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Building Resilient Jewish Communities:
A Jewish Response to the Coronavirus Crisis

Building Resilient Jewish Communities:

Baltimore Key Findings

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected members of Jewish communities around the world. In addition to the health effects experienced by many, nearly everyone has felt significant disruption to their personal, social, and economic lives. The pandemic is, thus, a crisis for the community as well as for individuals and families. For the Jewish community, whose core values promote a sense of responsibility for one another, COVID presents a challenge to adapt and respond to changing needs. How the Jewish community responds will depend on understanding the specific ways in which the crisis has affected its members. This report, based on a survey of Baltimore area Jewish adults in May and June 2020, identifies some of the ways the community has been affected by COVID and aims to facilitate communal planning during and beyond the COVID pandemic.

The results of this study allow us to compare various populations, for example, those with different pre-crisis levels of economic security and different levels of engagement with Jewish institutions. Because our respondents are drawn from an incomplete sample of the Baltimore Jewish community (e.g., our sample includes a larger proportion of synagogue members, as well as Federation donors), the study's strength is in highlighting the differences between sub-groups and the ways in which these sub-groups have coped and/or been challenged by the crisis. One should be cautious in using the point estimates of any particular finding.

This report focuses on the impact of the crisis on the financial well-being and emotional health of respondents, and the roles Jewish institutions have played during the crisis. These findings are a subset of those drawn from a relatively long survey. We emphasize those that have direct implications for short- and medium-term planning by The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and other communal organizations.

The key findings presented in this report respond to the research questions that drove this study: How were members of the Jewish community affected by the pandemic, and who was most affected? How did Jewish organizations respond to the crisis? How did Judaism and online Jewish life help members of the Jewish community cope emotionally with pandemic challenges? In addition to the findings in this report, detailed responses to survey questions broken down by demographic subgroups are available in a separate topline report.

Summary

Financial Well-being

- Respondents in more difficult financial situations prior to the crisis were more likely to have their financial situation worsen because of the pandemic.
- Although the vast majority of respondents reported that they had at least “enough” money prior to the crisis, older adults tended to be significantly better off financially than younger adults.
- Younger respondents were more likely to be concerned about their immediate needs, even accounting for different levels of confidence that life would “return to normal.”

Coping and Emotional Health

- Younger adults (ages 18-34) had more trouble coping with the psychological effects of the pandemic than older adults, despite having similar or greater social support.
- Respondents whose financial situations were worse prior to the pandemic had a harder time coping emotionally and tended to have less support than more affluent respondents.
- Adults under age 35 or ages 75 and older had the greatest need for any services such as help obtaining food or other necessities, Meals on Wheels, home health care, mental health services, vocational services, medical care, and/or help obtaining public benefits.
- Younger adults and those in the most difficult financial situations had worse psychological outcomes, with the worst outcomes for respondents who were both young *and* lacked sufficient financial resources prior to the pandemic.
- Those whose work hours increased, and those whose jobs were most difficult to perform from home, experienced the most job stress.

Relationships with Jewish Organizations

- Respondents who were highly engaged in Jewish communal life prior to the pandemic were more likely to receive all types of contact from Jewish organizations than those who were less engaged. Regardless of level of engagement, younger respondents were more likely to be contacted than were older respondents, except to ask how they were doing.
- Congregants who prior to the pandemic attended religious services frequently (monthly or more often) were more likely to receive all types of contacts from their synagogues than those who did not attend services or attended services only occasionally.
- Synagogue members who were contacted by their congregations during the pandemic gave higher ratings to their synagogue’s performance and were more aware of their synagogue’s response than synagogue members who were not contacted.

Charitable Support for Jewish Organizations

- Most respondents expected to increase (13%) or maintain (60%) the amount they give to Jewish causes. Those who were financially well-off prior to the pandemic were more likely to increase or maintain their levels of Jewish giving than those who were not.
- Interest in Jewish causes remained stable for past Federation donors but decreased slightly for those who donated to other Jewish organizations or did not donate to any Jewish organizations in 2019.

