

2018
SOUTH
PALM BEACH
COUNTY
JEWISH
COMMUNITY
STUDY

Boca Raton
Delray Beach
Highland Beach

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**JEWISH
COMMUNITY
STUDY**

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Cohen Center
for Modern Jewish Studies



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Established in 2005 and housed at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) uses innovative research methods to collect and analyze sociodemographic data on the Jewish community.

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.

Letter to the Jewish Community of South Palm Beach County

Our Federation strives to sustain and enhance a community that is engaging and compassionate, enriched and ennobled by Jewish values. To realize our aspirations and plan more effectively, we must update our knowledge of our residents, their attitudes and needs. Where do we live, and how do we aspire to satisfy individual and communal needs? What matters to us? To answer these questions and more, we have invested in a comprehensive study of our local Jewish community. It is with pride and a sense of accomplishment that we present the findings of the *2018 Jewish Community Study of South Palm Beach County*.

This study allows us to understand evolving communal needs so we can allocate precious resources for maximum impact. Through this process, we elicited prospective questions from lay and professional leadership, to make certain that significant issues and concerns were addressed in the survey.

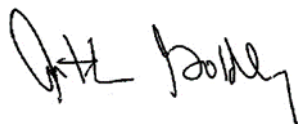
Our Federation engaged the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University to conduct the survey and to report on its findings. Led by principal researcher, Dr. Matt Boxer, the Brandeis team used the most advanced research techniques to provide us with a high quality survey, which produced reliable findings. More than 2100 respondents participated in the study, far more than the number required to deem the study statistically sound. It allowed us to gain important insights into contemporary Jewish life—the beliefs, practices, values and rituals that add meaning for our core constituencies and the many subgroups of our community. This data will enable our own strategic planning, and prove helpful to agencies, synagogues, day schools, and other Jewish service and funding organizations. We view the 2018 study report not as a final document but as the starting point for an ongoing community dialogue.

We are grateful to many people who helped bring this study to fruition. Our thanks to the Jacobson Jewish Community Foundation that funded this project in its entirety. Many thanks go to the Brandeis team, Matt Boxer, Janet Aronson, Matt Brookner and Len Saxe, for conducting the research, patiently answering our questions and bringing their expertise to our work. Our sincere thanks to our Immediate Past Chair, Anne Jacobson, whose leadership made this study a priority. We also thank the individual respondents, and our community partners for their participation and support of this project.

Most of all, we extend our deep appreciation to the members of our Demographic Study Ad Hoc Committee: Jeff Newman (Chair), Jill Deutch, Debra Halperin, Steve Mendelsohn and Carol Smokler, whose insight and knowledge were instrumental in selecting the research team, development of survey questions and overall collaboration with Federation professionals. Finally, this study would not be possible without the tireless work of Federation professionals Stuart Silver, Vice President, Community Planning and Director, JCRC and Stacey Lipton, Director of Governance and Special Projects.

We are proud of the successful completion of the *2018 Jewish Community Study of South Palm Beach County* and look forward to utilizing the data as a tool with which we serve our mission. We invite you to review these findings, and to join us as we plan for the future of our Jewish community.

Sincerely,



Arthur Goldberg
Chair, Federation Board of Directors



Matthew C. Levin
Federation President & CEO

CMJS/SSRI Acknowledgments

The CMJS/SSRI research team is grateful to the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County for proposing and sponsoring the 2018 South Palm Beach County Jewish Community Study. The Federation's staff, Board of Directors, and Community Study Committee provided valuable input on the study design, questionnaire, and report. We are particularly grateful to Vice President of Community Planning Stuart Silver, Director of Governance and Special Projects Stacey Lipton, and Community Study Committee Chair Jeff Newman. We also appreciate the generosity of the organizations that shared contact information with us for the purposes of this study.

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A team of students facilitated various elements of the project. Ethan Aronson, Jeff Hart, Mariah Manter, Sarah Binney, and Yaoyao Gao worked to ensure we had comprehensive

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Executive Summary

The 2018 South Palm Beach County Jewish Community Study was developed to help communal leaders, planners, and residents better understand the size and character of their community. The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at Brandeis University conducted the study on behalf of the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County. Interviews with over 2,100 Jewish households residing in South Palm Beach County form the basis of the report. Key findings include:

The Jewish population of South Palm Beach County consists of 134,200 adults and children living in 69,000 households. Also residing in these households are 21,800 non-Jewish adults and children. The total number of people living in Jewish households is 155,900. The Jewish community comprises over one third of the total South Palm Beach County population.

The Jewish community in South Palm Beach County is undergoing a demographic transition. The community still has a significant population of retirees and senior citizens (ages 65 and up) but is getting younger and includes more families than it did in 2005. The intermarriage rate remains low but is increasing. The number of children and non-Jews living in South Palm Beach County Jewish households has also increased since 2005.

Seasonal residents comprise 20% of the South Palm Beach County adult Jewish population. Those living in the area between four and nine months of the year number 23,000 Jewish adults in 12,700 households, representing 20% of Jewish adults and 18% of Jewish households.

Nearly one-in-five Jewish families in South Palm Beach County are living on the economic edge. One percent each of households are poor or nearly poor, and 17% say they are just getting along. In the past year, 13% percent of Jewish households received a public welfare benefit, and 19% experienced an economic hardship.

Geography and Seasonality

The plurality of the Jewish community lives in Central Boca Raton (ZIP codes 33433, 33434, 33496) **and in Delray Beach** (ZIP codes 33444, 33445, 33446, 33464, 33483). These regions also include the largest proportions of senior citizens.

More than 40% of Jewish children live in West Boca Raton (ZIP codes 33428, 33498).

The majority of Jewish seasonal residents live in Delray Beach and Central Boca Raton.

Children and Families

Two thirds of Jewish adults in South Palm Beach County are married. Among married Jewish individuals, the intermarriage rate is 16%, one of the lowest rates in the country.

Overall, 80% of children are being raised Jewish in some way. Seventy percent are being raised exclusively Jewish, either Jewish by religion (59%) or as culturally Jewish (11%).

Among children with intermarried parents, 66% are being raised exclusively Jewish, either Jewish by religion or culturally Jewish, on par with the national average.

Overall, 34% of Jewish students in grades K-12 participated in some form of Jewish education in the past year. Twenty-six percent of students in grades K-12 were enrolled in some type of formal Jewish education, including day schools, part-time Hebrew schools, or private Jewish classes. Nineteen percent participated in an informal Jewish education program, including day and overnight camps, youth groups, or peer Israel trips.

Synagogues

Twenty percent of Jewish households belong to a synagogue in South Palm Beach County, and another 11% belong to a congregation outside the area. The 31% of synagogue-member households contain 36% of Jewish adults, comparable to the national average (39%).

The plurality of households who belong to synagogues, 32%, pay dues to a “brick-and-mortar” congregation. Another 14% of synagogue members belong to a local Chabad,¹ 13% say they are members of a “brick-and-mortar” congregation but do not pay dues, and 9% belong to an independent *minyán* or High Holiday congregation.

Community and Organizations

Eighty percent of Jewish adults feel to some extent part of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community. Feelings of connection toward the Jewish people in general are high, with 94% feeling some level of connection to the worldwide Jewish community.

Seventeen percent of Jewish households affiliate with the Levis Jewish Community Center. Membership rates are highest in West Boca Raton, where the JCC is located and where nearly half of the region’s Jewish children live.

One third of Jewish households belong or pay dues to a Jewish organization in South Palm Beach County that is not a synagogue or the Levis JCC. These rates are highest among senior citizens and seasonal residents.

More than one third of the Jewish community attended a program sponsored by a South Palm Beach County Jewish organization in the past year, and 59% read material produced by one of these organizations.

Thirty-six percent of Jewish adults engaged in some volunteer activity in the past month, with either a Jewish or non-Jewish organization. Eighteen percent of Jewish adults volunteered with a Jewish organization in some capacity, including 7% who held a leadership role in a South Palm Beach County Jewish organization.

Eighty-two percent of Jewish adults made charitable donations in the past year, with 63% giving to Jewish organizations and 36% giving to Jewish organizations that primarily serve the South Palm Beach County Jewish community.

Israel

More than two thirds, 69%, of Jewish adults have been to Israel at least once. This figure is higher than the national average of 43%.

Twenty-eight percent of Jewish adults have traveled to Israel with a Jewish organization, such as a Federation mission or synagogue trip. Additionally, 44% of those age-eligible for Birthright Israel have participated in that program.

The South Palm Beach County Jewish community feels connected to Israel. Ninety-one percent of Jewish adults feel a connection to Israel. This feeling of connection is strongest among senior citizens and those who have already been to Israel. Ninety-one percent of Jewish adults agree that a Jewish state is necessary for the survival of the Jewish people.

Financial Well-Being

While there is affluence within the South Palm Beach County Jewish community, there is also financial vulnerability. Seven percent of Jewish households describe themselves as prosperous; one third (31%) say they are living very comfortably; 42% say they are living reasonably comfortably; 17% say they are just getting along; and 1% each say they are “nearly poor” or “poor.”

Twenty-seven percent of Jewish households do not have enough savings for three months’ expenses.

Seven percent of Jewish households say they were constrained from participating in Jewish life in the past year due to financial issues.

Health and Special Needs

Twenty-eight percent of Jewish households include at least one person who has some sort of health issue, special need, or disability. Seventeen percent of Jewish households include a member who is limited in the amount of work, school, or housework he or she can do.

In 6% of Jewish households, a household member required but did not receive services for a health issue, special need, or disability.

Two percent of Jewish households include a member with a cognitive or developmental disability.

Introduction: The South Palm Beach County Jewish Community in 2018

The 2018 South Palm Beach County Jewish Community Study, conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) at Brandeis University, employed innovative, state-of-the-art methods to create a comprehensive portrait of the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of present-day South Palm Beach County Jewry. The Pew Research Center's 2013 study, *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, galvanized discussions in the American Jewish community on a host of topics: growing and shrinking sub-populations, declining affiliation in traditional institutions as well as new forms of Jewish engagement, the rise of both secular and Orthodox Jews, and the impact of intermarriage on community growth.² With the Pew study and the related national discourse as a backdrop, understanding the dynamics of South Palm Beach County's Jewish community takes on added significance.

The principal goal of this study is to provide valid data about the South Palm Beach County 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 seeks 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 community programs and institutional Judaism and describe reasons for participation
- Understand the multifaceted cultural, communal, and religious expressions of Judaism that constitute Jewish engagement
- Assess attitudes toward Israel and Judaism

The present study provides a snapshot of today's South Palm Beach County Jewish community. At the same time, the report considers trends and developments that diverge from those of the past.

History

The present study is the latest in a succession of occasional studies about the South Palm Beach County Jewish community. The first study that was regarded as "scientific," conducted in 1984, identified 56,000 Jews in 28,550 households. A 1995 study found 110,400 Jews in 61,300 households. The most recent demographic study, in 2005, found 130,900 Jews in 73,000 Jewish households. All reports on previous studies can be found at the Berman Jewish DataBank, <<http://www.jewishdatabank.org/studies/us-local-communities.cfm>>.

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. Over time, it has become increasingly complex to conduct these surveys and, in particular, to obtain an unbiased sample of community members. The 2018 South Palm Beach County Jewish Community Study updates the methods that have been used since 1984, using innovative approaches to overcome the challenges of survey research.³

At the heart of the methodological challenge is that traditional methods to conduct community surveys are no longer feasible. The classic survey methodology, random digit dialing (RDD), relied on telephone calls to randomly selected households in a given geographic area and phone interviews with household members. Today, as a result of changing telephone technology (e.g., caller ID), fewer people answer the phone for unknown callers, putting response rates for telephone surveys in the single digits.⁴ More significantly, nearly half of households no longer have landline phones⁵ and rely exclusively on cell phones. Because of phone number portability,⁶ cell phones frequently have an area code and exchange, and in some cases a billing address, that are not associated with the geographic location in which the phone user resides. Therefore, it is no longer possible to select a range of phone numbers and assume that the owners of those numbers will live in the specified area and be willing to answer the phone.

The present study addresses these obstacles with several innovative methods, described in detail in Appendix A:

- **Enhanced RDD.** 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 that are conducted by government agencies and other organizations that include

information about religion. The synthesis combines data from hundreds of surveys and uses information collected from Palm Beach County residents to estimate the Jewish population in the region.

- ***Comprehensive list-based sample.*** Rather than selecting survey participants from the entirety of Palm Beach County, the CMJS study selects respondents based on their appearance on the membership and contact lists of dozens of local Jewish organizations. This comprehensive list-based approach ensures that anyone in South Palm Beach County who has had even minimal contact with an area Jewish organization is eligible to participate in the sample.
- ***Ethnic name sample.*** Needless to say, not all Jewish community members are known by a community organization. For that reason, the sample is supplemented with a list of households in the area comprised of individuals who have a Jewish first or last name.
- ***Multiple survey modes.*** Because households are increasingly difficult to reach by telephone, CMJS approaches survey participants by postal mail, phone, and email. Multiple attempts are made to reach respondents, and efforts are made to update contact information and the respondent's status when initial efforts are unsuccessful.

The 2018 South Palm Beach County Jewish Community Survey was based on a sampling frame of 116,856 households. From this frame, two samples were drawn: a **primary sample** of 29,024 households who were contacted by postal mail, email, and telephone, and a **supplemental sample** of 29,135 households who were contacted by email only. Designed to be representative of the entire Palm Beach County Jewish community, the primary sample was used as a basis for population estimates and analyses of the community as a whole. The response rate for this sample was 22.7% (AAPOR RR4).⁷ Because households from the supplement were only contacted by email, we expected that highly engaged households would be more likely to complete the survey. Consequently, we utilized statistical adjustments to account for the different likelihood of response in the two samples. The survey weights ensured that the full response sample—primary and supplemental—represented the entire community in terms of key factors including age, Jewish denomination, and synagogue membership.

A component of this study is the incorporation of 280 respondents who live in Broward County but appear on South Palm Beach County Jewish organizations' lists. A brief analysis of these individuals appears in Appendix C.

Throughout this report, for purposes of analysis and reporting, we derived estimates about the entire population from the primary sample only. We used the combined, or full, sample for analyses of subgroups—such as families with children—where the increased number of respondents supported more robust analysis.

Table I.I: Summary of survey respondents

	Primary	Supplement	Total
Data for analysis: main survey			
Completes	1,115	819	1,934
Partials	86	98	184
Total main survey	1,201	917	2,118
Broward County	169	111	280
Screen out/incomplete/ineligible	937	86	1,023
Total households reached	2,307	1,114	3,421
Response rate (AAPOR4)	22.7%	6.6%	15.0%

Undercounted Populations

The goal of the community study was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the South Palm Beach County Jewish population. Nevertheless, some groups are likely to be undercounted and/or underrepresented. In particular, residents of institutional settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, and dormitories on college campuses, as well as adults who have never associated in any way with a Jewish organization in the South Palm Beach County, are less likely to have been identified and contacted to complete the survey. Although we cannot produce an accurate count of these individuals, these undercounts are unlikely to introduce significant bias into the reported estimates. Where appropriate, we have noted the limitations of the methodology.

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 his/her 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 derived 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.)

When size estimates of subpopulations (e.g., seasonal residents) 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 E, for the actual number of responses to each question.

Some tables and figures that present proportions do not add up to 100%. In some cases, this is a result of respondents having the option to select more than one response to a question; in such cases, the text of the report will indicate 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.

For simplicity, in some tables not all groups will be shown. For example, if the proportion of a group who participated in a Passover seder is shown, the proportion who did not participate will not be shown. When a percentage is between 0% and 0.5% and would otherwise round down to 0%, the number is denoted as < 1.

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 were not offered to each respondent, it would be misleading to report the weighted proportion of responses to these questions. Instead, we report the total number of responses that mentioned a particular code or theme. This number appears in parentheses after the response without a percent sign, or in tables labeled as “n” or number of responses. In most cases sample quotes are also reported, with identifying information removed and edited for clarity.

Comparisons across Surveys

As part of the goal to assess trends, comparisons of answers to a number of questions are made to earlier local data (in particular, the 2005 study⁸) and data from national studies (in particular, Pew’s 2013 *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*⁹). Although these analyses are informative, comparisons across studies are not as precise and reliable as the data from the present study.

Report Overview

This report presents key findings about the South Palm Beach County 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 South Palm Beach County Jewish community and discusses changes in the Jewish population size and characteristics since 2005.

Chapter 3. Seasonal Residents

This chapter provides demographic details about the seasonal residents of South Palm Beach County (those living in the area for four to nine months per year), in comparison to the year-round residents (10-12 months).¹⁰

Chapter 4. Patterns of Jewish Engagement

This chapter describes the multifaceted ways in which the Jews of South Palm Beach County 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.

Chapters 5-8. Jewish Children, Synagogue and Ritual Life, Social and Communal Life, Israel
Each of these chapters focuses on a particular aspect of Jewish life and describes key behaviors and attitudes.

Chapters 9-10. Financial Well-Being, Health, and Special Needs

These chapters examine the living conditions of South Palm Beach County Jewish households, in particular with regard to economic well-being, economic hardship, and health and social service concerns.

Chapter 11. In the Words of Community Members

The penultimate chapter summarizes the findings of the study using comments from survey respondents.

Chapter 12. Looking Toward the Future

The final chapter provides recommendations to assist in future planning for the South Palm Beach County Jewish community.

Report Appendices

The appendices, available in a separate document, include:

Appendix A. Methodology

Details of data collection and analysis

Appendix B. Comparison Charts

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

Appendix C. Broward County

Description of the Broward County residents who affiliate with South Palm Beach County Jewish organizations

Appendix D. Latent Class Analysis

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

Appendix E. Codebook

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

Appendix F. Study Documentation

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

Appendix G. Maps

Series of maps that show the distribution of the population and different subgroups across the region

Chapter 2: Demographic Snapshot of the South Palm Beach County Jewish Community

Knowledge of the size, geographic distribution, and basic socio-demographic characteristics of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community provides context for understanding the character, behavior, and attitudes of community members. South Palm Beach County Jewry is not homogenous. The ways in which Jews identify as Jewish and engage with the Jewish community vary significantly in terms of who they are, where they live, their household composition, their ages, and their Jewish identities. This demographic overview describes the size of the community and the basic characteristics of community members.

Jewish Population Estimate

The findings of previous studies of the Jewish community of South Palm Beach County indicate that the size of the community has been relatively stable over the past decade, following large growth in the 1980s and 1990s. The 1984 study, the earliest existing written report, estimated that there were 56,000 Jewish individuals in South Palm Beach County. Between 1984 and 1995, the Jewish population nearly doubled to 110,400. Finally, the 2005 study estimated the Jewish population at 130,900 individuals.

The 2018 community study estimates that the South Palm Beach County Jewish community, as defined by the borders of the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County catchment area,¹¹ numbers about 134,200 Jewish adults and children, constituting about one third of the area population.¹² From 2005 to 2018, South Palm Beach County's Jewish population grew by about 3%. The overall regional population¹³ grew by about 23% from 2000 to 2017 and by about 15% from 2010 to 2017.¹⁴ It is often more appropriate, however, to compare the Jewish community to the non-Hispanic white college-educated population, which increased across the area by approximately 27% from 2000 to 2016 and by approximately 8% from 2010 to 2016.¹⁵

South Palm Beach County Jewish community population estimates, 2018

Total Jews	134,200
Adults	
Jewish	116,900
Non-Jewish	17,600
Children	
Jewish	17,300
Non-Jewish	4,200
Total people	155,900
Total households	69,000

Jewish Adults

Estimates of the size of the Jewish population rest on a set of fundamental questions about who is counted as Jewish for the purposes of the study. Recent studies, such as Pew Research Center's 2013 *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, classify respondents according to their responses to a series of screening questions: What is your religion? 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, Jews have been categorized as "Jews by religion" (JBR)—if they respond to a question about religion by stating that they are solely Jewish—and "Jews of no religion" (JNR)—if their religion is not Judaism, 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 South Palm Beach County Jewry could be compared to the population nationwide, a variant of Pew's scheme was employed, supplemented by several other measures of identity. Included in the Jewish population are those adults who indicate they are Jewish and another religion; we refer to this category as "Jews of multiple religions" (JMR).

Among Jewish adults in South Palm Beach County, 82% (95,600 individuals) identify as Jewish by religion (JBR). This proportion is higher than that of the overall United States Jewish population as reported by Pew (78%).¹⁶ The remaining Jewish adults (18%) identify as Jews of no religion (JNR) or Jews of multiple religions (JMR). Two thirds of these (14,400) have no religion but say they consider themselves Jewish for ethnic or cultural reasons. The remainder (6,900) consider themselves to be Jewish along with another religion.¹⁷

Jewish Households

South Palm Beach County's Jewish population resides in an estimated 69,000 households. We estimate that 17,600 non-Jewish adults and 4,200 non-Jewish children live in Jewish households in South Palm Beach County. These 21,800 individuals bring the total population of people living in Jewish households in the region to approximately 155,900 people (134,400 adults and 21,500 children).

Table 2.1: Jewish population of South Palm Beach County, summary (rounded to nearest 100)

	2018	2005	Change 2005 to 2018
Households with at least one Jewish adult	69,000	73,000	-5%
Total Jewish adults and children	134,200	130,900	3%
Total people in Jewish households	155,900	136,800	14%

Definitions

Jewish households are households that include at least one Jewish adult.

Jewish adults are those who say (1) their religion is Jewish, their religion is Jewish and another religion, or they consider themselves Jewish aside from religion; AND (2) they have at least one Jewish parent, were raised Jewish, or converted to Judaism.

Non-Jewish adults include two groups: (1) those who report that they do not consider themselves Jewish in any way (regardless of whether they had a Jewish parent or were raised Jewish); AND (2) those who consider themselves Jewish but were not born to Jewish parents, were not raised Jewish, and did not convert.

Jewish children are children being raised Jewish by religion, as secular/cultural Jews, or as Jewish and another religion.

Non-Jewish children are children being raised with no religion or a religion other than Judaism, or whose parents have not yet decided on a religion.

Extended Jewish Community

Among the non-Jewish population, there are two groups of adults who have connections to Judaism but are not included in the Jewish population, as is the practice with other community studies (e.g., Pew, 2013). The first, listed as “Jewish background” in Table 2.2, are those who have Jewish parents or were raised Jewish but do not currently consider themselves to be Jewish in any way. There are 2,900 such individuals who live in households with at least one Jewish adult. The study also found 600 adults with Jewish backgrounds who do *not* live with any other Jewish adults (and are not included in Table 2.2).

