64	39	13	19	19
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	40	19	14	7	6
Sussex County	56	24	16	11	11
Brandywine Valley	71	33	34	34	13
Age					
18-44	55	28	24	21	19
45-64	74	34	26	26	8
65-74	39	16	19	13	2
75+	53	24	18	15	19
Marital status					
Inmarried	60	38	19	27	10
Intermarried	51	13	29	10	5
Not married	54	15	18	16	19
Parent status					
No	55	27	23	23	10
Yes	60	24	21	8	10
Congregation member					
No	47	17	19	20	11
Yes	72	42	26	18	10

Additionally, 9% of Jewish adults feel limited by a lack of confidence in their Jewish knowledge, including 18% of those who are not married and 11% of those who are intermarried. Seven percent are limited in their participation because they feel unwelcome, including 16% of the Holiday group and 14% of residents of the Brandywine Valley. Five percent say their participation is limited by safety or security concerns and 2% due to a lack of kosher options.

Table 7.3b. Limits to participation in the Delaware/Brandywine Valley Jewish community

	Not confident in Jewish knowledge	Feel unwelcome	Safety or security concerns	Lack of kosher options	Something else
All Jewish adults	9	7	5	2	14
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	9	2	1	0	9
Holiday	16	16	8	3	24
Personal	6	15	8	<1	23
Immersed	3	6	7	5	11
Region					
Newark area	6	5	4	<1	11
Wilmington core	12	13	5	4	13
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	7	3	2	1	15
Sussex County	14	4	11	3	6
Brandywine Valley	7	14	5	2	21
Age					
18-44	9	4	1	3	12
45-64	12	13	7	1	21
65-74	6	10	4	2	12
75+	7	3	12	<1	16
Marital status					
Inmarried	4	10	6	3	16
Intermarried	11	9	2	<1	12
Not married	18	5	7	2	19
Parent status					
No	8	9	5	2	13
Yes	9	4	1	<1	23
Congregation member					
No	8	6	2	<1	13
Yes	9	12	10	4	18

Knowledge of Hebrew

Understanding of Hebrew may be related to respondents' level of confidence in their Jewish knowledge. Two thirds of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have some knowledge of Hebrew, including 32% who can read letters but not understand words and 7% who can understand most or all of what they read. The Minimally Involved group has the highest proportion that does not know the Hebrew alphabet (65%), compared to 6% of the Immersed group. The Sussex County region has the highest share that does not know the Hebrew alphabet (56%), followed by the Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties region (55%). Those between the

ages of 45 and 64 include the largest share who can understand most or all of what they read (12%), compared to only 2% of those ages 75+.

Table 7.4. Knowledge of Hebrew

	Don't know the Hebrew alphabet	Can read letters but not understand words	Can understand some of what is read	Can understand most or all of what is read
All Jewish adults	34	32	27	7
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	65	28	6	2
Holiday	12	50	36	2
Personal	34	17	35	14
Immersed	6	36	43	16
Region				
Newark area	36	41	22	2
Wilmington core	41	28	19	11
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	55	26	10	10
Sussex County	56	20	20	3
Brandywine Valley	14	38	41	7
Age				
18-44	31	47	15	7
45-64	24	25	39	12
65-74	57	18	22	4
75+	54	30	15	2
Marital status				
Inmarried	30	30	32	8
Intermarried	49	35	14	2
Not married	34	31	24	10
Parent status				
No	35	31	27	6
Yes	29	32	30	9
Congregation member				
No	55	26	13	5
Yes	6	40	44	9

Concerns about and Experiences with Antisemitism

The majority of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are very concerned about antisemitism around the world (67%) and in the United States (54%; Table 7.5). They are less concerned about antisemitism in their local community (30% very concerned).

Members of the Immersed group have the largest share who feel very concerned about antisemitism around the world (86%). A larger share of members of Jewish congregations are very concerned

about global antisemitism, compared to non-members (80% versus 58%). The groups with the largest shares of those very concerned about antisemitism in the United States include residents of Sussex County (85%), people with children at home (77%), and members of the Holiday group (75%). Those groups with the greatest shares who are very concerned about antisemitism in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley include the Immersed group (46%), residents of Sussex County (64%), and those ages 45 to 64 (45%).

Eighteen percent of Jewish adults personally experienced antisemitism in the past year. The regions that have the highest share that personally experienced antisemitism in the past year are Sussex County (27%) and the Newark area (19%). By contrast, residents of the Brandywine Valley (11%), the Wilmington core (9%), and the Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties region (7%) had below average rates of having personally experienced antisemitism in the past year.

Table 7.5. Antisemitism

	Very concerned, around the world	Very concerned, in the US	Very concerned, in Delaware/ Brandywine Valley	Personally experienced in past year
All Jewish adults	67	54	30	18
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	44	29	12	17
Holiday	78	75	20	7
Personal	71	61	39	8
Immersed	86	63	46	27
Region				
Newark area	64	43	20	19
Wilmington core	69	60	37	9
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	54	26	14	7
Sussex County	87	85	64	27
Brandywine Valley	68	64	24	11
Age				
18-44	53	32	6	25
45-64	68	69	45	23
65-74	78	51	25	6
75+	60	56	38	5
Marital status				
Inmarried	56	50	30	4
Intermarried	79	59	29	25
Not married	74	53	25	19
Parent status				
No	66	49	24	14
Yes	72	77	40	25
Congregation member				
No	58	45	21	20
Yes	80	70	40	15

CHAPTER 8. CONNECTIONS TO ISRAEL

Chapter Highlights

Israel plays an important role in the Jewish identity of many Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. The proportion having traveled to Israel is similar to the national Jewish community, and although only a small share of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley follow the news about Israel closely, they express a stronger sense of emotional attachment to Israel than among all US Jewish adults.

- Almost half of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley (47%) have traveled to Israel. This share is similar to that of US Jews in general, of whom 45% have traveled to Israel.
- Over one third (36%) of age-eligible Jewish adults (younger than age 51) have been on a Birthright trip to Israel.
- The majority of Jewish adults are emotionally attached to Israel, with 28% feeling very attached and 42% feeling somewhat attached. Taken together, this proportion (70%) is higher than among all US Jewish adults (58%).
- More than half of Jewish adults follow the news on Israel, 9% very closely and 44% somewhat closely.

Travel to Israel

Nearly half of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have been to Israel: 35% have been there once, 11% have traveled to Israel multiple times, and 1% have lived there (Table 8.1). The share of Jewish adults who have traveled to Israel at least once (47%) is similar to US Jews in general, of whom 45% have traveled to Israel.¹⁶

Israel travel is associated with patterns of Jewish engagement. Among Jewish adults in the Immersed group, three quarters (74%) have been to Israel, followed by just over half of those in the Personal group (58%). The Minimally Involved group has the lowest share who have visited Israel (25%). There are also regional differences in Israel travel, with 63% of Jewish adults from the Brandywine Valley having been to Israel; by contrast, only 22% of Jewish adults from Sussex County have traveled to Israel (22%).

Table 8.1. Travel to Israel

	Never	Once	More than once	Lived in Israel
All Jewish adults	53	35	11	1
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	75	23	2	1
Holiday	42	49	9	<1
Personal	42	40	17	1
Immersed	26	43	27	3
Region				
Newark area	58	33	9	1
Wilmington core	57	21	14	8
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	55	38	7	1
Sussex County	78	11	11	<1
Brandywine Valley	37	48	14	<1
Age				
18-44	37	56	6	1
45-64	58	28	11	2
65-74	66	16	17	<1
75+	59	28	12	<1
Marital status				
Inmarried	48	37	14	1
Intermarried	68	29	3	<1
Not married	45	37	15	2
Parent status				
No	53	34	12	1
Yes	48	42	7	3
Congregation member				
No	65	27	7	1
Yes	33	48	17	2
Attachment to Israel				
Not at all attached	91	8	0	0
Not too attached	70	30	1	<1
Somewhat attached	46	40	14	<1
Very attached	41	39	16	4

Among age-eligible Jewish adults (ages 50 and younger), 36% have traveled to Israel with Birthright Israel (Tables 8.2). For 70% of Jewish adults 50 or younger who have been to Israel only once, their sole visit to Israel was on a Birthright trip (not shown in table).