Online Jewish Life

- Online Jewish life had the greatest appeal for those who were engaged in Jewish life prior to the pandemic and was critical in maintaining Jewish connections in the absence of in-person activities.
- Among respondents whose Jewish engagement was similar prior to the pandemic, younger adults were more likely to be active in online Jewish life than were older adults.
- Among those with medium and high levels of Jewish communal engagement, online programs were most likely to be popular, followed by religious services.
- Among those with medium and high levels of engagement prior to the pandemic, those with high levels of participation in online Jewish life during the crisis were most likely to report that they valued it in a variety of ways and expected to continue to use it.
- Online Judaism was more effective at connecting respondents to programs and resources than to other people.
- Those who participated more actively in online Jewish life were more likely to feel that Judaism helped them cope emotionally during the crisis.
  For respondents with medium and high levels of Jewish engagement prior to the crisis, online Jewish life helped them to maintain connections to the Jewish community.

Methodological Notes

- This report is based on data from 1,325 respondents collected online between May 21 and June 23, 2020. Respondents are representative of Jewish adults known to selected organizations and not of the whole community.
- Throughout this report, "level of Jewish communal engagement" refers to Jewish engagement prior to the pandemic and includes organization member, donor to Jewish charity, program participation, and Jewish volunteering. "Level of Jewish ritual engagement" refers to ritual behavior prior to the crisis and includes religious service attendance, Shabbat observance, and seder participation.
- Study results appear either as proportions or as predicted probabilities. Each table indicates which type of measure is used.
- Proportions of single variables or in crosstabs show weighted proportions of respondents who responded to survey questions.
- Predicted probabilities are weighted estimates of the likelihood of a particular response given specific values of other variables, as estimated using a statistical model. When predicted probabilities are reported, they should be understood as the likelihood of a particular response given a set of conditions (such as age and financial status), rather than the actual responses of survey respondents. When we estimate predicted probabilities, we control for values of other variables that are not shown in the table. The full models with all control variables appear in the Appendix.
- We present predicted probabilities for selected scenarios that are intended to illustrate key findings. Not all combinations of variables are shown.
- A brief Methodological Appendix appears at the end of this report. An Appendix showing details of the statistical models is available in a separate document.

Report Findings

1. Financial Well-being

Respondents in more difficult financial situations prior to the crisis were more likely to have their financial situation worsen. Not surprisingly, these individuals were more worried about their financial future and more likely to need health or human service assistance.

Among all respondents, 26% reported that their financial situation worsened, and three quarters (72%) were worried about at least some aspect of their financial future (Table 1.1). Financial worries included affording basic living expenses, affording testing or treatment for COVID-19, maintaining accustomed standard of living, and having enough money for retirement. Among those who did not have enough money prior to the pandemic, financial worries were significantly worse than for those who had more resources to begin with.

Table 1.1. Financial situation (proportions)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Financial situation worsened	Any financial worry	Very worried about finances	Somewhat or very worried about losing job	Needed any services
Overall	26	72	13	18	14
Not enough money	35	99	48	31	32
Enough money	28	88	16	19	16
A little extra money	26	77	6	20	9
Well-off	23	42	2	10	9

Although the vast majority of respondents of all ages reported they had at least "enough" money, older adults tended to be significantly better off financially than younger adults (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2. Pre-pandemic financial situation by age (proportions)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	18-34	35-49	50-64	65-74	75+	Overall
Not enough money	19	25	14	5	8	13
Enough money	39	34	26	26	27	29
A little extra money	33	24	31	27	23	28
Well-off	9	17	28	42	42	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Regardless of their household structure, financial situations, and employment status, **younger respondents were more likely to be concerned about their immediate needs, even accounting for different levels of confidence that life would "return to normal"** (Table 1.3). Twenty-nine percent of adults ages 18-34 who were very confident life would return to normal were likely to be somewhat or very worried about affording basic living experiences or maintaining their standard of living. This figure compares to 11% of adults ages 75 and older and 18% of adults ages

50-64 who shared the same outlook on the future. Among those who were less confident about a return to normal, about half (49%) of adults ages 18-34 were likely to be somewhat or very worried about their immediate financial needs compared to 33% of adults ages 50-64 and 23% of those ages 75 and older.

