

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



Why the 2020 Community Study?

- Provides a “broad stroke” portrait of our community
- Allows us to generalize beyond our own personal experience and people we know/engage
- Serves as a baseline for planning for the future, a benchmark to measure change
- Provides information to set priorities and strategic directions
- Today’s summary is only the beginning of learning, analyzing and acting

How the Community Study was Conducted

Research experts are **The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University** - in particular, **Dr. Leonard Saxe and Dr. Matthew Boxer.**

Survey was developed together with the Community Study Management Team and Task Force led by Martin S. Himeles, Jr. and Mark D. Neumann.

Community members were randomly selected to participate in telephone and internet surveys.

Data was supplemented with secondary sources in order to ensure that the study is representative of the entire community.

2,597 Completed Surveys



Our Eight Stories and Guiding Questions

1 • 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.

JEWISH BALTIMORE IS HOME TO 115,400 PEOPLE AND 46,700 HOUSEHOLDS

95,400 Jewish individuals:

74,900 adults and 20,500 children

4% increase in # of Jewish individuals since 2010

20,000 Non-Jewish individuals:

18,000 adults and 2,000 children

11% increase in # of Jewish households since 2010*

*Note: *Harford County was added in 2020*

We are a stable community.

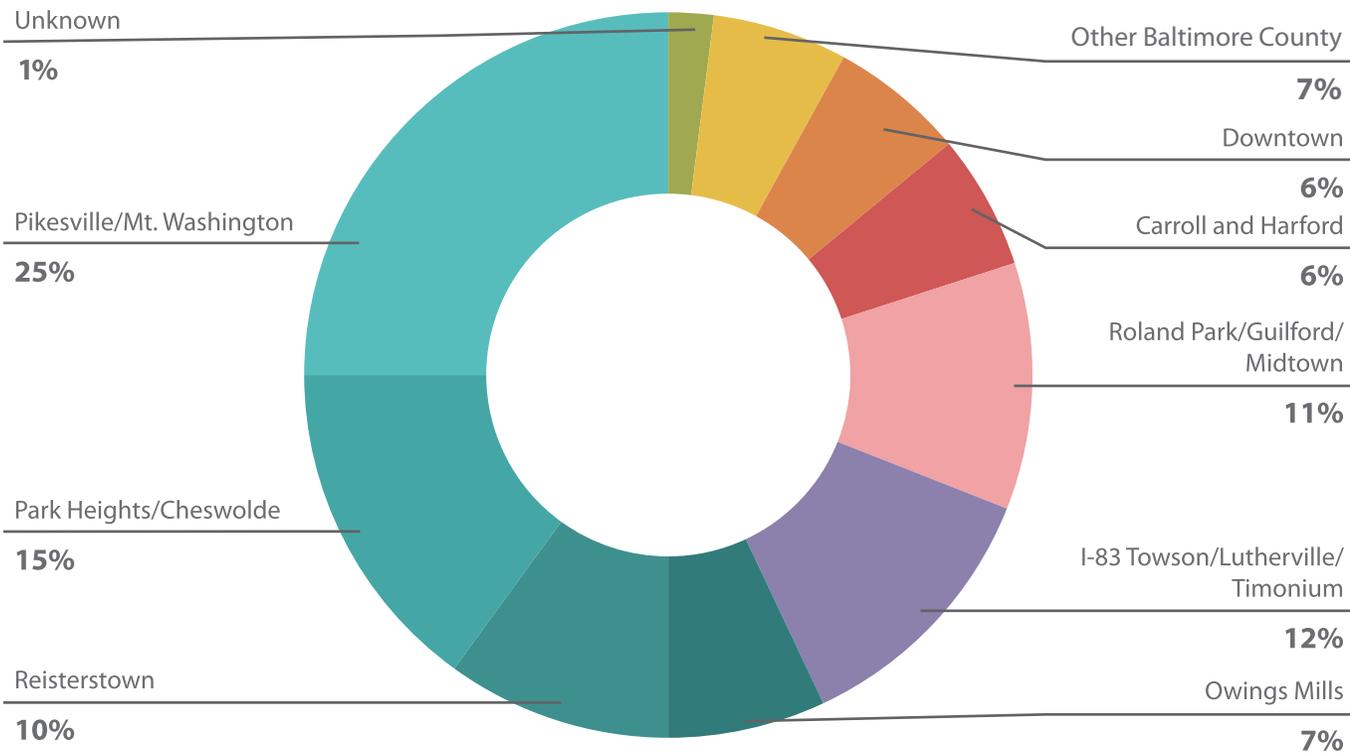
Baltimore Jews have been living in the area for an average of 34 years

45% of Jewish adults were raised in Baltimore

24% plan to move in the next 3 years, with a large majority planning to stay within the area



57% of Jewish individuals live in the Jewish hub* of Baltimore, while 29% now live in the I-83 corridor and city neighborhoods representing a 71% increase since 2010.



60% of young adults (18-34) live in Baltimore City

**Includes Park Heights, Pikesville, Owings Mills, Reisterstown*

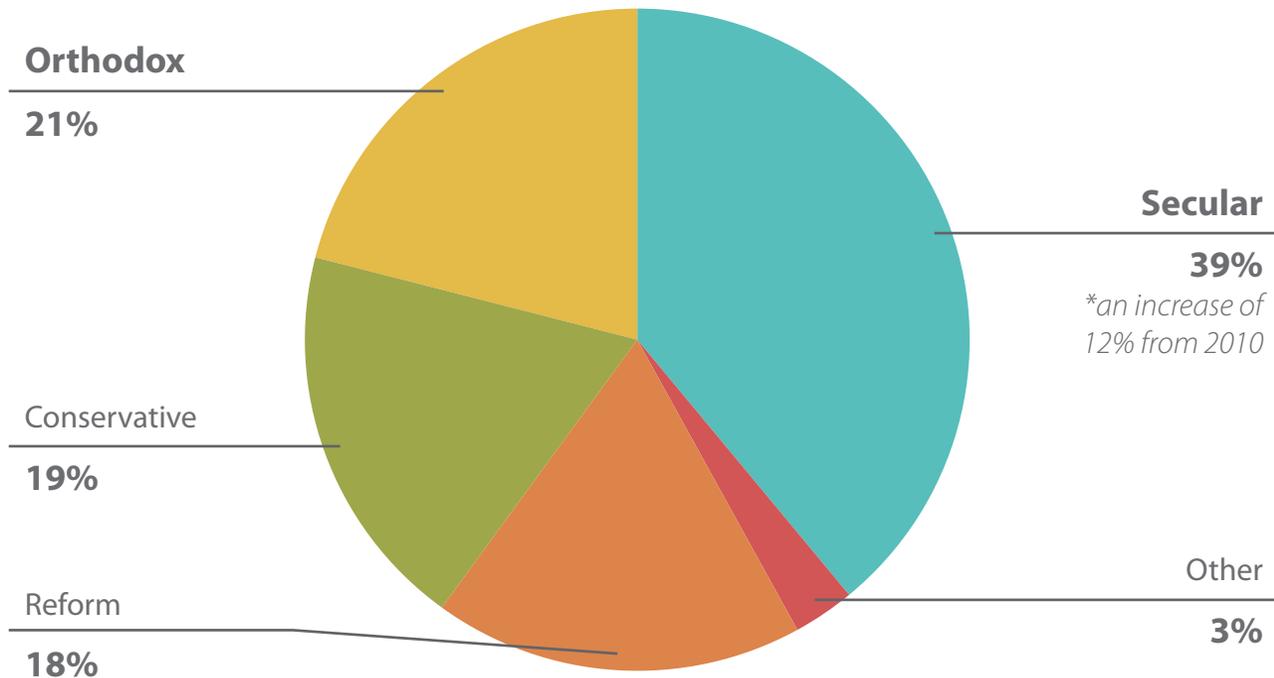
Note: Harford County was added in 2020

CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE:

How can we provide Jewish life
across all of Baltimore?