Table 8.2. Travel on Birthright

		Traveled on Birthright
Jewish adults age <51		36
Jewish engagement		
Minimally Involved		--
Holiday		62
Personal		--
Immersed		19
Region		
Newark area		--
Wilmington core		36
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties		--
Sussex County		--
Brandywine Valley		--
Age		
18-44		47
45-64		2
65-74		n/a
75+		n/a
Marital status		
Inmarried		56
Intermarried		14
Not married		--
Parent status		
No		52
Yes		5
Congregation member		
No		40
Yes		26

Nearly one third (32%) of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have expressed interest in a federation, synagogue, or solidarity mission to Israel (Tables 8.3a, 8.3b). Among Jewish adults in the Immersed group, 65% have expressed this interest, followed by 47% of the Holiday group. The Personal group has the lowest share of expressed interest in Israel travel, with only 9% reporting they are interested in such a trip.

Table 8.3a. Interest in federation, synagogue, or solidarity mission to Israel

Interested in mission	
All Jewish adults	32
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	20
Holiday	47
Personal	9
Immersed	65
Region	
Newark area	58
Wilmington core	28
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	16
Sussex County	30
Brandywine Valley	36
Age	
18-44	45
45-64	30
65-74	24
75+	15
Marital status	
Inmarried	23
Intermarried	35
Not married	51
Parent status	
No	32
Yes	36
Congregation member	
No	24
Yes	46

Table 8.3b. Interest in federation, synagogue, or solidarity mission to Israel

	Interested in mission
All Jewish adults	32
Travel to Israel	
Never	28
Once	37
More than once or lived there	34
Attachment to Israel	
Not at all attached	10
Not too attached	22
Somewhat attached	31
Very attached	47

Emotional Attachment to Israel

The majority of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are emotionally attached to Israel, with 42% feeling somewhat attached and 28% feeling very attached (Table 8.4). Taken together, the proportion who are attached to Israel (70%) is higher than among all US Jewish adults (58%).¹⁷ The majority of each engagement group feels some level of attachment, although 18% of the Minimally Involved group feel not at all attached, compared to 3-4% of the other engagement groups.

Attachment to Israel is also related to age, with 36% of those ages 75+ not at all attached to Israel, compared with just 5% of those ages 18 to 44. Nearly half of Jewish adults who have been to Israel multiple times or lived there (46%) are very attached to Israel, compared to 22% who have never been there and 31% who have only been once.

Table 8.4. Emotional attachment to Israel

	Not at all attached	Not too attached	Somewhat attached	Very attached
All Jewish adults	8	22	42	28
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	18	23	32	27
Holiday	4	25	53	19
Personal	3	17	60	20
Immersed	3	6	39	53
Region				
Newark area	8	45	22	25
Wilmington core	9	32	34	25
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	4	5	55	36
Sussex County	3	35	34	27
Brandywine Valley	14	16	46	24
Age				
18-44	5	26	51	18
45-64	8	31	45	17
65-74	2	10	37	50
75+	36	16	33	16
Marital status				
Inmarried	10	14	57	18
Intermarried	7	31	19	42
Not married	6	23	41	30
Parent status				
No	8	16	46	30
Yes	6	48	23	22
Congregation member				
No	11	25	40	24
Yes	3	16	46	35
Travel to Israel				
Never	14	28	36	22
Once	2	18	48	31
More than once or lived there	5	1	47	46

News about Israel

More than half (53%) of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley follow news about Israel closely, with 44% following the news somewhat closely, and 9% following the news very closely (Tables 8.5a, 8.5b). Thirty-one percent of Jewish adults in the Immersed engagement group follow news about Israel very closely. While there were no significant differences in the level of following news on Israel according to frequency of Israel trips, there was a strong association with attachment to Israel. Just over one quarter (27%) of those who are very attached to Israel follow

news about Israel very closely, compared to no more than 6% of any group that expressed less attachment to Israel.

Table 8.5a. News about Israel

	Not at all closely	Not too closely	Somewhat closely	Very closely
All Jewish adults	7	40	44	9
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	7	65	25	3
Holiday	8	39	48	5
Personal	3	9	77	11
Immersed	1	15	54	31
Region				
Newark area	7	22	69	3
Wilmington core	12	37	34	16
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	3	61	24	12
Sussex County	3	34	47	16
Brandywine Valley	5	37	51	7
Age				
18-44	5	48	40	7
45-64	9	30	49	12
65-74	<1	48	42	10
75+	5	39	42	14
Marital status				
Inmarried	1	43	45	11
Intermarried	12	49	32	6
Not married	4	23	58	16
Parent status				
No	3	39	49	8
Yes	12	45	24	19
Congregation member				
No	5	52	35	7
Yes	6	22	58	15

Table 8.5b. News about Israel

	Not at all closely	Not too closely	Somewhat closely	Very closely
All Jewish adults	7	40	44	9
Travel to Israel				
Never	7	48	35	10
Once	8	38	50	4
More than once or lived there	3	15	64	21
Attachment to Israel				
Not at all attached	26	64	8	2
Not too attached	12	42	46	<1
Somewhat attached	1	45	49	6
Very attached	0	27	46	27

CHAPTER 9. FINANCIAL WELL-BEING AND HEALTH NEEDS

Chapter Highlights

Jewish organizations in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley devote a significant share of their resources toward caring for families and individuals in need. The community's economic stability has provided sufficient means to provide for the needs of many. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are some unmet needs in the community.

Like the overall Jewish community in the United States, the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community is highly educated and economically comfortable. Most Jewish households describe themselves as having enough money to meet their needs, including about half of households that say they “have a little extra” or are “well-off.” Yet there is a significant number of households with unmet financial and health needs, including some whose needs preclude their participation in Jewish life.

- Among the 12,600 Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, 18% are serving as primary caregivers for a relative, separate from routine childcare.
- Nineteen percent of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley include at least one person who is limited in their work, school, or activities by some sort of health issue, special need, or disability. The most common health issue is a chronic illness, faced by 10% of households.
- All of the Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley with mental or emotional health issues in their household reported that they have a personal support network. However, 90% said their support network consists of just a few people.
- Two percent of Jewish households do not have access to transportation when needed for medical appointments, meetings, work, or daily tasks some or all of the time.
- Sixty-nine percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have attained at least a bachelor's degree, a slightly higher proportion than in the national Jewish community.
- Close to two thirds (64%) of Jewish adults who are not in high school are working, including 45% working full-time in one job or position, 17% working part-time in one job or position, and 2% working in multiple positions. Thirty-one percent of Jewish adults are retired.
- Fifteen percent of Jewish households say either that they cannot make ends meet (1%) or are just managing to make ends meet (14%).
- While 20% of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have an income of \$200,000 or more, roughly the same proportion (21%) have an income of less than \$75,000, including 6% with an income below \$50,000.
- Eight percent of all Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley experienced a household hardship within the past year, and 5% experienced a household hardship one to three years ago.
- Fourteen percent of all Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley reported that their financial situation limited their participation in Jewish life.

Caregiving

Eighteen percent of all Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are serving as primary caregivers or managing the care for a relative, separate from routine childcare (Table 9.1a). Ten percent of Jewish households personally provide the care, 2% manage the care, and another 6% do both. Intermarried households have a significantly larger share providing care (34%) compared with inmarried households (12%; Table 9.1b).