Table 1.3. Future financial worries by confidence of "return to normalcy" and age (predicted probabilities)

Confident of lives getting "back to normal"	Confident of lives getting "back to normal"	Somewhat or very worried
Very much	18-34	29
	50-64	18
	75 +	11
Less confident	18-34	49
	50-64	33
	75 +	23

2. Coping and Emotional Health

Consistent with research on Americans' responses to the pandemic, **younger respondents had more trouble coping with the psychological effects of the pandemic, despite having similar or greater social support than older adults. Similarly, respondents whose financial situations were worse prior to the pandemic had a harder time coping with challenges related to the crisis and tended to have less social support than respondents who were more affluent.**

Adults under age 35 and those ages 75 and older had the greatest need for any services, such as help obtaining food or other necessities, Meals on Wheels, home health care, mental health services, vocational services, medical care, and/or help obtaining public benefits. Although not enough respondents needed any one of these services to enable a breakdown by age, research on the general US population suggests that young adults are in greatest need of mental health services, vocational services, and help accessing public benefits, whereas older adults are in greater need of other services.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show psychological outcomes, service need, and available social support by age and pre-pandemic financial situation, respectively.

Table 2.1. Psychological outcomes, service need, and social support by age (proportions)

Age	Not coping well	Lonely	Emotional difficulties	Need any services	Adequate support network	In contact with others
Overall	8	37	29	14	51	96
18-34	11	52	55	20	63	96
35-49	10	35	43	11	59	95
50-64	9	40	31	12	46	95
65-74	4	34	18	9	46	97
75+	6	34	16	23	50	98

Not coping well: Coping not at all or not too well
Lonely: Felt lonely in past week sometimes, often, or all the time
Emotional difficulties: Emotional or mental difficulties hurt ability to live day-to-day life in past week sometimes, often, or all the time
Adequate support network: Fair number or a lot of people you can rely on
In contact with others: In contact with family and friends not living with you sometimes or often in past week

Table 2.2. Psychological outcomes, service need, and social support by pre-pandemic financial situation (proportions)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Not coping well	Lonely	Emotional difficulties	Need any services	Adequate support network	In contact with others
Overall	8	37	29	14	51	96
Not enough money	15	48	51	32	41	95
Enough money	9	46	33	16	44	96
A little extra	7	39	32	9	55	95
Well-off	3	24	14	9	56	97

Not coping well: Coping not at all or not too well
Lonely: Felt lonely in past week sometimes, often, or all the time
Emotional difficulties: Emotional or mental difficulties hurt ability to live day-to-day life in past week sometimes, often, or all the time
Adequate support network: Fair number or a lot of people you can rely on
In contact with others: In contact with family and friends not living with you sometimes or often in past week

Younger adults, especially those confronting difficult financial situations prior to the pandemic, tended to suffer most emotionally during the crisis. This association existed despite younger adults having as many or more sources of social support than older adults. Respondents with few financial resources were likely to have fewer sources of social support and experience greater emotional strain than respondents who were more affluent. Table 2.3 illustrates the outcomes for age and financial status.

Table 2.3. Psychological outcomes and support by age and financial status (predicted probabilities)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Age	Not coping well	Lonely	Emotional difficulties	Need any services	Adequate support network	In contact with others
Not enough money	18-34	16	62	59	27	43	96
	50-64	9	52	40	28	50	96
	75+	5	46	15	29	25	96
Well-off	18-34	7	32	44	6	67	95
	50-64	4	29	22	6	55	97
	75+	2	15	7	6	47	97

Not coping well: Coping not at all or not too well
Lonely: Felt lonely in past week sometimes, often, or all the time
Emotional difficulties: Emotional or mental difficulties hurt ability to live day-to-day life in past week sometimes, often, or all the time
Adequate support network: Fair number or a lot of people you can rely on
In contact with others: In contact with family and friends not living with you sometimes or often in past week

