

# 2022 Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish Community Study

## Highlights for Beneficiary Agencies

**Prof. Matthew Boxer**

Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and  
Steinhardt Social Research Institute  
Brandeis University

March 27, 2023

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



Sponsored in part by  
a generous grant from



Brandeis  
COHEN CENTER FOR  
MODERN JEWISH STUDIES  
STEINHARDT SOCIAL  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**Brandeis**

COHEN CENTER FOR  
MODERN JEWISH STUDIES

STEINHARDT SOCIAL  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

# Size of the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish Community

The 2022 population estimate

Jewish individuals	<b>25,900</b>
Jewish households	<b>12,600</b>
People in Jewish households	<b>34,000</b>
Adults in Jewish households	
Jewish adults in Jewish households	<b>22,400</b>
Non-Jewish adults in Jewish households	<b>6,000</b>
Children in Jewish households	
Jewish children in Jewish households	<b>3,500</b>
Non-Jewish children in Jewish households	<b>2,100</b>

## DEFINITIONS

**Jewish households:** Households with at least one Jewish adult

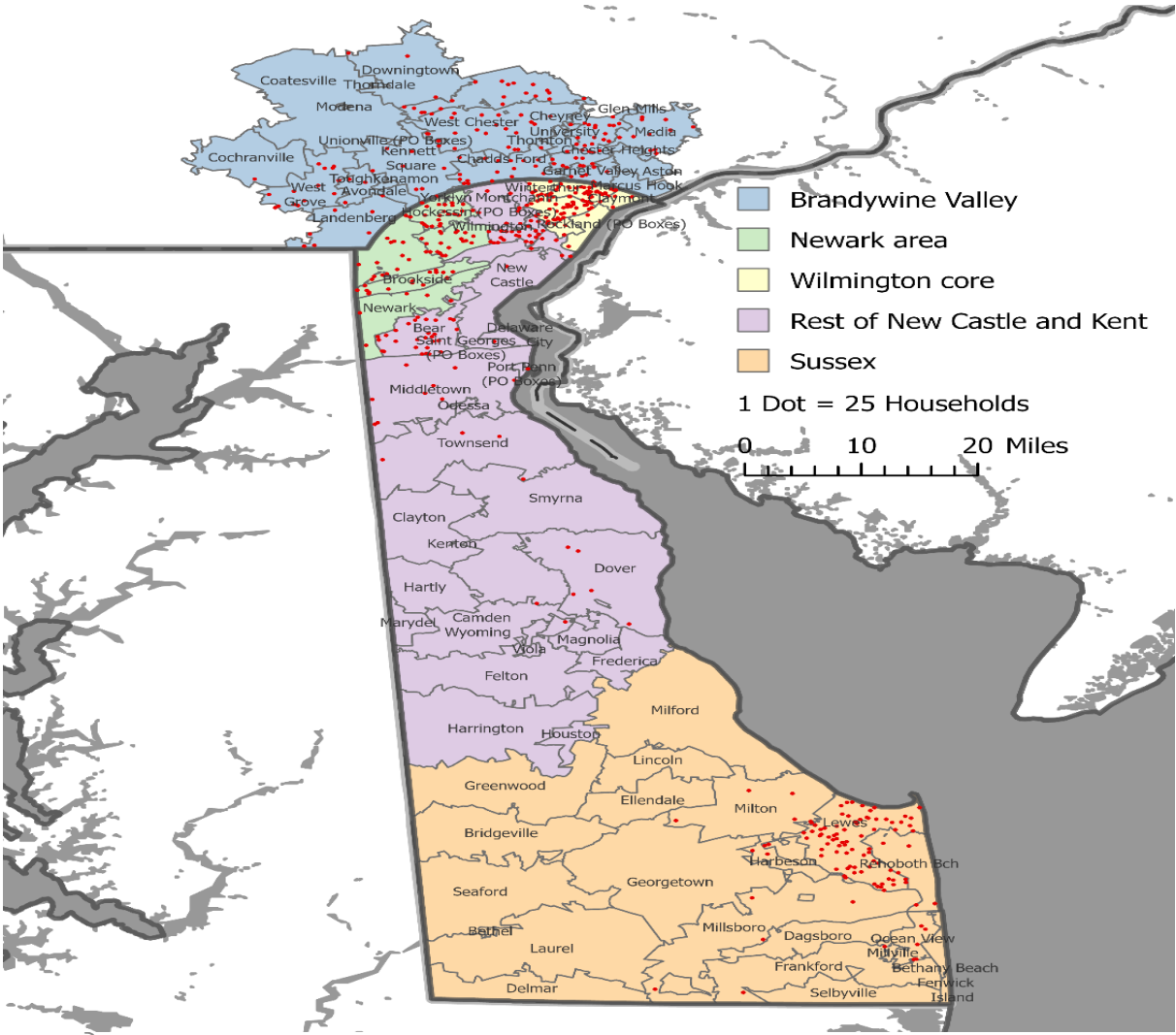
**People in Jewish households:** Includes non-Jewish people in Jewish households