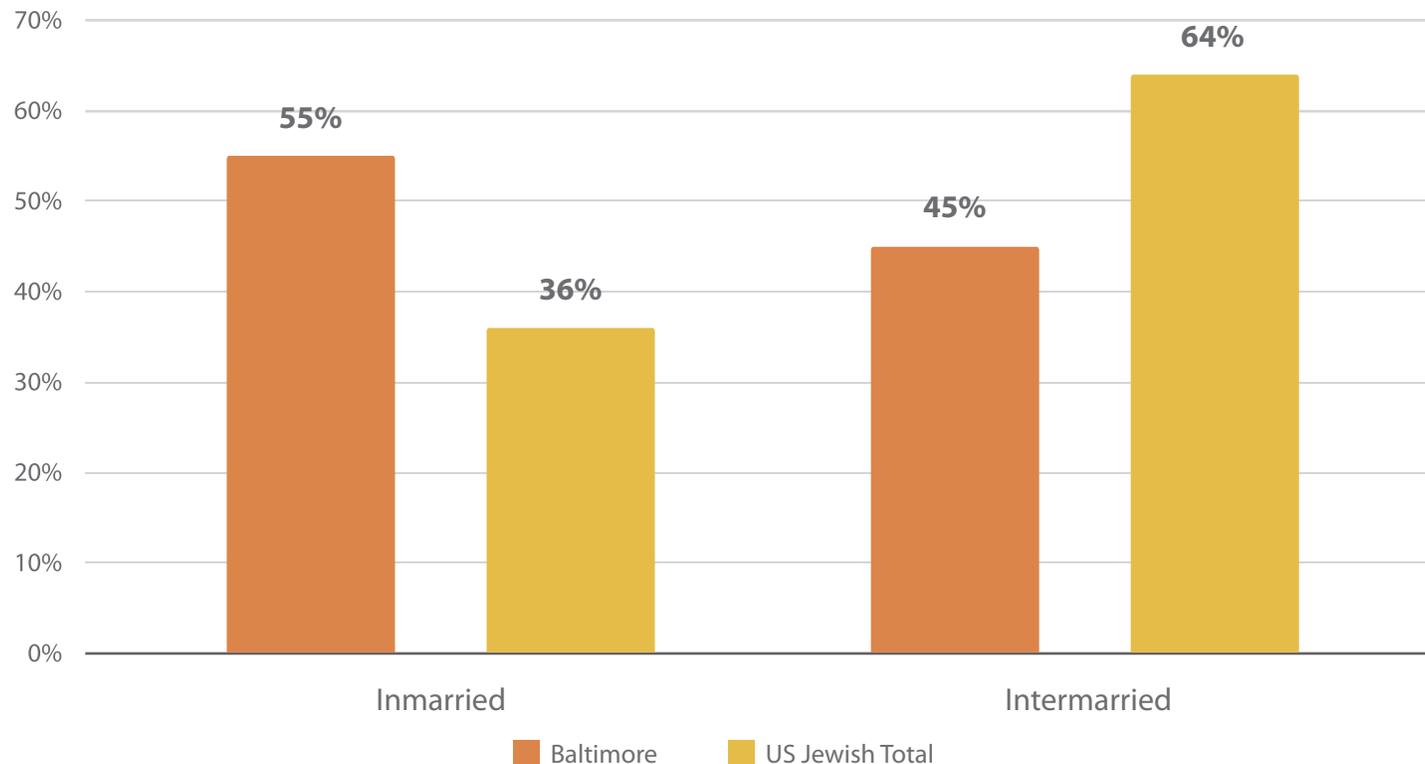
2. Our Jewish family is changing.

We are one of the largest Orthodox communities in the nation while 39% of Jewish adults in Baltimore identify as Secular or Just Jewish.



Baltimore's inmarriage rate is higher than the US Jewish total while our intermarriage rate is lower.

TYPE OF MARRIAGE



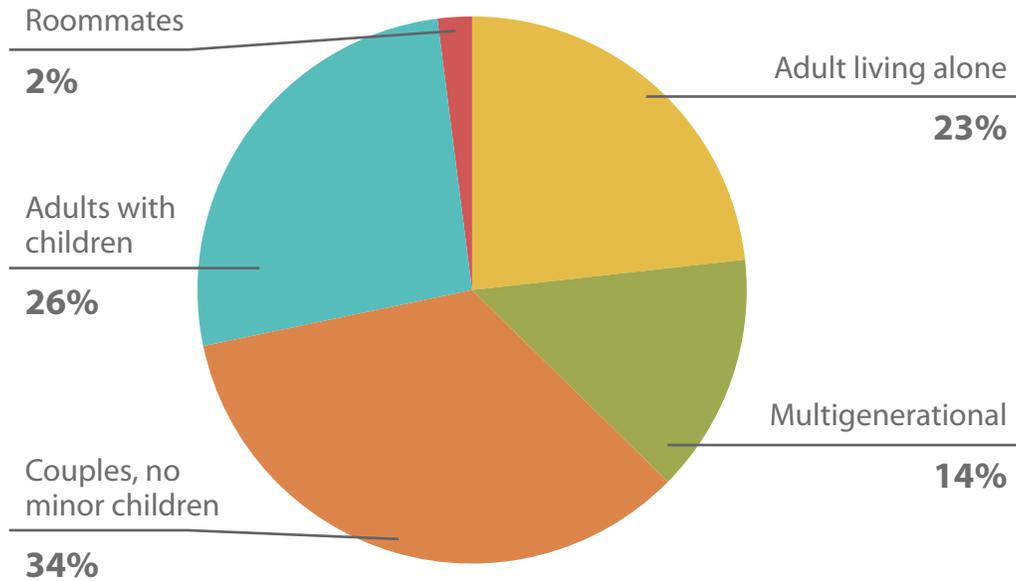
68% of households in Baltimore are comprised of married couples, compared to the US Jewish total at 51%.

Baltimore's largest age cohort of 50-64 is greater compared to the US Jewish community while our age cohort of 18-34 is smaller.