Job Stress

Among those who were employed at the time of the survey, 61% reported feeling more stress in their work, 26% reported that their stress level had not changed much, and 13% reported less stress in their job, compared to the time before the crisis (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4. Job stress and challenges (proportions)

New feelings of stress at work	%
Less stress	13
Hasn't changed much	26
More stress	61
Total work hours increased	
Yes	12
No	88
Difficulty of working from home	
Relatively easy	34
Can be done with some challenges	38
Difficult, but possible	15
Impossible	12
Not sure	1

Respondents whose work hours increased, and those whose jobs were most difficult to do from home, experienced the most job stress. While only 12% of those employed reported increased hours, 80% of those individuals reported experiencing more stress. Comparatively, 59% of respondents whose hours stayed the same felt more stressed by their jobs. Similarly, people whose jobs were "relatively easy" to do from home felt less stress than others, regardless of whether or not they started working from home due to the pandemic.

Regardless of changes to respondents' work hours and job settings, work stress increased for the majority of respondents. Increase in job stress was highest among those who encountered an increase in work hours and whose jobs were impossible to do from home (88%) (Table 2.5). Among those whose work hours stayed the same, those whose work was impossible to do from home were more likely to report a substantially larger increase in job stress (74%), compared to those whose job was relatively easy to do from home (51%).

Table 2.5. Job stress by increase in work hours and ease of working from home (predicted probabilities)

Change in hours	Ease of work from home	More job stress
Hours increased	Relatively easy	72
	Impossible	88
Hours same	Relatively easy	51
	Impossible	74

Respondents who described their jobs as "careers" experienced more stress than those who considered their jobs just as "a way to get by." Eighty-four percent of workers described their jobs as a career; among them, 63% felt more job stress, compared to 48% of people whose jobs were not careers. Business owners and the self-employed did not tend to experience stress differently than regular employees.

Those whose financial situation became worse during the pandemic reported higher levels of stress. Respondents worried about losing their jobs experienced more stress than those who were not concerned about job loss. After accounting for change in work hours and work at home status, "essential workers" did not experience greater stress than other workers.

3. Relationships with Jewish Organizations

Jewish organizations and synagogues reached out to community members by offering assistance, checking in on how they were doing, inviting them to online programs or to volunteer, and by asking for donations. In all, 28% of Jewish adults were contacted by both a Jewish organization and by a synagogue, 23% were only contacted by a synagogue where they were a member, and 17% by a Jewish organization but not by a synagogue. Notably, 32% of respondents were not contacted by any Jewish organization since the start of the crisis (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Contacts with Jewish institutions by type of contact and organization (proportions)

% who received this contact from…	Any type of contact	Offer of assistance	Ask how you were doing	Invite to program	Invite to volunteer	Ask for donation
Synagogue and Jewish organization	28	5	8	14	5	11
Synagogue only	23	17	31	21	12	7
Jewish organization only	17	6	6	11	7	19
% who were not contacted	32	72	55	54	76	63
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Synagogue contact only asked of synagogue members

Donors to the Federation were more likely to be contacted by Jewish organizations and by the Federation than other respondents. Respondents who participated frequently in programs or activities sponsored by Jewish organizations prior to the crisis were more likely to be contacted by Jewish organizations and by the Federation than people who did not participate or participated only occasionally prior to the pandemic (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Contact with Jewish organizations by donor status and frequency of program attendance prior to the crisis (proportions)

	Any type of contact	Offer of assistance	Ask how you were doing	Invite to program	Invite to volunteer	Ask for donation
Overall	45	11	14	26	12	30
2019 donations						
Did not donate to Jewish org.	20	7	7	13	5	10
Donated to Jewish org., not to Federation	36	9	10	20	8	22
Donated to Federation	66	15	20	37	21	47
Frequency of program attendance						
Never	19	4	3	5	2	13
Occasionally	39	9	12	21	10	25
Monthly	60	14	18	35	18	40
Weekly	69	18	29	50	24	48

