



# A Snapshot of Baltimore's Jewish Community

BASED ON THE PORTRAIT OF  
JEWISH BALTIMORE: 2020 JEWISH  
COMMUNITY STUDY

**Brandeis**

COHEN CENTER FOR  
MODERN JEWISH STUDIES  
STEINHARDT SOCIAL  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE



**The Associated**  
Jewish Federation of Baltimore

## The 2020 Community Study is a snapshot of Jewish Baltimore.

### THE 2020 GREATER BALTIMORE JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDY\* PAINTS A PORTRAIT OF OUR COMMUNITY AS STABLE AND HIGHLY ENGAGED WHILE HIGHLIGHTING CHANGES, NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore is pleased to present highlights of our 2020 Community Study – *Foundation of Our Future: Portrait of Jewish Baltimore*. The study provides a snapshot of a strong and vibrant Jewish community that continues to evolve. The data yielded by the study will help us prepare for the challenges and opportunities that will present themselves in the coming years.

- How large is our community? Where does our population live?
- How do we engage in Jewish life and connect with Jewish community?
- How many of us live in poverty or have unmet financial needs?

- How many households in Jewish Baltimore include people with disabilities?
- How do we connect to Israel?

This study answers these and many other questions that are relevant to the present and future of our community.

We thank the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University for conducting this research. Their efforts have enabled us to tell the story of our community through a wealth of data and analyses. We look forward to the wide range of discussions, insights and initiatives that will emerge from our collective review of the information and help guide us as we begin the next decade.

**\*The Community Study data were collected and analyzed prior to the COVID-19 crisis that began in early 2020. New info is currently being compiled on the impact of the pandemic and will be available shortly.**

## Methodology

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. Our Baltimore Jewish Community Study is based on data collected through telephone and internet surveys from April to July 2019 from a total of 2,597 Jewish households residing for at least part of the year in The Associated's catchment area. The response rate for the primary sample was 35.4%.

Households invited for 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, researchers used additional information to develop the estimates of population size and characteristics reported in this study.

The population size and basic demographic characteristics were estimated using an innovative enhancement of the traditional random

digit dial survey method. This newer method relies on a synthesis of national surveys, conducted by government agencies and other organizations, that include information about religion. The synthesis combined data from hundreds of surveys and used information collected from Baltimore residents to estimate the Jewish population in the region.

In all studies of members 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, all results were validated 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.

## The center of Jewish Baltimore remains constant while our borders continue to expand.

The size of our community has experienced modest growth over the past decade (an increase of 11% in Jewish households and 4% in Jewish individuals since 2010\*). As we grow and shift, more of us are moving downtown and along I-83 to Cockeysville.

**Challenge for the Future: How can we support Jewish life across all of Baltimore?**

95,400 Jews

(74,900 Adults & 20,500 children)

46,700 households

57%

of Jewish individuals live in the Jewish hub of Baltimore

(Pikesville, Park Heights, Mount Washington, Owings Mills and Reisterstown)

29%

of people live along I-83 from downtown to Cockeysville

(Roland Park/Guilford/Midtown, Towson/Lutherville/Timonium, Downtown)

60%

of young adults (18-34) live in Baltimore City

\*Harford County was added in 2020

## Our Jewish family is changing.

We are raising families that are increasingly diverse, constantly evolving and more likely to identify as Secular or Just Jewish.

**Challenge for the Future: How do we make Jewish life in Baltimore inclusive and welcoming for all?**

39%

of Jewish adults in Baltimore identify themselves as being Secular or Just Jewish

A 12% growth since 2010

8%

of Jewish adults identify as people of color

21%

of Jewish adults in our community identify as Orthodox, which is more than other cities