Table 9.1a. Caregivers

	Household provides or manages care
Yes, personally provide care	10
Yes, manage care provided by others	2
Yes, both manage care and personally provide care	6
Neither	82

Table 9.1b. Caregivers

Household provides or manages care	
All Jewish households	18
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	16
Holiday	6
Personal	24
Immersed	14
Region	
Newark area	5
Wilmington core	21
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	24
Sussex County	33
Brandywine Valley	10
Age	
18-44	2
45-64	26
65-74	23
75+	20
Marital status	
Inmarried	12
Intermarried	34
Not married	8
Child in household	
No	14
Yes	29
Congregation member	
No	21
Yes	13

Fifty-seven percent of caregivers are helping a parent or parent-in-law, but some are providing care for a spouse (43%) or an adult child age 18 and older (9%). Another 14% provide or manage care for someone not in these categories (Table 9.2).

Table 9.2. Caregiving recipients

Households that provide or manage care	
Parent	57
Spouse	43
Adult child	9
Minor child with special needs	<1
Other	14

Health Needs

Poor health, special needs, and disabilities can indicate the need for assistance from human service agencies. These issues can also be significant obstacles to full, desired participation in Jewish life. Nineteen percent of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley include at least one person who is limited in their work, school, or activities by some sort of health issue, special need, or disability (Table 9.3).

Table 9.3. Household health issues, disabilities, or special needs

	Household member limited by chronic health issue, special need, or disability
All Jewish households	19
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	8
Holiday	22
Personal	27
Immersed	33
Region	
Newark area	20
Wilmington core	15
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	29
Sussex County	18
Brandywine Valley	15
Age	
18-44	8
45-64	24
65-74	18
75+	25
Marital status	
Inmarried	28
Intermarried	18
Not married	11
Child in household	
No	20
Yes	14
Congregation member	
No	16
Yes	26

Eighteen percent of all Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have an adult member with a health issue, disability, or special need, while 1% have a child so affected. This corresponds to 16% of all Jewish households with children.

The most commonly faced health situation is chronic illness, experienced by 10% of all Jewish households (55% of any households with a health issue). Other top health issues include physical disability (7%) or mental or emotional health problems (6%).

Table 9.4. Types of health issues, special needs, or disabilities

	All Jewish households	Jewish households with health issues
Chronic illness	10	55
Physical disability	7	38
Mental or emotional health problems	6	32
Developmental or intellectual disability	1	6
Substance abuse/addiction	<1	<1
Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease	<1	<1
Complications related to COVID-19	<1	<1
Other	2	10

In the past year, 12% of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley with health issues (2% of all Jewish households) did not receive all services needed to manage their household’s health issues, special needs, mental health issues, or disabilities.

In the last three months, lack of transportation kept 2% of all Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley from medical appointments, meetings, work, or getting things for daily living some or all of the time.

Ninety-eight percent of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley currently have health insurance.

Mental and Emotional Health

All Jewish adults from households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley with mental or emotional health issues said that they had a personal support network. Only 10% of them, however, have a lot or a fair number of people in their support network, while 90% said they had just a few people in their personal support network (Table 9.5).

Thirteen percent of Jewish adults from households with mental or emotional health issues said they felt lonely sometimes or often during the previous week (Figure 9.6). Fifty-eight percent of Jewish adults felt that emotional or mental health difficulties hurt their ability to live their day-to-day lives sometimes, often, or all the time during the previous week.

Table 9.5. Personal support network, among households with mental or emotional health issues (6% of households)

	Size of support network
A lot of people	2
A fair number of people	8
Just a few people	90
No one	0

Table 9.6. Feelings of loneliness and emotional or mental health difficulties, among households with mental or emotional health issues (6% of households)

	Lonely in past week	Emotional or mental health difficulties in past week
Never	74	38
Rarely	12	4
Sometimes	10	52
Often	3	2
All the time	0	4

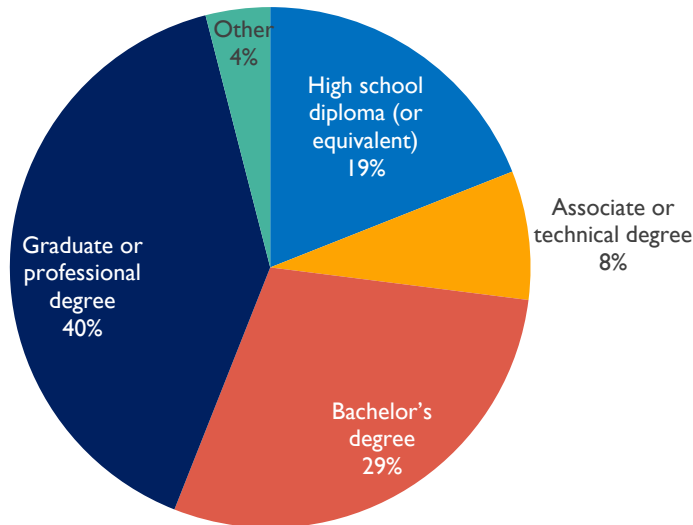
Older Adults

Five percent of households with a member 55 years of age or older needed help with daily activities such as doing housework, preparing meals, dressing and undressing, taking a bath or a shower, or walking up and down stairs.

Educational Attainment and Employment

The Jewish population of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley is highly educated. Of Jewish adults not enrolled in high school, 29% have earned a bachelor’s degree, and another 40% have earned a graduate degree (Figure 9.1). Among Jews in the United States, 58% have a bachelor’s degree or higher.¹⁸

Figure 9.1. Highest level of schooling



About two thirds of Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley who are not in high school are working in at least one job, either full time (45%), part time (17%), or in multiple positions (2%; Table 9.7). Thirty-one percent of Jewish adults are retired. Despite 4% of Jewish adults not working for pay, less than 1% were receiving unemployment benefits—suggesting that the majority of this group may be unemployed by choice, perhaps as stay-at-home parents or as full-time students.

Table 9.7. Currently working for pay

	Jewish adults not in high school
Yes, full-time in one job or position	45
Yes, part-time in one job or position	17
Yes, working in multiple positions	2
No, not working for pay	4
No, on temporary leave	0
No, retired	31

Financial Situation and Income

To assess financial well-being, each survey respondent was asked to provide a subjective assessment of their household’s financial situation. One percent of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley said they cannot make ends meet, and another 14% stated they are just managing to make ends meet (Table 9.8a). These two groups are combined for purposes of this report into a single category referred to as “struggling” and constitute 15% of Jewish households. About one third of households (31%) stated they have enough money, about one quarter (24%) said they have extra money, and 30% described themselves as well-off.

Table 9.8a. Financial situation

Report Category	Financial situation	All Jewish households
Struggling	Cannot make ends meet	1
	Just managing to make ends meet	14
Enough	Have enough money	31
Extra	Have some extra money	24
Well-off	Well-off	30

The financial situation of Jewish households does not vary significantly by Jewish engagement, geography, age, or congregation membership (Table 9.8b). About half of intermarried households (48%) said they were well-off, compared to 32% of the inmarried and 6% of those who were not married. Eighteen percent of households with children reported they were struggling compared to 14% of households without children, but households with children were also more likely to be well-off (45% versus 26%).

Table 9.8b. Financial situation

	Struggling	Have enough money	Have some extra money	Well-off
All Jewish households	15	31	24	30
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	13	33	27	28
Holiday	20	22	18	39
Personal	10	32	26	31
Immersed	17	32	21	30
Region				
Newark area	8	33	30	29
Wilmington core	13	27	33	27
Rest of New Castle and Kent	21	26	22	31
Sussex County	14	51	22	13
Brandywine Valley	15	19	19	46
Age				
18-44	20	31	26	23
45-64	17	21	24	38
65-74	14	37	25	24
75+	15	34	28	24
Marital status				
Inmarried	11	23	33	32
Intermarried	16	17	18	48
Not married	16	56	22	6
Child in household				
No	14	36	24	26
Yes	18	13	24	45
Congregation member				
No	13	33	25	29
Yes	19	26	22	33

Six percent of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley have an income of less than \$50,000, and 20% of Jewish households make \$200,000 or more (Table 9.9). Another 24% of households, however, declined to provide income information. Among those households that did not report their incomes, 7% are struggling, 38% have enough money, 18% have extra money, and 37% are well-off.