Respondents who were highly engaged in Jewish communal life prior to the pandemic were more likely to receive all types of contact from Jewish organizations than those who were less engaged. Regardless of level of engagement, younger people were more likely to be contacted than were older people, except for general welfare checks (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3. Type of contact with Jewish organizations by communal engagement and age (predicted probabilities)

Communal engagement before	Age	Any type of contact	Offer of assistance	Ask how you were doing	Invite to program	Invite to volunteer	Ask for donation
Low	35-49	23	7	7	15	6	14
	65-74	18	5	7	9	2	10
Medium	35-49	48	12	12	29	17	31
	65-74	40	8	12	19	5	24
High	35-49	73	20	21	49	39	56
	65-74	66	13	21	36	15	47

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents rated the Federation's response to the coronavirus as positive, 8% of the respondents rated the response as just fair or poor, and an additional 64% did not know how to respond to the question.

Donors to the Federation were more likely to be aware of the Federation's response to the pandemic and rate it favorably compared to non-donors. Respondents who were contacted by a Jewish organization were more likely to rate the Federation response to the pandemic more favorably than those who were not contacted (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Rating of Federation response to pandemic by Jewish donors and contact (proportions)

	Poor / Just fair	Good / excellent	Don't know
Overall	8	28	64
2019 donations			
Did not donate to Jewish org.	4	21	74
Donated to Jewish org., not to Federation	10	15	76
Donated to Federation	8	44	48
Was contacted by a Jewish organization			
No	9	15	76
Yes	7	42	51

Synagogues and Congregations

Almost 82% of survey respondents who were members of Jewish congregations were contacted by their congregations during the coronavirus pandemic (Table 3.5). Sixty-one percent of respondents were personally contacted to ask how they were doing, 35% were offered (or received) assistance, 56% were invited to participate in programs, 26% were invited to volunteer, and 28% were contacted for donations.

Congregants who prior to the pandemic attended religious services frequently (monthly or more often) were more likely to receive all types of contact from their synagogues than those who did not attended services or attend them only occasionally.

Table 3.5. Contacted by synagogues by attendance at services prior to the pandemic (proportion of synagogue members)

	Any type of contact	Offer assistance	Ask how you were doing	Invite to program	Invite to volunteer	Ask for donation
Overall	82	35	61	56	26	28
Attendance at services prior to crisis						
Occasionally or less	75	30	49	47	20	21
Monthly	85	37	65	61	28	30
Weekly	89	39	75	66	34	39

The majority of synagogue members rated the response of the congregation as positive, including 29% as good and 55% as excellent. Seven percent of the respondents rated the congregation's response as just fair or poor, and an additional 9% did not know how to respond to the question.

Synagogue members who were contacted by their congregations during the pandemic gave higher ratings to their synagogue's performance and were more aware of the synagogue response than synagogue members that were not contacted. Congregants who attended services frequently prior to the pandemic were more aware of the synagogue response to the crisis and rated the synagogue performance higher compared to those who attended services less frequently (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6. Rating of congregations' response to pandemic by contact with congregation and attendance at services prior to the crisis (proportion of synagogue members)

	Poor / Just fair	Good	Excellent	Don't know
Overall	7	29	55	9
Contact with congregation				
No contact	13	25	30	32
Yes-any contact	6	30	61	4
Attendance at services prior to crisis				
Never or occasionally	7	29	47	17
Monthly or weekly	8	29	60	3

4. Charitable Support for Jewish Organizations

Most respondents expected to increase (13%) or maintain (60%) the amount they give to Jewish causes (Table 4.1). Among the 80% of respondents who donated to a Jewish cause in 2019, 15% planned to increase their Jewish giving, and 61% planned to keep it the same. Even among the 20% who did not donate to Jewish causes in 2019, there were some who were considering donating this year (5% plan to, 39% are unsure).