**Jewish adults:** Consider themselves Jewish by religion or culturally/ethnically, AND have at least one Jewish parent, were raised Jewish, or converted  
*Includes Jewish and another religion*

**Jewish children:** Considered Jewish by their parents  
*Includes Jewish and another religion*

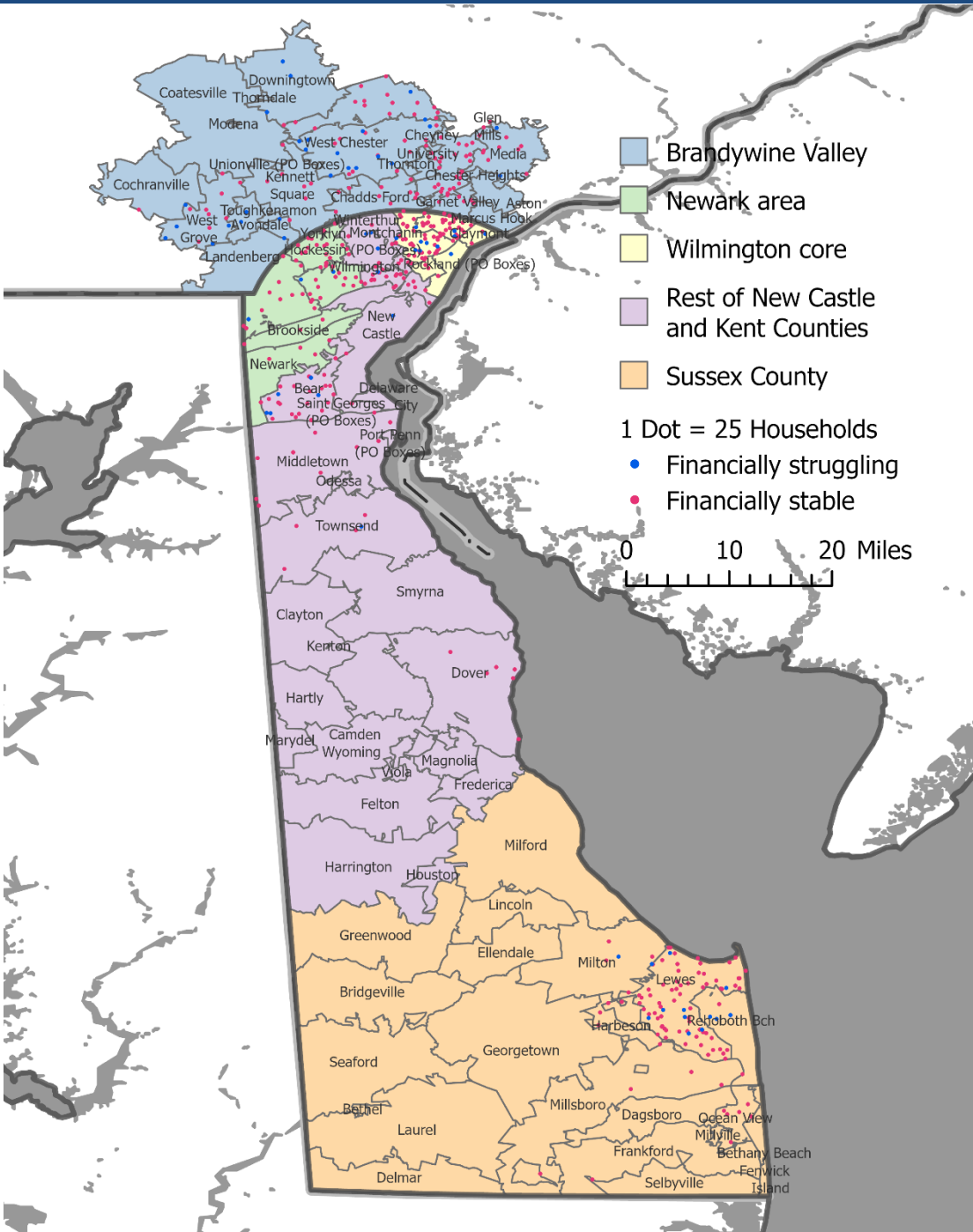
Note: Rounded to the nearest 100.