Table 9.9. Household income

	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$200,000 or more	Don't know/ Prefer not to answer
All Jewish households	6	16	12	13	9	20	24
Jewish engagement							
Minimally Involved	6	22	12	10	9	26	16
Holiday	3	5	10	22	9	16	35
Personal	7	15	10	17	7	13	31
Immersed	9	13	9	9	13	13	33
Region							
Newark area	9	2	7	18	11	20	34
Wilmington core	8	8	26	7	12	23	18
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	11	25	8	5	10	11	30
Sussex County	3	38	17	14	7	5	16
Brandywine Valley	3	8	5	17	8	34	25
Age							
18-44	7	14	6	14	19	32	9
45-64	6	8	4	18	12	22	31
65-74	8	34	22	4	5	10	18
75+	6	12	15	21	6	6	34
Marital status							
Inmarried	1	7	9	19	16	20	29
Intermarried	4	10	10	13	7	34	22
Not married	14	34	18	5	5	2	21
Child in household							
No	7	20	12	13	9	14	25
Yes	2	4	11	11	11	39	21
Congregation member							
No	6	20	14	10	9	22	20
Yes	7	8	7	19	11	15	33
Financial situation							
Struggling	33	22	15	17	3	0	10
Enough	4	39	10	8	10	3	27
Extra	1	3	25	28	18	9	16
Well-off	1	4	4	4	5	56	26

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) determines the federal poverty level (FPL) annually, using a formula based on household income and household size.¹⁹ Using that formula, less than 1% of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are below 100% FPL (Table 9.10). In all, 10% of Jewish households are below 250% FPL.

Table 9.10. Federal poverty level

All Jewish households	
< 250% FPL	10
< 100% FPL	1
100-149% FPL	3
150-249% FPL	6

Many Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley expressed concerns about their future financial needs (Table 9.11a). Four percent of adults ages 45 and younger are not at all confident that they will be able to afford their student loan payments, and 8% are not too confident.²⁰ Eight percent of adults ages 55 and older are not at all (3%) or not too (5%) confident in their ability to afford retirement. Fourteen percent of all Jewish adults are not at all (2%) or not too (12%) confident that they will be able to keep their current savings and investments.

Perception of the affordability of healthcare varies by relationship status (Table 9.11b). Those who are not married have a much larger share (11%) who feel not at all or not too confident in their ability to afford healthcare, compared with those who are inmarried or intermarried (1% each). Those who are financially struggling are much more likely (51%) than those with enough (2%) and those with extra or who are well-off (<1%) to be not at all or not too confident about their ability to keep their savings.

Table 9.11a. Financial confidence

	Afford student loan debt (age ≤45)	Afford retirement (age ≥55)	Keep savings	Afford basic living expenses	Afford healthcare
Not at all confident	4	3	2	1	1
Not too confident	8	5	12	5	2
Somewhat confident	13	37	28	20	25
Very confident	24	44	53	74	70
Does not apply	51	11	6	0	2

Table 9.11b. Not at all or not too confident in financial future

	Keep savings	Afford retirement (age ≥55)	Afford basic living expenses	Afford healthcare
All Jewish adults	14	8	5	3
Jewish engagement				
Minimally Involved	23	8	7	2
Holiday	8	6	7	<1
Personal	8	11	3	6
Immersed	12	14	7	7
Region				
Newark area	7	17	6	4
Wilmington core	7	12	6	9
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	22	7	1	3
Sussex County	27	17	12	5
Brandywine Valley	6	7	7	<1
Age				
18-44	4	n/a	<1	4
45-64	11	13	7	2
65-74	30	7	10	3
75+	20	11	10	7
Marital status				
Inmarried	6	6	5	1
Intermarried	27	9	7	1
Not married	15	22	8	11
Parent status				
No	14	7	7	3
Yes	11	--	5	5
Congregation member				
No	16	7	5	4
Yes	10	14	8	2
Financial situation				
Struggling	51	--	21	11
Enough	2	3	2	1
Extra	<1	4	0	1
Well-off	<1	1	<1	<1

Financial Vulnerability

One benchmark that is commonly used to assess financial vulnerability is the ability to cover emergency expenses. Two percent of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley said they are unable to pay in full an unexpected \$400 emergency expense with cash, money currently in a bank account, or a credit card²¹ (Table 9.12). People who are struggling have a much

larger share (9%) than those with enough (2%), those with extra (<1%), or those who are well-off (<1%) who said they cannot afford a \$400 emergency expense.

Table 9.12. Economic insecurity

Cannot afford \$400 emergency expense	
All Jewish households	2
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	2
Holiday	1
Personal	0
Immersed	7
Region	
Newark area	3
Wilmington core	1
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	4
Sussex County	3
Brandywine Valley	<1
Age	
18-44	6
45-64	1
65-74	2
75+	1
Marital status	
Inmarried	<1
Intermarried	2
Not married	3
Child in household	
No	2
Yes	<1
Congregation member	
No	2
Yes	1
Financial situation	
Struggling	9
Enough	2
Extra	<1
Well-off	<1

The most common financial hardships faced by Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley over the past year were the inability to pay for medical care or for medicine (Table 9.13). Seven percent of households were unable to pay for medical care or medicine sometime in the past year, and an additional 1% of households encountered this situation from one to three years ago. Three percent of households could not afford to pay for utilities, and another 1% could not afford to buy the food they needed in the past year.

In total, 8% of Jewish households encountered at least one of these hardship over the past year, and an additional 5% experienced a hardship between one and three years ago (Table 9.14). A larger share of households that are struggling (28%) reported encountering hardships in the recent past compared to those that are better off financially.

Table 9.13. Type of household hardship

	Within past year	Between 1-3 years ago
Any hardship	8	5
Healthcare	7	1
Utilities	3	1
Rent	1	4
Food	1	1

Table 9.14. Any household hardship

	Hardship within past year	Between 1-3 years ago
All Jewish households	8	5
Jewish engagement		
Minimally Involved	3	5
Holiday	2	3
Personal	12	6
Immersed	8	5
Region		
Newark area	5	6
Wilmington core	5	10
Rest of New Castle and Kent Counties	13	5
Sussex County	3	3
Brandywine Valley	2	1
Age		
18-44	3	11
45-64	9	6
65-74	9	3
75+	9	<1
Marital status		
Inmarried	3	3
Intermarried	4	3
Not married	8	7
Child in household		
No	6	4
Yes	14	6
Congregation member		
No	8	5
Yes	7	5
Financial situation		
Struggling	28	12
Enough	4	8
Extra	0	1
Well-off	0	1

Impact of Finances on Jewish Life

Fourteen percent of Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley had to limit or change their involvement in Jewish life due to their financial situation in the past year (Table 9.15). Eleven percent of Jewish households with children did not enroll them in Jewish schools or camps for financial reasons. Seven percent of all households were unable to contribute to Jewish causes to the same extent as they had in the past, and a similar proportion required financial assistance to maintain their synagogue membership. A small number of synagogue-member households discontinued their synagogue membership for financial reasons.

Table 9.15. Financial limitations to Jewish life

	All Jewish households
At least one limitation	14
Required financial assistance to enroll children in Jewish education, Jewish camp, or activities (children in household)	11
Required financial assistance to maintain synagogue membership (congregation member)	7
Unable to contribute to Jewish causes as much as I would have liked	7
Did not enroll children in Jewish education, camp, or activities (children in household)	6
Unable to participate in some Jewish activities	5
Discontinued synagogue membership	5
Something else	4

Being limited in household participation in Jewish life by financial circumstances does not vary significantly by age, marital status, or congregation membership (Table 9.16). Among the Immersed group, 26% said finances limited their participation, more than twice the rate of any other group. Among those from the Sussex County region, 41% said a financial situation limited their participation in Jewish life, twice the rate of the next highest region. Those who are parents are nearly four times as likely as those who are not parents (33% versus 9%) to also say a financial situation limited their participation in Jewish life.