The second group, listed as “Jewish affinity” in Table 2.2, are those who consider themselves to be Jewish in some way even though they do not have Jewish parents, were not raised Jewish, and did not convert. Many of these individuals are the spouses of Jewish adults. There are 3,200 adults with a “Jewish affinity” who live in Jewish households. The study also estimated that fewer than 100 such adults live outside of Jewish households in South Palm Beach County (and are not included in Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Jewish population of South Palm Beach County, detail (rounded to nearest 100, sums may not add up due to rounding)

	2018	2005	Change 2005 to 2018
Jewish adults	116,900	119,900	-3%
JBR adults	95,600		
JNR adults	14,900		
JMR adults	6,400		
Non-Jewish adults in Jewish households	17,600	5,000	252%
Jewish background	2,900		
Jewish affinity	3,200		
Not Jewish	11,500		
Jewish children in Jewish households	17,300	11,000	57%
JBR children	12,700		
JNR children	2,300		
JMR children	2,200		
Non-Jewish children in Jewish households	4,200	900	367%
No religion	2,500		
Not yet decided	200		
Other religion	1,500		

Age and Gender Composition

The South Palm Beach County Jewish community is older than the US Jewish community as a whole. Compared to the national Jewish population, the local Jewish community has more seniors and fewer adults under age 50 (Table 2.3). The mean age of Jewish adults, based on the present population estimate, is 58, and the median is 61, older than the median age of Jewish adults nationally, 50.¹⁸ The mean age of all South Palm Beach County Jews, including children, is 51 and the median is 56. The population estimate of Jewish adults ages 18-34, however, is likely to be an undercount due to difficulties in contacting this population. Even so, the community is getting younger—the median age of South Palm Beach County Jews in 2005 was 71.

The age-gender pyramid (Figure 2.1) shows the distribution of the population. The largest share of the adult Jewish population is between ages 70-79. There are notably fewer Jewish children and Jews in their 30s and 40s, compared to older adults.

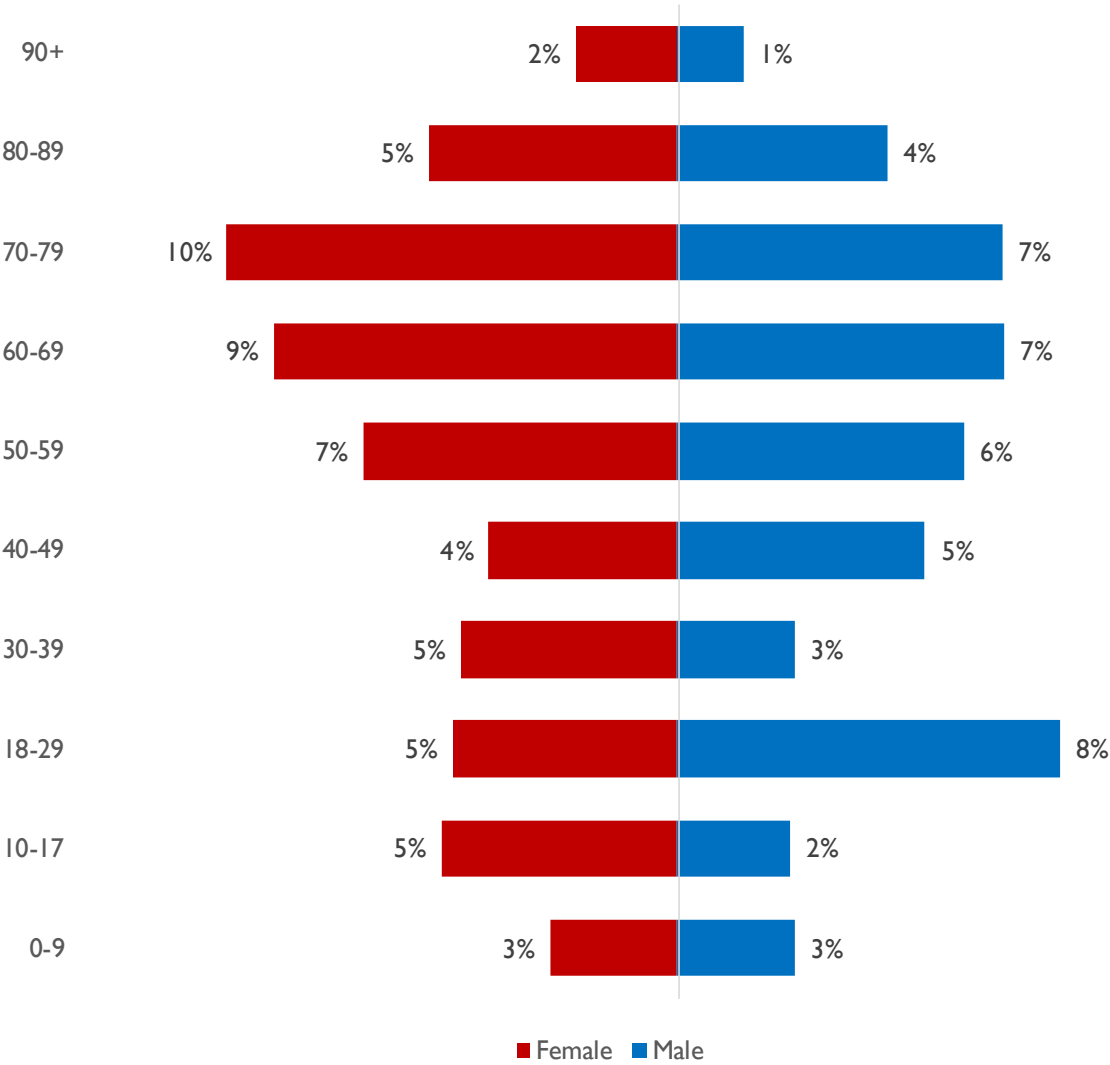
Table 2.3: Age of Jewish adults in South Palm Beach County and nationally

	South Palm Beach County (%)	National ¹⁹ (%)
18-34	20	28
35-49	16	20
50-64	22	30
65-79	29	15
80+	15	6

As seen in Table 2.1, the number of Jewish households has declined since 2005. However, the number of Jews in these households has increased. The primary explanation for that change is the increase in the number of children being raised in Jewish households in South Palm Beach County. Additionally, the numbers of non-Jews living with Jews have grown (see Table 2.2). Both developments suggest that younger families (i.e., those most likely to have younger children and be married to non-Jews) have moved into South Palm Beach County in increasing numbers since 2005.

Overall, the South Palm Beach County Jewish 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.

Figure 2.1: Age-gender distribution of Jews in South Palm Beach County

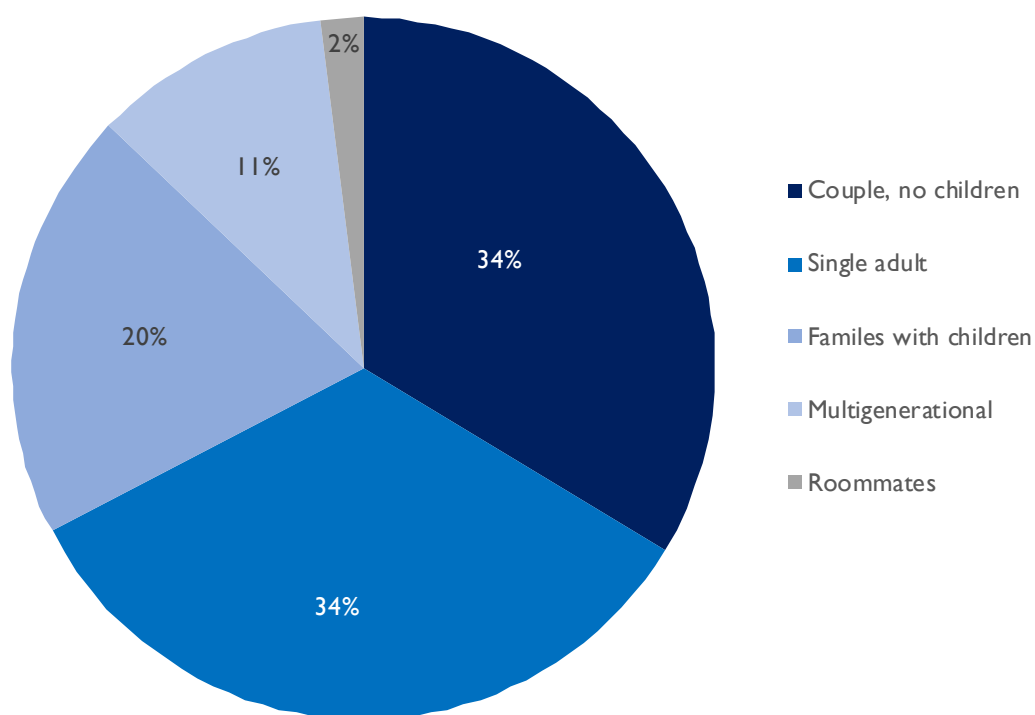


Household Composition

Households with children under age 18 (comprising single-parent, two-parent, or multigenerational households) make up 20% of Jewish households in South Palm Beach County (Figure 2.2). The remaining households consist of single adults (34%), couples without children (34%), and households with parents and adult children living together (multigenerational households; 11%). Among households in which a single adult resides, 31% are seniors ages 80 and older, 28% are seniors 65-79, 16% are 50-64, and the remaining 24% are 18-49 years of age.

Overall, 54% of Jewish households include a married, engaged, or cohabiting couple, living with or without children or other relatives. This proportion has decreased slightly from 2005, when it was 60%. Twenty percent of households today include children, compared to 9% in 2005. Among households with children, the mean number of children ages 17 and younger is 1.6. The mean size of all households is 2.3 individuals.

Figure 2.2: Composition of Jewish households



Jewish Denominations

Historically, denominational affiliation has been one of the basic indicators of Jewish identity and practice. Overall, 70% of South Palm Beach County’s Jewish adults identify with a formal Jewish denomination, and the remainder indicate they are secular, just Jewish, or have no specific denomination (Table 2.4). The largest denomination, Reform, includes more than one third of Jewish adults.

The denominational breakdown of South Palm Beach County Jews has remained relatively stable since 2005 (Table 2.5). The share of those who claim no denomination—that is, those who are secular, culturally Jewish, “just Jewish,” or have no specific denomination—has increased by 2%. The share of Reform Jews has grown by 3%, and the share of Orthodox Jews has grown by 4%. The proportion of Conservative Jews, however, has declined 10% over the past 13 years. Despite this trend, South Palm Beach County Jews are still more likely than US Jews overall to be Conservative; they are equally as likely to claim a denominational affiliation.

Table 2.4: Age by denomination

Denomination	All Jewish adults (%)	Age 18-34 (%)	Age 35-49 (%)	Age 50-64 (%)	Age 65-79 (%)	Age 80 + (%)
Orthodox	8	12	9	9	7	4
Conservative	25	8	27	21	33	39
Reform	37	30	32	43	40	32
Other	1	0	0	1	2	3
Just Jewish	15	32	22	8	9	13
Secular	14	19	10	18	10	9

Table 2.5: Denomination of Jewish adults in 2018 compared to 2005 and the national Jewish community

Denomination	South Palm Beach County 2018 (%)	South Palm Beach County 2005 (%)	US 2013 (%)
Orthodox	8	4	10
Conservative	25	35	18
Reform	37	34	36
Other	1	1	6
Secular/Just Jewish	28	26	30

Inmarriage and Inter marriage

Two thirds of Jewish adults in South Palm Beach County (67% are married, engaged, or partnered, similar to the rate in 2005, 60% (Table 2.6). Among married Jewish adults, 84% are inmarried, and 16% are intermarried. Five percent of inmarried couples include someone who converted to Judaism. The rate of intermarriage has increased from 9% in 2005.

Geographic Distribution

The Jews of South Palm Beach County can be divided among four regions: West Boca Raton, Central Boca Raton, East Boca Raton (including Highland Beach), and Delray Beach. A map showing the distribution of Jewish households appears in Figure 2.3 (next page). The distribution of Jews and Jewish households is described in Table 2.7.

Table 2.6: Age by marriage status (includes engaged couples and partners who live together)

	All Jewish adults (%)	Age 18-34 (%)	Age 35-49 (%)	Age 50-64 (%)	Age 65-79 (%)	Age 80+ (%)
Married	67	34	72	74	80	72
Inmarried	84	70	81	77	89	96
Intermarried	16	30	19	23	11	4

Table 2.7: Geographic distribution of South Palm Beach County's Jews

Geographic region	Households (%)	Jewish individuals (%)
West Boca	14	20
Central Boca	31	29
East Boca	21	23
Delray Beach	34	28

Figure 2.3: Dot density map of Jewish households in South Palm Beach County

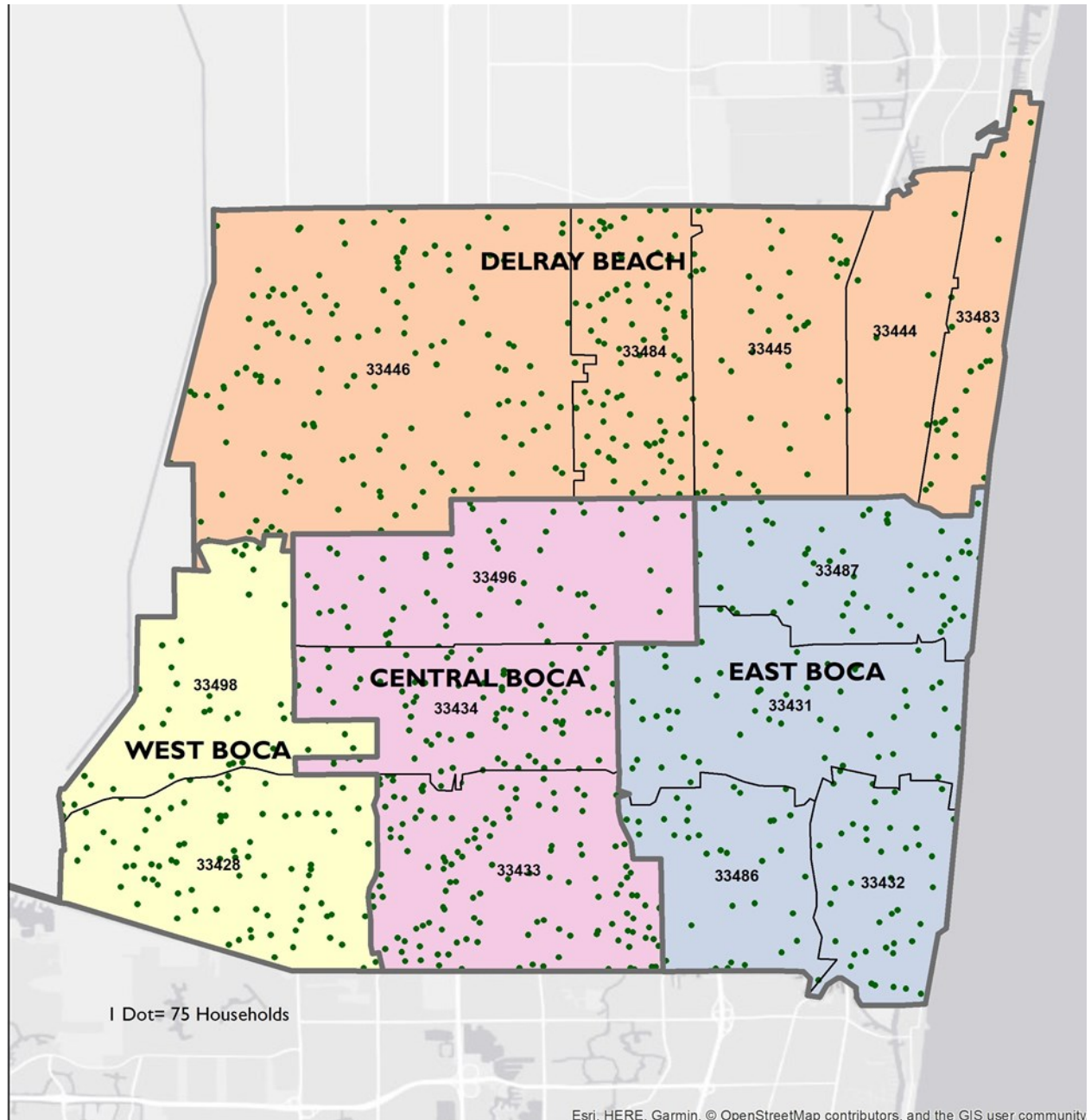


Table 2.8 displays the distribution across the region by age. Relatively few senior citizens live in West Boca Raton or in East Boca Raton; a plurality live in Delray Beach. The largest portion of Jewish children, 42%, are being raised in West Boca Raton. Jewish adults ages 18-34 are fairly evenly distributed across South Palm Beach County, with 23-28% in each region.

Residency and Length of Residence

The Jews of South Palm Beach County have been living in the area for an average of 15.6 years. Thirty-six percent have lived in the area for under a decade, 28% for 10-19 years, and 36% for 20 years or longer. Seventeen percent of Jewish households rent their homes in South Palm Beach; the remainder are homeowners.

Table 2.8: Geographic region of Jews by age

	Age 0-17 (%)	Age 18-34 (%)	Age 35-49 (%)	Age 50-64 (%)	Age 65-79 (%)	Age 80+ (%)
West Boca	42	26	33	10	7	9
Central Boca	19	28	19	33	37	36
East Boca	28	23	29	30	10	9
Delray Beach	10	23	19	26	46	45

Chapter 3: Demographic Snapshot of Seasonal Residents

This overview describes the characteristics of the seasonal Jewish residents of South Palm Beach County and compares them to the year-round population. For the purposes of this report, seasonal residents are those who live in the area between four and nine months of the year; year-round residents live in the area for 10-12 months. In addition, the study found approximately 3,100 Jewish households who reside in South Palm Beach County for less than four months of the year and who are not included in the report.

Seasonal Jewish Population

The seasonal Jewish population of South Palm Beach County includes an estimated 12,700 households (Table 3.1). It is comprised of 23,000 Jewish adults and 1,400 non-Jewish adults. There are fewer than 100 Jewish children who live in seasonal households. Seasonal residents comprise 18% of the Jewish households and 20% of the adult Jewish population.

The year-round Jewish population of 93,900 Jewish adults and 16,200 non-Jewish adults resides in 56,300 households.

Table 3.1: Adults of South Palm Beach County by seasonality

	Seasonal	Year-round
Jewish households	12,700	56,300
Jewish adults	23,000	93,900
JBR adults	22,600	73,000
JNR adults	400	14,500
JMR adults	--	6,400
Non-Jewish adults in Jewish households	1,400	16,200
Jewish background	0	2,900
Jewish affinity	600	2,500
Not Jewish	700	10,700

Age Composition of Seasonal Residents

The seasonal Jewish population of South Palm Beach County is older than the year-round Jewish population (Table 3.2). About three quarters (77%) are senior citizens 65 and older; the majority are ages 65-79. The median age of Jewish adult seasonal residents is 72, compared to 56 for year-round residents.

Jewish Denominations of Seasonal Residents

Seasonal residents of South Palm Beach County are about as likely as year-round residents to identify with the Orthodox, Reform, or “other” denominational movements (Table 3.3). They are nearly twice as likely to identify as Conservative. Year-round Jewish residents are three times as likely to identify with no denomination.

Table 3.2: Age of Jewish adults by seasonality

	Seasonal (%)	Year-round (%)
18-34	3	24
35-49	1	15
50-64	19	26
65-79	60	21
80+	17	14

Table 3.3: Denomination of Jews by seasonality

	Seasonal (%)	Year-round (%)
Orthodox	9	8
Conservative	39	22
Reform	40	36
Other	1	1
Secular/Just Jewish	11	34

Inmarriage and Inter marriage of Jewish Seasonal Residents

Most (83%) Jewish seasonal residents are married, as compared to 63% of Jewish year-round residents (Table 3.4). Among married Jewish seasonal residents, nearly all are inmarried.

Geographic Distribution

Jewish seasonal residents are more likely to live in Central Boca Raton (46% of households, 45% of individuals) and Delray Beach (43% of households, 36% of individuals) than elsewhere in South Palm Beach County. Very few, 2%, live in West Boca Raton. The year-round Jewish population, however, is much more evenly distributed, with 23-27% of individuals living in each section of South Palm Beach County.

Table 3.4: Marital status by seasonality (includes engaged couples and partners who live together)

	Seasonal (%)	Year-round (%)
Married	83	63
Inmarried	95	81
Intermarried	5	19

Table 3.5: Geographic distribution by seasonality

Geographic region	Households		Individuals	
	Seasonal (%)	Year-round (%)	Seasonal (%)	Year-round (%)
West Boca	2	14	2	23
Central Boca	46	27	45	26
East Boca	9	24	17	24
Delray Beach	43	35	36	27

Seasonal Residency and Length of Residence

Twenty-nine percent of Jewish households have multiple homes, including all households classified as seasonal and 12% of households classified as year-round.²⁰ Of households with a second home, 54% consider South Palm Beach County to be their primary residence. This figure includes 46% of seasonal and 86% of year-round households.

Seasonal residents have spent fewer years in South Palm Beach County than year-round residents. The average length of time seasonal residents have owned or rented a home in the area is 13 years, compared to 16 years for year-round residents.

The large majority of those with multiple homes, 63%, have their second home in the northeastern United States. Twenty percent have a second home elsewhere in Florida, 9% in the Midwestern United States, 3% elsewhere in the United States, 1% in Israel, and the remainder in some other country.

Two thirds (65%) of households with multiple homes do not anticipate changing the amount of time they spend in South Palm Beach County; 27% plan on increasing their time locally, and 8% plan on decreasing it.

Chapter 4: Patterns of Jewish Engagement

The diversity of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community is reflected not only by the varied demographics of its residents, but also in their many types of Jewish identification and means of engagement in Jewish life. Examining the ways in which Jewish adults not only view, but also enact their Jewish identities is necessary to understand this population and the ways in which Jewish life in the region can be enhanced. In this chapter, the Index of Jewish Engagement, created uniquely for the South Palm Beach County Jewish community, provides a new lens for understanding Jewish life in the region.

Background: Classifications of Jewish Identity

The best-known system to categorize Jewish identity is denominational affiliation. Jewish denominational categories, at least in the past, closely correlated with measures of Jewish engagement, including behaviors and attitudes.²¹ However, because these labels are self-assigned, their meaning varies from one individual to another. In addition, an increasing number of US Jews do not affiliate with any specific denomination (30% in 2013).²² Thus, denominational labels are limited in their ability to convey Jewish behavior and attitudes.

Many Jewish demographic studies, including the Pew Research Center's 2013 national study, classify Jewish adults as either "Jewish by religion" (JBR; they respond that they are "Jewish" when asked about their religious identity) or "Jews of no religion" (JNR; they consider themselves to be Jewish through their ethnic or cultural background rather than their religious identity, or they consider themselves to be Jewish and another religion). These classifications are based primarily on a set of screening questions that center on religious identity: What is your religion? Do you consider yourself to be Jewish aside from religion? Were either of your parents Jewish? Were you raised Jewish? For purposes of this report and comparability with other studies, we used a variant of this set of classifications for the population estimates shown in Chapter 2.

Although research has shown that Jewish adults who are "JBR" are, overall, more engaged Jewishly than those who are "JNR," these classifications are too broad to provide insight into the range of Jewish behaviors and attitudes within each group. We developed a new set of categories specifically for this study that are based on behavior rather than self-identification. We refer to these categories as the "Index of Jewish Engagement."