# Where do Jewish households live in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley?



Jewish households are fairly evenly distributed across the five key regions of Delaware and Brandywine Valley

	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

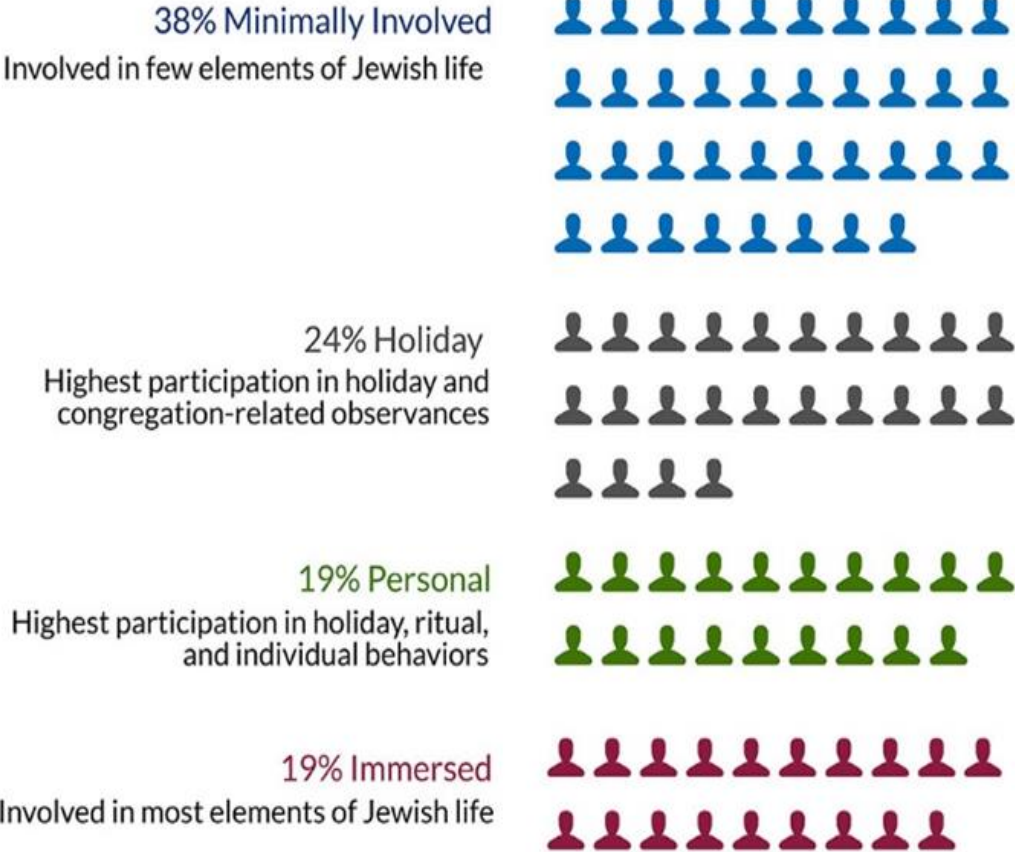


# Where do households live that are struggling financially?

# Index of Jewish Engagement

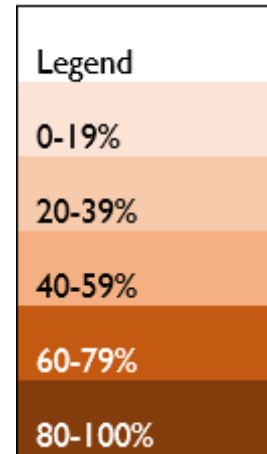
Nearly all Jewish adults are engaged in some aspects of Jewish life

- Captures multiple dimensions of Jewish life: ritual, cultural, individual activities, and organization involvement
- Statistically derived categories specifically developed for Delaware and Brandywine Valley
- Based on behavior rather than on self-identification



# 18 behaviors used to create the index

	Minimally Involved	Holiday	Personal	Immersed
<b>Holiday Behaviors</b>				
Attended seder, 2021	41	84	98	100
Lit Hanukkah candles, 2021	68	97	83	99
Fast on Yom Kippur, 2021	17	84	30	72
<b>Ritual Behaviors</b>				
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
<b>Organization Behaviors</b>				
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
<b>Individual Behaviors</b>				
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