Table 9.16. Any financial limitation to participating in Jewish life

Financial situation limited participation in Jewish life	
All Jewish households	14
Jewish engagement	
Minimally Involved	3
Holiday	12
Personal	9
Immersed	26
Region	
Newark area	7
Wilmington core	19
Rest of New Castle and Kent	6
Sussex County	41
Brandywine Valley	9
Age	
18-44	10
45-64	24
65-74	6
75+	19
Marital status	
Inmarried	8
Intermarried	17
Not married	25
Parent status	
No	9
Yes	33
Congregation member	
No	10
Yes	21
Financial situation	
Struggling	42
Enough	12
Extra	3
Well-off	<1

CHAPTER 10. IN THE WORDS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

To provide an additional layer of insight into the thoughts and feelings of members of the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community, the survey closed with two open-ended questions:

- Based on your own experience, what do you consider to be the strengths and gaps of the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community?
- What gives you the most satisfaction, joy, or meaning to your life as a Jewish person?

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 648 responses to the question about strengths and weaknesses and 707 responses to the question about priorities. Many respondents touched on multiple themes and may be included in more than one category. Some comments are mildly edited to protect respondents' identities.

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.

Strengths and Gaps

Synagogues

Issues related to synagogues in the area, both positive and negative, were mentioned most frequently by respondents (156). Several respondents commented on the close-knit communities fostered by synagogues, the commitment of members of the community to support each other across congregations, and the importance of being open and welcoming to all regardless of financial resources or Judaic knowledge.

People are friendly, and many families have affiliations with more than one synagogue (or at least that's how it used to be before COVID). – female, age 72, New Castle County

Close-knit, good leadership, different denominations freely coordinate and collaborate. Wide range of activities, opportunities, events, and synagogues for a community of our size. – male, 51, New Castle County

It is a strong community that cares for one another. There were a number of wonderful people who supported us when [we went through a difficult time]. There are so many ways to feel like you're a part of the shul, including clubs, volunteering opportunities, and musical groups, without feeling like one has to read Hebrew or constantly donate. – male, 61, Brandywine Valley

However, several respondents also noted that not all members of the community live in close proximity to a synagogue, making it a challenge for those individuals to access the services that synagogues provide. Additionally, many respondents commented on services they felt were missing from synagogues and what they perceived as the high costs of belonging to a congregation, or that synagogues were not as open to members of certain groups or newcomers to the community as they should be:

My family had to withdraw our children from a Hebrew school because [we could not afford dues and tuition]. – male, 49, New Castle County

I have not found many synagogues or Jewish organizations that are openly welcome to LGBTQ people. – non-binary, Brandywine Valley

Our synagogues need to do better with education past bar and bat mitzvah. – female, 46, New Castle County

The closest synagogue is [a particular denomination], and I would not feel comfortable there. The closest [congregations of the denomination I would feel comfortable with] are too far to travel regularly. – female, Brandywine Valley

Delaware is a very insular state. As newcomers to the community, we aren't as connected as many longstanding residents. Synagogues also feel very insular, especially with older membership. – female, 35, New Castle County

If you are conservative politically, the Jewish community has no place for you. – female, 62, Brandywine Valley

I would like to attend synagogue services, but it's hard with a baby. I wish there were a childcare option at shul but I understand that wouldn't make sense [when there are few young children in the congregation]. – Kent County

The culture at [my synagogue] is very focused on fundraising. – female, 69, New Castle County

Programming

The Jewish programming offered by the community (mentioned by 152 respondents) generally received high marks. Respondents noted that the community does a good job publicizing opportunities for engagement and provides a variety of activities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests.

A community calendar helps keep activities visible. – male, 74, New Castle County

I think they do a very good job reaching out with activities and events. If you're interested in finding stuff, it's there. There's publications and emails. – female, 74, New Castle County

Lots of programming, religious and social. Programming for teens, welcoming of interfaith families. – female, 50, New Castle County

However, many comments focused on the difficulty of attending programs far away from respondents' homes, the lack of programming for certain groups, financial obstacles to participation, or certain kinds of programming that they wish were more available. There is wide recognition that the relatively small size of the community, its geographic spread, and the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic are significant obstacles to expanded offerings.

It's a 45 minute drive to the closest Jewish activities. – female, 40, New Castle County

I wish there were more events (or better publicized events) for young families. – female, 33, New Castle County

[There is little to no] programming that speaks to anyone above their 20s who doesn't have children. – female, 30, New Castle County

There aren't many activities for families with older children. – male, Brandywine Valley

More singles events for Jewish people over 60. – female, 66, New Castle County

[More afternoon programming] so that seniors could easily drive in the daylight. – female, 70, New Castle County

If you don't have a lot of money, there are activities you don't feel comfortable participating in. – female, 82, Brandywine Valley

I really wanted my [child] to be enrolled in the JCC summer camp, but there was not enough room for [my child] to attend. – female, 35, New Castle County

Connectivity between Jewish communities in northern and southern Delaware. This might occur at some level, but is less apparent to busy families with younger children living in southern Delaware. – male, Sussex County

There is no real infrastructure for observant Jews... There are limited educational programs, no convenient access to kosher food, day schools with a serious Jewish curriculum are far (and there is no support for commuting expense). – male, New Castle County

Currently, we are not paying enough attention to two areas: young adults, there is a need to pull them into the Jewish community. Secondly, adult Jewish education is lacking. Jewish adults have time after retirement to expand their minds, perhaps to study aspects of Jewish history, art, and culture that they did not have time for previously. – female, 74, New Castle County

COVID-19 disruption of programming. – female, 77, New Castle County

Supportive and welcoming community

One hundred fourteen respondents mentioned how supportive and welcoming the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community is. Overall, respondents depict the community as friendly and supportive, though some noted that particular segments of the community are less welcome than others and that it can be difficult for newcomers to break into existing social structures. Additionally, outside the main centers of Jewish life, some respondents have little contact with or awareness of an organized Jewish community.

I think that the community is a very haimish [warm], caring one. People are down-to-earth and welcoming. – female, 36, New Castle County

[The community] reaches a diverse group of Jews from many backgrounds. Volunteerism of many members. – female, 71, Sussex County

The community is very welcoming. While a small community, there are still many opportunities to become active and participate if one desires. A very friendly, easy place to live. – female, 76, Brandywine Valley

We have lived in several other wonderful Jewish communities, but I think the [Delaware and Brandywine Valley] Jewish community is the best. We are so impressed with the warm welcome we received when we moved here, the ongoing collaboration among the Rabbis, the strong leadership in the community (particularly in the Federation and JCC), the quality of community services, the focus on social justice, and the warm welcome we received when we moved here. We are so proud to be members of this special Jewish community. – female, 76, New Castle County

Many members are very involved with charitable and interfaith activities. – female, 69, Sussex County

There is a strong sense of community. There is the joy of communal celebration in good times, but when help and encouragement are needed, the Jewish community responds in great numbers. Meals and offers of rides and help with anything needed abound. – male, 81, New Castle County

Very unwelcoming to those who were not born Jewish. – male, New Castle County

Not welcoming or open to new people. Before moving here, I was told that this community was warm, welcoming, and active, which has not been the case. I was told this by the JCC, as well, about the community at large, including the JCC, which has not been the case. I feel like an outsider. I have not made one new Jewish friend since moving to the area. I realize that the pandemic has an effect. I have not gone to the JCC in months as they do not enforce the mask mandate. The Federation representative was open and provided some referrals, at first, and then disappeared with the exception of an occasional email announcing an online event. It has not been a good experience thus far. – female, 64, New Castle County

Community can feel cliquish like high school. Can feel like an outsider at own synagogue. Also very expensive to be member of a synagogue and/or JCC. – female, 51, Brandywine Valley

The leadership has been too socialized that when you have some grumble with what you experienced, there must be something wrong with you. A lot of American Judaism has become private... Too many of the encounters were a long way from endearing, a form of Leadership Generated Attrition perhaps. – male, 70, New Castle County

The community feels like a clique. Not having gone to camp or sending my kids to Jewish camp, not knowing the organizations/ acronyms or well-known people, etc., makes me feel like an outsider within the community. – male, 49, New Castle County

Until this survey, I was unaware there was a Delaware/Brandywine Valley Jewish community organization. Frankly, I'm still not sure there is one... If there is one, it needs to be much better publicized. If there is not one, perhaps there should be. – male, 70, Sussex County

Siegel JCC and Jewish Federation of Delaware

Many respondents singled out the Siegel Jewish Community Center (89) and Jewish Federation of Delaware (41) as tremendous resources—critical to providing support for other Jewish organizations and offering services that bridge all aspects of Jewish life.