45%

of married couples in Jewish households are intermarried

10%

of Jewish Households have someone who identifies as LGBTQ+

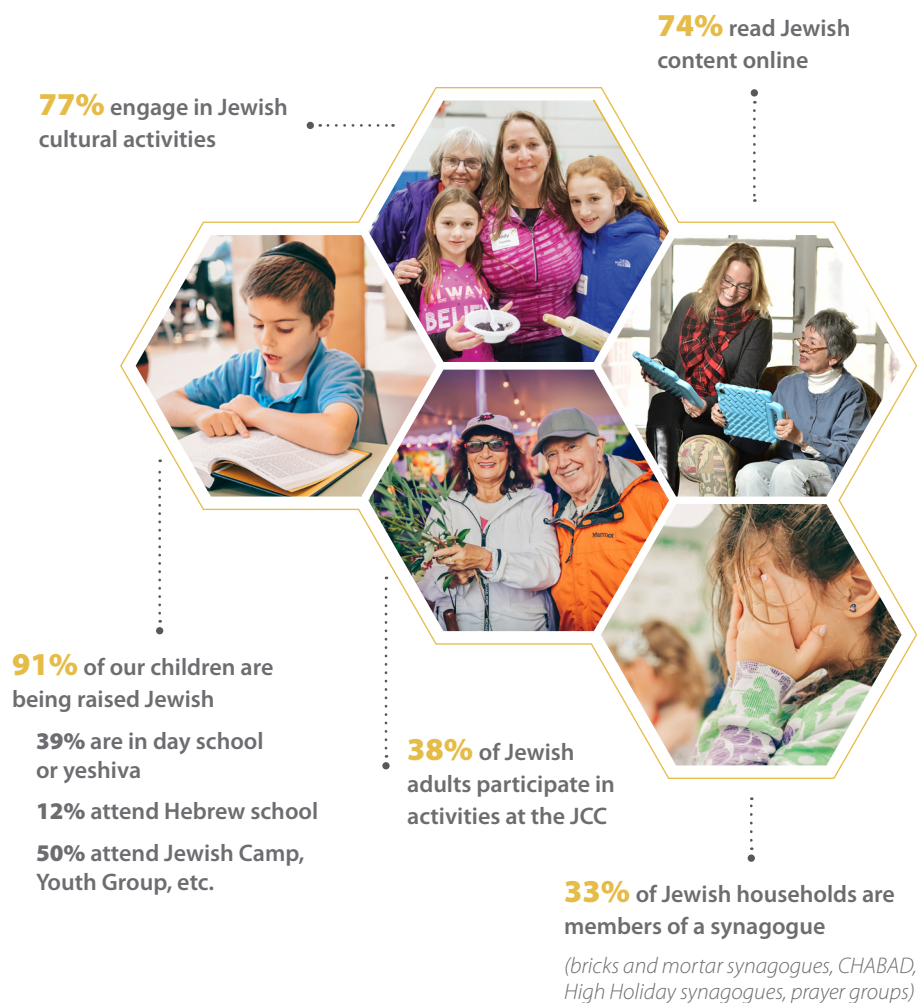




## Community members engage in Jewish life in a variety of ways.

From formal to informal education, from synagogue services to cultural events and beyond, Greater Baltimore offers a wide range of opportunities to participate in Jewish life.

**Challenge for the Future: How do we ensure that Jewish life is meaningful for the many different people in Jewish Greater Baltimore?**



## Many young adults are philanthropic and involved while others have yet to participate.

This demographic has the highest rates of participation in Jewish organizational programs and is more likely to volunteer their time than all other adults.

**Challenge for the Future: How can we continue to enhance the connections of young adults to Jewish life?**



## Many in our community are comfortable, but a large number of us are financially challenged.

Many of us are a paycheck away from financial insecurity and would need to borrow or sell something to pay for unexpected expenses.

**Challenge for the Future: How can we help?**

# 23%

of all Jewish households earn less than \$50,000 annually

# 25%

of households say they do not have savings to cover 3 months of expenses

# 38%

of households are not confident about their ability to save for retirement

\*The Community Study data were collected and analyzed prior to the COVID-19 crisis that began in early 2020. New info is currently being compiled on the impact of the pandemic and will be available shortly.



## Others are vulnerable in different ways.

Our core value is "*Kol Yisrael Areivim Ze BaZeh*." All Jews are responsible for each other.

**Challenge for the Future: How will we work together to help each other meet life's challenges?**

# 3 in 10

of households have at least one person who has a significant health issue, special need or disability

# 18,000

members of our community are 65 and older representing 19% of our population

# 13%

of households have at least one member serving as a primary caregiver

# 16%

of our population over age 65 is experiencing isolation



## Our community generally has positive views about Israel.

Positive connections are directly correlated to travel to Israel, where our community builds strong relationships. Yet, there are many who have different views about Israel.

**Challenge for the Future: How can we promote dialogue and build meaningful connections to Israel for more people?**

87%

of adults see Israel  
as a homeland for all Jews

59%

of adults have traveled  
to Israel at least once

(well above the national rate)

80%

of Jewish adults  
feel connected to Israel

(strongest connection among  
ages 65 and greater)

64%

of all adults, but only 55% of young  
adults, see Israel as a source of pride



## Concern about antisemitism reflects recent activity, but we are more concerned about national than local antisemitism.

This is our first Community Study to ask about antisemitism.

**Challenge for the Future: What can we do to continue to make Jewish Baltimore feel safe and secure?**

60%

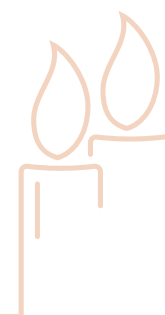
of Baltimore community members  
expressed concern about antisemitism  
either nationally or locally

59%

of Jewish adults are worried about  
antisemitism at the national level

26%

of Jewish adults are concerned  
about antisemitism locally



## Leadership

Martin S. Himeles, Jr.  
*Co-Chair, Community Study*

Mark D. Neumann  
*Co-Chair, Community Study*

Debra S. Weinberg  
*Chair of the Board*

Beth H. Goldsmith  
*Chair-Elect*

Marc B. Terrill  
*President*

Community Study Sponsor

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