# Income and standard of living

Community is relatively affluent compared to the surrounding population, but many households are struggling

10% of households below 250% of the Federal Poverty Limit

<b>Income</b>	<b>Jewish households (%)</b>
<\$50,000	6
\$50,000-\$74,999	16
\$75,000-\$99,999	12
\$100,000-\$149,999	13
\$150,000-\$199,999	9
\$200,000+	20
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	24

<b>Standard of living</b>	<b>Jewish households (%)</b>
Struggling: Cannot/Just managing to make ends meet	15
Have enough money	31
Have some extra money	24
Well off	30

# Economic needs and insecurity

<b>Jewish households</b>	<b>In past year (%)</b>	<b>Between 1-3 years ago (%)</b>
Any hardship	8	5
Healthcare	7	1
Utilities	3	1
Rent	1	4
Food	1	1

- 2% of households unable to pay an emergency \$400 expense
- 14% of adults not at all or not too confident they will be able to keep current savings/investments
- 14% of households limited their involvement in Jewish life for financial reasons
  - 11% of parents required financial assistance to enroll children in Jewish education, camp, or activities
  - 7% of congregation-member households required financial assistance to maintain their membership



# Health issues, special needs, and disabilities

- 19% of Jewish households include at least one person who is limited in their work, school, or activities by some sort of health issue, special need, or disability
- Older Jewish adults have significantly higher rates of health issues, special need, or disability

	<b>Of households with a health issue (%)</b>	<b>All Jewish households (%)</b>
Chronic illness	55	10
Physical disability	38	7
Mental/emotional health problem	32	6
Developmental/intellectual disability	6	1
Substance abuse/addiction	<1	<1
Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease	<1	<1
COVID-19 complications	<1	<1
Other	10	2

# Health needs and supports

- 2% of Jewish households do not have access to every daily transportation need
  - 5% of households with a member 55 years of age or older have at least one person who needs assistance with a daily activity such as household chores, preparing meals, or taking stairs
  - Of households with health issues, 12% did not receive all services needed in the past year to manage their household's health issues, special needs, mental health issues, or disabilities
- 18% of households are managing or providing care for someone else, aside from routine childcare
    - About one quarter of middle-aged households are caregivers
  - While all Jewish adults from households including someone with mental or emotional health issues said they had a personal support network, only 10% have a lot or a fair number of people in their support network

# Comparison charts

## Appendix B. Comparison Charts

### About

The Comparison Charts provide details on various subgroups in the Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish community. These charts include data for all response options for all survey questions included in the study. In each section, characteristics are reported for the overall population on the top row, as well as for subgroups of the population, with each subgroup appearing in its own row.

The comparison charts can be downloaded here:

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

There is a separate Excel file for each topic area.

# Comparison charts

## 2022 Delaware and Brandywine Valley Jewish Community Study

[Matthew Boxer](#), [Matthew A. Brookner](#), Adina Bankier-Karp, Alicia Chandler, [Adam Martin](#), [Raquel Magidin de Kramer](#), [Ilana Friedman](#), Matthew Feinberg, [Janet Krasner Aronson](#), and [Leonard Saxe](#)

February 2023

The *2022 Community Study of Jewish Delaware and the Brandywine Valley* is the first in-depth assessment of the size and characteristics of the Jewish community in Delaware since 1995, and the first to include a section of the Brandywine Valley in Pennsylvania. The study provides a comprehensive portrait of the community's 25,900 Jews; their families; their Jewish attitudes, affiliations, and behaviors; their health and financial well-being; and other measures of their engagement in Jewish life.

[Read the report](#)

[Read the executive summary](#)

[Read the technical appendices](#)

[Download the comparison charts](#)

[Download the public dataset](#)