Table 4.1. Plans to change Jewish giving in 2020, by Jewish donations in 2019 (proportions)

	Increase	Maintain	Decrease	Unsure
Overall	13	60	11	17
Donated to Jewish org. in 2019	15	61	14	11
Did not donate to Jewish org. in 2019	5	56	0	39

Those who were well-off prior to the pandemic were likely to increase or maintain their levels of Jewish giving. Nineteen percent of 2019 donors who were well-off intended to increase their Jewish giving, compared to 6% of 2019 donors who did not have enough money (Table 4.2). The majority of the well-off (86%) donated to a Jewish organization in 2019. Respondents whose financial situations either stayed the same or improved since the start of the pandemic were more likely to increase or maintain their Jewish giving.

Table 4.2. Jewish donations in 2019 and plans for 2020, by financial situation, among donors (proportions)

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Donated to Jewish org. in 2019	2020 Increase	2020 Maintain	2020 Decrease	2020 Unsure
Not enough money	64	6	45	36	13
Enough money	80	14	55	17	15
A little extra money	80	14	63	11	13
Well-off	86	19	69	7	5

For most individuals, expected changes to Jewish giving were similar to plans for non-Jewish giving. For example, 49% of those who planned to increase their non-Jewish giving also expected to increase their Jewish giving, and 84% of those who planned to maintain their non-Jewish giving expected to maintain their Jewish giving (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Jewish versus non-Jewish giving (proportions)

	Plan to change Jewish giving in 2020			
Plans to change non-Jewish giving	Increase	Maintain	Decrease	Unsure
Increase	49	40	5	6
Maintain	9	84	3	4
Decrease	4	17	74	6
Unsure	3	18	3	76

Respondents were more likely to increase their Jewish giving if they received a request for donations from a Jewish organization (Table 4.4). For those who were contacted by a synagogue or Jewish organization, 22% planned to increase their Jewish giving. Among those who were not contacted, only 7% planned to increase their Jewish giving.

Table 4.4. Plans to increase or maintain Jewish giving by request for donation (proportions)

	Plan to change Jewish giving in 2020			
Received request for donation from Jewish org. or synagogue	Increase	Maintain	Decrease	Unsure
Yes	22	57	10	11
No	7	61	11	20

Issues of Interest

The survey asked respondents for up to three causes they cared most about, both before the pandemic and during it. Interest in causes related to social justice, human service needs, politics, and health care and research increased during the pandemic (Table 4.5). Interest in the environment and climate change, arts and culture, antisemitism, Jewish life, and Israel decreased.

Table 4.5. Interest in selected causes before and during pandemic (proportions)

	Top cause before	Top cause now	Change
Social justice	36	39	+3
Human service needs	38	39	+1
Politics	30	35	+5
Environment & climate change	30	26	-4
Health care & research	31	38	+7
Arts & culture	18	12	-6
Any Jewish cause	57	55	-2
Antisemitism	30	29	-1
Jewish life	29	27	-2
Israel	27	25	-2

Interest in Jewish causes remained stable for past Federation donors but decreased slightly for those who donated to other Jewish organizations or did not donate to any Jewish organizations in 2019 (Table 4.6). Overall interest in one of the three Jewish causes was greatest among those who donated to the Federation in 2019. Among those who donated to the Federation in 2019, 66% were likely to be interested in a Jewish cause before the pandemic and 66% remained interested now. Twenty-eight percent of respondents who did not donate to any Jewish organization in 2019 were likely to be interested in Jewish causes now, down 2% from before the pandemic.

Table 4.6. Interest in Jewish causes among donors (predicted probabilities)

Donor in 2019	Interest Jewish cause before	Interest Jewish cause now	Change
Did not donate to Jewish org.	30	28	-2
Donated to Jewish org., not Federation	59	57	-2
Donated to Federation	66	66	0

Older respondents were likely to care more about antisemitism, but younger respondents were likely to care more about Jewish life specifically. Political moderates and conservatives were more likely to be interested in each of the three Jewish causes than were liberals.

Among those who donated to the Federation in 2019, the top concerns were human services and Jewish life (Table 4.7). In contrast, among those who made no donations to Jewish organizations, top concerns were social justice, health care, and human service needs.