Index of Jewish Engagement

We specifically designed the Index of Jewish Engagement to identify opportunities for increased engagement for groups with different needs and interests. The Index focuses on behaviors—the ways in which individuals occupy and involve themselves in Jewish life. Such behaviors are concrete and measurable expressions of Jewish identity. Behaviors, in many cases, are correlated with demographic characteristics, background, and attitudes. 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 skills and resources that enable them to participate, and the opportunities available and known to them. We are interested in how South Palm Beach County Jews think about their Jewish identities and participate in Jewish life.

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 the typology are inclusive of the different 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 and home-based practices, ritual practices, personal activities, and organizational participation. The behavioral measures include:

- **Family holiday celebrations:** Participating in a Passover seder and lighting Hanukkah candles. (Family holiday celebrations 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 can be practiced at home without institutional affiliation.)
- **Ritual practices:** Keeping kosher, lighting Shabbat candles or having a Shabbat dinner, attending religious services regularly, attending High Holiday services, and fasting on Yom Kippur.
- **Communal activities:** Belonging to a synagogue, belonging to a JCC or other Jewish organization, attending Jewish programs, volunteering for Jewish organizations, and donating to Jewish causes.
- **Personal activities:** Engaging in Jewish cultural activities (books, music, TV, museums), reading Jewish material (newsletter, website), following news about Israel, discussing Jewish topics, and eating traditional Jewish foods.

We employed a statistical tool, latent class analysis (LCA),²³ 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 five unique patterns of Jewish engagement.

Patterns of Jewish Engagement

Within the set of behaviors listed above, Jewish individuals make unique choices regarding their participation in Jewish private and communal life. Nonetheless, individual sets of choices can be clustered into patterns of behavior that are similar to one another. Applying LCA to the data from the survey responses yielded five distinct patterns of behavior and engagement with Jewish life in South Palm Beach County. The patterns are summarized in Figure 4.1 and described below. For each pattern, Table 4.1 shows the level of participation in each of the 18 behaviors that were used to construct the Index of Jewish Engagement.

Using LCA, each Jewish adult in the community was classified into one of the five engagement groups according to the pattern that most closely matches the individual's participation in different types of Jewish behaviors. The classification enables us to understand the characteristics of people who participate in Jewish life in different ways: the demographics, background, and attitudes that are associated with each pattern of participation. 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.

The five patterns differ both in degree and types of engagement with a broad set of Jewish behaviors. Two patterns exhibit engagement with all aspects of Jewish life, including holiday, ritual, personal, and communal behaviors. For Jews with the "Immersed" pattern, all of the behaviors are common and are practiced by the vast majority of those with this behavior pattern. Those with the "Involved" pattern have high rates of participation in almost all of the activities, though less so than the Immersed group. Additionally, the Involved participate in many of these activities *less frequently* than do the Immersed.

Two groups represent medium levels of engagement. In comparing these two groups, the "Communal" group has lower levels of Jewish holiday observance but higher participation in Jewish cultural and home-based activities. In contrast, the "Holiday" group has lower levels of Jewish cultural and personal activity but higher Jewish holiday and synagogue participation.

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 South Palm Beach County Jewish community. Both the set of classifications and their names are derived directly from data collected for this study.

The lowest level of engagement is found in the “Personal” group. Among this group, there is little ritual or communal behavior. The majority of Jewish activities are conducted in a personal or private way rather than in community or with family.

As shown in Figure 4.1, the groups are nearly equal in size and each group includes approximately one fifth of the community. The remainder of this chapter describes the distinguishing characteristics of each of the five groups.

Jewish Behaviors and Jewish Engagement

As shown in Table 4.1, the Jewish behaviors across the five engagement patterns vary widely, but all patterns include at least some behaviors that represent a connection to Jewish life. This section focuses on the 18 behaviors that were used to construct the typology of Jewish engagement. Later chapters of this report relate these patterns to specific areas of Jewish communal engagement and attitudes about Judaism and Jewish life.

Figure 4.1: Patterns of Jewish engagement

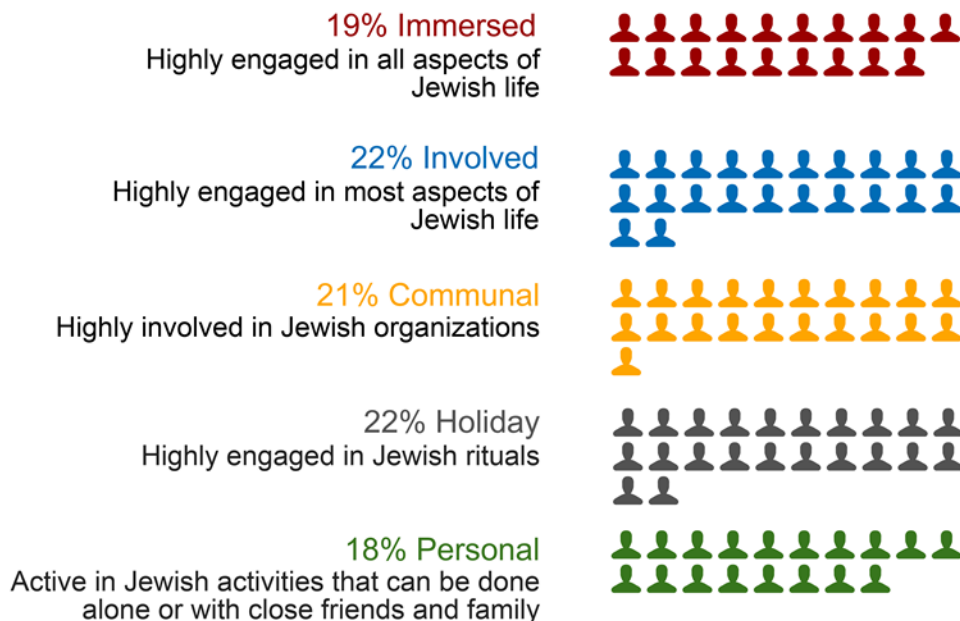


Table 4.1 shows the proportion of Jewish adults within each group who engage in the listed behavior. Where there are two rows for the same behavior, the first shows the proportion who have participated in that behavior at all in the specified time period. The indented row below shows the proportion who engage in the behavior frequently (monthly or more for attending religious services, weekly or more for the remaining items).

Family holidays

The home-based holidays of Passover and Hanukkah are widely observed among the Immersed, Involved, Communal, and Holiday groups. One third (32%) of the Personal group attended a seder, and about two thirds (67%) lit Hanukkah candles in the past year.

Ritual activities

Other than keeping kosher, all ritual practices are observed by almost all of those in the Immersed group. Observance of the High Holidays, either through synagogue attendance or fasting on Yom Kippur, is nearly universal among the Involved, but the other practices are followed less frequently by the Involved Jews. Levels of keeping kosher, as well as frequency of Shabbat observance and synagogue service attendance, are among the primary distinctions between the Immersed and the Involved.

None of the Personal or Communal Jews attend High Holiday services, compared to 40% of the Holiday Jews. Among the Holiday Jews, three quarters (76%) attended religious services at least once in the past year compared to just over half (54%) of the Communal. Levels of Shabbat observance, in contrast, are similar among the Holiday and Communal Jews. Few of the Personal Jews observe any Jewish rituals.

Communal activities

Communal activities include memberships and participation in synagogue and organizational life. Nearly all (92%) of the Immersed are synagogue members, as are over half (60%) of the Involved and 21% of the Holiday Jews. The Communal Jews are far more likely to donate to Jewish organizations, volunteer for Jewish organizations, and attend Jewish programs, compared to the Holiday and Personal Jews.

Personal activities

Nearly all Immersed Jews participate in the personal activities frequently. The Communal and Involved Jews participate in personal activities at similar levels, although the Communal Jews do most activities more frequently. The Personal and Holiday Jews participate in personal activities at similar rates, but neither group engages in the activities frequently.

Table 4.1: Behaviors used to construct engagement index

	Personal (%)	Holiday (%)	Communal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)
Family holidays					
Attended seder	32	90	87	97	100
Lit Hanukkah candles	67	90	79	91	97
Ritual practices					
Attended High Holiday services	0	40	0	97	95
Fasted on Yom Kippur*	5	79	55	85	99
Ever attended services**	4	76	54	100	98
Attend services monthly or more	0	6	1	22	68
Keep kosher in any way	0	11	1	7	60
Ever celebrate Shabbat	0	46	42	64	97
Usually celebrate Shabbat***	0	4	1	1	41
Communal activities					
Synagogue member	2	21	1	60	92
Jewish organization member	0	45	49	63	72
Jewish organization donor**	15	48	60	93	94
Jewish organization volunteer†	0	1	19	28	42
Ever attend Jewish program**	4	18	42	60	67
Attend Jewish programs monthly or more	0	2	17	19	43
Personal activities					
Ever read Jewish material**	20	27	85	78	89
Read Jewish material monthly or more	0	8	50	39	74
Ever ate Jewish foods†	55	53	90	81	96
Eat Jewish foods weekly or more	0	7	37	17	74
Ever discussed Jewish topics†	34	62	96	95	100
Discuss Jewish topics weekly or more	0	5	45	33	89
Ever accessed Jewish websites†	18	11	71	74	97
Access Jewish websites weekly or more	1	2	30	14	78
Ever consume Jewish culture†	24	7	68	69	88
Consumed Jewish culture weekly or more	0	8	50	39	74
Ever sought Israel news†	49	54	89	85	98
Seek Israel news weekly or more	13	16	45	37	89

* Indicates respondent fasted for all or part of day, or could not fast for medical reasons

** Indicates a timeframe of the past year

*** Indicates respondent had Shabbat dinner two or more times per month, or usually or always lit Shabbat candles

† Indicates a timeframe of the past month

Demographics and Jewish Engagement

The patterns of engagement are associated with demographic characteristics of respondents. Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 show the distribution of selected demographic characteristics within the Jewish engagement categories. 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 bottom row of each table. This comparison indicates where each engagement group differs from the overall population. See Appendix D for a table showing the distribution of engagement groups within each demographic characteristic (i.e., column totals rather than row totals).

Note that the overall rows in these tables do not necessarily match those given elsewhere in the report because they are based only on the subset of Jewish adults who provided sufficient information for assignment of a Jewish engagement category.

There are some age differences across the engagement groups (Table 4.2). The Personal group has a larger share (33%) of the 18-34 year olds than do the other engagement groups. The largest share of both the Holiday and Communal groups are 50-64. The Involved and Immersed group have a larger share of 65-79 year olds compared to the other engagement groups.

Table 4.2: Age by Jewish engagement

Age	Age 18-34 (%)	Age 35-49 (%)	Age 50-64 (%)	Age 65-79 (%)	Age 80 + (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	20	16	22	29	15	100
Engagement						
Personal	33	10	23	22	13	100
Holiday	21	19	25	24	11	100
Communal	14	12	30	28	17	100
Involved	16	8	23	35	19	100
Immersed	14	15	23	36	13	100

Those in the Personal group are least likely to be married (55%; Table 4.3), and far less likely to be inmarried than those in the other groups. About one quarter of those in the Personal, Holiday, and Immersed groups have children at home, compared to smaller numbers of the Communal and Involved.

The geographic distribution within each engagement group differs from that of the overall Jewish adult population (Table 4.4). Delray Beach is home to the largest shares of the Personal (36%) and Communal (40%) groups. Just under one third of the Holiday Jews live in each of Central Boca Raton (30%) and Delray Beach (32%), as do just over one third of the Involved (36% in Central Boca Raton, 34% in Delray Beach). Nearly half (48%) of the Immersed live in Central Boca Raton. About one third of the Involved (32%) and Immersed (36%) are seasonal residents, compared to a smaller share of the other groups.

Table 4.3: Marriage and children by Jewish engagement

	Married (%)	Inmarried (of married) (%)	Has children (%)
All Jewish adults	67	84	21
Engagement			
Personal	55	52	24
Holiday	71	89	26
Communal	61	76	13
Involved	74	94	17
Immersed	78	97	24

Table 4.4: Residence by Jewish engagement

	West Boca (%)	Central Boca (%)	East Boca (%)	Delray Beach (%)	Total (%)	Seasonal (%)	Year-round (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	17	30	20	32	100	20	80	100
Engagement								
Personal	20	15	29	36	100	5	95	100
Holiday	20	30	18	32	100	18	82	100
Communal	19	28	13	40	100	13	87	100
Involved	8	36	22	34	100	32	68	100
Immersed	7	48	17	29	100	36	64	100

Jewish Background and Jewish Engagement

The following tables describe the Jewish identity and Jewish backgrounds of those in each Jewish engagement category. Tables 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 show the distribution of selected Jewish identity characteristics within each Jewish engagement category in comparison to the overall Jewish adult population. See Appendix D for a table showing the distribution of engagement groups within each demographic characteristic (i.e., column totals rather than row totals).

Note that the overall rows in these tables do not necessarily match those given elsewhere in the report because they are based only on the subset of Jewish adults who provided sufficient information for assignment of a Jewish engagement category.

Jewish denomination corresponds closely to Jewish engagement but is not identical (Table 4.5). Seventy-six percent of the Personal Jews have no specific denomination.

Reform Jews constitute the largest shares of the Holiday group (53%) and the Involved group (51%). The Immersed group has the largest proportion of both Orthodox (35%) and Conservative (41%) Jews. Every denomination is represented in each engagement group.

Jewish backgrounds are associated with Jewish engagement in adulthood. Nearly all (87%) of South Palm Beach County Jewish adults were raised by two Jewish parents (Table 4.6), and this is true for all of the engagement groups other than the Personal. One third (36%) of the Personal Jews had any childhood Jewish education. Among the Immersed group, 80% had some childhood Jewish education, as did over two thirds of the Holiday, Communal, and Involved.

Table 4.5: Denomination by Jewish engagement

Denomination	Orthodox (%)	Conservative (%)	Reform (%)	Other (%)	None (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	8	25	37	1	28	100
Engagement						
Personal	2	6	15	1	76	100
Holiday	1	26	53	1	20	100
Communal	1	15	43	1	41	100
Involved	3	37	51	1	7	100
Immersed	35	41	14	3	7	100

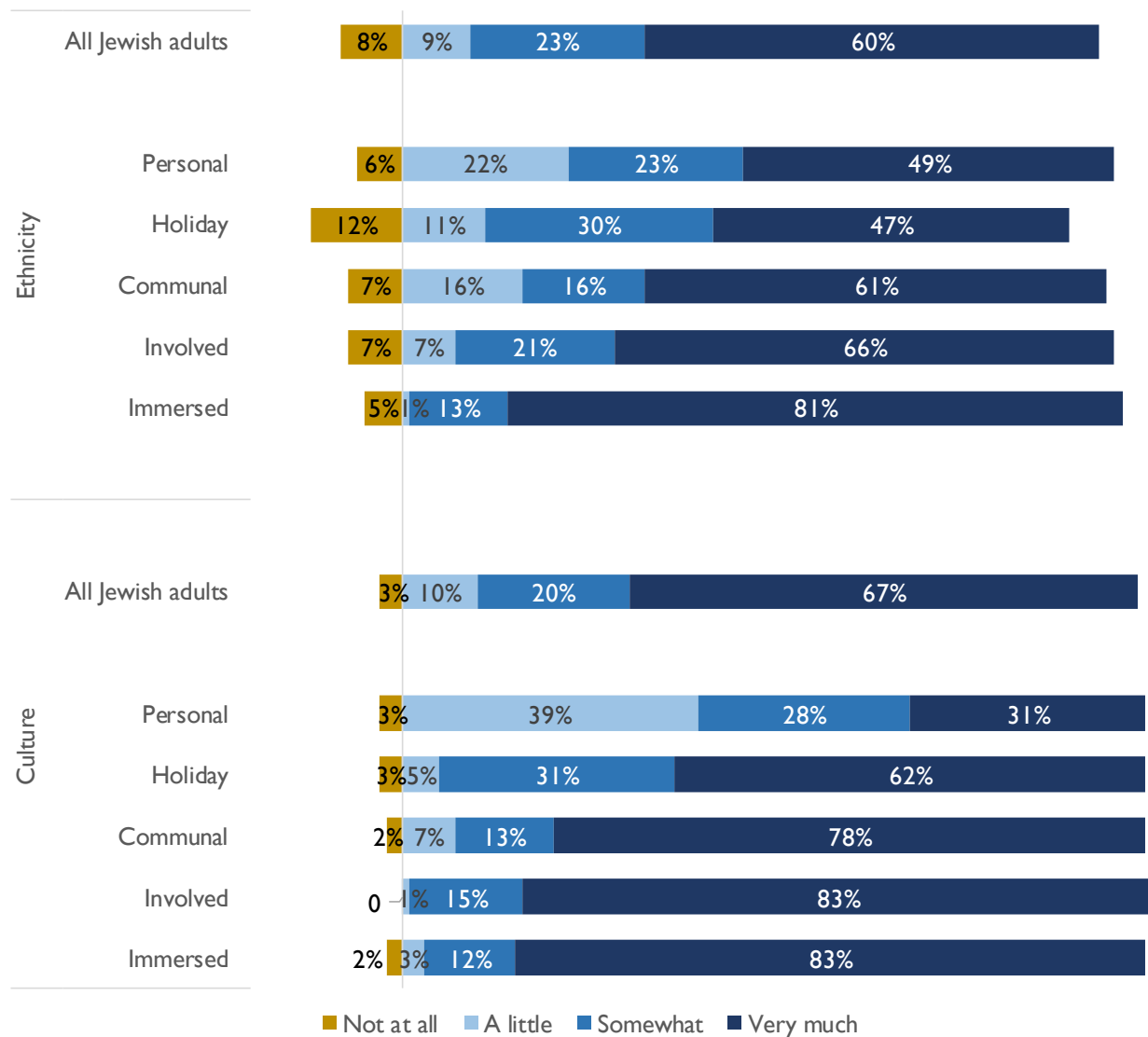
Table 4.6: Jewish background by Jewish engagement

Jewish background	Parents inmarried (%)	Had Jewish education (%)
All Jewish adults	87	64
Engagement		
Personal	63	36
Holiday	94	69
Communal	92	64
Involved	87	67
Immersed	97	80

Attitudes about Being Jewish and Jewish Engagement

Just as Jewish behaviors vary across the engagement groups, so too do attitudes about being Jewish. The figures below show responses to a set of attitudinal questions that illustrate the differences among the groups. As is evident from Figure 4.2, nearly all groups consider Judaism to be a matter of ethnicity and culture. However, the Immersed value the ethnic aspects of Judaism more strongly than do the other groups, with 81% saying it is “very much” a matter of ethnicity. About four in five of those in the Immersed, Involved, and Communal groups consider Judaism to be “very much” a matter of culture, compared to smaller shares of the other groups.

Figure 4.2: Aspects of being Jewish by engagement group: Ethnicity and culture

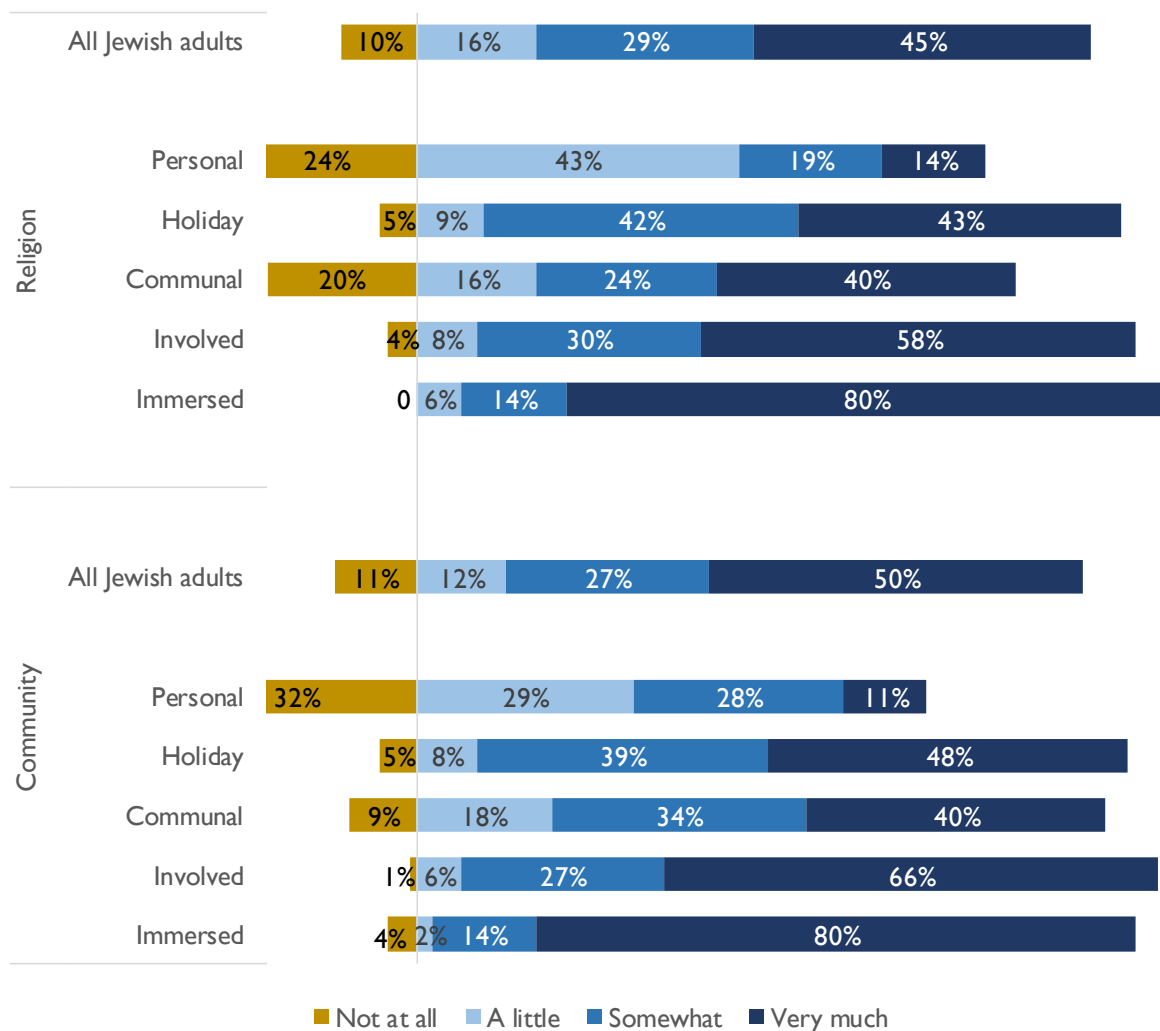


Question: To you personally, to what extent is being Jewish a matter of ethnicity?

Question: To you personally, to what extent is being Jewish a matter of culture?

Regarding the community and religious aspects of Judaism, there are larger differences in the engagement groups. Smaller shares of the Communal and Personal connect to the religious aspect of Judaism, while all of the Immersed consider Judaism to be a matter of religion, as do nearly all of the Involved and the Holiday (Figure 4.3). Among the Personal Jews, one third (32%) say that Judaism is not at all a matter of community. The Communal and Holidays Jews are similar in their feelings about the Jewish community. The Immersed are highest in considering Judaism to be a matter of community, followed by the Involved.