Brandeis



Brandeis

COHEN CENTER FOR  
MODERN JEWISH STUDIES  
STEINHARDT SOCIAL  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

# Comparison charts

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
	Currently Employed							Of eligible respondents, currently receiving unemployment benefits				Household Financial Situation					Confidence in affording basic living expenses					Confidence in affording healthcare		
	Yes, full-time in one job or position	Yes, part-time in one job or position	Yes, working in multiple positions	No, not working for pay	No, on temporary leave (such as disability or parental leave)	No, retired		No	Yes		Cannot make ends meet	Just managing to make ends meet	Have enough money	Have some extra money	Well off		Not at all confident	Not too confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident	Does not apply		Not at all confident	Not too confident
Overall	45	17	2	4	<1	31	Overall	100	<1	Overall	1	14	31	24	30	Overall	1	5	20	74	<1	Overall	1	
Minimally Involved	48	13	1	3	0	35	Minimally Involved	100	0	Minimally Involved	<1	13	33	27	28	Minimally Involved	1	6	19	74	<1	Minimally Involved	1	
Holiday	51	21	1	1	<1	26	Holiday	100	<1	Holiday	<1	20	22	18	39	Holiday	<1	7	13	80	<1	Holiday	<1	
Personal	35	25	2	5	<1	34	Personal	97	3	Personal	1	9	32	26	31	Personal	2	1	15	82	<1	Personal	2	
Immersed	33	18	8	9	1	31	Immersed	100	<1	Immersed	<1	16	32	21	30	Immersed	3	4	17	76	<1	Immersed	1	
Newark area	24	54	2	5	1	14	Newark area	100	<1	Newark area	3	5	33	30	29	Newark area	6	<1	12	82	<1	Newark area	<1	
Wilmington core	51	17	4	12	<1	17	Wilmington core	100	<1	Wilmington core	1	12	27	33	27	Wilmington core	5	1	21	72	<1	Wilmington core	8	
Rest of New Castle and	66	1	2	2	<1	28	Rest of New Castle and	97	3	Rest of New Castle and	<1	21	26	22	31	Rest of New Castle and	0	1	28	71	0	Rest of New Castle and	<1	
Sussex County	44	2	2	6	<1	46	Sussex County	100	0	Sussex County	0	14	51	22	13	Sussex County	0	12	45	43	1	Sussex County	<1	
Brandywine Valley	36	23	3	2	<1	36	Brandywine Valley	100	0	Brandywine Valley	<1	15	19	19	46	Brandywine Valley	<1	7	3	90	0	Brandywine Valley	<1	
18-44	70	21	2	7	<1	0	18-44	--	--	18-44	0	20	31	26	23	18-44	0	<1	14	86	0	18-44	<1	
45-64	54	30	4	4	1	7	45-64	100	<1	45-64	1	16	21	24	38	45-64	2	6	22	71	<1	45-64	2	
65+	19	5	1	2	<1	74	65+	100	<1	65+	<1	14	36	26	24	65+	2	8	24	66	<1	65+	1	
Inmarried	45	17	2	4	<1	31	Inmarried	100	<1	Inmarried	<1	11	23	33	32	Inmarried	1	4	6	88	<1	Inmarried	<1	
Intermarried	52	11	3	<1	1	33	Intermarried	100	0	Intermarried	1	16	17	18	48	Intermarried	0	7	40	53	<1	Intermarried	1	
Not married	33	28	2	9	<1	28	Not married	98	2	Not married	1	15	56	22	6	Not married	4	4	21	71	<1	Not married	3	
Not parent of minor child	38	17	2	4	<1	39	Not parent of minor child	99	1	No child in HH	1	13	36	24	26	Not parent of minor child	2	5	16	77	<1	Not parent of minor child	1	
Parent of minor child	74	19	6	1	<1	<1	Parent of minor child	--	--	Child in HH	<1	17	13	24	45	Parent of minor child	0	5	31	64	0	Parent of minor child	0	
Not synagogue member	54	12	1	3	<1	30	Not synagogue member	99	1	Not synagogue member	1	12	33	25	29	Not synagogue member	1	4	23	71	<1	Not synagogue member	1	
Synagogue member	32	26	5	5	<1	32	Synagogue member	100	<1	Synagogue member	1	18	26	22	33	Synagogue member	1	6	13	79	<1	Synagogue member	1	

# JCC, programs, and agencies as communal strengths

*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, age 49, New Castle County*

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

*I think [communal agencies] 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, age 74, New Castle 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, age 81, New Castle County*

# Where the agencies might have more work to do

*The size limits what can be done, and most activities gravitate to northern Wilmington, which can be an effort if you are not in that area of the county. – female, age 49, 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, age 48, Kent 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... – male, age 70, Sussex County*

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

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



## **THANK YOU TO**

The Jewish Fund for the Future and the Mandel Foundation  
The Jewish Community of Delaware and the Brandywine Valley  
The organizations and agencies who participated  
The 1,065 survey respondents