	Baltimore 2019	US Jewish Community
Age 0-17	22%	26%
Age 18-34	14%	21%
Age 35-49	18%	16%
Age 50-64	27%	20%
Age 65-79	16%	13%
Age 80+	3%	5%

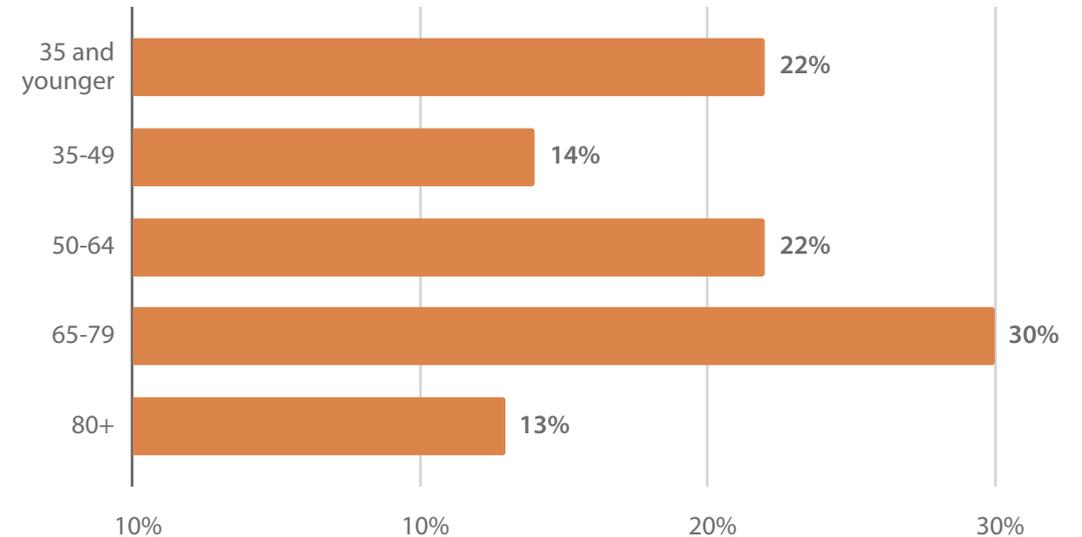
Almost one quarter of all adults are living alone, and 43% are 65 years and older.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



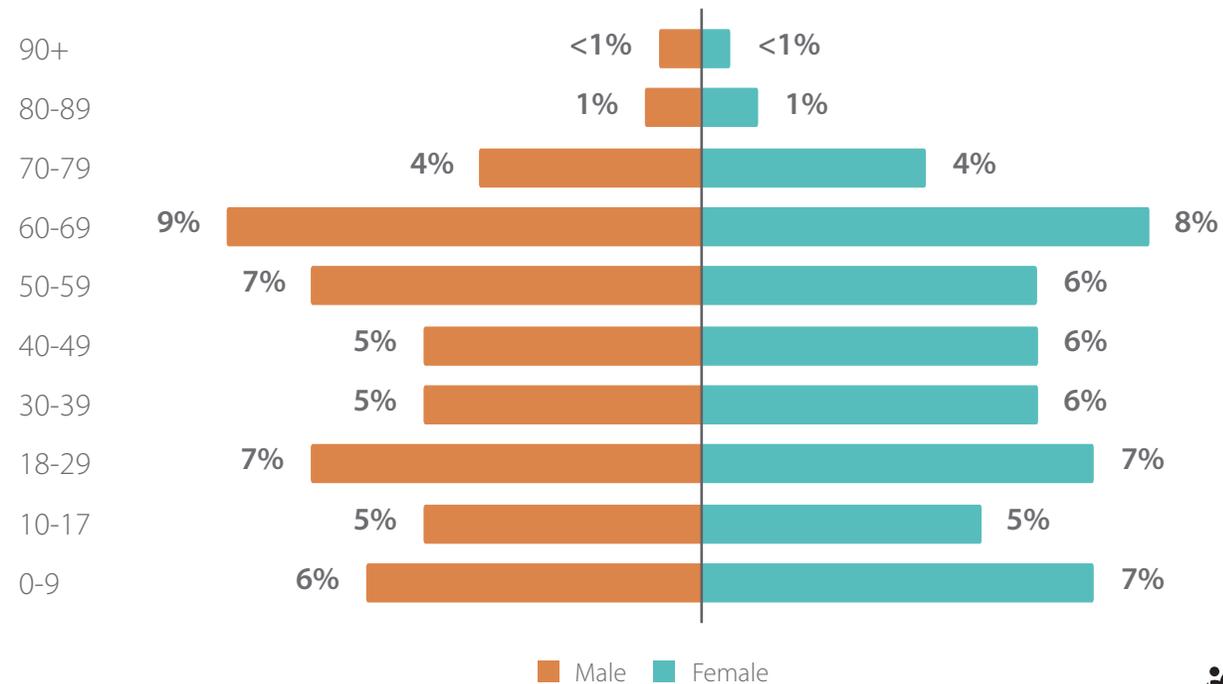
**For households with children, the average number of children (ages 17 and younger) is 1.8*

AGES OF ADULTS LIVING ALONE



Our community has more females than males (52% and 48% respectively), with less than 1% of adults identifying as a gender other than male or female.

GENDER IS FAIRLY EVENLY DISTRIBUTED ACROSS ALL AGE GROUPS.



We recognize all members of our changing landscape.