Figure 4.3: Aspects of being Jewish by engagement group: Religion and community

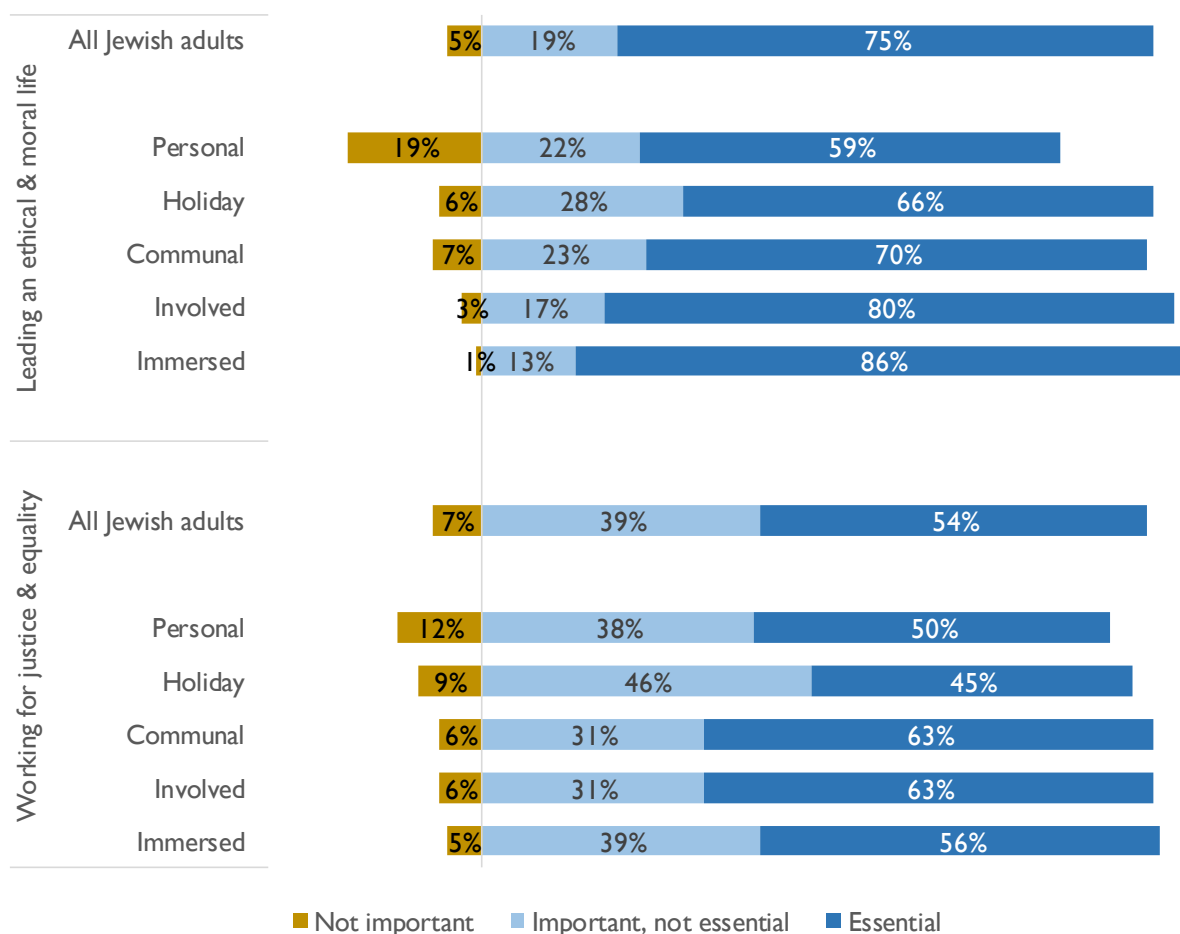


Question: To you personally, to what extent is being Jewish a matter of religion?

Question: To you personally, to what extent is being Jewish a matter of community?

To further explore the meaning of being Jewish, respondents were asked what were essential parts of being Jewish to them. In Figure 4.4, these results are presented for each engagement group. For the two dimensions, “leading an ethical and moral life” and “working for justice and equality,” the differences between the groups are not dramatic, although agreement is slightly lower for the Personal group.

Figure 4.4: Essential aspects of being Jewish by engagement group: Leading an ethical and moral life and working for justice and equality

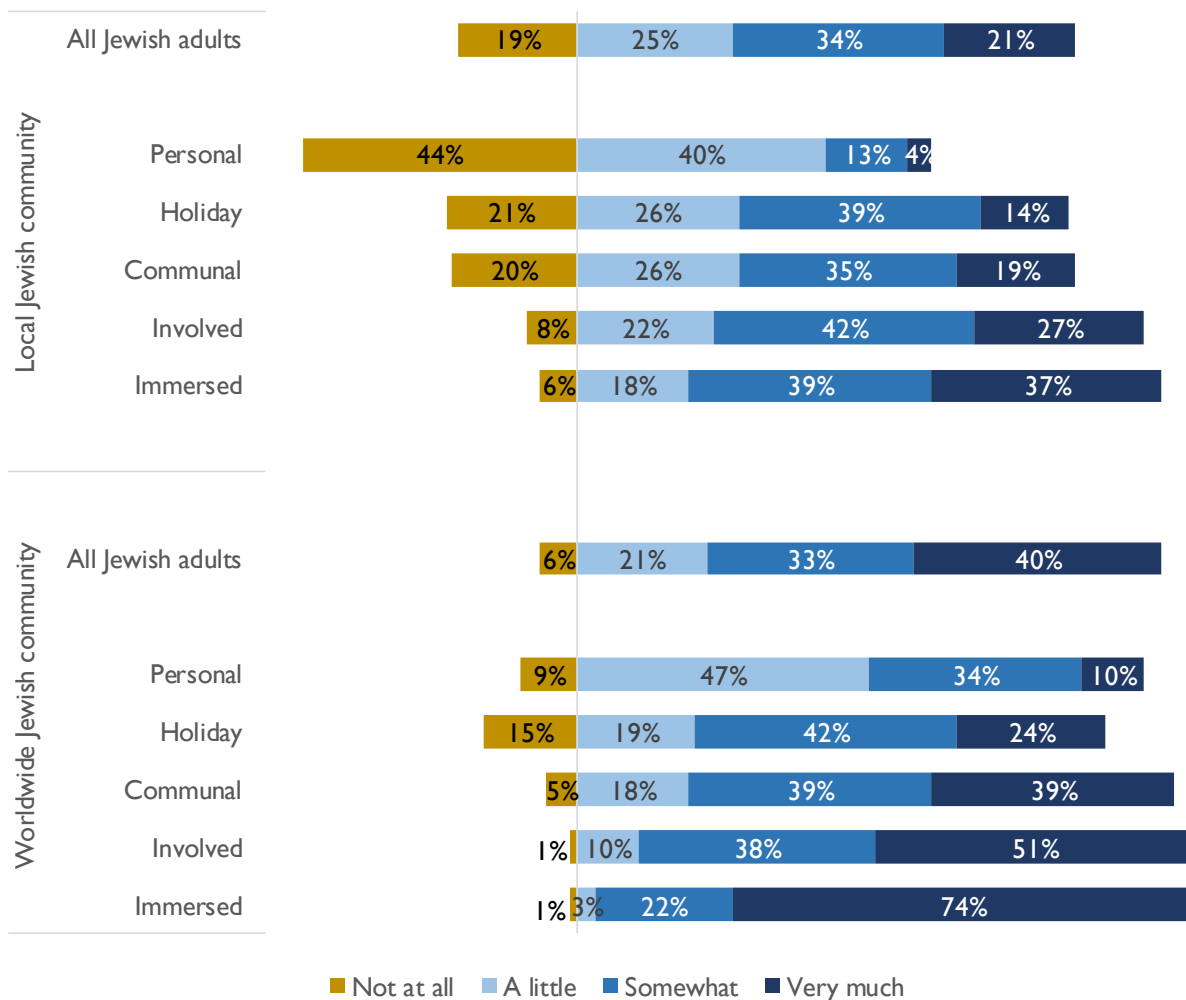


Question: How important is each of the following to what being Jewish means to you? Leading an ethical and moral life

Question: How important is each of the following to what being Jewish means to you? Working for justice and equality in society

Community connections vary widely across the engagement groups, but in all cases, connection to the global Jewish community exceeds connection to the local community (Figure 4.5). Among the Personal Jews, 44% do not feel at all connected to the local Jewish community, compared to 9% who do not feel at all connected to the worldwide Jewish community.

Figure 4.5: Feelings of connection to local and global Jewish communities by engagement group



Question: To what extent do you feel like part of the Jewish community in South Palm Beach County?
 Question: To what extent do you feel like part of a worldwide Jewish community?

Chapter 5: Jewish Children

In South Palm Beach County, with approximately 17,300 Jewish children, there are seven Jewish early childhood centers, six Jewish day schools and yeshivot, and 15 part-time Jewish schools. The community is also served by at least 19 Jewish summer overnight and day camps.

This chapter focuses on the choices that parents make regarding how to raise their children and how families take advantage—or, in some cases, do not—of South Palm Beach County’s Jewish educational opportunities. As part of that discussion, the chapter describes the landscape of educational programs, including Jewish preschools and formal Jewish education programs, both part-time and full-time; as well as informal Jewish education programs, including camp and youth groups.

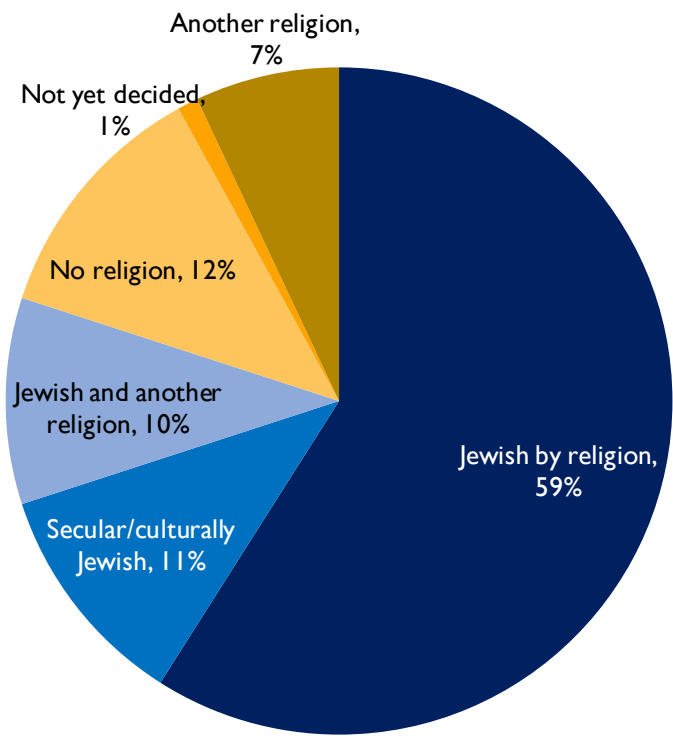
Jewish Children

Raising Jewish children does not start with educational institutions. Parents make initial decisions regarding how to raise their children: Jewish religiously or culturally, no religion, multiple religions, or even another religion. Among the 21,500 children who live in South Palm Beach County Jewish households, there are 17,300 children being raised Jewish in some way, either by religion, secularly or culturally, or as Jewish and another religion (Table 5.1, Figure 5.1). A total of 2,500 children are being raised with no religion. Parents have not yet decided how to raise an additional 200 children. Fifteen hundred children are being raised exclusively in a religion other than Judaism.

Table 5.1: Religion of children in Jewish households (rounded to nearest 100)

	Number of children
Jewish children	17,300
Jewish by religion	12,700
Secular/culturally Jewish	2,300
Jewish and another religion	2,200
Non-Jewish children	4,200
No religion	2,500
Not yet decided	200
Another religion	1,500

Figure 5.1: Religion of children in Jewish households



About one quarter (24%) of Jewish children are age five or less, about one third (34%) are between 6 to 12, and 42% are teenagers ages 13 to 18. (Table 5.2). A larger share of the non-Jewish child population are teenagers (71%) than is the case with Jewish children (42%).

Table 5.2: South Palm Beach County child population estimates by age range

Age range	Jewish children		Non-Jewish children		All children	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0-5	4,100	24%	100	2%	4,200	20%
6-12	5,800	34%	1,100	26%	6,900	32%
13-17	7,200	42%	3,000	71%	10,200	47%
Unknown age	200	1%	0	0%	200	1%
Total	17,300	100%	4,200	100%	21,500	100%

Of all children in Jewish households, 49% are being raised by inmarried parents, 22% by intermarried parents, and the remainder, 29%, by single parents. Among Jewish children, 59% have inmarried parents, 17% have intermarried parents, and 24% have single parents. Nearly three quarters (74%) of Jewish children are being raised Jewish by religion, and 14% are being raised as secular or cultural Jews.

Religion of Children by Household Characteristics

Overall, 80% of children in Jewish households are being raised Jewish in some way (Table 5.3). Nearly all parents who are part of the Holiday, Communal, Involved, and Immersed engagement groups are raising their children Jewish in some way. Nearly all children in Jewish households in Central (94%) and West (87%) Boca Raton are being raised Jewish, compared with 59% of children in Delray Beach and about three quarters (76%) in East Boca Raton. Nearly all inmarried parents are raising their children Jewish, and among children of intermarried parents, 66% are being raised exclusively Jewish, comparable to the national average.

Table 5.3: Children raised Jewish by household characteristics

	Raised Jewish in some way (%)
All children	80
Engagement	
Personal	--
Holiday	87
Communal	89
Involved	100
Immersed	97
Region	
West Boca	87
Central Boca	94
East Boca	76
Delray Beach	59
Household structure	
Inmarried	96
Intermarried	66
Single adult(s)	69

Participation in Jewish Education

Jewish education is provided in the context of Jewish preschools; formal classroom settings, such as day school and part-time supplementary school; and informal settings, including camp, youth groups, and peer trips to Israel. Overall, one third (34%) of Jewish children²⁴ in grades K-12 are enrolled in some form of Jewish education. Table 5.4 shows the overall numbers of children in each form of Jewish education. This table also displays the proportion of Jewish children who are enrolled in each form of Jewish education, among Jewish children who are age-eligible to attend that form of Jewish education.

Of Jewish children who are not yet in kindergarten, one third are currently enrolled in a Jewish preschool program. Formal Jewish education includes part-time and full-time school programs, as well as private tutoring and classes; 26% of Jewish children in grades K-12 are enrolled in formal Jewish education. Eleven percent of Jewish children in grades K-12 are

Table 5.4: Children in Jewish education

	Jewish student enrollment	Percentage of age-eligible Jewish children
Jewish preschool	1,200	33%
Any formal Jewish education, K-12	4,200	26%
Day school		
K-8	900	11%
9-12	1,100	13%
K-12	2,000	12%
Part-time school		
K-8	1,500	20%
9-12	300	3%
K-12	1,800	11%
Jewish tutoring/classes, K-12	1,800	11%
Any informal Jewish education, K-12	3,100	19%
Jewish day camp, K-12	2,100	13%
Jewish overnight camp, K-12	1,400	9%
Jewish youth group, 6-12	500	5%
Peer Israel trip, 9-12	500	6%
Any Jewish education, K-12	5,600	34%

enrolled in part-time schools, including 20% of those in grades K-8 and 3% of those in grades 9-12. For full-time day schools, 12% of K-12 students are enrolled, including 11% of K-8 Jewish students and 13% of Jewish high school students. In addition to enrollment in Jewish educational institutions, 11% of children participate in some other form of Jewish learning, such as bar or bat mitzvah tutoring, Hebrew or Yiddish language lessons, or Rosh Chodesh clubs.

Informal Jewish education refers to camps and youth groups; 19% of Jewish children in grades K-12 participate in some type of informal Jewish education. Thirteen percent of Jewish children in grades K-12 attended Jewish day camp in summer 2017, and 9% attended an overnight Jewish camp. Five percent of Jewish children in grades 6-12 participated in a Jewish youth group during the 2016-17 school year. Six percent of Jewish high school students have traveled to Israel on a peer trip.

Drivers of Participation in Jewish Education

Because decisions to participate in Jewish education are typically made by parents, those outcomes are linked with the characteristics and overall engagement of adults. Tables 5.5 and 5.6 describe the households who participate in various forms of Jewish education. In these two tables, for each household characteristic listed, the table shows the proportion of Jewish households with Jewish age-eligible children who have at least one child enrolled in that form of Jewish education.

Formal Jewish Education: Preschool, Part-time School, Day School

Families in the Immersed group participate in formal Jewish education at higher rates than other groups. A higher proportion of children in Central Boca Raton (41%) participate in formal Jewish education than elsewhere in South Palm Beach County. Twenty-one percent of intermarried households with Jewish children in grades K-12 have at least one child in part-time school. Jewish children with inmarried parents attend part-time school at lower rates, but 32% are enrolled in Jewish day schools. Households with higher self-described standards of living are less likely than less affluent families to send their children to Jewish pre-schools, more likely to send them to part-time schools, and about as likely to enroll them in day schools or private classes.

Table 5.5: Household participation in formal Jewish education

	Pre-K %	Any formal education, K-12 %	Part-time school, K-12 %	Day school, K-12 %	Jewish tutoring, K-12 %
Jewish households with age-eligible children	42	26	12	15	12
Engagement					
Personal	--	--	--	--	--
Holiday	--	22	6	15	7
Communal	--	11	4	2	7
Involved	41	31	12	14	13
Immersed	53	65	26	35	24
Region					
West Boca	--	27	9	11	13
Central Boca	36	41	16	22	15
East Boca	24	32	6	23	6
Delray Beach	--	19	18	2	12
Marriage					
Inmarried	50	53	17	32	16
Intermarried	--	21	21	0	12
Single adult(s)	--	8	3	1	7
Financial status					
Prosperous/very comfortable	30	39	21	15	14
Not prosperous	57	34	10	19	12

Informal Jewish Education: Camps and Youth Groups

For most forms of informal education, participation follows expected patterns of engagement, with participation highest among families in the Immersed group (Table 5.6).

Participation in camp, youth group, and Israel travel is higher for inmarried than intermarried families. Summer camps, day and overnight, are the most common informal education activities for intermarried families with Jewish school-age children. Families who are financially prosperous are less likely to participate in Jewish day camp but more likely to participate in Jewish overnight camp. As with formal education, participation in Jewish informal education is highest for families living in Central Boca Raton.

Table 5.6: Household participation in informal Jewish education

	Any informal education, K-12 %	Day camp, K-12 %	Overnight camp, K-12 %	Youth group, 6-12 %	Israel trip, 9-12 %
Jewish households with age-eligible children	21	18	11	7	7
Engagement					
Personal	--	--	--	--	--
Holiday	22	24	5	3	3
Communal	17	21	12	5	--
Involved	19	8	8	11	10
Immersed	45	36	29	16	30
Region					
West Boca	28	23	7	4	1
Central Boca	35	25	24	14	30
East Boca	11	6	4	7	6
Delray Beach	15	10	6	9	6
Marriage					
Inmarried	34	31	18	13	21
Intermarried	14	20	4	--	--
Single adult(s)	13	3	5	6	5
Financial status					
Prosperous/very comfortable	23	12	21	13	14
Not prosperous	26	20	9	8	13

Chapter 6: Synagogue and Ritual Life

Religious and ritual observance constitute one way in which Jews in South Palm Beach County express their Jewish identities. Synagogues have long been the central communal and religious “home” for US Jews, and membership in a congregation is one of the key ways Jews affiliate with the Jewish community. Synagogue membership notwithstanding, many Jews participate in rituals on a regular or intermittent basis at home.

Synagogues and Congregations

In South Palm Beach County, 31% of households (approximately 20,500) belong to a synagogue or another Jewish worship community of some type (Table 6.1). Thirty-six percent of Jewish adults live in synagogue-member households, comparable to that of the rest of the country (39%) but similar to rates found in 2005 (33%; not shown).

Synagogue affiliation models appear to be changing. In many cities, even as overall synagogue membership rates are declining, alternatives to “brick-and-mortar” synagogues such as Chabad and High Holiday congregations have grown in popularity, and voluntary contributions have replaced dues in some congregations.²⁵ For this study, respondents indicated whether they were members of “a Jewish congregation, such as a synagogue, temple, *minyan*, *chavurah*, or High Holiday congregation.” Members were asked to name each congregation (up to five) and, for each one, to indicate whether they pay dues, consider themselves members without paying dues, or dues are not required for membership. Using this information, all congregations that could be identified were coded with a type and denomination.

Twenty percent of households are members of a local synagogue in South Palm Beach County (Table 6.1). Eleven percent belong to a congregation outside of South Palm Beach County — either in the areas where seasonal residents have their other homes or in adjacent Jewish communities (e.g., Broward County). One percent of households belong to both local and non-local synagogues (not shown in table).

Synagogue membership is nearly universal among those in the Immersed group (89%). Fifty-four percent of those in the Involved group and 19% of those in the Holiday group are synagogue members. Very few in the Communal or Personal groups have joined a congregation. Geographically, rates of congregational membership are highest in Central Boca Raton. While senior citizens are the most likely (34%) to belong to congregation of some type, along with young adults ages 18-34, they are least likely to be members of congregations in South Palm Beach County; about half of senior citizens' congregational memberships are in other communities.

Table 6.1: Household synagogue membership

	Any synagogue member (%)	Local synagogue member (%)	Out of area synagogue member (%)
All Jewish households	31	20	11
Engagement			
Personal	< 1	< 1	0
Holiday	19	13	6
Communal	1	< 1	< 1
Involved	54	26	28
Immersed	89	65	26
Region			
West Boca	22	18	5
Central Boca	45	30	17
East Boca	25	16	9
Delray Beach	29	15	14
Respondent age			
18-34	21	17	4
35-49	27	26	2
50-64	29	22	8
65-79	34	18	17
80 +	34	16	18
Residence			
Seasonal	58	15	45
Year-round	25	21	5

More than half (58%) of seasonal households belong to a synagogue of some kind, but fewer of them (15%) belong to local congregations than do year-round households (21%). Among synagogue member households, 32% are dues-paying members of brick-and-mortar synagogues, and 13% indicate that they are members of synagogues but do not pay dues—including those congregations where dues are not required (Table 6.2). Alternative congregational structures that South Palm Beach County households affiliate with include Chabad (14% of member households) and a minyan or chavurah (9% of member households). Five percent of local member households belong to multiple synagogues or worship groups;

Table 6.2: Household membership in congregations of different types

	Brick-and-mortar synagogue, pays dues (%)	Chabad (%)	Brick-and- mortar synagogue, no dues (%)	Independent minyan or High Holiday congregation (%)
Synagogue-member households	32	14	13	9
Engagement				
Personal	--	--	--	--
Holiday	15	11	30	13
Communal	--	--	--	--
Involved	26	8	11	10
Immersed	42	19	12	9
Region				
West Boca	40	25	29	5
Central Boca	38	16	11	9
East Boca	34	10	13	12
Delray Beach	23	10	12	10
Respondent age				
18-34	40	12	22	9
35-49	41	45	22	9
50-64	36	13	20	13
65-79	29	6	10	8
80 +	30	0	7	10
Residence				
Seasonal	17	4	2	3
Year-round	40	19	20	14

in all, 2% of member households belong to both a brick-and-mortar synagogue and an alternative (not shown in table).