The JCC is a tremendous resource for those who are not very religious or synagogue-affiliated. It also engages widely on issues impacting the broader Jewish community. – female, 49, New Castle County

The Siegel JCC often acts of hub of connectivity for the local Jewish community (particularly in summer) and offers a chance to reconnect for friends and acquaintances that one often doesn't see throughout the year. – male, 49, Brandywine Valley

The Federation is very supportive of its Jewish agencies... The Jewish Community Center serves as a hub for our Jewish community, although the majority of members are not Jewish. – female, 60, New Castle County

I have been most impressed with the strength of the Jewish community in Delaware. Federation and its affiliated organizations are critical in providing support and resources to Jews (and non-Jews) in the area. I am incredibly grateful to the organizations—they do an incredible job! – female, 51, New Castle County

The Siegel JCC's early childhood center is a star! – female, 47, Brandywine Valley

Several respondents noted that the JCC and Jewish Federation struggle to serve members of the community outside of Wilmington. Some commented that the JCC needs renovation and strains to retain its identity as a Jewish organization, and that the Federation caters too much to the whims of wealthy supporters.

The outreach from the JCC and Federation could be improved outside of the Wilmington area through better communication. – male, 74, New Castle County

We are not informed at all about activities or any sort of calendar regarding Jewish activities associated with the Jewish Federation of Delaware or the JCC. We feel like outsiders to those organizations living in [a part of Delaware with few Jewish residents]. I give to the Federation, and receive their Jewish VOICE magazine. But other than that we do not receive any information from them or the JCC. They have a lot to improve upon in reaching out to other parts of Delaware besides Wilmington. – female, 63, New Castle County

Jewish Federation of Delaware has never figured out a way to establish a meaningful relationship with Jews outside of Wilmington and now the beach. We are everywhere in the state, but Federation is not. – male, 68, Kent County

JCC membership fees are too high. Very pushy about joining. Overcrowded exercise classes. Locker rooms need updating. – female, 68, New Castle County

They don't even call it the Jewish community center. They call it the J to get more members and stress how you don't need to be Jewish. Their programs are boring. – female, 42, New Castle County

JCC and Federation are located far from much of Delaware. – male, 71, New Castle County

The JCC is very expensive if you have limited income. – female, 65, New Castle County

My personal experience with this community has been both wonderful in many regards and awful in others. I suppose the most disheartening factor is really that the community feels like a clique with Federation serving as the bully and only catering to the wealthy donors. – female, 42, Brandywine Valley

I have been disappointed with the Jewish Federation of Delaware, as I do not often agree with the way they allocate some of their resources. Perhaps I am not terribly well-informed, but... I think the 'old assumptions' are still afloat—that every Jewish family is 'comfortable.' – female, 55, New Castle County

Community size

Many of the comments cited above have already alluded to respondents' feelings about the size of the Jewish community in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. In total, 69 respondents indicated that the size of the Jewish community was a strength in some ways and a weakness in others. They feel that the relatively small size of the community encourages greater collaboration between organizations, but together with the geographic dispersion of the community, it also makes it harder for the community to achieve some of its goals.

The size limits what can be done, and most activities gravitate to northern Wilmington, which can be an effort to go to if you are not in that area of the county. – female, 49, New Castle County

Plurality and smallness makes varying groups have to work together and for the most part they do. – male, 46, New Castle County

The sense of 'Jewish community' is only available through Jewish organizations, which is not the same as residing in a Jewish 'neighborhood.' Often a child would be the only Jew in their class. – male, 82, New Castle County

The small size of the population enables one to be as involved as they may desire. – male, 75, Brandywine Valley

The community is small, which is both a strength and a weakness. We lack a lot of Jewish infrastructure, like kosher catering. Shoprite has greatly scaled back kosher catering and offerings. Another example is that the JCC ECC is the only Jewish early childcare in the area. Jewish education was important to us, but we were informed that Jewish education wasn't important to THEM because most clients aren't Jewish. – female, 72, New Castle County

The community is small enough that sometimes it is difficult to find enough volunteers to help out in the Jewish community. – male, 48, Kent County

Satisfaction, Joy, and Meaning

Family

For most respondents (227), the area where they find the greatest satisfaction, joy, or meaning in their Jewish lives is in their families. In particular, respondents enjoy watching their children and grandchildren form their own connections to the Jewish community and celebrating holidays and lifecycle events with their extended families.

I get most satisfaction from seeing my children deeply care about the community—their local communities as well as the global Jewish community. I believe we are leaving a strong legacy of love for the Jewish people and continued tradition. — female, 60, New Castle County

Seeing our children and grandchildren (especially grandchildren) embrace Judaism and learn of our rich culture and history; celebrating holidays with them. — male, 69, Sussex County

My family, none of whom live in this region, connect via email, Zoom, letter, or phone. Also, photos and items that have been passed down from great-grandparents and others (art created by my father years ago, a rocking chair and Shabbat candlesticks from my great grandmother, my grandmother's good dishes from childhood Shabbat and holiday meals). In years past, enjoying family celebrations, gathering for weddings, b'nai mitzvahs and holidays. — female, 69, Kent County

No. 1 and there is nothing close to it: Seeing my children and grandchildren living a Jewish life and participating in Jewish activities. Observing my grandchildren learning about Judaism, celebrate their bat mitzvahs, and joining with my wife and me as we celebrate holidays and other simchas. — male, 76, New Castle County

Traditions

Part of what makes family a key source of satisfaction, joy, or meaning in Judaism is the opportunity to celebrate or observe Jewish traditions and pass them on to the next generation. One hundred sixty-seven respondents cited celebrating or observing Jewish traditions as a source of satisfaction, joy, or meaning in Judaism.

Tell the stories! Sharing my culture, my family history. Making the foods from recipes handed down from generations ago. TRADITIONS! — female, 52, New Castle County

The traditions, the extended family gathering (during non-Covid times) for holidays such as Rosh Hashanah and Passover. — female, 60, Brandywine Valley

Practicing with my family, and seeing my kids learn and enjoy the traditions as their own. — female, 36, Sussex County

Being able to maintain the religious and cultural traditions I experienced as a child and pass those along to my own child. — male, 44, Sussex County

I truly enjoy celebrating Jewish holidays and maintaining the traditions of those holidays. The holidays remind me, in a most pleasurable way of my childhood, my grandparents and other relatives, as well as teaching Jewish history and culture to my children and now my grandchildren. — male, 74, Sussex County

Having a community with shared traditions and values that I can believe in. — female, 35, Brandywine Valley

Being able to maintain the traditions of our heritage. — male, 74, Kent County

Sense of community

Beyond their families and their connection to tradition, many Jews in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley find satisfaction, joy, or meaning in their sense of belonging to and preserving the Jewish community, both in Delaware and around the world.

Finding connection to Jewish people within Delaware [through volunteering in the Jewish community]. – female, Kent County

Reading of the success of Israel and the Jewish people in general. I enjoy being able to contribute to a number of organizations—IDF, Maccabee Games, Jewish Federation, Holocaust Museum, etc. – male, 81, New Castle County

The connections I've made with other Jews in the community (many through Federation) are such an important and valuable part of my life. Giving back to the community is incredibly meaningful. While I don't go to synagogue, I am proud to be Jewish. – female, 51, New Castle County

Building community and teaching my child the rich history of Jewish social justice movements. – non-binary, Brandywine Valley

Feeling like an active part of a meaningful Jewish community. – female, 58, New Castle County

It's all about feeling like we belong and having that camaraderie and sense of safety among the Jewish community. – male, 42, New Castle County

A feeling of belonging to a community, a feeling of being connected to 5,000 years of history. – female, 77, Sussex County

Jewish values and social justice

For some Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, Jewish values, including social justice, are key sources of satisfaction, joy, or meaning in Judaism. Eighty-one respondents mentioned Jewish values, and 79 cited social justice in particular.