1 in 10 Jewish households have someone who identifies as LGBTQ+

8% of Jewish adults identify as a person of color

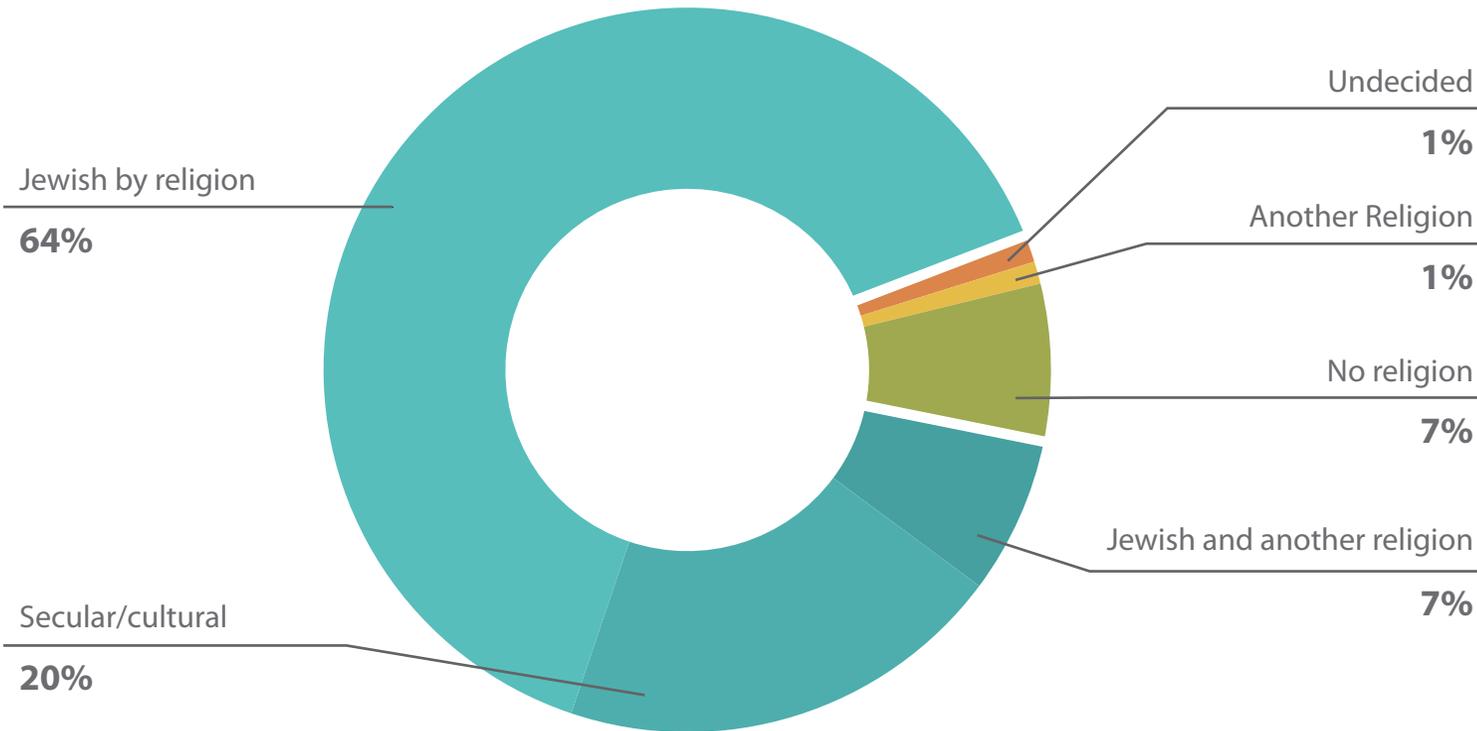


CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE:

How do we make Jewish life
in Baltimore inclusive and
welcoming for all?

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

Most children (91%) in Jewish Baltimore are being raised Jewish in some way.



Overall, 65% of children in Jewish Baltimore participated in at least one formal or informal Jewish educational program.

FORMAL

17% of Jewish children are in Jewish preschool

39% K-12 are enrolled in day school or yeshiva

12% of Jewish children attend Hebrew school

INFORMAL

50% participated in Jewish camp or a youth group

44% of children younger than 12 received PJ library books

Baltimore offers a wide range of opportunities for adults to participate in Jewish life.

SYNAGOGUES

33% of Jewish households are members of a synagogue

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

77% engage in Jewish cultural activities

40% of adults attend programs at Baltimore Jewish organizations at these locations:

- **Synagogue** (59%)
- **JCC** (38%)
- **Chabad** (15%)

VOLUNTEERING

17% volunteer for a Jewish organization, while another **23%** volunteer for non-Jewish organizations

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

74% read Jewish content online

JEWISH KNOWLEDGE

10% belong to Jewish organization other than synagogue or JCC and **9%** belong to informal Jewish group



A new way of looking at Jewish engagement is by examining specific behaviors.

Family holiday celebrations: Participating in a Passover seder and lighting Hanukkah candles

Ritual practices: Keeping kosher, lighting Shabbat candles or having a Shabbat dinner, attending religious services, attending High Holiday services, fasting on Yom Kippur

Communal activities: Belonging to a synagogue, belonging to a Jewish organization or group, attending Jewish activities, volunteering for Jewish organizations, donating to Jewish causes

Personal activities: Engaging in cultural activities (book, music, TV, museum), following news about Israel, accessing Jewish content online (websites, podcasts, etc.), reading Jewish organization's material

Five patterns of engagement emerge based on the data that are unique to Baltimore.

16% Familial
Participates in family and home-based dimensions of Jewish life.



19% Personal
Participates primarily in Jewish activities that can be done individually and less so in communal and ritual activities.



12% Involved
Participates in most aspects of Jewish life at a moderate level.



26% Communal
Participates in communal and personal activities.



27% Immersed
Participates in all dimensions of Jewish life.



**Statistically-created groups based on 16 Jewish behaviors.*

Jewish engagement is not the same as denomination.

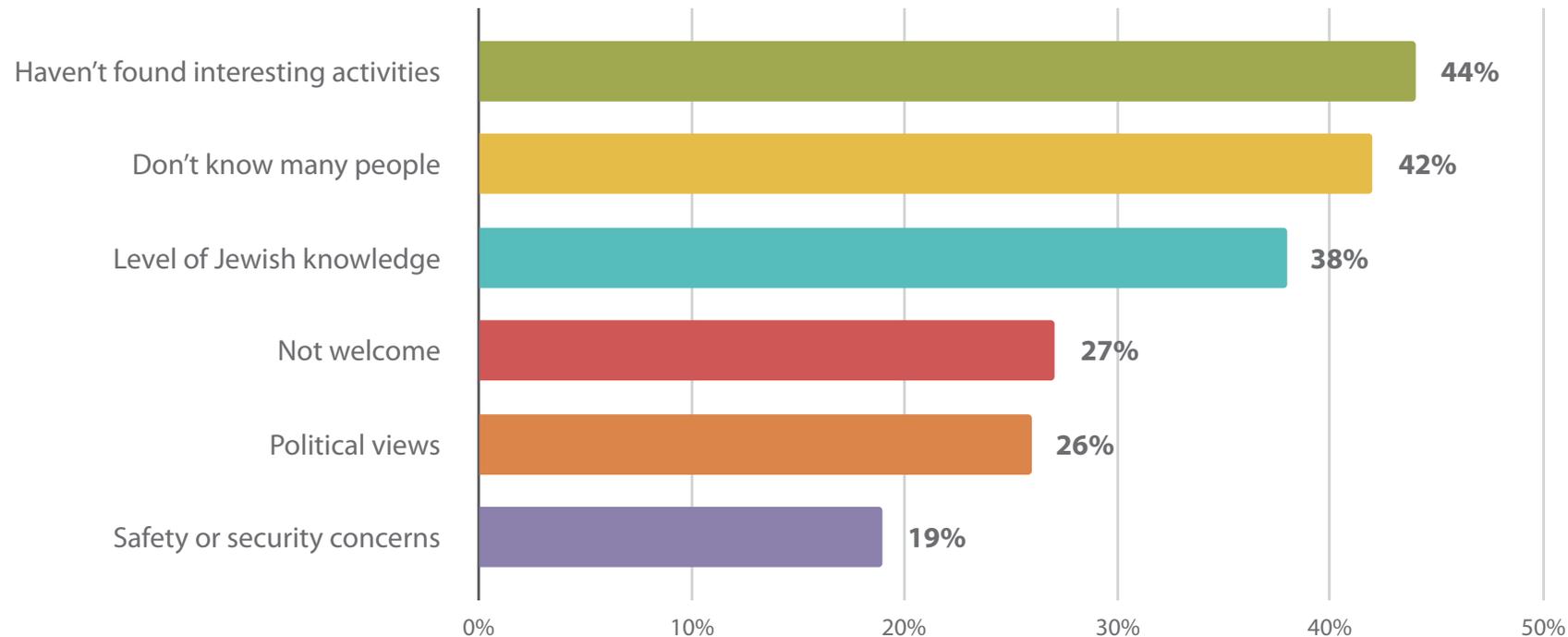
HELPS TO DIFFERENTIATE WITHIN DENOMINATIONS... INCLUDING NONE
ALL DENOMINATIONS REPRESENTED IN ALL ENGAGEMENT GROUPS