Jews in the Immersed group are among the most likely to pay dues to a brick-and-mortar synagogue, with 42% doing so. Jews younger than 50 are more likely than their older counterparts to belong to a brick-and-mortar synagogue. One quarter of Jews living in West Boca Raton belong to a Chabad. Thirty percent of Jews in the Holiday group say they belong to a brick-and-mortar congregation but do not pay dues. Year-round Jewish residents are more likely than seasonal Jewish residents to belong to all types of local congregations.

Among households who are members of brick-and-mortar synagogues, 33% are members of Orthodox, 28% Conservative, and 32% Reform congregations (Table 6.3). Nine percent are members of synagogues of other denominations (for example, Renewal or Reconstructionist) or no denomination.

Among the 64% of Jewish adults who do not currently belong to a Jewish congregation, over one quarter (28%) of Jewish adults have never belonged to a synagogue and over one third (37%) were members at some point in their lives. Twenty-eight percent of former members once belonged to a congregation in South Palm Beach County. Forty-three percent of former members left their congregation in the previous decade, 26% left 10-19 years in the past, and 31% left 20 or more years previously.

Table 6.3: Denomination of brick-and-mortar synagogues (total exceeds 100% because multiple options could be selected)

	Percentage of brick-and-mortar member households
Orthodox	33
Conservative	28
Reform	32
Other denomination, nondenominational	9

Synagogue Participation

Both members and non-members of synagogues attend religious services (Table 6.4). Two thirds (68%) of all Jewish adults attended at least one religious service in the past year, with attendance universal or nearly so for those in the Involved (100%) and Immersed (97%) groups. Of the whole community, 19% attended services monthly or more, and 46% attended High Holiday services in 2017. Large majorities of the Involved and Immersed groups said they felt comfortable and had their spiritual needs met the last time they attended services; few felt disconnected. Although majorities of Holiday and Communal Jews attended services at least once in the past year, Holiday Jews were more likely than Communal Jews to attend services during the High Holidays, and more likely to feel comfortable and have their spiritual needs met. Although only 13% of Jewish adults overall said they felt disconnected when they attended services, 25% of Holiday Jews and 21% of Involved Jews felt disconnected.

Table 6.4: Synagogue participation

	Attended services			At last service attended...		
	Ever (%)	Monthly + (%)	High Holidays (%)	Felt comfortable (%)	Spiritual needs met (%)	Felt disconnected (%)
All Jewish adults	68	19	46	54	44	13
Engagement						
Personal	4	0	0	2	1	0
Holiday	76	6	40	49	45	25
Communal	54	1	0	34	24	16
Involved	100	22	97	80	71	21
Immersed	97	68	95	86	71	11
Region						
West Boca	61	10	24	50	38	15
Central Boca	77	27	63	57	51	17
East Boca	63	22	48	48	39	16
Delray Beach	64	14	46	43	35	13
Respondent age						
18-34	63	20	39	48	42	18
35-49	70	20	39	55	38	25
50-64	62	14	44	47	43	14
65-79	75	22	58	52	44	9
80 +	65	16	45	48	41	11
Residence						
Seasonal	83	28	74	58	49	10
Year-round	64	17	40	48	41	16
Synagogue						
Member	97	50	92	82	71	15
Non-member	52	3	23	33	28	15

Jews living in Central Boca Raton were more likely to attend services “ever” or “monthly,” as well as during the High Holidays in 2017; they were also more likely to have positive experiences when they did attend. Younger and older Jews had similar rates of attendance of services “at all,” but Jews under 50 were less likely to go during the High Holidays than were Jews over 50. The youngest and oldest Jews were least likely to feel comfortable at services. Seasonal residents were more likely to attend services and to have positive experiences at them.

As would be expected, nearly all synagogue members attended services at least once during the year and during the High Holidays, compared to half (52%) and one quarter (23%) of those who did not belong to synagogues. Members and non-members were equally likely to feel disconnected when at services, but members were much more likely to feel comfortable and to have their spiritual needs met.

Ritual Practices

The majority of South Palm Beach County’s Jewish adults mark Jewish holidays over the course of the year, with 85% lighting Hanukkah candles and 84% attending a Passover seder (Table 6.5). Hanukkah celebrations are nearly universal among the Immersed, Involved, and Holiday engagement groups but less frequent among members of the Communal and Personal groups. By contrast, Shabbat candle-lighting and Shabbat meal attendance is widespread among those in the Immersed group but are less frequent for all other groups. Half of Jewish adults fasted on Yom Kippur (excluding those who could not do so for medical reasons). That includes nearly all Immersed Jews, and majorities of Holiday and Involved Jews. With the exception of Personal Jews (40%), majorities (79-98%) of each engagement group have a mezuzah somewhere in their home. Relatively few Jews in South Palm Beach County keep kosher at home, but 60% of the Immersed group do.

Although Jews across South Palm Beach County light Hanukkah candles at similar rates, those in Central Boca Raton are more likely to engage in the other ritual behaviors. Jews between the ages of 18-34 are most likely to light Hanukkah candles and celebrate Shabbat, but least likely to attend a seder, fast during Yom Kippur, or have a mezuzah in their home. Seasonal residents are more likely than year-round residents to engage in all the ritual behaviors, as are synagogue members compared to non-members.

Table 6.5: Ritual practice

	Light Hanukkah candles in typical year (%)	Attend Passover seder in typical year (%)	Ever light Shabbat candles in past year (%)	Ever have Shabbat meal in past month (%)	Fasted on Yom Kippur last year (%)*	Has mezuzah in home (%)	Keep kosher at home (%)
All Jewish adults	85	84	47	33	51	81	16
Engagement							
Personal	67	32	0	0	3	40	0
Holiday	90	90	40	24	63	86	11
Communal	79	87	35	14	34	79	1
Involved	91	97	55	37	68	94	7
Immersed	97	100	92	79	89	98	60
Region							
West Boca	87	74	38	26	49	73	13
Central Boca	85	90	56	42	61	87	24
East Boca	88	74	40	27	50	73	13
Delray Beach	84	82	41	25	49	81	10
Respondent age							
18-34	96	75	47	34	45	64	12
35-49	89	89	44	35	58	74	28
50-64	87	81	46	30	56	86	15
65-79	78	86	45	27	54	83	14
80 +	78	79	40	32	46	91	13
Residence							
Seasonal	88	97	59	39	69	90	23
Year-round	84	78	41	29	47	78	13
Synagogue							
Member	91	97	72	60	78	95	34
Non-member	82	75	30	15	39	72	6

*Among those who did not fast are 15% of Jewish adults who could not do so for medical reasons

Compared to 2005, similar proportions of Jews in the community “usually” or “always” light Shabbat candles and keep kosher at home, and smaller proportions attend religious services “ever” or “monthly” (Table 6.6). Compared to US Jews as a whole, South Palm Beach County Jews are about as likely to fast during Yom Kippur but attend services slightly less frequently; they light Shabbat candles at slightly lower rates than the national Jewish community.

Table 6.6: Ritual practice in South Palm Beach County 2018, South Palm Beach County 2005, and Pew 2013

	South Palm Beach County 2018 (%)	South Palm Beach County 2005 (%)	Pew 2013 (%)
Shabbat candles in past year			
Never	53	55	53
Sometimes	27	22	24
Usually	7	5	6
Always	13	17	16
Religious service attendance in past year			
Never	32	28	22
Less than monthly	49	52	55
Monthly or more	19	20	23
Other rituals			
Keep a kosher home	16	14	22
Fasted during Yom Kippur last year*	51	---	53
*This proportion excludes those who could not fast for medical reasons			

Chapter 7: Social and Community Life

The South Palm Beach County Jewish community offers diverse avenues for communal participation. Jews join local, regional, and national membership organizations and attend an array of cultural, educational, and religious events. They volunteer and donate their time to Jewish and non-Jewish causes. Through their participation, they make Jewish friends and strengthen their ties to the local community. This chapter describes the multiple ways in which Jews in South Palm Beach County interact and participate with their local peers and institutions and points to measures that can enhance these connections.

Organizations and Activities

South Palm Beach County's Jews participate in a wide range of Jewish organizations and activities. Seventeen percent of Jewish households say they currently affiliate with the Adolph and Rose Levis Jewish Community Center (JCC), and one third of households belong to at least one local Jewish organization other than a synagogue or JCC, such as a chapter of Hadassah (Table 7.1). Aside from synagogues or the JCC, 20% of Jewish households pay dues to a local Jewish organization. Those in the Immersed group are most likely to be members of an organization. Residents of West Boca Raton, where the JCC is located, are most likely to affiliate with the JCC, while those living in Central Boca Raton and Delray Beach are more likely to belong and pay dues to other local Jewish organizations.

Older Jews are more likely than younger Jews to belong or to pay dues to a local Jewish organization, but the pattern with the JCC is less clear. Seasonal and year-round households are about as likely to affiliate with the JCC, but the latter are more likely to belong and pay dues to other local Jewish organizations.

Households with multiple residences also participate in Jewish communities outside of South Palm Beach County. Eighteen percent of multiple-home households belong to a Jewish organization based in another community, and 20% pay dues to organizations in other communities that are not synagogues or JCCs. Only 4% and 3%, respectively, of South Palm Beach County households belong and pay dues to a non-local Jewish organization without also belonging and paying dues to a local one.

Table 7.1: Household memberships and activities

	Affiliate with Levis JCC (%)	Belong to other local organization (%)	Pay dues to local organization (%)
All Jewish households	17	33	20
Engagement			
Personal	0	< 1	< 1
Holiday	12	21	8
Communal	21	37	21
Involved	26	45	31
Immersed	22	60	45
Region			
West Boca	45	26	15
Central Boca	22	39	26
East Boca	12	23	14
Delray Beach	9	38	28
Respondent age			
18-34	10	14	5
35-49	22	14	6
50-64	13	33	19
65-79	20	43	31
80 +	18	43	34
Residence			
Seasonal	16	45	41
Year-round	17	33	20

More than one third (37%) of Jews in South Palm Beach County attended a program or event within the past year, with 13% doing so at least monthly, and 24% doing so less than monthly (Table 7.2). A greater share of the population, 59%, read a Jewish organization's materials in the past year, with 31% reading material at least monthly and 28% reading material less frequently. Those in the Immersed and Involved groups are most likely to attend any programs, but the Involved and Communal groups are about equally likely to attend programs monthly or more frequently. Communal and Immersed Jews are most likely to read organizations' materials, both "ever" and on a monthly basis.

Residents of Central Boca Raton attend Jewish programs more frequently than residents of other neighborhoods, possibly because most of the programs are hosted by institutions located nearby. They are, however, about as likely as residents of East Boca Raton and Delray Beach to read organizations' materials. Older Jews are more likely to read local organizations' materials, both "ever" and monthly or more frequently.

Among Jews with multiple homes, about half (49%) participated in a program or event in the location where they have their other home; 21% say they participated at least once a month. Sixty-six percent read materials from a Jewish organization based in their other community, and 35% did so at least monthly.

Table 7.2: South Palm Beach County Jewish organizational participation in past year

	Attend program		Read materials	
	Ever (%)	Monthly + (%)	Ever (%)	Monthly + (%)
All Jewish adults	37	13	59	31
Engagement				
Personal	4	0	20	0
Holiday	18	2	27	7
Communal	41	16	85	49
Involved	57	15	76	33
Immersed	62	32	84	65
Region				
West Boca	26	13	50	30
Central Boca	46	15	61	33
East Boca	37	11	57	23
Delray Beach	35	14	61	36
Respondent age				
18-34	31	10	43	20
35-49	36	13	54	35
50-64	33	9	62	26
65-79	42	16	63	36
80 +	38	15	67	42
Residence				
Seasonal	43	15	61	36
Year-round	35	13	58	30

Sources of Information

Two thirds of the community say they learn about Jewish events and programs online, and 54% gain information on these activities from family or friends. About one third (34%) each say they learn from synagogue or organization newsletters or from the *Jewish Journal* and other Jewish periodicals. About one quarter each learn about programs directly from the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County (24%) or directly from rabbis and communal professionals (23%).

Community Priorities

The Jews of South Palm Beach County feel strongly about the need for local Jewish organizations to address key community priorities: the quality of Jewish life on local college campuses; the quality of life in South Palm Beach County beyond the Jewish community; disagreements about Israel within the Jewish community; and drug and/or alcohol use.

Across the board, Jews in the Personal group feel least strongly about these priorities, as do younger Jews. Involved and Immersed Jews feel more strongly than others about Jewish life on campus and drug/alcohol use, and Communal Jews feel most strongly about the community working toward enhancing the quality of life in South Palm Beach County in general, beyond the Jewish community. Jews in West Boca Raton feel most strongly about Jewish life at local colleges, and least strongly about the other issues. This is unsurprising because this area includes more parents. Seasonal residents are more likely than year-round residents to feel that community organizations should work toward any of these issues.

Table 7.3: Sources of information (total exceeds 100% because multiple options could be selected)

Source of information	Percentage of Jewish adults
Online	66
Family or friends	54
Synagogue or organization newsletter	34
<i>Jewish Journal</i>	34
Jewish Federation	24
Rabbi or communal professional	23

Table 7.4: Community priorities (somewhat or very much agreement)

	Quality of Jewish life on local college campuses (%)	Quality of life beyond the Jewish community (%)	Disagreements about Israel within the Jewish community (%)	Drug and/or alcohol use (%)
All Jewish adults	85	84	81	76
Engagement				
Personal	57	69	54	58
Holiday	86	81	77	75
Communal	88	91	88	72
Involved	94	83	90	81
Immersed	93	83	87	80
Region				
West Boca	94	71	64	55
Central Boca	88	82	83	79
East Boca	81	77	81	73
Delray Beach	79	88	82	77
Respondent age				
18-34	75	67	63	46
35-49	84	86	75	59
50-64	86	85	82	80
65-79	85	83	88	86
80 +	90	89	84	87
Residence				
Seasonal	91	83	90	78
Year-round	82	81	77	72

Volunteering

In the South Palm Beach County Jewish community, 36% of Jewish adults say they engaged in some volunteer activity in the past month (Table 7.5). Of the overall population, 18%, representing half of volunteers, volunteered with at least one Jewish organization in the month prior to their participation in the study. Those in the Immersed and Involved groups were most likely to volunteer under Jewish auspices, while 31% of the Communal and between 18-22% of the other groups, volunteered for non-Jewish organizations.

Table 7.5: Volunteering

	Any volunteering (%)	Type of organization		Role at local Jewish organization	
		Non-Jewish (%)	Any Jewish (%)*	Leadership (%)	Other (%)
All Jewish adults	36	23	18	7	12
Engagement					
Personal	22	22	0	0	0
Holiday	23	22	1	< 1	0
Communal	44	31	19	9	14
Involved	40	19	28	11	18
Immersed	49	18	42	21	19
Region					
West Boca	38	23	16	4	14
Central Boca	37	22	19	10	10
East Boca	39	24	22	8	10
Delray Beach	33	23	17	8	10
Respondent age					
18-34	38	22	17	5	14
35-49	44	33	20	12	18
50-64	41	31	17	8	10
65-79	32	16	21	9	8
80 +	23	14	12	6	5
Residence					
Seasonal	36	18	24	4	3
Year-round	36	24	17	9	12

*Any Jewish volunteering includes organizations outside of South Palm Beach County.

Jews ages 35-49 were most likely to engage in any volunteering (44%) and to volunteer with non-Jewish organizations (33%), but were about as likely (20%) as those ages 65-79 (21%) to volunteer with Jewish organizations. The former were still, however, most likely to serve in a leadership or some other role. Seasonal and year-round residents were just as likely to do any volunteering, but the latter were more likely to volunteer with non-Jewish organizations (24% versus 18%). Despite the fact that seasonal residents were more likely to do any volunteering with Jewish organizations (24% versus 17%), year-round residents were more likely to volunteer with local Jewish organizations.

Seventeen percent of seasonal residents volunteered in a leadership role at a Jewish organization where they have their other home (not shown in table), and 4% volunteered in a leadership capacity with a local organization. Thirteen percent volunteered in some other capacity with a Jewish organization in their other community (not shown in table), and 3% volunteered in another capacity in South Palm Beach County.

When it comes to organizational and volunteer activity, South Palm Beach County's Jews support a variety of causes (Table 7.6). Nearly two thirds (63%) say education is very important; slightly more than half each say social justice and health or medical issues are very important (54%); and just under half say Israel (49%) or some other cause (48%) are very important. Immersed Jews are most likely to prioritize Israel (79%) and education (65%). Jews in the Communal group are most likely to prioritize social justice (70%), health or medical (60%), or some other cause (47%).

Those living in West Boca Raton are more likely to find education (78%), health/medical issues (58%), and social justice (57%), to be very important, while those in East Boca Raton are more likely to think Israel is very important (53%). Seventy percent of Jews ages 35-49—those most likely to be parents—believe education is very important, and 63% of those 80 and older think health and medical causes are very important. Aside from Israel, year-round residents are more likely than seasonal residents to think the other causes are very important.

Respondents mentioned many other causes that were important to them. Politics and policy were important to 245 people; issues expressed include liberal and conservative viewpoints on gun control/gun rights²⁶ (specifically mentioned by 76 respondents), the economy, political leadership, and economic and racial divides. Arts and culture, including performance and museums, were important to 154 respondents. Social and human services were important to 83 people; the environment to 69; and women's issues, including gender equality and abortion access, to 49. Seventy-two respondents mentioned something connected to the Jewish community, including 36 who commented about antisemitism.

Table 7.6: Very important causes of interest

	Education (%)	Social justice (%)	Health/medical (%)	Israel (%)	Other (%)
All Jewish adults	63	54	54	49	48
Engagement					
Personal	59	33	51	23	27
Holiday	54	47	48	36	39
Communal	61	70	60	56	47
Involved	64	56	56	51	36
Immersed	65	50	46	79	35
Region					
West Boca	78	57	58	45	41
Central Boca	54	49	45	50	29
East Boca	68	54	51	53	32
Delray Beach	54	50	56	46	42
Respondent age					
18-34	63	50	55	45	31
35-49	70	46	33	42	50
50-64	56	51	53	45	39
65-79	59	55	55	57	32
80 +	64	61	63	62	40
Residence					
Seasonal	56	49	49	54	31
Year-round	62	53	53	49	38

Philanthropy

Within the South Palm Beach County Jewish community, 82% of Jews report making a charitable contribution in the past year (Table 7.7). Sixty-three percent of the community—or 77% of donors—gave to at least one Jewish organization. More than one third (37%) of Jewish adults gave to organizations that primarily serve the Jewish community of South Palm Beach County, representing 57% of those who gave to a Jewish cause and 43% of all donors. Ten percent of the community donated to the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County—27% of anyone who donated to local Jewish organizations.

Table 7.7: Philanthropy

	Any donation (%)	Any Jewish donation (%)	Any local Jewish donation (%)	Donated to Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County (%)
All Jewish adults	82	63	37	10
Engagement				
Personal	79	15	4	< 1
Holiday	65	48	24	6
Communal	76	60	33	11
Involved	96	93	59	17
Immersed	95	94	64	18
Region				
West Boca	73	37	30	12
Central Boca	79	74	43	16
East Boca	85	55	31	8
Delray Beach	88	67	36	8
Respondent age				
18-34	67	31	20	3
35-49	78	57	35	11
50-64	82	61	34	7
65-79	90	77	44	12
80 +	86	81	54	21
Residence				
Seasonal	96	92	45	18
Year-round	78	55	35	8

Nearly all Involved (93%) and Immersed (94%) Jews donated to Jewish organizations. Although 79% in the Personal group made any type of donation, only 15% donated to a Jewish cause. Fewer than half of the Personal, Holiday, and Communal Jews donated to local Jewish organizations. Those living in Central Boca Raton were most likely to donate to Jewish causes (74%) and local ones (43%). Older Jews were most likely to donate at all, donate to Jewish causes, and donate to local Jewish causes. More than one quarter of those who donated to an organization serving the South Palm Beach County Jewish community gave to the Federation—10% of all Jewish adults. Rates of giving to the Federation were highest among those living in Central Boca Raton (16%). The oldest members of the community were more likely to give to Federation than others.

Seasonal Jews were more likely than year-round Jews to have donated at any level; nearly all seasonal Jews who made donations gave to Jewish causes, whereas 55% of year-round Jews gave to a Jewish organization. Additionally, 80% of seasonal residents donated to Jewish organizations in the community where they have their other home, with 26% donating to the other federation.

Informal Involvement in the Jewish Community

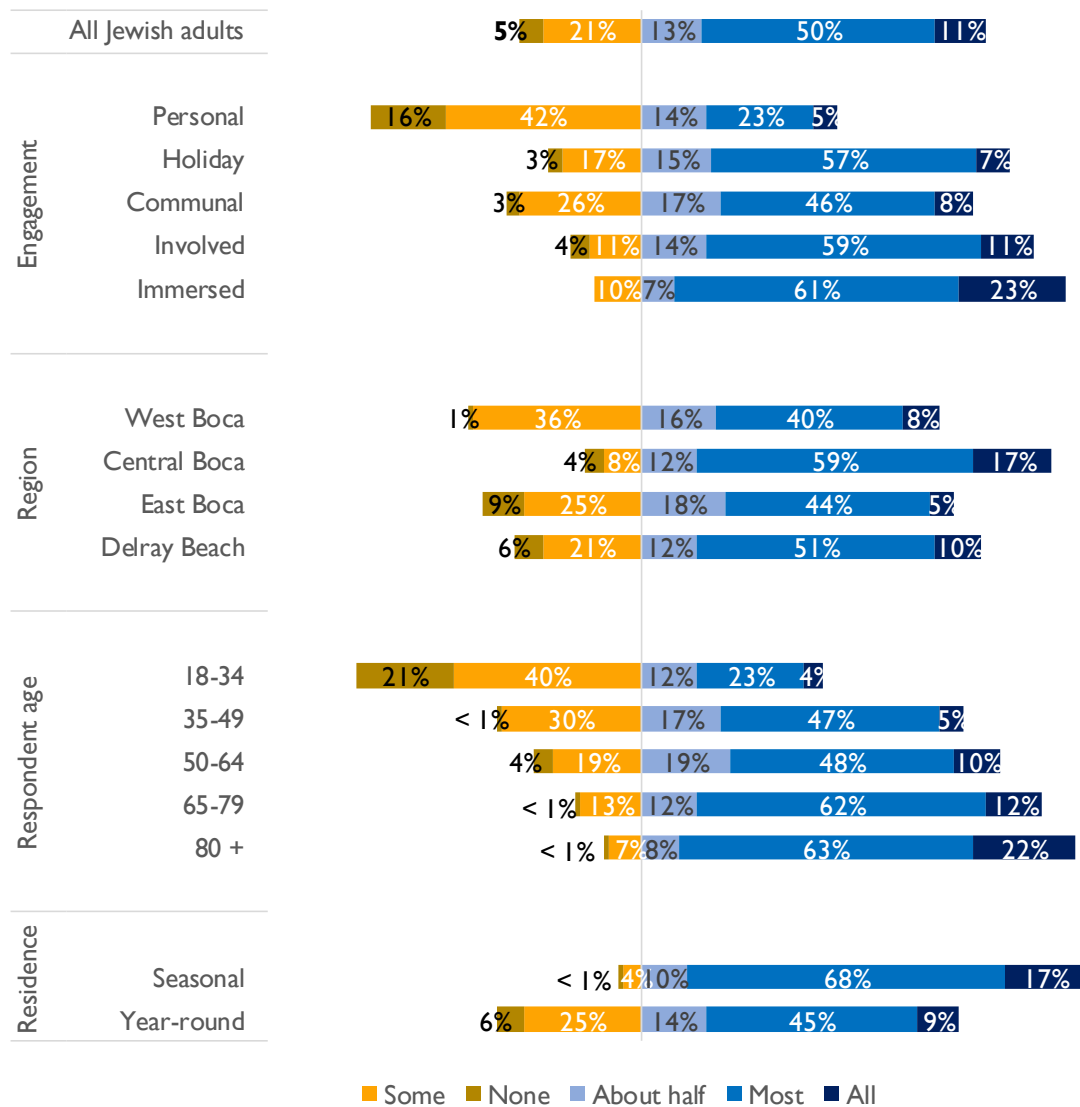
Community engagement is closely tied to personal connections and friendships among Jews. The vast majority (95%) of Jews in South Palm Beach County have at least some close Jewish friends, and 74% say at least half of their closest friends are Jewish (Figure 7.1). Ninety-one percent of the Immersed group and 84% of the Involved group say that half or more of their close friends are Jewish, reflecting their deep engagement in the Jewish community. Additionally, 10% of Jewish households say they belong to an informal or grassroots group in South Palm Beach County, like a Jewish book club.