Learning together as a community and helping others with economic or health care needs. – female, Kent County

It is hard to separate what is bred in the bone as being raised a Jew who was raised with values that are intrinsically Jewish: charitable, ethical, interested in knowledge. To directly answer the question, what gives me joy and satisfaction is contributing to society of time and the work that I do. – male, 63, Brandywine Valley

Jewish values and the extent to which they have permeated American culture, in spite of intolerant, extremist fringe groups that get too much attention in media. – male, 77, New Castle County

I believe we are basically a charitable group of people who have given much to improving the world. – female, 91, Sussex County

Performing a mitzvah, helping others, and teaching the same Jewish values to our children and grandchildren. – male, 71, New Castle County

Participating in tikkun olam—helping those in need. Witnessing our grandchildren growing up with Jewish values. — female, 70, New Castle County

Doing good, thinking of others first, having gratitude for so much—these are all part of my living a Jewish life. — female, 62, Sussex County

I love prayer and Jewish culture. I love what I consider to be the key Jewish values: tzedakah and tikkun olam.

Trying to make the world a better place is one of the most Jewish things I do in life. I also love being part of an intellectually-rigorous tradition, with a long history of questioning received wisdom. — female, 36, New Castle County

Jewish culture

Jewish culture, cited by 81 respondents, is also a significant source of satisfaction, joy, or meaning for Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. These respondents described Jewish culture in terms of learning, art, literature, music, contributions to civic life, Jewish history, and Jewish peoplehood.

I'm very, very proud of all that the Jewish people have contributed to medicine, art, music, and culture. I love interacting with other Jewish folks, enjoy Jewish foods and all Jewish celebrations. I have a strong identity with my Jewishness. — female, 85, Brandywine Valley

The history, the connection to a long-standing culture, the connection to others regardless of geography. — male, 49, New Castle County

Love the culture, foods, and connectedness. — female, 81, New Castle County

Socializing with other Jewish people at educational and social events, i.e., book groups, film festivals. — female, 74, Sussex County

Appreciating that there is more to being Jewish than religion. I enjoy the food, humor, and learning about Yiddish expressions that my grandparents and parents used when they didn't want the children to know what they were talking about. — female, 73, New Castle County

My Jewish spirituality is so important to me. I love Jewish arts and entertainment. I love Israel. I love knowing that there is an instant community wherever I go. — female, 65, Kent County

Jewish music, song, and dance. Israeli dancing. Watching JBS [Jewish Broadcasting Service] daily. — female, 75, Kent County

CHAPTER 11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The words of community members, taken together with the findings presented in chapters 2-9, contribute to a detailed portrait of the Jewish community of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. This study has described community members' demographic characteristics, participation in Jewish communal life as well as private Jewish activities, and their attitudes about Judaism, Israel, and the local Jewish community. The findings presented in this report lend themselves to a series of conclusions about the community today and recommendations that we hope will inform planning and policy-making by Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish organizations for the next decade.

It is difficult to say whether the Delaware and Brandywine Jewish community is growing, stable, or, as many members of the community believe, shrinking. From the time the research team started speaking with the staff of the Jewish Federation of Delaware about the possibility of a community study, we heard from several members of the community that they believed that the Jewish population was shrinking in most areas but growing rapidly in Sussex County. The last community study, conducted in 1995,²² estimated that there were 13,500 Jewish individuals living in Delaware but did not account for the Brandywine Valley. Although this study shows a larger Jewish population in Delaware than existed in 1995, there is no way to tell definitively that the population has grown or that it continues to grow.

Nevertheless, two facts are clear: **The Jewish community of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley is much larger than many of its members believe, and many members are not involved in local Jewish organizations.** This study estimates that there are 25,900 Jews in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. However, nearly 40% of Jewish adults in the community are members of an engagement group characterized by having little to no involvement in Jewish organizations, and a number of others in the Brandywine Valley have chosen to spend significant time involved in Jewish organizations in the nearby Philadelphia Jewish community. This low level of local communal engagement may contribute to the mistaken narrative about a smaller community.

Additionally, it is clear that **the population distribution of the Jewish community is far less concentrated than it used to be.** The 1995 study reported that approximately 88% of the Jewish population of Delaware resided in New Castle County, primarily in Wilmington and Newark. It appears that the number of Jews residing in Wilmington and Newark today is similar to the number in 1995, but the present study also estimates roughly three times as many Jews reside in Sussex County today as lived in Sussex and Kent Counties combined in 1995. The present study also includes a significant Jewish population in the Brandywine Valley, across the state border in Pennsylvania, in an area that was not previously actively served by the Jewish Federation of Delaware. This area accounts for most of the "growth" in the Jewish population estimate compared to 1995, but only because it was not assessed at all at that time, and it does not account for *all* of the growth.

Recommendations: Promote active ties and innovation across the multiple Jewish communities of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. Most Jewish community studies are conducted in communities with a single central city and its associated suburbs and exurbs. This study is more complicated because, although a single Jewish Federation provides services throughout the entire State of Delaware and a piece of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it is not really a single community. Rather, it is a collection of several communities, each with its own history, culture, and characteristics. These distinct communities are not necessarily closely tied to each other, and are in many cases geographically distant from each other, and so resources that are available in one community may not be readily accessible or even available to the others despite the best efforts of the Jewish Federation. It is our sense, however, that each distinct community has something unique to offer the others, and each would benefit from greater access to the resources of their counterparts. We believe that greater cooperation, collaboration, and shared programming between the Jewish communities of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley would provide significant benefits across the entire region. We encourage the Jewish Federation to explore new efforts to expand and strengthen extant bonds.

Be sensitive to differences of resources and backgrounds. There are deep social, economic, political, and religious divides in the Jewish community of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. Some members of the community face significant financial barriers to participation. Newcomers to the region often find it difficult to learn the history, traditions, and folkways of their new community. Some feel unwelcome because their religious practice is too relaxed, because of their political preferences, or because they do not know enough about Judaism. Ultimately, all Jewish households and individuals are part of the Jewish community and should be made to feel welcome and included. The community must work to unite around what its members have in common, and not allow members' differences to cause rifts between Jews.

Support families in need. Collectively, the Jewish community of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley is largely middle class, with a substantial population that is quite well-off. However, 15% of Jewish households say they either cannot (1%) or are just managing (14%) to make ends meet. Fourteen percent of Jewish households say they have limited their participation in Jewish life because of their financial situation. Ten percent of Jewish households are living below 250% of the Federal Poverty Line. Many have sustained significant economic hardships in the past year, and some cannot afford to pay an emergency \$400 expense with cash on hand, in a bank account, or on a credit card that can be fully paid off at the end of the month. To best serve families in need, it may be necessary to raise awareness of available resources in the community, particularly for young adults, families with children, and older adults, and to allocate new resources.

Promote active ties to the local Jewish community for newcomers. There is a strong sense among community members that it can be difficult for newcomers to break into existing social networks. This can be particularly difficult in communities like those in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, where 66% of Jewish adults have lived in the area for 10 or more years, including 42% who have lived in the area for 20 years or longer. Not knowing many people is one of the most commonly cited barriers to participation in Jewish communal life for Jewish adults in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, and it is critical that local Jewish organizations work together to find ways to help newcomers to the community overcome this challenge. This may be particularly important for two distinct groups: 1) young adults ages 18-44, who are in school, beginning their careers, or starting their families, and 2) older adults ages 75 and older, who may be moving to the region to be closer to family or to enjoy their retirement. Nearly half of both of these groups are

newcomers to the community, and those who move to Delaware or the Brandywine Valley without prior connections may benefit from assistance in forming connections to the local Jewish community.