DENOMINATION BY JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

Denomination	Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Other	None	Total
All Jewish Adults	21%	19%	18%	3%	39%	100%
Familial	1%	5%	14%	1%	79%	100%
Personal	1%	6%	13%	3%	77%	100%
Involved	7%	19%	38%	1%	35%	100%
Communal	6%	35%	29%	6%	23%	100%
Immersed	69%	19%	5%	2%	6%	100%

While there are many ways to engage in Jewish life, some feel there are barriers to their community connections.

THE GREATEST BARRIER IS “HAVEN’T FOUND ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST” (44%)



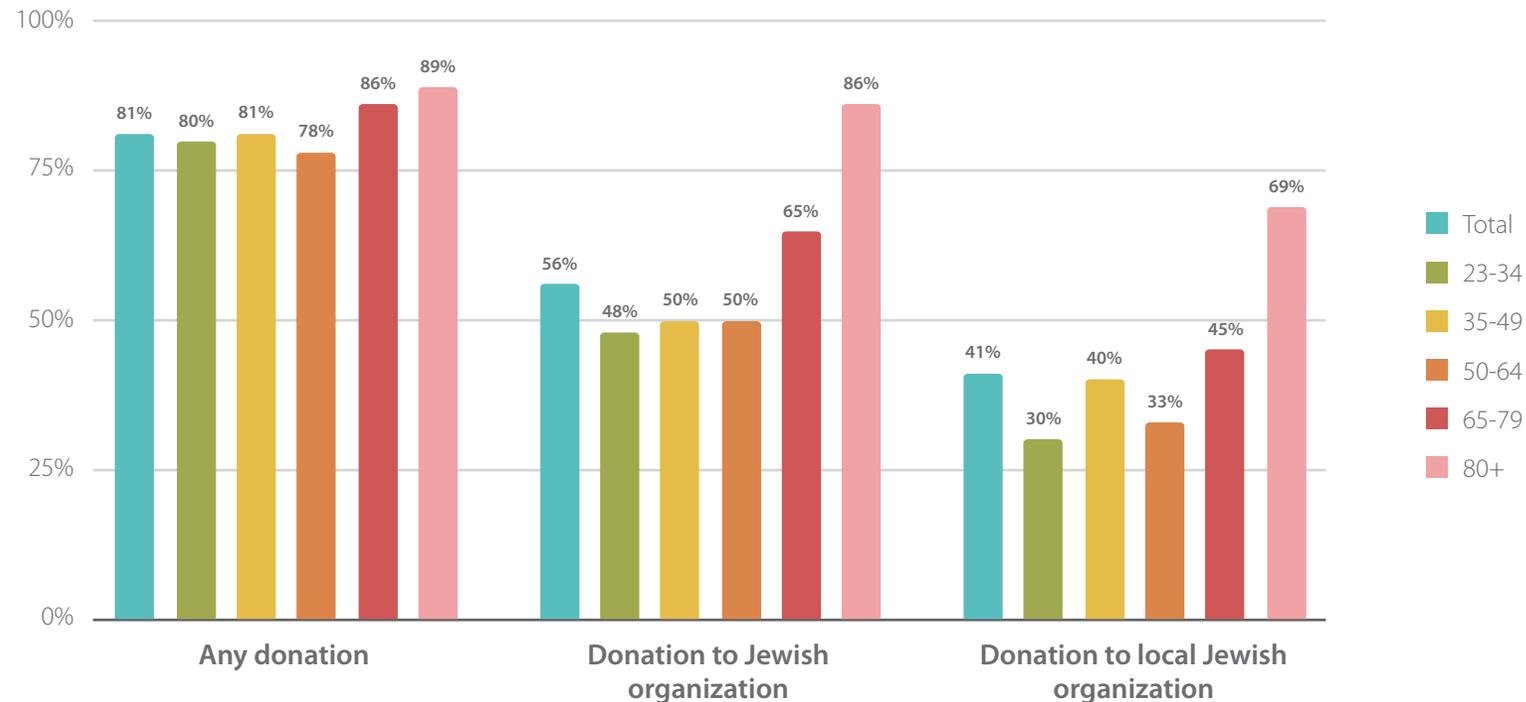
CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE:

How do we ensure that Jewish life is relevant and meaningful for the many different people in Jewish Baltimore?

4. Many young adults are philanthropic and community-minded while others have yet to participate.

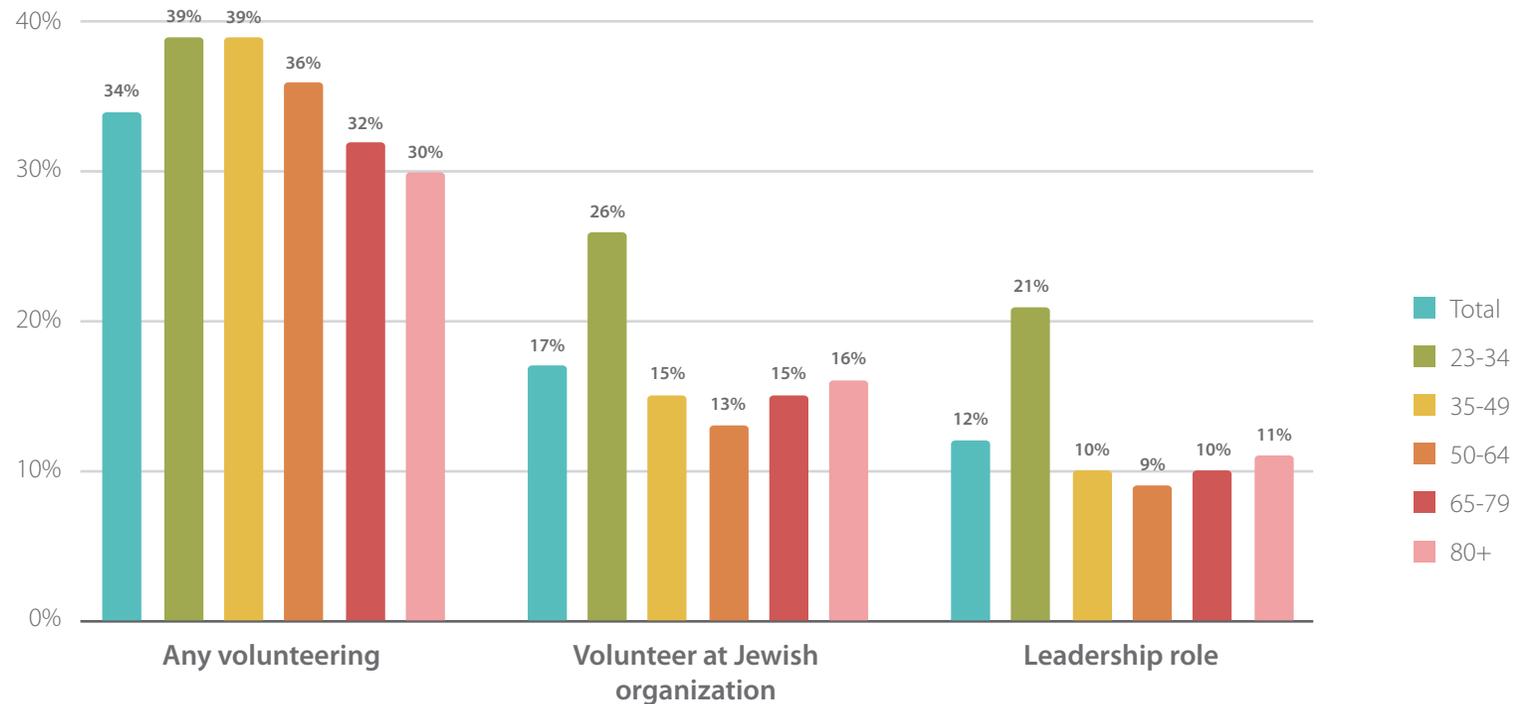
Adults 23-34 are philanthropic but less likely to donate to local Jewish organizations than other age groups.