Informal and Cultural Activities

Informal and cultural activities include Jewish activities that are not sponsored by Jewish organizations, such as attending Jewish theatre productions, reading Jewish books, eating Jewish foods, and discussing Jewish topics (Tables 7.8a, 7.8b).

Overall, 81% of South Palm Beach County's Jews indicate that they discussed a Jewish topic in the past month, including all of those in the Immersed group and nearly all in the Communal (96%) and Involved (95%) groups. Of all Jewish adults, 72% ate Jewish foods in the past month, including more than half of the Personal (55%) and Holiday (52%) groups. More than half of the Jewish community (52%) searched for Jewish information online, including nearly all (97%) of those in the Immersed group and about three quarters (74%) of the Involved group.

Figure 7.1: Close Jewish friends by engagement group, region, age, and residence



Question: How many of the people you consider to be your closest friends are Jewish?

Table 7.8a: Participation in informal and cultural activities in past month

	Discuss Jewish topics		Eat Jewish foods		Access Jewish information online	
	Ever (%)	Weekly + (%)	Ever (%)	Weekly + (%)	Ever (%)	Weekly + (%)
All Jewish adults	81	33	72	27	52	23
Engagement						
Personal	35	< 1	55	< 1	18	1
Holiday	62	5	52	7	12	2
Communal	96	45	91	36	71	30
Involved	95	33	79	16	74	14
Immersed	100	89	96	74	97	78
Region						
West Boca	65	30	83	27	44	26
Central Boca	88	42	73	37	65	33
East Boca	71	31	59	18	48	16
Delray Beach	79	32	80	20	53	23
Respondent age						
18-34	73	25	71	23	47	15
35-49	70	40	67	27	46	27
50-64	81	32	76	29	60	25
65-79	82	39	77	27	60	30
80 +	79	36	81	28	46	21
Residence						
Seasonal	86	48	79	33	66	37
Year-round	76	31	74	25	51	21

Half (48%) of South Palm Beach County's Jews report that they accessed Jewish-focused culture, such as books, music, museums, or TV programs in the past month, including 88% of the Immersed, 69% of the Involved, and 67% of the Communal group. Residents of Central Boca Raton (59%) and Delray Beach (54%) were more likely to access Jewish-focused culture than residents of other neighborhoods. One quarter (24%) of adults studied a Jewish text in the past month, including 71% of those in the Immersed group; 30% of this group studied a Jewish text weekly or more frequently.

Table 7.8b: Participation in informal and cultural activities in past month

	Access Jewish culture		Study Jewish text	
	Ever (%)	Weekly + (%)	Ever (%)	Weekly + (%)
All Jewish adults	48	14	24	8
Engagement				
Personal	24	0	11	0
Holiday	7	1	6	1
Communal	67	12	14	2
Involved	69	7	24	2
Immersed	88	53	71	30
Region				
West Boca	35	8	11	4
Central Boca	59	22	34	16
East Boca	48	8	23	4
Delray Beach	54	15	21	4
Respondent age				
18-34	42	10	33	8
35-49	31	6	23	9
50-64	59	17	26	7
65-79	55	14	21	7
80 +	55	17	16	3
Residence				
Seasonal	66	24	32	10
Year-round	47	11	23	6

Antisemitism

South Palm Beach County Jewish community members are concerned about antisemitism, but that worry is more focused nationally than locally. Sixty-nine percent each say they are very much concerned about antisemitism on college campuses and elsewhere in the country, but only 38% feel the same way about South Palm Beach County. Jews in the Immersed group are most concerned about college antisemitism (81%). Those in the Communal group are most concerned about other types of antisemitism that occur nationally (81%) and local antisemitism (46%).

Residents of Central Boca Raton and Delray Beach are highly concerned about antisemitism on college campuses (70% of Jews in the former and 78% of the latter). Younger Jews are least likely to feel concerned about antisemitism, both nationally and locally.

Table 7.9: Concern about antisemitism (very much)

	US college campuses (%)	The US, aside from college campuses (%)	South Palm Beach County (%)
All Jewish adults	69	69	38
Engagement			
Personal	42	46	31
Holiday	58	64	39
Communal	72	81	46
Involved	74	72	36
Immersed	81	72	37
Region			
West Boca	55	62	32
Central Boca	70	70	37
East Boca	57	61	30
Delray Beach	68	66	43
Respondent age			
18-34	37	42	15
35-49	70	71	45
50-64	62	63	34
65-79	78	78	45
80 +	84	83	55
Residence			
Seasonal	75	70	36
Year-round	63	66	39

Thirteen percent of Jews say they personally experienced antisemitism in the past year, similar to the proportions found in recent Jewish community studies in other communities in Florida.²⁷ Respondents who suffered antisemitism were asked to describe their experiences. The most frequent types of occurrences are listed in table 7.10, along with the number of respondents who cited each experience.

Most incidents were relatively minor. The most common category of antisemitic experiences was microaggressions (221 respondents). Below are a few examples of the types of microaggressions some respondents described:

Table 7.10: Types of antisemitic experiences

Type of experience	Number of respondents
Microaggressions ²⁸	221
General comments: conversational tone	86
Insults	55
Stereotype of being cheap or rich	53
Discrimination (e.g., jobs, lack of religious accommodation)	35
General comments: aggressive tone	20
Internet	17
Other stereotypes	16
“Jokes”	15
Anti-Israel/BDS	12
Neo-Nazism	11
Vandalism	11

“ A person [who serves on the board of trustees of a local organization with the respondent] twice remarked that we needed to hire a Jewish lawyer to get things done.

“ I have been introduced to people as ‘Oh, [respondent] is Jewish’ as the first, most important characteristic [and] people saying that ‘of course you’re successful’ because I’m Jewish. [They are] taking the merit away [from my work].

“ I bought a challah at Publix and the people working there were calling it ‘Jew bread.’ They didn’t say anything bad, but it made me uncomfortable.

Respondents often noted the tone of antisemitic comments and distinguished between things said casually or aggressively:

“ A woman behind me on a plane overheard a conversation I had with the gentleman seated next to me. She then started making blatantly antisemitic comments to her companion, in a loud voice, knowing I would hear.

“General conversations that stereotype Jewish people. Racial beliefs and people are just not educated.

Seventeen respondents specifically said they had encountered antisemitism on the Internet:

“[On social media,] someone said... that we should have been burned in ovens.

“Facebook messages about how the Holocaust was a hoax.

Several respondents noted examples of discrimination and lack of accommodation for religious observance:

“There are exclusive clubs where they do not have Jewish members.

“Being turned down [as a medical provider] by potential patients for not being Christian.

“Scheduling things on a Friday night without thinking of Sabbath.

And several respondents noted incidents of discrimination, vandalism, harassment, or threats:

“We tried to build a synagogue and were met with the organized, well-funded, entrenched action of literally hundreds of Boca residents to prevent it...Dozens of residents made public comments about not wanting Jews in the neighborhood.

“There was more than one incident where a swastika was painted on school property.

“Someone spray painted the word JEW on the outside of the synagogue.

“My son was in line at school and someone said ‘why don’t you believe in Jesus?’ [The other boy] told [my son] that he was going to slit his throat and he could get away with murder if someone had a different religion.

Chapter 8: Connections to Israel

The South Palm Beach County Jewish community has strong ties to Israel, grounded in religious, cultural, and familial connections. For many Jewish adults, Israel is central to their Jewish identity. Travel to Israel is frequent and friendships with Israelis are common.

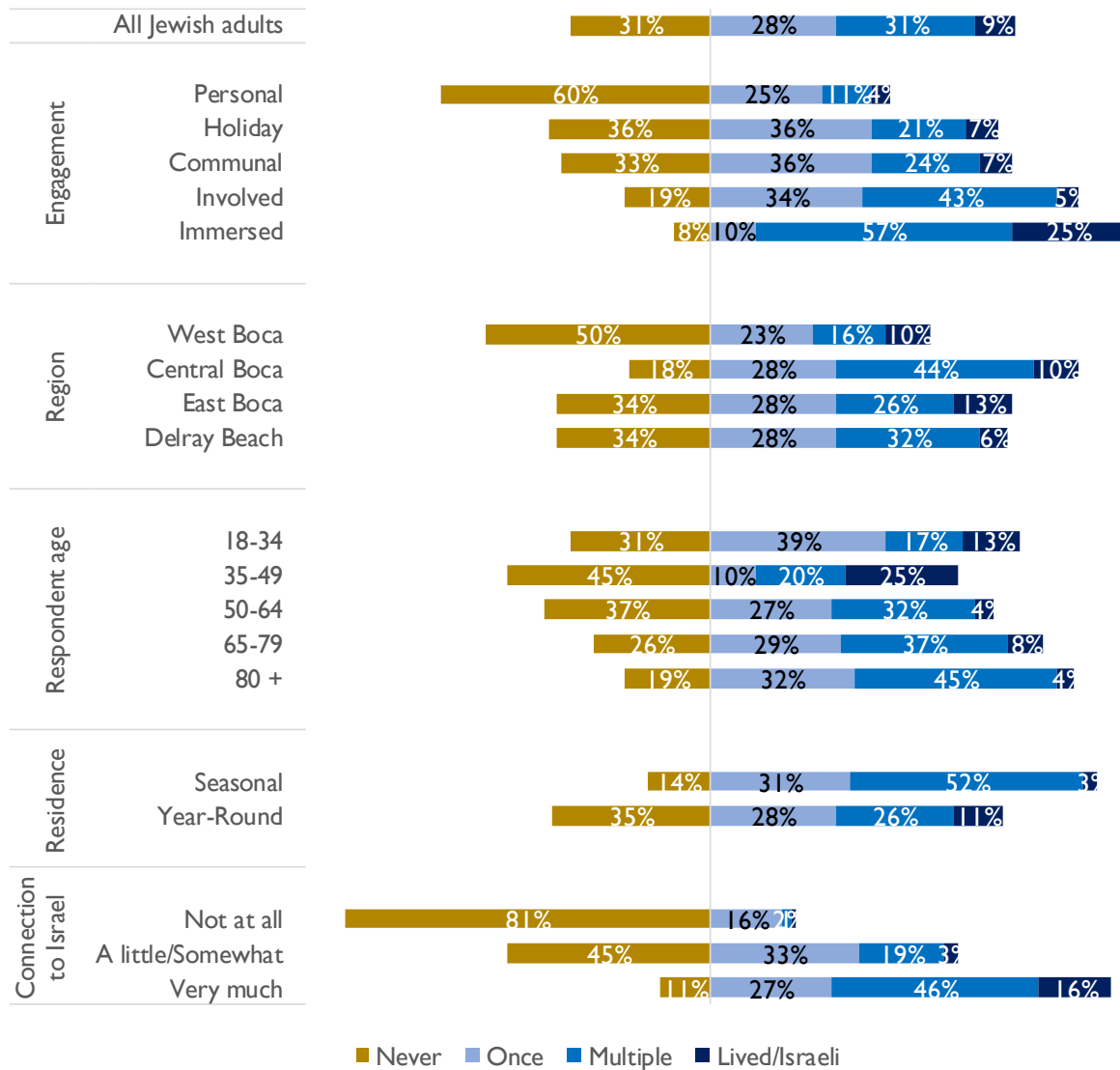
More than two thirds (69%) of South Palm Beach County Jews have been to Israel (Figure 8.1). Among them, 28% have been to Israel once, and a similar proportion (31%) have visited more than once. Nine percent, including 6% who are Israeli citizens, have lived in Israel at some point. South Palm Beach County's rate of travel represents a substantially higher proportion than among US Jews in general, of whom, as of 2013, 43% had been to Israel.²⁹

Those in the Immersed group are the most likely to have been to Israel (92%), followed by those in the Involved group (82%). Among those in the Personal group, 40% have been to Israel. Eighty-two percent of Central Boca Raton's Jewish residents have been to Israel, including 54% who have visited multiple times or lived there. This compares to the half of West Boca Raton residents who have not been, and the one quarter (26%) of residents who have been multiple times or lived there. Although senior citizens are most likely to have gone to Israel, 69% of those younger than 35 have also visited; half of them (53%) have gone on a Birthright Israel trip (see Table 8.1).

Seasonal residents are more likely to have traveled to Israel and visited Israel frequently than year-round residents. Of those who have been to Israel, only 19% do not feel connected to Israel. This figure compares to 89% who feel very much connected.

Aside from travel to Israel, Jews from South Palm Beach County connect to Israel through their family and friends who live there. About one third (35%) of Jews indicate that they have close family or friends living in Israel, and 20% have both. Engagement with Israel is further facilitated by fluency in the Hebrew language: 12% can understand most or all of what they read in Hebrew and another 18% can understand some Hebrew. Fewer Jews in South Palm Beach County (40%) than US Jews (48%)³⁰ say they do not know the Hebrew alphabet.

Figure 8.1: Frequency of Israel travel by engagement group, region, residence, and connection to Israel



Question: How many times, if any, have you been to Israel?

Types of Israel Travel

Overall, 28% of Jewish adults have traveled with a Jewish organization on a mission or other sponsored trip to Israel, representing 42% of all those who have been to Israel (Table 8.1). Seventeen percent of adults have traveled to Israel on an educational or volunteer program, representing 26% of those who have been to Israel. Among those under age 47,³¹ 44% have participated in Birthright Israel trips. This represents two thirds (68%) of that age group that has been to Israel.

Those who had not been to Israel offered a number of reasons. Ten percent mentioned cost, and 9% expressed safety concerns. A few dislike travel (5%) or simply have no interest in going (4%).

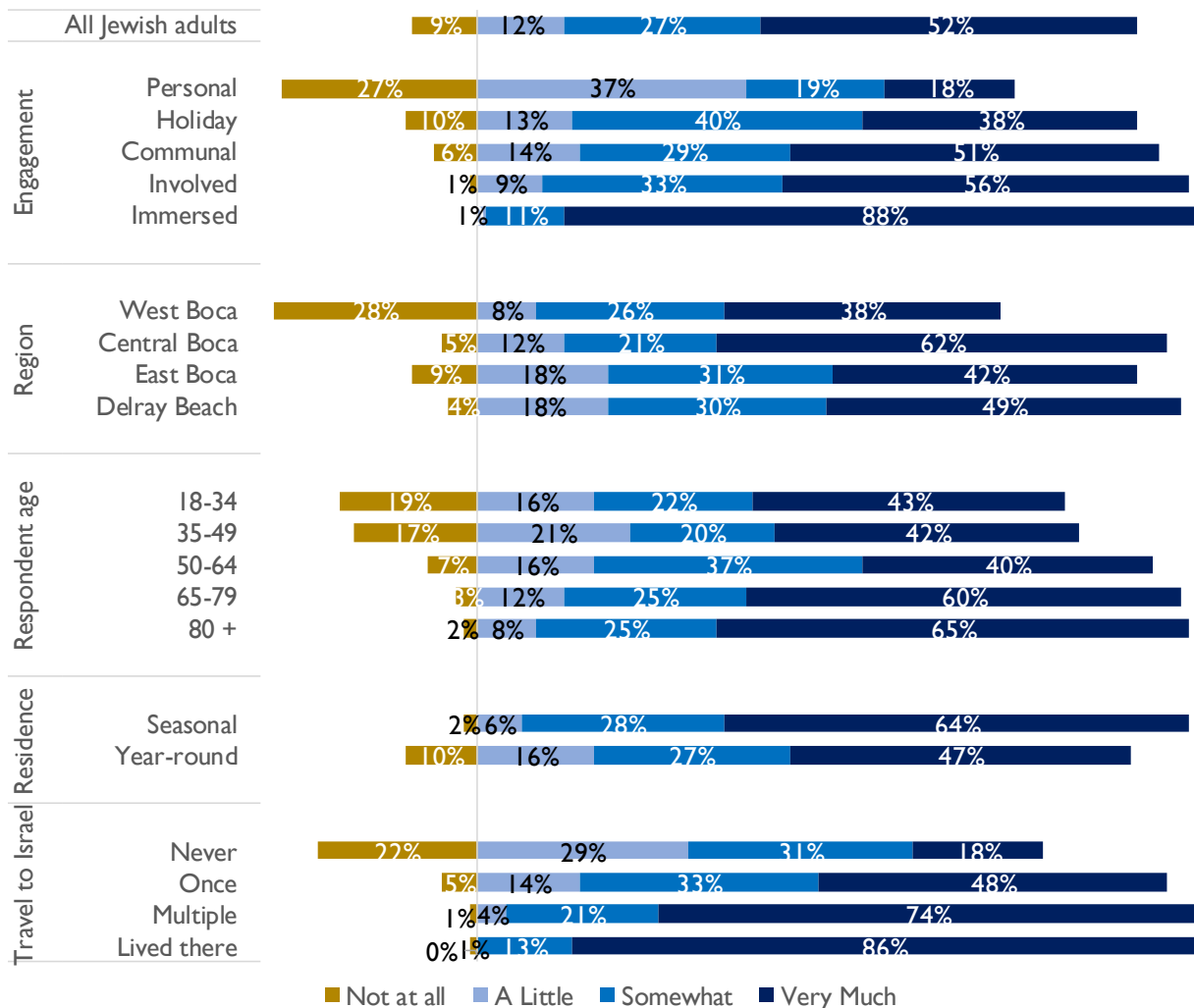
Table 8.1: Types of organized Israel travel

	Birthright (< 47 years old) (%)	Federation/organization mission (%)	Education/volunteer (%)
All Jewish adults	44	28	17
Engagement			
Personal	--	6	8
Holiday	49	25	10
Communal	47	28	17
Involved	43	38	19
Immersed	41	48	34
Region			
West Boca	23	17	10
Central Boca	56	38	18
East Boca	51	16	9
Delray Beach	33	30	21
Respondent age			
18-34	53	18	16
35-49	2	25	22
50-64	n/a	27	15
65-79	n/a	31	16
80 +	n/a	39	19
Residence			
Seasonal	--	40	19
Year-round	39	25	17
Connection to Israel			
Not at all	--	10	4
A little/somewhat	38	17	10
Very much	59	42	27

Emotional Connection to Israel

Feelings of connection to Israel are intimately tied not only to Israel travel, but also to Jewish engagement (Figure 8.2). The strongest connections to Israel are found among the Immersed group (88% very much). At least 90% of all engagement groups aside from Personal Jews feel connected to Israel to some extent. Among those in the Personal group, 74% feel a connection to some extent. Connection to Israel is closely tied to past travel: Jewish adults who have been to Israel feel much more connected than those who have never been, and those who have visited multiple times (74%) or lived there (86%) feel even more strongly.

Figure 8.2: Emotional connection to Israel by engagement group, region, age, residence, and travel to Israel

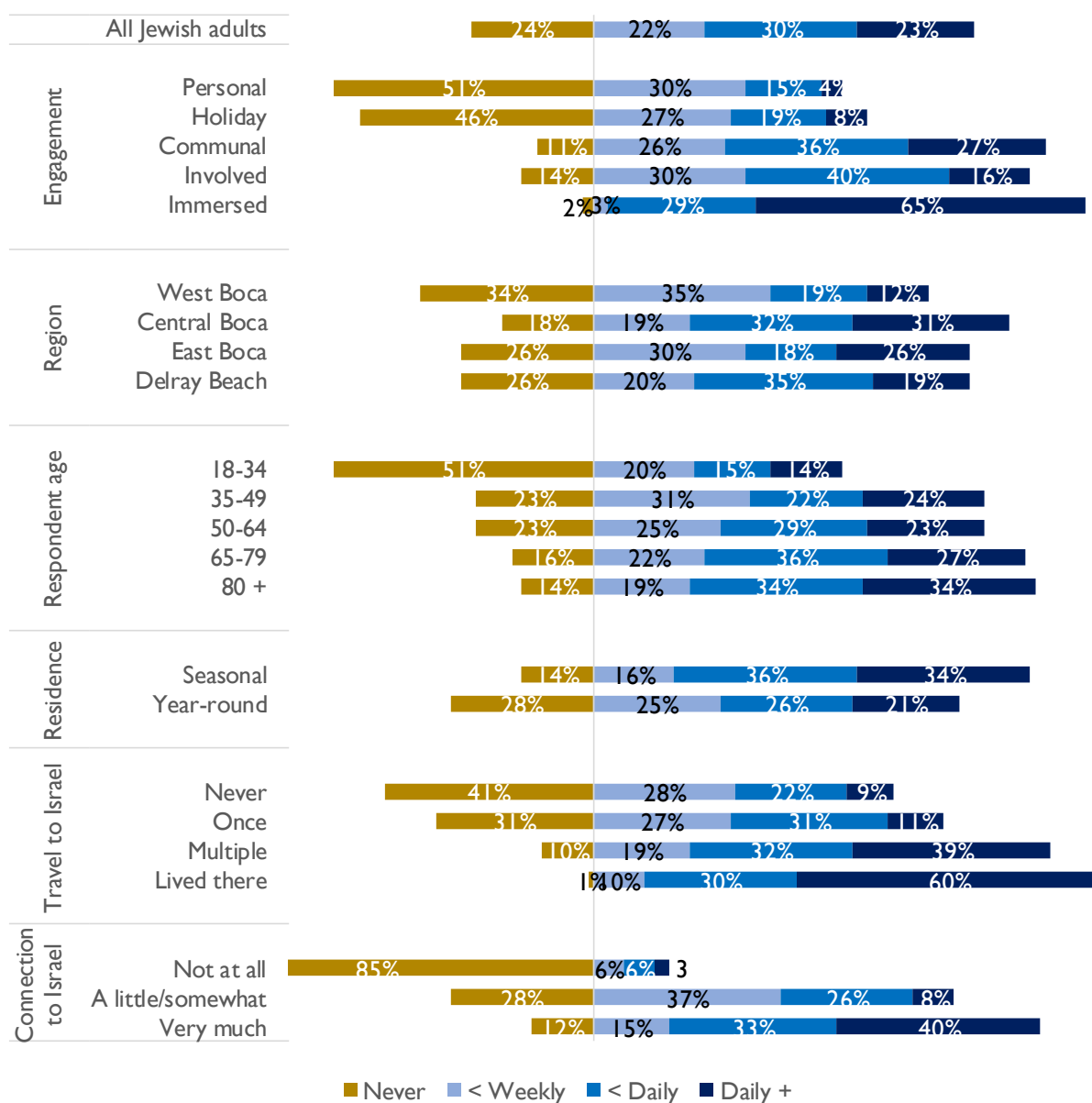


Question: To what extent do you feel a connection to Israel?