Table 4.7. Interest in selected causes by 2019 donor status (predicted probability)

Cause	Did not donate to Jewish org.	Donated to Jewish org., not to Federation	Donated to Federation
Social justice	52	40	37
Human service needs	44	37	43
Politics	38	36	33
Environment & climate change	39	23	21
Health care & research	46	39	33
Arts & culture	13	11	10
Any Jewish cause	28	57	66
Antisemitism	19	33	30
Jewish life	5	28	40
Israel	12	27	30

5. Online Jewish Life

About four-in-five Jewish adults participated in some form of online Jewish life in the past month including online religious services, Jewish programs, Jewish information, and Jewish social media, and/or a virtual Passover seder. Thirty-two percent of Jewish adults participated regularly in many forms of online Jewish life, and another 9% reported engaging in all of these activities frequently (Table 5.1). Throughout this report, those in the high and maximum category of online participation are referred to as "high" users.

Online Jewish life had the greatest appeal for those who were engaged in Jewish life prior to the pandemic and served as a critical link to maintaining Jewish connections in the absence of in-person activities. Respondents who were most engaged in Jewish communal life (organization and synagogue members, program participants, donors) and those immersed in ritual life (attending religious services or celebrating Shabbat at home) participated in all forms of online Jewish life more regularly than those who were less engaged in Jewish communal life.

Table 5.1. Participation in online Jewish life by prior Jewish engagement (proportions)

	Low	Medium	High	Maximum	Total
Overall	20	39	32	9	100
Communal Involvement					
Low	45	49	5	1	100
Med	9	52	36	3	100
High	1	19	54	25	100
Ritual Involvement					
Low	58	37	4	1	100
Med	13	55	29	3	100
High	3	22	53	22	100

Among respondents whose Jewish engagement was similar prior to the pandemic, **younger adults were more likely to be active in online Jewish life than were older adults** (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Online Jewish life by prior Jewish engagement and age (predicted probabilities)

Jewish engagement before	Age	Any online participation	High online participation
Low	18-34	75	14
Low	35-49	64	9
Low	50-64	57	8
Low	65-64	46	6
Low	75+	40	5
Medium	18-34	97	56
Medium	35-49	95	47
Medium	50-64	92	40
Medium	65-64	87	29
Medium	75+	87	30
High	18-34	99	85
High	35-49	99	85
High	50-64	99	79
High	65-64	99	81
High	75+	98	76

Participation in specific types of Jewish online activities varied by levels of prior Jewish engagement and levels of online activity. Among those with medium and high levels of Jewish communal engagement, **online programs were most likely to be popular, followed by services** (Table 5.3). Even for those with low levels of Jewish engagement prior to the pandemic, participation in online seders was likely to be relatively high.

Table 5.3. Frequent participation in types of online activities by prior Jewish engagement and online use (predicted probabilities)

Jewish engagement before	Online use	Services	Programs	Social Media	Information	Virtual Seder
Low	Low	0	0	0	3	21
Low	Medium	8	5	4	13	47
Low	High	46	49	44	57	60
Medium	Low	1	1	0	2	30
Medium	Medium	11	15	7	12	45
Medium	High	59	72	49	52	61
High	Low	2	3	1	1	35
High	Medium	13	32	9	14	49
High	High	71	90	69	64	61

Because online services were not available to the Orthodox community during the pandemic for reasons of *halacha*, Orthodox Jews were a notable exception to online service participation (not shown in table). This fact explains the more rapid reopening of in-person services by Orthodox synagogues. Conservative and Reform Jews were more likely to attend online services than Jews with no denominational affiliation. There were few other denominational differences in online Jewish life.

Perception of Value

Among those with medium and high levels of engagement prior to the pandemic, **those who participated in high levels of online Jewish life were most likely to report that they valued it in a variety of ways and expected to continue to use it** (Table 5.4). Those who participated in online Jewish life less often were less likely to find it valuable.