Strengthen outreach to interfaith families. Interfaith families represent about 40% of all Jewish households in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, making them a critical demographic in the community. Across the United States, as the intermarriage rate rises, it is increasingly important to Jewish communities, particularly those concerned about possible population loss, to promote cultures of welcome and inclusivity that encourage interfaith families to raise their children as Jews. In Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, 67% of the children of intermarriage are being raised Jewish in some way, comparable to the national average of 69%. Of the remaining 33%, 25% are being raised in no religion. This reality presents both a significant challenge and an opportunity for the Jewish community in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. Research on interfaith families and their children suggests that some of these children may embrace their Jewish identities in adulthood (e.g., on a Birthright Israel trip),²³ but the single best predictor that they will identify as Jews when they are grown is enrollment in high-quality Jewish educational programming—such as schools, camps, and youth groups—when they are children.²⁴ Convincing intermarried parents to enroll their children in Jewish educational programs requires a strong investment in efforts to attract interfaith families to communal programs and events and clear communication that these families are a valued part of the Jewish community.

Invest in Jewish education. Twenty percent of Jewish children in grades K-12 in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley were enrolled in a Jewish day school (1%) or Hebrew school (19%) during the 2021-22 school year; 12% attended a Jewish day camp, and 10% attended a Jewish overnight camp in the summer of 2021; and 23% of Jewish children in grades 6-12 participated in a Jewish youth group during the 2021-22 school year. Most of these numbers likely would have been a little higher if not for the COVID-19 pandemic, but other factors are more significant. Parents whose children in grades K-12 were enrolled in neither a Jewish day school nor any Hebrew school were asked to identify the biggest obstacles to enrollment. Nearly 40% indicated that available Hebrew schools' hours did not work with their schedules or their children's schedules. Nearly 20% said they could not find a Hebrew school that was a good fit for their children or their families. Other significant barriers were lack of transportation, not belonging to a synagogue, and cost. The community should explore ways of helping families overcome these barriers to ensure that all families who wish to provide their children with access to a robust Jewish education have the opportunity to do so.

Promote opportunities for volunteering in and with the Jewish community. Many Jews in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley are active or even habitual volunteers, but a little more than half are volunteering exclusively outside the Jewish community. Research on the volunteering activities and preferences of American Jews suggests that volunteering is a core activity that appeals universally across denominations, socioeconomic status, and age, and can be particularly valuable for providing an outlet that unites universal prosocial values with individuals' Jewish identities.²⁵ And because of its universal appeal, it may also be a means of providing low cost, low-barrier activities that help integrate newcomers into the community.

Address Covid-related anxiety, but maintain access even for those who cannot yet return to a pre-pandemic “normal.” This survey was conducted at a time when high-quality vaccines were available and readily accessible for most people, and this report is being finalized at a time when vaccines calibrated to address the most troubling variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have

just become available. Based on the data, the pandemic remains one of the largest barriers to participation in the Jewish community of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. Even as organizations are easing the restrictions they imposed for communal safety at the height of the pandemic, some individuals and families remain at high risk and are unable to return to in-person programming, either at all or to the degree that they would like. The community must be sensitive to the needs of members who are slow to remove their masks, shake hands, and hug their friends in communal spaces. To the extent that they are able to improve the ventilation of their indoor spaces or hold programs outdoors, they may be able to alleviate some of the remaining concerns about in-person programming. Until the crisis is completely over, the community must continue to do what it can to reassure its members of their safety in Jewish spaces and to provide access to those who remain at high risk from the SARS-CoV-2 virus and are unable to rejoin programs and events in person.

These recommendations emerge from data collected systematically between February and May 2022. 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 Delaware and the Brandywine Valley. The community has invested significant resources in upgrading its programming and infrastructure, reaching out to diverse segments of the population, and meeting the needs of a shifting population. We hope that this snapshot of the community will stimulate discussion about how best to take advantage of the great strengths of the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community, confront its challenges, and plan for the future.

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 Janet Krasner Aronson et al., “Building Resilient Jewish Communities: A Jewish Response to the Coronavirus Crisis: BRJC Topline Report for Aggregated Data” (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, September 2020).

³ For the purposes of this study, the Delaware and Brandywine Valley area is defined as the parts of Pennsylvania from the Delaware border to West Chester. Household data for these counties is based on ACS 2020 5-year estimates.

⁴ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.” (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2021.)

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

⁶ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

⁷ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

⁸ Although the number of respondents involved is too small for reliable analysis, it is clear that a substantial proportion of those who identify as Traditional belong to a Traditional synagogue in Wilmington. Similarly, a substantial proportion of those who identify with no particular denomination belong to a nondenominational congregation in Sussex County. CMJS/SSRI developed the Index of Jewish Engagement (see Chapter 3) in part because we believe that denominational labels do not match up as concretely with behavior as they did in the past; we believe that for many American Jews, a denominational label refers to the affiliation of the synagogue to which they currently belong or to which they belonged in the past. Accordingly, it is possible that some of the Traditional Jews in our sample so identify because they belong to a Traditional synagogue, and that some of the Jews in Sussex County whose denominational preference is “none” have responded this way because they belong to a nondenominational congregation.

⁹ See also Janet Krasner Aronson et al., “A New Approach to Understanding Contemporary Jewish Engagement,” *Contemporary Jewry* 39 (2018): 91–113.

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

¹¹ Notably, there is no Jewish preschool in Kent or Sussex Counties. However, if the analysis was limited solely to families with preschool-aged children in New Castle County or the Brandywine Valley, the proportion of Jewish children attending a Jewish preschool program is still 17%.

¹² The only Jewish day school in the geographic area covered in this study runs from kindergarten through sixth grade. However, recognizing that families with children in the Brandywine Valley may send their children to Jewish schools in Philadelphia that go through high school, the question was asked for all children through 12th grade. If the analysis was limited to families with school-aged children in New Castle County or the Brandywine Valley, the proportion of Jewish children attending a Jewish day school would be 2%.

¹³ The question was asked as follows: “Do you or anyone in your household currently belong to a Jewish congregation, such as a synagogue, temple, *minyan*, *chavurah*, or High Holiday congregation?” Respondents who answered “yes” were then asked a series of follow-up questions, including one that identified the congregations to which they belong. Among the congregations to which respondents said they belong are some congregations outside the Delaware/Brandywine Valley area as well as congregations—such as independent *minyanim*, *chavurot*, and Chabad organizations—that do not operate on a membership model.

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

¹⁵ However, about one quarter of households in the Brandywine Valley that are members of out-of-area synagogues belong to a particular synagogue in a ZIP code that is just outside the study area.

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

²⁰ On August 24, 2022, while this report was being written, President Biden announced that many student loan borrowers will have up to \$10,000 of their debt forgiven, or up to \$20,000 if they were Pell Grant recipients. Although the way the income question was asked on this survey does not allow for perfect comparisons, it appears that many of those who said they are not at all or not too confident in their ability to pay back their student loans likely qualify for relief.

²¹ According to the US Federal Reserve, in 2021, 32% of US households could not cover a \$400 emergency expense. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/files/2021-report-economic-well-being-us-households-202205.pdf>

²² Ira M. Sheskin, Jacob B. Ukeles, & Ron Miller. (1996). *The 1995 Jewish Population Study of Delaware: Summary Report*. Wilmington, DE: The Jewish Federation of Delaware.

²³ See Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Identity* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press/ University Press of New England, 2008).

²⁴ See, for example, Theodore Sasson et al., “Millennial Children of Inter-marriage: Religious Upbringing, Identification, and Behavior among Children of Jewish and Non-Jewish Parents,” *Contemporary Jewry* 37 (2017): 99–123.; Michelle Shain et al., “Beyond Welcoming: Engaging Inter-married Couples in Jewish Life” (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2019).

²⁵ See, for example, Fern Chertok et al., “Volunteering + Values: A Repair the World Report on Jewish Young Adults” (New York; Waltham: Repair the World; Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2011).