News about Israel

Almost half (53%) of South Palm Beach County Jews follow news about Israel at least once a week (Figure 8.3). The Immersed group members follow Israel news most closely, with nearly two thirds (65%) seeking news on a daily basis. About half (49%) of Jews younger than 35 follow news about Israel, as do about three quarters (77%) of Jews ages 35-64, and about 85% of senior citizens. Those who have lived in Israel or have been there multiple times follow news more closely, with 60% and 39%, respectively, following news about Israel daily.

Figure 8.3: Following news about Israel in past month by engagement group, region, age, residence, and connection to Israel



Question: In the past month, how often did you actively seek out news about Israel?

Community Views on Israel

The high levels of personal travel and emotional connections to Israel correlate to strong feelings about the relationships between Israel, the South Palm Beach County Jewish community, and individual members themselves.

Nearly all (91%) Jewish adults somewhat or very much agree that a Jewish state is necessary for the long-term survival of the Jewish people (Table 8.2). This feeling is highest among Involved (94%) and Immersed (95%) Jews. Senior citizens believe this statement more than adults ages 18-34. Those who feel very much connected (92%) feel more strongly than those who feel not at all connected (71%).

Overall, 81% of the community also believes that local organizations should address disagreements about Israel within the South Palm Beach Jewish community. Older Jews and those who have been to Israel are more likely to believe that organizations should address these disagreements. Of those who do not feel connected to Israel, 39% somewhat or very much believe the community should do so, compared to 89% of those who feel very much connected to Israel.

Half (51%) of the Jews in South Palm Beach County feel somewhat or very much personally responsible for Israelis in need of social support. These feelings are strongest among the Immersed group (77%), those who have been to Israel multiple times (69%), and those who feel very much connected to Israel (69%).

Table 8.2: Views on Jewish community's relationship to Israel (somewhat or very much agree)

	Jewish State is necessary for long- term survival of Jewish people (%)	Local community should address disagreements about Israel (%)	Israel as a topic for activities and organizations (%)	Feel personally responsible for Israelis in need of social support (%)
All Jewish adults	91	81	76	51
Engagement				
Personal	84	54	38	28
Holiday	89	77	74	32
Communal	87	88	80	57
Involved	94	90	87	62
Immersed	95	87	98	77
Region				
West Boca	92	64	72	33
Central Boca	88	83	79	58
East Boca	86	81	76	51
Delray Beach	92	82	77	52
Respondent age				
18-34	83	63	64	29
35-49	89	75	75	51
50-64	89	82	76	49
65-79	93	88	84	62
80 +	94	84	83	62
Residence				
Seasonal	93	90	86	65
Year-round	89	77	75	48
Travel to Israel				
Never	87	65	62	37
Once	87	85	74	47
Multiple	94	87	90	69
Lived	92	88	91	55
Connection to Israel				
Not at all	71	39	32	11
A little/somewhat	90	76	67	39
Very much	92	89	93	69

Chapter 9: Financial Well-Being

The South Palm Beach County Jewish organizations devote a significant share of resources toward caring for families and individuals who have economic and social needs. The relative affluence of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community, both financially and in terms of human capital, has meant the organized Jewish community has been able to meet many of these needs.

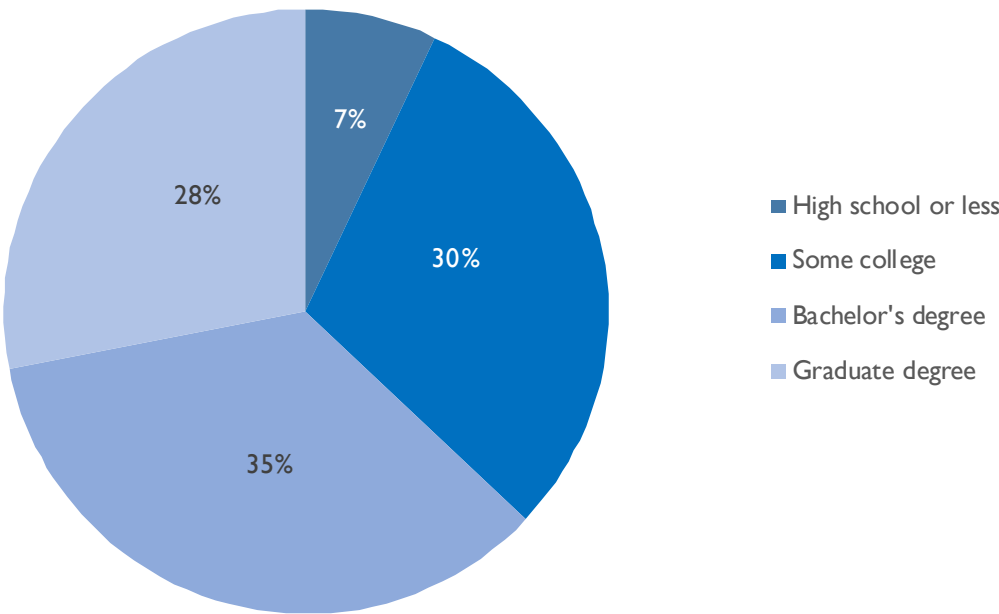
Nevertheless, it is clear that there are some unmet needs in the community. Aside from the expenses associated with affiliating with Jewish organizations, providing Jewish education for children, purchasing kosher food, and other means of engaging in Jewish life, less affluent families are also more likely to be struggling with basic necessities such as adequate housing and healthcare services. There are underserved households throughout the community, but particularly among younger Jews and in West Boca Raton.

Educational Attainment and Employment

The Jewish population of South Palm Beach County is highly educated compared to the overall US population, and about equal with the US Jewish population as a whole. Of the Jewish adults in South Palm Beach County, 63% have earned at least a bachelor's degree, including 28% with at least one post-graduate degree (Figure 9.1). Among Jews in the United States, over half have attained at least a bachelor's degree (58%), including 28% who have graduate degrees.³² In South Palm Beach County overall, 45% of individuals ages 25 or older have at least a bachelor's degree, including 18% who have a graduate degree. In the US population overall, 30% of adults ages 25 and older hold bachelor's degrees, including 12% who hold advanced degrees.³³

Fewer than half (46%) of Jewish adults in the community are currently full- (34%) or part-time (12%) employees. An additional 37% of the population is retired. The remaining 16% are stay-at-home parents, unemployed, on temporary leave, or studying for a degree. Fourteen percent of Jewish adults, including some already with jobs, are looking for work. Among those under the age of 65, 56% are working full-time, 14% are working part-time, 7% are retired, and 23% are stay-at-home parents, unemployed, on temporary leave, or studying for a degree.

Figure 9.1: Educational attainment



Economic Well-Being

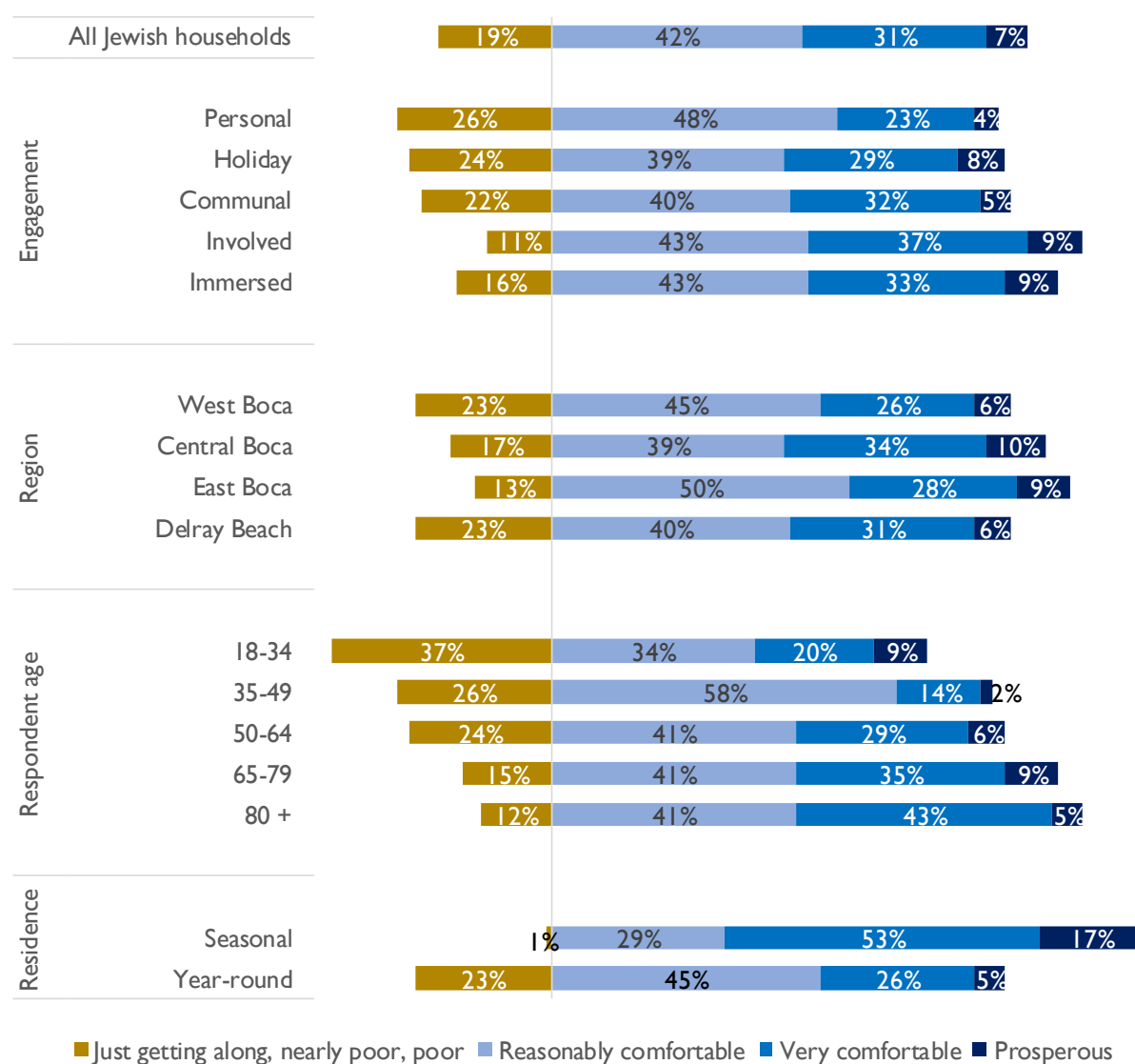
Similar to the US Jewish population as a whole, the South Palm Beach County Jewish community is relatively affluent. Overall, 7% of the community describes itself as “prosperous,” and one third (31%) says it is “living very comfortably” (Table 9.1). Those who say they are “living reasonably comfortably” make up 42% of Jewish households. But 17% say they are “just getting along,” a possible indication of economic vulnerability, and 1% each say they are “nearly poor” or “poor.”

Table 9.1: Standard of living

	Percentage of Jewish households
Prosperous	7
Living very comfortably	31
Living reasonably comfortably	42
Just getting along	17
Nearly poor	1
Poor	1

Although there are small differences in economic well-being by Jewish engagement and region, most are not significant (Figure 9.2). Those who are part of the Involved group are least likely to describe themselves as just getting along, nearly poor, or poor. Geographically, residents of East Boca Raton are most likely to describe themselves as very comfortable or prosperous. Both older adults and seasonal residents have higher self-described standards of living than do younger adults and year-round residents, respectively.

Figure 9.2: Household standard of living by engagement group, region, age, and residence



Economic Insecurity and Poverty

Although the South Palm Beach County Jewish community as a whole is comfortable, some households struggle with significant economic challenges. As one measure of economic need, respondents indicated whether they received government benefits or skipped necessities in the past year (Table 9.2). These benefits included Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Medicaid; subsidized housing; SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); daycare assistance; unemployment benefits; or energy or utility assistance. However, it is important to note that some of these benefits are not entirely restricted to low-income households (e.g., SSDI, Medicaid); accordingly, receipt of these benefits is only a possible indicator of financial need, not a definite indicator. Overall, 13% of households receive some form of public benefit.

Respondents were also asked about life changes in the previous year that resulted in economic hardship. Overall, 19% of respondents report encountering such a hardship. Nine percent note a change in employment, such as a reduction in pay; 8% indicate a change in health, such as major illness; 5% mention a change in family structure, such as divorce; and 3% report a change in housing, such as foreclosure.

A significant portion of Jewish households in South Palm Beach County express a lack of confidence in their ability to afford their own retirement. Thirty-seven percent are not confident, including 24% who are uncertain of their ability to live comfortably during retirement, and 13% who say they are not at all or not very confident.

While a relatively small share of the Jewish community of South Palm Beach County is facing immediate financial need, many are at risk. As noted above, 37% of respondents are not confident in their ability to save for retirement. One quarter (27%) of households do not have enough funds to cover three months of expenses were they to face an unexpected loss of income. Six percent could not cover a \$400 expense in full, and 5% had to skip a rent or mortgage payment in the preceding year.

Seven percent say they have been constrained from participating in Jewish life in the community due to financial issues. Respondents were asked specific ways that financial issues have prevented them from participating in Jewish communal life, and 252 provided answers. The most commonly cited challenges are the high costs of synagogue dues or High Holiday tickets (112), program and event fees (88), and Jewish education, including schools and camps (45).

Table 9.2: Economic needs

	Percentage of Jewish households
Public benefit received	
Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income	9
Medicaid	4
Subsidized housing	2
SNAP or food stamps	1
Daycare assistance	< 1
Unemployment benefits	< 1
Energy or utility assistance	0
Any public benefit	13
Economic hardship experienced	
Employment	9
Health	8
Family structure	5
Housing	3
Any economic hardship	19
Financial insecurities	
Not confident saving for retirement	37
Insufficient savings for three months	27
Financial constraint prevented participation in Jewish life	7
Inability to pay off \$400 expense in full	6
Skipped rent/mortgage payment in past year	5

Jews in the Holiday group are least confident in being able to afford retirement, and Jews ages 35-49 are less confident than others (Table 9.3). Forty-three percent of the Personal group lack sufficient savings for three months of expenses, as do 44% of those in West Boca Raton. Nearly half of Jews under 50 (49% of those ages 18-34 and 48% of those ages 35-49) do not have three months of savings, nor do about one third (32%) of year-round residents. Nearly one quarter (24%) of those in the Personal and Holiday groups experienced an economic hardship in the past year due to changes in personal or familial circumstances, compared to 16% of the rest of the community. Thirty percent of households in West Boca Raton experienced a hardship, as did 39% of Jews under age 35 and one quarter (23%) of year-round residents. Nineteen percent of the Communal Group have received a public benefit, as did 16% of households in Delray Beach and 17% of adults ages 50-64.

Table 9.3: Economic insecurity by household characteristics

	Not confident for retirement (%)	Insufficient savings for three months' expenses (%)	Any hardship (%)	Any public benefit (%)
All Jewish households	37	27	19	13
Engagement				
Personal	43	43	24	17
Holiday	45	32	24	16
Communal	37	22	16	19
Involved	26	19	16	5
Immersed	29	22	16	8
Region				
West Boca	46	44	30	12
Central Boca	33	21	16	10
East Boca	36	27	16	7
Delray Beach	31	26	19	16
Respondent age				
18-34	50	49	39	2
35-49	57	48	21	15
50-64	46	29	29	17
65-79	24	21	12	14
80 +	26	19	9	10
Residence				
Seasonal	7	6	1	1
Year-round	42	32	23	16

Chapter 10: Health and Special Needs

Understanding the health status of individuals in the community is important because poor health can be an indicator of needs for community-based services and may prevent individuals from participating in the community's programs.

Health Status and Needs

Overall, 28% of Jewish households in South Palm Beach County include at least one person who has some sort of health issue, special need, or disability (Table 10.1). In 17% of all Jewish households, representing 61% of households with a health issue, disability, or special need, the person is limited in the amount of work, school, or housework he or she can do. In 6% of all households, representing 21% of the households with a health issue, special need, or disability, the services needed were not received.

Jewish households in the Communal group are most likely to include a member with a health issue, special need, or disability (36%), have a limitation (25%), and not receive services (11%). While households in Delray Beach are most likely to include someone with a health issue (33%), those in West Boca Raton are more likely not to receive needed services (12%). The oldest Jews are most likely to have health issues in their households (40%), but are among the least likely to require services (2%); Jews ages 35-49 are the most likely not to receive required services for their health and disability concerns (16%). There are also connections between health and finances: Households that described themselves as prosperous or very comfortable are less likely than others to include someone with health needs or to require services for that person.

Table 10.1: Health challenges for anyone in household

	Any health issue, special need, or disability (%)	Limitation in work, school, or housework (%)	Needed services but did not receive (%)
All Jewish households	28	17	6
Engagement			
Personal	24	18	4
Holiday	32	19	8
Communal	36	25	11
Involved	20	10	3
Immersed	25	14	3
Region			
West Boca	30	22	12
Central Boca	25	13	5
East Boca	18	10	1
Delray Beach	33	21	8
Respondent age			
18-34	10	3	2
35-49	25	19	16
50-64	34	26	11
65-79	25	13	2
80 +	40	24	2
Residence			
Seasonal	21	8	1
Year-round	29	19	7
Financial status			
Prosperous/very comfortable	23	11	1
Not prosperous	31	21	8

Respondents who indicated that a household member had a health issue, special need, or disability were asked to categorize the issue. The most frequent are chronic health problems, occurring in 43% of households with a health issue, representing 12% of all Jewish households (Table 10.2). Ambulatory and hearing challenges are each faced by 6% of households. Five percent of households include someone with a mental health challenge, and 3% include someone visually impaired.

Table 10.2: Type of health issue, special need, or disability

	All households (%)	Only households with a health challenge (%)
Chronic health	12	43
Ambulatory	6	21
Hearing	6	20
Mental health	5	17
Vision	3	12
Cognitive	1	4
Developmental	1	2
Other	10	36

Households including someone with a cognitive or developmental need each constitute 1% of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community.

Ten percent of households indicated that a member had some other health issue, special need, or disability. When asked for more information, 164 respondents provided details. The most commonly cited ailments include illnesses and diseases such as Parkinson's and a variety of cancers (69), as well as chronic health conditions like diabetes, multiple sclerosis, or high blood pressure (45).

Seventeen percent of households that required services for the member with a health issue, special need, or disability sought these services from a Jewish-sponsored organization; 11% received them, but 6% did not. Thirty-one percent of households that required services sought them from other organizations; 29% received them, but 2% did not.

Respondents were asked to describe the concerns they had for the future regarding the household member with a health issue, special need, or disability (which may have been themselves); 296 provided answers. The most common concerns were a deterioration in the person's health (94); the quality and availability of health care and support (68); the loss of personal independence and mobility and ensuing struggles (65); the cost of health care and financial burdens (57); and the ability to work or socialize (20).

Caring for Seniors

Some members of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community have elderly parents in the area and are either already providing significant care to them or are planning for the possibility of doing so in the future. Nine percent of Jews younger than age 75 indicate that they are providing care for a parent or elderly relative living in a different household within South Palm Beach County; 4% are caring for a relative outside of South Palm Beach County. Among Jews younger than age 75, 30% have a parent living in an assisted living facility in South Palm Beach County, and 7% have a parent in a senior community elsewhere.

Eight percent of Jewish South Palm Beach County senior citizens live in an assisted living facility, a nursing home, or an independent living community. Among those who do not, 7% are considering moving to one within the next five years.

Health Limitations and Jewish Life

Nine percent of households include someone who, in the past year, was constrained by health issues from participating in the South Palm Beach County Jewish community (Table 10.3). Jews in the Communal (12%), Holiday (11%), and Immersed groups (11%) were most likely to be limited in Jewish life by health restrictions. Jews in West Boca Raton (9%) and Delray Beach (10%) were more likely to be restricted than those in other regions, as were Jews ages 80 and older (20%).

Table 10.3: Health limitations on Jewish life

	Unable to participate in Jewish life due to health or ability constraints (%)
All Jewish households	9
Engagement	
Personal	3
Holiday	11
Communal	12
Involved	5
Immersed	11
Region	
West Boca	9
Central Boca	6
East Boca	4
Delray Beach	10
Respondent age	
18-34	6
35-49	7
50-64	8
65-79	5
80 +	20
Residence	
Seasonal	5
Year-round	9
Financial status	
Prosperous/very comfortable	8
Not prosperous	9

Of the 166 respondents who shared details on their specific constraints, 84 indicated that they could not attend services at synagogue, and 36 could not attend programs or activities sponsored by Jewish organizations. Twenty cited accessibility and transportation issues.

Chapter 11: In the Words of Community Members

South Palm Beach County Jews were given the opportunity to explain, in their own words, the strengths of the community, areas for improvement, and their recommendations for setting priorities. These responses, taken together, reinforce the themes presented elsewhere in the report and provide new insights into community needs and opportunities to meet those concerns.

Over 1,400 individuals responded to questions asking for their impressions of the strengths of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community, as well as the gaps and areas for improvement. Among those, over 200 were not familiar enough with the community to provide substantive responses. More than 1,000 people responded to a question about what the community's priorities should be moving ahead. Among those, 761 respondents suggested specific programs, activities, or concerns that they believed the community should address.

This chapter summarizes the comments of the respondents who provided responses to these questions; many of these respondents commented on multiple topics. The numbers shown in this chapter indicate the actual number of respondents who mentioned each issue. Topics mentioned by fewer than 20 people are not included in this summary.

Community Size and Unity

Respondents felt strongly that the size of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community was the source of its strength (288). In addition, 113 remarked on the feelings of togetherness and unity within the community, and another 103 praised the community's sense of diversity and inclusivity to multiple groups. For 22 community members, enhancing the feelings of togetherness and unity should be a priority.

“There are numerous kosher shopping and dining resources within easy driving distance. There are many religious congregations of a wide variety of Jewish denominations. There are cultural resources in both Jewish and secular realms.