ONLY 30% OF YOUNG ADULT HOUSEHOLDS DONATE TO A LOCAL JEWISH ORGANIZATION



When it comes to volunteering, adults 23-34 are most likely to volunteer for Jewish organizations and to take leadership roles compared to other ages.

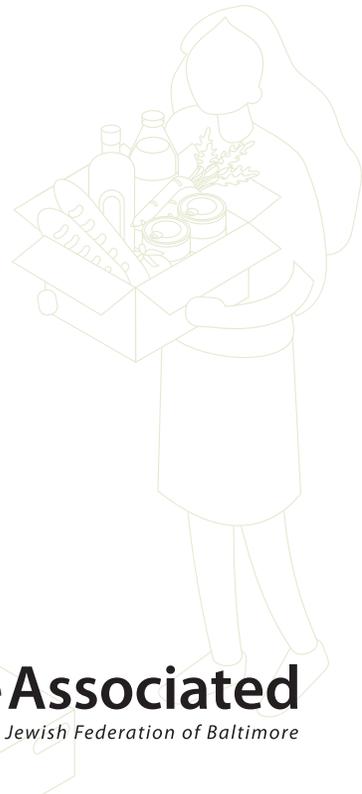
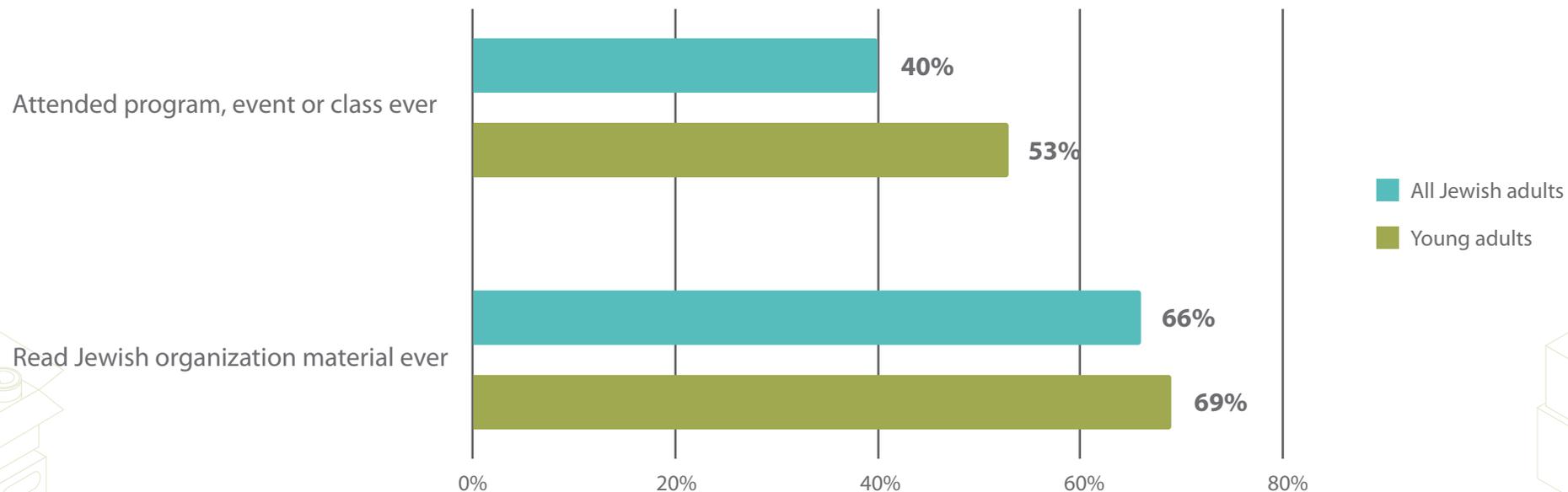
26% OF ADULTS 23-34 VOLUNTEER FOR JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS COMPARED WITH NO MORE THAN 16% OF ANY OTHER AGE GROUP



Adults (23-34) are more apt to participate in Jewish life in a variety of ways than to belong to a Jewish organization.