Table 5.4. Views on online activity by online use (predicted probabilities)

Online use	Helped me feel connected	Expect to use online resources in future	Will stay connected to virtual community
Low	23	18	17
Medium	52	50	40
High	83	85	73

Online Judaism was more effective at connecting people to programs and resources than to other people. Regardless of prior Jewish engagement and online use, the greatest value in online life was in access to new programs, followed by new resources (Table 5.5). Fewer respondents were likely to connect with new people or communities online.

Table 5.5. Exposure to new online activities by online use (predicted probabilities)

Online use	New programs	New resources	New community	New people
Low	8	4	2	0
Medium	21	10	5	3
High	56	34	21	15

Jewish Connections

For respondents with medium and high levels of Jewish engagement prior to the pandemic, **those who participated more actively in online Jewish life were more likely to feel that Judaism helped them cope during the pandemic** (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6. Feeling that Judaism helps to cope with pandemic by prior ritual engagement and online use (predicted probabilities)

Prior ritual engagement	Online use	Not at all	Not too much	Somewhat	Very much
Low	Low	66	21	12	2
Low	Medium	42	29	25	4
Low	High	19	24	43	13
Medium	Low	47	27	22	4
Medium	Medium	26	28	37	9
Medium	High	10	17	47	26
High	Low	33	26	32	9
High	Medium	10	16	44	30
High	High	3	7	35	55

For respondents with medium and high levels of Jewish engagement prior to the pandemic, online Jewish life helped to maintain connections to the Jewish community. Those who were more active online were more likely to feel connected to the worldwide, local, and online Jewish communities (Table 5.7). In addition, respondents who were coping better with the pandemic were more likely to feel connected to the local and online Jewish communities.

Table 5.7. Connections to the Jewish world by online use and coping with pandemic (predicted probabilities)

		Connection to worldwide Jewish community		Connection to local Jewish community		Connection to online Jewish community	
Online use	Coping with pandemic	Somewhat	Very much	Somewhat	Very much	Somewhat	Very much
Medium	Not well	31	25	27	18	12	3
Medium	Well	34	26	31	28	19	5
High	Not well	34	43	33	39	34	19
High	Well	26	62	24	65	38	30

Appendix: Methodology

Data for the BRJC survey of Baltimore were collected between May 21 and June 23, 2020. Participants received up to four email invitations for the survey and were invited to take the survey online. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Respondents were offered two incentive conditions. The majority of respondents who completed the survey were entered into a lottery for their choice of a $100 Amazon.com gift card or a donation to a charity designated by The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore. A smaller sample was offered a guaranteed incentive of $10 which they could receive as an Amazon.com gift card or donate to a charity designated by The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore. The survey instrument was developed for the BRJC project with slight modifications for each community.

Survey Sample

Federation and community organization lists were collected and de-duplicated based on email addresses. The resulting frame was stratified based on the source and characteristics of the lists. After households were de-duplicated, out-of-area addresses and non-valid email addresses were dropped. The resulting frame included 38,232 contacts.

From the full frame, a stratified random sample of 2,000 respondents was drawn into the guaranteed incentive condition. The remainder were assigned to the lottery condition.

Overall, 1,325 individuals screened into the survey, and 367 individuals screened out of the survey. Respondents screened in if they considered themselves Jewish and lived in the designated geographic area. The total response rate was 4.6% (AAPOR 4), and the cooperation rate was 20.8% (AAPOR 1).

Table A.1. Outcome rates (AAPOR)

	Total	Incentive	Lottery
Frame	38,232	2,000	36,232
Sample	38,232	2,000	36,232
Screened In	1,325	66	1,259
Screened Out	367	40	327
Response Rate 4	4.6%	5.5%	4.5%
Refusal Rate 2	16.5%	4.5%	17.2%
Cooperation Rate 1	20.8%	46.3%	20.0%
Contact Rate 2	21.3%	11.5%	21.9%

After completion of data collection, responses were weighted by strata so that the characteristics of the respondent sample would more closely approximate the original list characteristics.

The two incentive conditions were tested for nonresponse bias. While there were no substantive differences by financial situations, demographic characteristics, or experiences of COVID-19, respondents in the lottery condition were more involved with Jewish community life than respondents in the universal incentive condition.