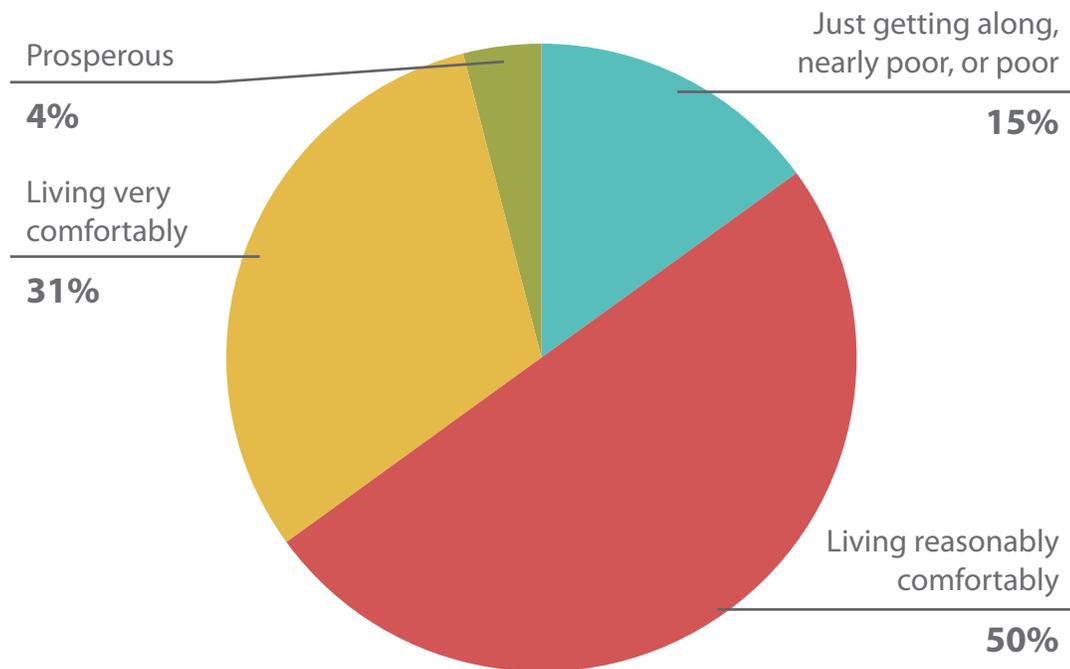
ONLY 4% OF YOUNG ADULT HOUSEHOLDS BELONG TO A JEWISH ORGANIZATION

JEWISH LIFE PARTICIPATION



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

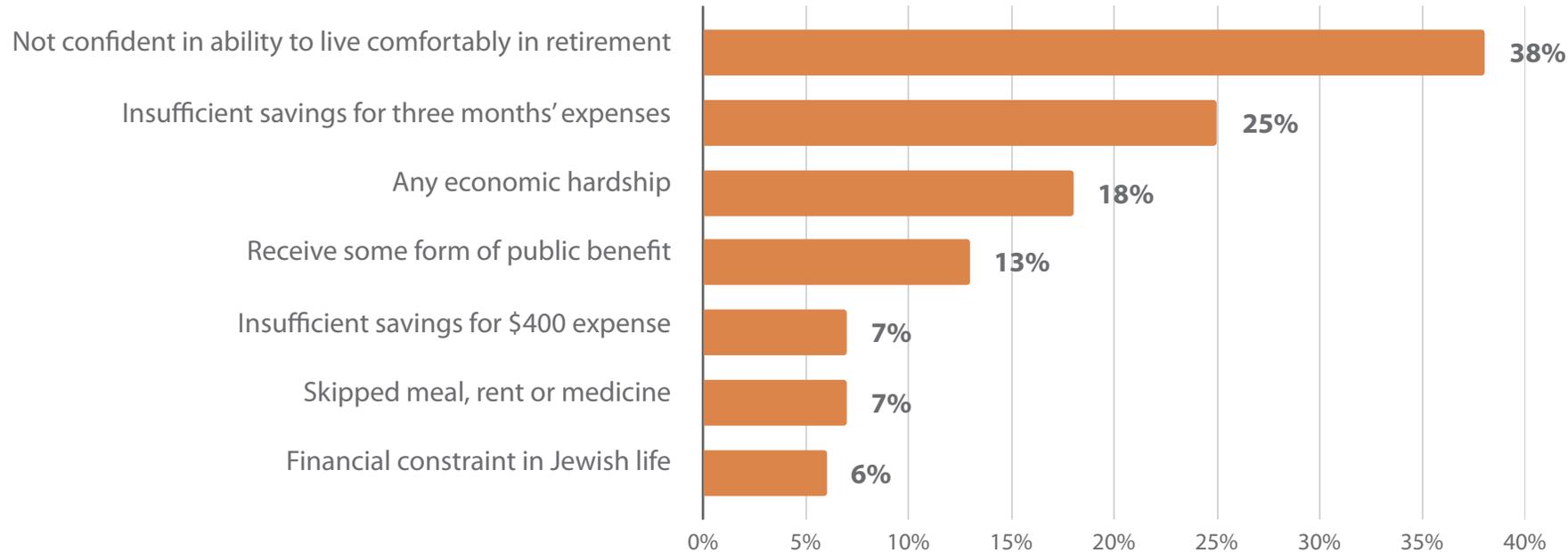
35% of Jewish households describe their financial position as prosperous or living very comfortably, while 15% are financially challenged.



Income	% of Jewish Baltimore households	% of all Baltimore households
\$200,000 or more	13%	7%
\$100,000 to \$199,999	35%	24%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	29%	30%
Less than \$50,000	23%	39%

**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.*

And there are many of us who are a paycheck away from financial insecurity.

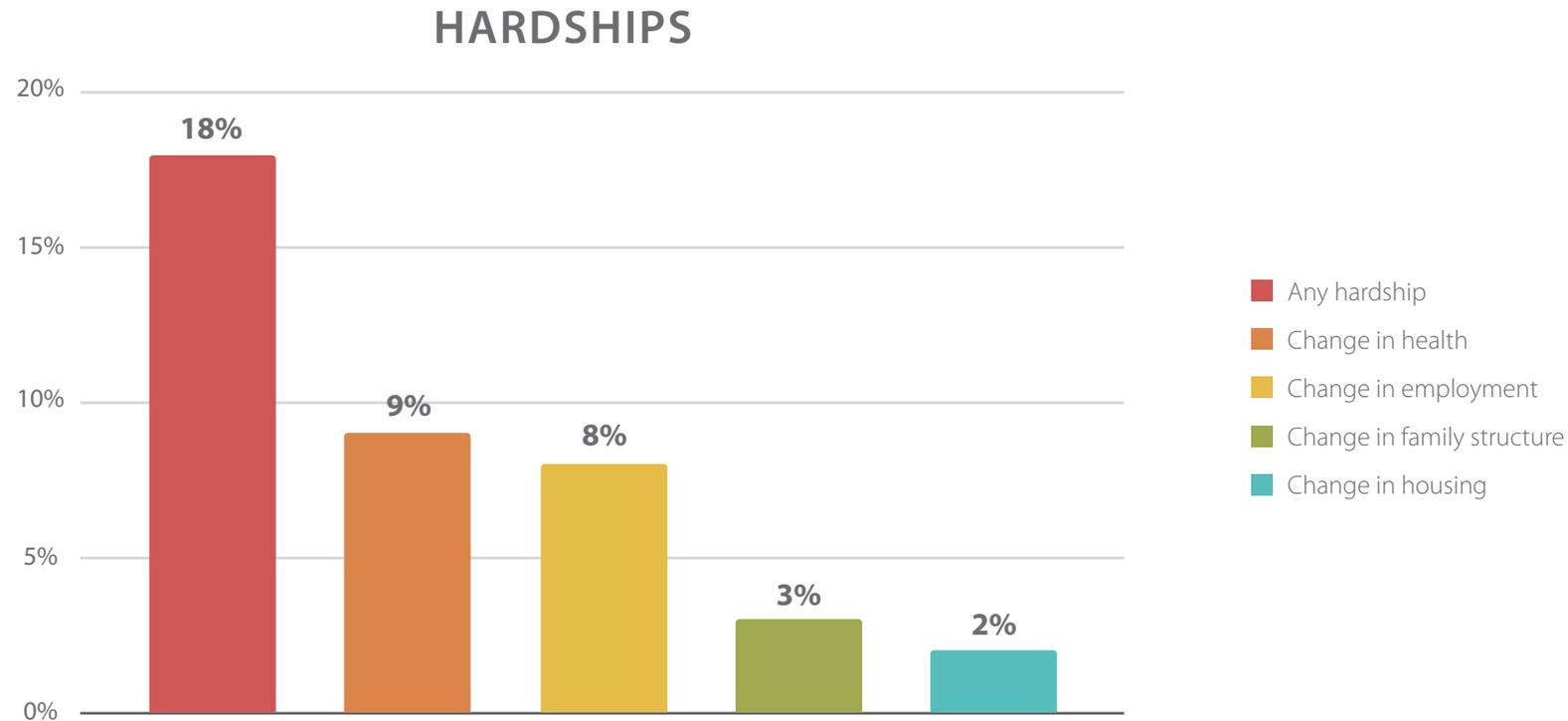


Note: Based on Jewish Households

**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.

18% of households experienced life changes that resulted in economic hardships.



CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE:
How can we help?



6. Others are vulnerable in different ways.

Almost 30% of households have at least one person who has a significant health issue, special need or disability.

	Households with a health need	All Jewish Households
Chronic illness	48%	14%
Physical disability	37%	10%
Mental illness	17%	5%
Learning disability	9%	3%
Developmental or cognitive disability	7%	2%
Other	14%	4%



In 14% of households, or almost half of those with a need, the health issue causes a limitation in the ability to work for pay, attend school or do housework.

8% indicated that their health issues limit their participation in Jewish life

- This number skyrockets among community members who are 80+, with 20% indicating that health issues prevent them for participating in Jewish life

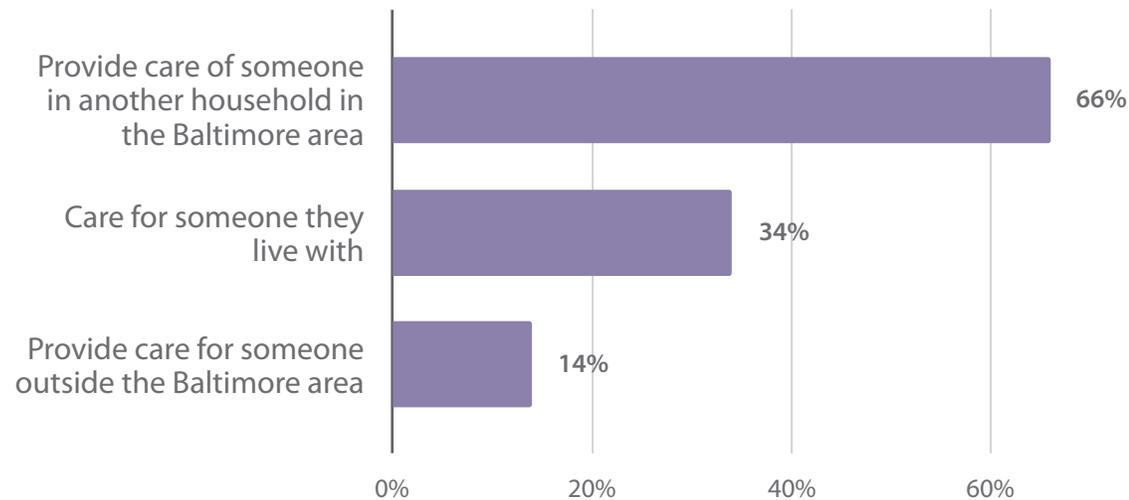
16% of Jewish adults age 65+ experience some isolation and are dissatisfied with the amount of time they spend with their friends and family

6% of Jewish adults ages 70+ live in an assisted living facility, nursing home, or independent living

- Half are Jewish-sponsored facility
- 7% are considering a move to one in next five years

An important group are our caregivers – 13% of households serve as a primary caregiver.

THESE INDIVIDUALS TEND TO BE AGE 50-64, SOME CARING FOR MORE THAN ONE INDIVIDUAL AT A TIME AND SOME CARING FOR THOSE WHO ARE OUT OF TOWN.



WHO ARE WE CARING FOR?

- Parent or parent-in-law (87%)
- Spouse (14%)
- Child (5%)

CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE:

How will we work together to help
each other meet life's challenges?



Our community generally has positive views about Israel.

Travel and emotional connection to Israel are deeply linked.

59% traveled to Israel at least once (well above the National rate of 43%)

86% of those who feel “very much” connected to Israel have been there while only 27% of those are “not at all” connected have traveled to Israel

28% have visited Israel more than once

17% have traveled with a Jewish organization on a mission or other sponsored event

Many have strong positive views about Israel while some groups feel differently.

87% of all Jewish adults see Israel as a homeland for Jews throughout the world

64% of all adults see Israel as a source of pride but only **55%** of adults 18-34 do

60% agree that Israel is a lively democratic society while only **45%** of those who have never traveled to Israel agree

80% feel at least a little connected to Israel with the connection being strongest among adults 65+

CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE:

How can we promote dialogue and
build meaningful connections to
Israel for more people?

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

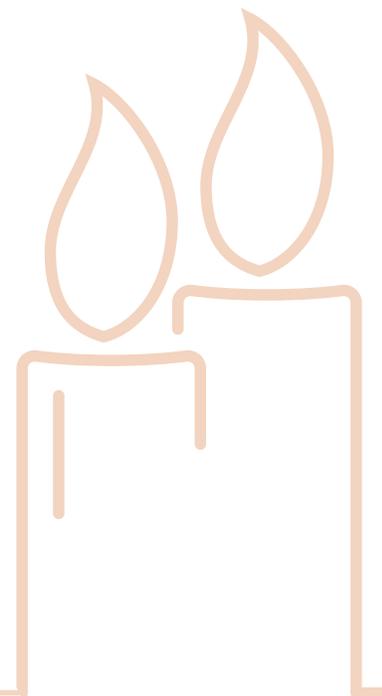
We are more concerned about antisemitism nationally than here at home.

Either National or Local: 60% of Baltimore community members expressed concern about antisemitism either nationally or locally

National: 59% worried about antisemitism

Local: 26% worried about antisemitism

Among those who express a barrier to participating in Jewish life, **1 in 5** Jewish adults cite safety concerns as the reason



CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE:

What can we do to continue to
make Jewish Baltimore feel safe
and secure?

Our eight stories.

1. The center of Jewish Baltimore remains constant while our borders continue to expand.
2. Our Jewish family is changing.
3. Community members engage in Jewish life in a variety of ways.
4. Many young adults are philanthropic and community-minded while others have yet to participate.
5. Many in our community are comfortable, but a number of us are financially challenged.
6. Others are vulnerable in different ways.
7. Our community generally has positive views about Israel.
8. Concern about antisemitism reflects recent activity, but we are more concerned about national antisemitism than local.

WHAT'S NEXT?

A Journey of

Learning Analyzing

Planning Acting

to improve the lives of Baltimoreans

QUESTIONS? EMAIL US AT:

communitystudy2020@associated.org