- “ It’s a growing community, many new young families with children are moving in. We have great schools and lots of choices. It’s a very welcoming, diversified group, and everyone cares about each other no matter what background you came from.
- “ I also appreciate the collaborative nature of our community. The many different organizations and synagogues in our community work together with respect for our differences in an effort to find strength in unity.

Other respondents felt that there was room for improvement:

- “ We need support in every area, beginning with children; integrate and keep them within the community and perpetuate the community moving forward. Family and community coherency needs to be supported. Bringing all people, all ages, all families together with an integrative Jewish essence.
- “ [A priority is] facilitating new friendships within the context of SPBC [South Palm Beach County] activities. People tend to stick too much to interactions only with people they already know or who have been ‘validated’ by trusted intermediaries. This limits sense of broader community and desire to come to community events.

Organizations and Leadership

Community organizations and their leadership are seen as areas of strength. Respondents mentioned the quality of leadership (45), level of organization (39), communication (28), and outreach (35). Specific organizations, including the Federation (74) and Levis JCC (30), are valued by community members, but some suggested areas of improvement for the Federation (21).

- “ The quality of those who are involved (caring, philanthropic, inclusive, etc.). Professionals and lay leaders are truly outstanding. The dedication and commitment of lay leaders. How it supports the local Jewish community, Jews around the world, and Israel. The programs and missions of our Jewish Federation. The communication and relationships amongst rabbis, whether Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, etc. Having such a strong Jewish foundation (LOJE, PACE, etc.). And, thankfully, our community has financial resources.

Despite organizational successes, many respondents (22) felt that coordination and communication could be improved, and 54 recommended more or different types of outreach.

One respondent reported a “lack of cohesiveness between Federation and the local synagogues.” Another wrote:

“There are many programs locally. However I think a lot of people are not familiar or do not know how to access.

Several respondents recommended the development of consolidated communications:

“A monthly calendar in maybe the Jewish Journal listing all activities and Jewish events to be held in the community.

“One clearinghouse to encourage widespread volunteerism and provide placement opportunities for volunteers.

Finances

Respondents described other sources of community strength as its wealth (66) and its philanthropic efforts (54). However, 50 respondents felt that communal financial support was insufficient. Another 66 respondents expressed concerns about the costs of being Jewish, in particular the cost of participation in religious life (21). For 29 respondents, making Jewish education more affordable was a priority.

“The number of passionate Jews who are willing to give of their time and money to improve the lives of others. The affluence, which significantly impacts how many people believe it defines themselves. The ability for the community to rally around a cause.

Other respondents mentioned the difficulties those who are not wealthy have in participating in community events and institutions.

“[There are] too many very expensive events—\$150 luncheons, \$500 social events. Not enough [events] for the ‘average person.’

- “ *The Federation caters to those individuals that have millions of dollars. There is no ‘room’ in leadership roles for anyone else.*
- “ *There isn’t a kosher independent assisted living for people whose income is less than \$100,000 per year—whose income is less than \$50,000-\$60,000. We need help in our old age.*
- “ *[Would like the community] to be more flexible with finances to allow families to join temples and participate in activities.*

Costs were mentioned most frequently in the context of Jewish education.

- “ *Unfortunately, the cost of Jewish day school tuition is very high, and it forces us to make tremendous sacrifices to enable us to send our children. Though we make it a priority to send our children, it puts us in a precarious financial situation for the long term. We wish there were much more ways to offset its high cost.*
- “ *[There should be] subsidized Jewish education for families with children in Pre-K-12th grade who choose not to send their children to Hebrew Day School. It has gotten way too expensive to provide a Jewish upbringing for children, and it is a barrier for many.*
- “ *Compared to non-Jewish preschools, the Jewish preschools are quite a bit more costly, and have more days off. This is the sole reason that my children attend a secular preschool rather than a Jewish preschool. If the preschools were more affordable and competitive with the fees of non-Jewish preschools, more parents and children would be part of the community earlier.*

Education

Respondents viewed educational programs (33) and schools (44) as community priorities: Thirty-eight explicitly mentioned Jewish education, and 51 discussed education in general. Thirty-four respondents recommended improvements in the Jewish education offerings in the community, and 40 recommended changes to schools.

“There are very well organized good education programs and motivates individuals to be part of the whole.

“[More] high-level, non-Orthodox Jewish learning.

Synagogues

Respondents viewed synagogues (124) as strong contributors to community life, with the variety of available synagogue options being another reflection of the community size (30). Synagogue rabbis were seen as an important component of synagogue strength (21). Community members were pleased with the denominational diversity and availability of religious options (42).

“Its inclusivity and cohesiveness is amazing. There is something for everyone and the way the different denominations interact is beautiful!

“The diversity of religious expression is extraordinary. There are so many different avenues for Jewish life, across the spectrum of Jewish belief.

Many respondents mentioned their own rabbi. One described the importance of “[h]aving a rabbi I can talk to who can talk to me with whom I can really relate.”

Social Services and Health

Respondents praised the support and social services provided to members of the community (125), in particular, services for the elderly (30).

“The senior services provided are invaluable to me and my family. Without the services I would not be able keep my mother in her home and continue at my job, and I would be financially strained. The services that JFS [Jewish Family Services] offers locally are unmatched. It is the shining star of our community.

Many community members discussed the provision of social services as a top priority and mentioned social and health services (112), home health care (22), and food and shelter for those in poverty (34). The greatest community concern noted was providing services for the elderly (42), services for those struggling with poverty (27), and services for those with special needs or mental health issues (21).

However, 78 felt particular health and human services were lacking, including services for those with impaired health (28), services for individuals with special needs (23), and services for the elderly (60). Others emphasized the importance of caring for the needs of the low-income members of the community (24).

- “ To help parents with mentally disabled or challenged or drug addicted children AND adults. There is a terrible lack of ‘homes’ where these people can go to for help and safety that is AFFORDABLE.
- “ Mental health support for children and families. Helping a parent find the proper agencies without having to jump through hoops. Helping the elderly Jews who are on a very limited income, find proper housing so they can maintain their Jewish life. Palm Beach County really has no supportive programs, which was upsetting to find out after living here.
- “ There is insufficient communal support, priority, and advocacy for the disabled and physically handicapped members of the Jewish community. Wheelchair-bound elderly Jewish members of the community and their caregivers, who are often family members, must constantly struggle to obtain adequate access to services, events, and programs. The disabled and handicapped members of our community are not adequately provided the dignity and accessibility of attending theatre performances, film screenings, lectures, etc. This is the result of a lack of sufficient training, planning, and design on the part of host Jewish organizations and associations. This is something which Jewish federations could play a vital and coordinating role in improving the participation and enjoyment for some of the most disadvantaged members of the Jewish community.

Programs

Respondents noted that one of the benefits of the large size of the community is the array of programs, services, and activities that are available (196).

- “ The array of services and goods available (social/communal services, programming, variety of restaurants, multiple shopping options for kosher food). The Federation campus housing schools, agencies, and residences in one location.
- “ Large and diverse with many opportunities to enjoy different kinds of Jewish activities on an almost daily basis.
- “ Excellent communications, activities, gym, lectures, prayer space, well-connected to synagogues and rabbis.

However, 64 respondents mentioned specific programs that were lacking. Fifty-four respondents noted gaps in social programs. Forty-one respondents mentioned gaps in cultural program offerings, in particular for specific demographic subgroups, including young adults (37), singles of all ages (22), families (20), and children of all ages (68). Outreach to these groups was a priority for 57 respondents, and the need for more social activities was mentioned by 74.

- “ I’m single these days and so I don’t think there are many activities and events for single people. The federation has things for younger people but not in my age group.
- “ Creating fun events for families and bringing families together. South Florida caters to all Jewish families...lots of us here.
- “ It’s hard for the 20-30 year olds, I tend to not find people my age if I go to a synagogue group; it is usually older people.
- “ It seems like there’s nothing vibrant enough for 20s early 30s to make it attractive to love in the area.
- “ Desperately needed opportunity for Jewish kids to meet other Jewish kids outside of Jewish day schools in a social setting.

Thriving Jewish Life

Other concerns about Jewish life were less specific to the local community. Combating antisemitism was a top priority for 32 respondents, and for 51 respondents, the top priority was a concern about the loss of Jewish connections, particularly among young adults, and the growing rates of intermarriage.

- “ Programs to address antisemitism within the varying levels of Jewish community, as well as the conflict between the different groups in Israel that more destructive to the people as a whole than outside antisemitism might be.
- “ Sponsor local educational programs regarding antisemitism in the US and encouraging support for Israel.
- “ Trying to get the young people involved in the Jewish community because we’re losing them.

Chapter 12: Looking Toward the Future

The Jewish community of South Palm Beach County is large and strong, with a robust network of organizations, programs, and services. The population has remained about the same size since its last study, in 2005, and is likely to remain about the same size or decline slightly in the coming decade. This stability, however, masks changing demographic conditions. In contrast to the portrait of the community presented by the 2005 study, elderly retirees who die or move away are not being replaced by similar peers as rapidly as they were in the past; instead a growing number of Jewish families are raising children in the community. Consequently, as the population becomes younger, communal priorities may need to adapt.

Community members feel that the size of the community is one of its great strengths, allowing it to draw from the diversity of its members, both demographically and in terms of talent. The community is well educated and relatively affluent, generous in giving of its time and resources to organizations in the Jewish community and the wider community around it. There is a perception, however, among many of those who are struggling financially that the community's Jewish organizations do not care about them as much as they care about those who can afford the high costs of organizational membership dues and program fees and have the means to make substantial financial contributions.

The community offers a diverse array of programs and institutions. Members are largely satisfied with the breadth and depth of offerings but would like more programs for specific demographic subgroups that may be underserved, including young adults, singles of all ages, and children. Many community members would like to see greater investment in Jewish educational programming, both for children and for adults.

As described in chapters 9, 10, and 11, the social service agencies are also considered one of the community's great strengths, particularly for the quality of the services they provide to elderly residents. Yet there is also consensus that need outpaces the availability of services for people with chronic health conditions, disabilities, or special needs, particularly individuals with cognitive or developmental disabilities.

Based on the responses of the over 2,100 households residing in South Palm Beach County who completed the survey, we have identified several implications and recommendations for using the data to enhance local Jewish life.

Prepare for changing demographics. The Jewish community of South Palm Beach County remains largely a retirement community but is undergoing a transition. Although Jewish retirees continue to move to the area in large numbers, there are not enough new retirees moving in to replace those who pass away or otherwise leave the community. The community has historically been and continues to be a retirement destination for US Jewry, but the high cost of real estate in the area has led many people who otherwise might have retired to South Palm Beach County to settle in other regions, including farther north on the Atlantic Coast of Florida, on the Gulf Coast, and other, less conventional retirement destinations.³⁴ The size of the community has been maintained by the increasing numbers of younger adults and families with children, making the community younger than it was 13 years ago. This process will likely continue, but whether there will be enough young newcomers to continue to maintain the size of the local Jewish community is not clear.

Increase focus on families with children. As the community's demographic transition proceeds, the community will need to engage young adults and families more deeply. With only one third of Jewish children currently participating in any sort of Jewish educational program, it appears that the community has not fully captured the interest of many young families. Efforts to strengthen informal educational programs in particular—camps, youth groups, and peer-group trips—are likely to be especially fruitful, as they engage families today and invest in the Jewish connections of the next generation of the Jewish community.

Engage with intermarried couples and their children. Although the intermarriage rate in South Palm Beach County is one of the lowest in the country, the figure has increased since 2005 and is likely to increase further in the coming decade as the Jewish community's share of the overall population of the region continues to decline; older residents, who are less likely to be intermarried, leave the community; and younger residents, who are more open to intermarriage than their forebears, marry in larger numbers. Among children with intermarried parents, 66% are being raised exclusively Jewish, similar to the national average. The community will need to expand its outreach efforts to intermarried couples as their numbers increase.

Pay attention, but do not panic over antisemitism. The community is very concerned about antisemitism, whether on US college campuses, the rest of the United States aside from college campuses, or in South Palm Beach County. Some of the antisemitic incidents respondents said they experienced in the past year were extremely disturbing, including incidents with neo-Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan. In addition, 13% of Jewish adults reported that they had personal experiences of antisemitism in the past year. Nevertheless, the proportion

of those who did experience antisemitism is not unusually high, and most who did so experienced relatively minor incidents. The community would be wise to continue monitoring incidents of antisemitism in the community on an ongoing basis but does not need to be overly concerned at this time about the frequency of local incidents or, in the vast majority of cases, their severity.

Invest in Israel education and programming. The South Palm Beach County Jewish community has strong ties to Israel. About two thirds of Jews in the community have visited Israel at least once, about half seek news about Israel at least once a week, and 91% feel at least a little connected to Israel. There is a strong consensus in the community that a Jewish state is necessary to the long-term survival of the Jewish people. There are disagreements within the community over Israel-related issues, and 81% of the community believes that it is important for local Jewish organizations to address those debates. Discussing challenging issues openly but civilly, in a way that allows community members from across the spectra of engagement, politics, and religious observance to share their views comfortably, is a good way to draw on community members' passion for Israel and engage them more deeply with the local Jewish community. Investments in Israel programming are also often effective for strengthening Jewish identity, promoting interest in learning about Jewish life and culture, and engaging with individuals and families who seek Jewish connections but do not necessarily want to be actively involved in communal organizations.

Support families in need. Collectively, the Jewish community of South Palm Beach County is largely middle class, with seasonal residents being somewhat more comfortable. However, 19% of the community describe themselves as just getting along, nearly poor, or poor. Thirteen percent of households receive at least one public benefit that may be an indicator of economic insecurity. Twenty-seven percent lack the funds to cover three months of expenses if they faced an unexpected loss of income, and 5% missed a rent or mortgage payment in the last year because they could not afford it. Seven percent have been constrained from participating in the Jewish community in the past year due to financial issues, particularly as a result of high program costs or fees or the expense of synagogue dues or High Holiday tickets. To best serve families in need, it may be necessary to raise awareness of available resources in the community, particularly for young adults and families with children, and to allocate new resources.

Assist community members struggling with health issues. As with any community with many retirees, the Jewish community of South Palm Beach County has many members who struggle with health problems associated with aging. Nearly one-in-five Jewish households in the community includes someone who is limited in the amount or type of work, schoolwork, or housework s/he can do as a result of a chronic health condition, special need, or disability. Six percent need some sort of assistance they did not receive. One percent of Jewish households in the community include someone with a cognitive need, and 1% include someone with a

developmental need. Although 1% represents a relatively small number of households, about 700, it is critical to note that care for patients with cognitive or developmental disabilities can be extremely expensive. For example, one estimate suggests that the national average annual cost of providing care for a child with an autism spectrum disorder is \$17,000;³⁵ another suggests that the lifetime cost exceeds \$2 million.³⁶ These expenses are prohibitive for many families, and they would likely benefit significantly from additional assistance.

Additionally, many Jewish communities struggle to include individuals with special needs or to maintain ties with members who develop chronic conditions. Nearly one-in-ten households indicated that they were unable to participate in Jewish life in the community in some way in the past year due to health issues; in particular, they could not attend services and programs or activities sponsored by Jewish organizations. Enhanced efforts to include individuals with disabilities and chronic health conditions could substantially increase participation in communal programs.

Develop strong networks to better accommodate the needs of members of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community who participate in Jewish activities in neighboring regions, as well as the neighbors who participate locally. South Palm Beach County borders two communities, Palm Beach County and Broward County, with substantial Jewish populations and networks of Jewish programs and services of their own. Many members of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community are active not only in the Jewish social, cultural, and religious life of the community where they live but also in these neighboring communities. At the same time, the vibrant Jewish institutions of South Palm Beach County attract many participants from beyond Boca Raton, Delray Beach, and Highland Beach. In keeping with the Talmudic dictum to “go out and see what the people are doing,”³⁷ this pattern of participation in multiple Jewish communities in Southeast Florida suggests significant value in maintaining strong ties with the Jewish communities in Palm Beach and Broward Counties and building collaborative programming with them.

These recommendations emerge from data systematically collected during the winter and spring of 2018. This study is part of a long tradition of using social scientific tools to assess the size, characteristics, and concerns of a local Jewish community: It measures participation in Jewish education and programs, institutional engagement, unmet needs, and many other aspects of Jewish life in South Palm Beach County. The community has invested numerous resources in strengthening programming, reaching out to diverse populations, and building ties within the Jewish and surrounding communities. The data provided by this study should provide the framework for making strategic decisions about the future of Jewish life in South Palm Beach County for the next decade.

Notes

¹ Chabad typically has its own building and sometimes does, but often does not, follow a typical membership-for-dues structure. However, because Chabad reaches across denominations more than most other types of synagogues, it is presented as a separate category.

² Saxe, L., Sasson, T., & Krasner Aronson, J. (2015). Pew's portrait of American Jewry: A reassessment of the assimilation narrative. In A. Dashefsky & I. Sheskin (Eds.), *American Jewish Yearbook 2014* (Vol. 114, pp. 71-81). Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut.

³ Saxe, L., Tighe, E., & Boxer, M. (2014). Measuring the size and characteristics of American Jewry: A new paradigm to understand an ancient people. *Studies in contemporary Jewry*, 18.

⁴ Kohut, A., Keeter, S., Doherty, C., Dimock, M., & Christian, L. (2012). *Assessing the representativeness of public opinion surveys*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.people-press.org/2012/05/15/assessing-the-representativeness-of-public-opinion-surveys>

⁵ Blumberg, S.J., and Luke, J.V. (2017). Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, January-June 2017. National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless201712.pdf>

⁶ Lavrakas, P. J., Shuttles, C. D., Steeh, C., & Fienberg, H. (2007). The state of surveying cell phone numbers in the United States: 2007 and beyond. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 71(5), 840-854.

⁷ The South Palm Beach County Jewish Community Study was conducted simultaneously with a similar study for the rest of Palm Beach County. For a variety of technical reasons, simultaneous studies made analysis simpler for both studies, but also required that respondents be screened into one survey or the other. In effect, although each community had its own survey, sampling and data collection functioned as though the two distinct studies were combined into a single study. Accordingly, the response rate presented here is a combined response rate across both studies.

⁸ Sheskin, I.M. (2005). *The 2005 Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County Jewish Community Study*. South Palm Beach County: Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County.

⁹ Pew Research Center. (2013). *A portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center survey of US Jews*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

¹⁰ A small number of respondents indicated that they lived in the area for 0-3 months per year. Representatives of the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County asked that such respondents be treated as visitors for the purposes of this study, and not as residents. They are therefore excluded from all analyses.

¹¹ The cities of Boca Raton, Delray Beach, and Highland Beach.

¹² Based on data from the US Census Bureau's Population Division County Characteristics Resident Population Estimates File, 2016 vintage. The 2017 and 2018 data were not available at the time of analysis.

¹³ Only year-round residents are included in these analyses. Seasonal residents are often estimated based on availability of different types of housing units rather than by population data; this makes comparable analysis of seasonal residents very difficult.

¹⁴ Based on US Census counts of the total population in 2000 and 2010 and American Community Study five-year estimates in 2017 for Boca Raton, Delray Beach, and Highland Beach. The 2017 data were the most recent available to assess the total population at the time this report was written.

¹⁵ Based on US Census counts of non-Hispanic white, college educated individuals aged 25 and older in 2000 and 2010 and American Community Study five-year estimates in 2016 for Boca Raton, Delray Beach, and Highland Beach. The 2016 data were the most recent available to assess educational attainment by racial/ethnic classification at the time this report was written.

¹⁶ If the Jews of multiple religions were excluded from the total Jewish population, as was done in the Pew study, the resulting proportion of Jews by religion would be 87%.

¹⁷ The definitions used in this study are similar but not identical to those used in the Pew Research Center's *A Portrait of Jewish Americans* (Pew Research Center, 2013). Adults who are Jewish and a second religion, if they were raised Jewish or have Jewish parents, are classified by Pew as "Jewish Background" and are not included among the Jewish "count." This study classifies them as "Jews of Multiple Religions" and includes them in the count of both Jewish adults and Jewish children.

¹⁸ Pew Research Center, 2013.

¹⁹ Pew Research Center, 2013.

²⁰ In consultation with the community study committee, households were classified as seasonal residents if they resided in South Palm Beach County for 4-9 months per year and as year-round residents if they lived in the area for 10 months or more per year. Respondents who said they lived in the area for less than four months per year were treated as visitors rather than residents and therefore excluded from all analyses.

²¹ Himmelfarb, H.S. (1982). Research on American Jewish identity and identification: Progress, pitfalls, and prospects. In *Understanding American Jewry*, ed. Marshall Sklare. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University.

²² Pew Research Center, 2013.

²³ A description of latent class analysis and details of how it was applied to our data are provided in Appendix D.

²⁴ For most of this report, “children” refers to individuals under the age of 18. For the purposes of analyses of Jewish educational programs, however, “children” includes 18- and 19-year-old individuals who are currently enrolled in high school.

²⁵ Olitzky, K.M., & Judson, D. (2002). *The rituals and practices of a Jewish life: A handbook for personal spiritual renewal*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing; Olitzky, K.M., & Olitzky, A.S. (2015). *New membership & financial alternatives for the American synagogue: From traditional dues to fair share to gifts from the heart*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing.

²⁶ The field period coincided with the February 14, 2018, mass shooting in Parkland, FL, a town in Broward County that is adjacent to Boca Raton.

²⁷ The 2014 Miami study reported 12% (see Sheskin, I.M. [2014]. *2014 Greater Miami Jewish Federation Population Study: A Portrait of the Miami Jewish Community*. Miami: Greater Miami Jewish Federation).

The 2016 Broward County study reported 12% (see Sheskin, I.M. [2016]. *The 2016 Jewish Federation of Broward County Population Study: A Portrait of the Broward Jewish Community*. Davie, FL: Jewish Federation of Broward County.

The 2017 Pinellas and Pasco Counties study reported 14% (see Sheskin, I.M. [2017]. *The 2017 Pinellas/Pasco Jewish Population Study: A Portrait of the Pinellas/Pasco Jewish Community*. Largo, FL: Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties.

²⁸ Microaggressions are brief and common verbal, behavioral, and environmental cues that transmit hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to their target because that person is a member of a stigmatized or disadvantaged group. (See Sue et al., [2007]. Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *The American Psychologist*, 62, 271-286.) They may be either intentional or unintentional and often appear harmless to observers, particularly members of the dominant majority, but nevertheless can cause significant stress to the targets. Common examples of microaggressions are statements that affirm stereotypes of the minority group or subtly insult its members.

²⁹ Pew Research Center, 2013.

³⁰ Pew Research Center, 2013.

³¹ At the time of Birthright Israel’s inception in 1999, participants had to be between the ages of 18-26 to participate in the program. Thus, a person could have turned 27 in late December 1999 and still have been eligible for the first Birthright Israel trip. Such a person would be 46 years old at the time this survey was conducted.

³² Pew Research Center, 2013.

³³ Estimates for the US and South Palm Beach County are based on data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2012-2016 vintage. The 2017 data were not available at the time of analysis.

³⁴ See, for example, Olson, E. (2018, June 8). A Florida city wants more retirees, and is going after them. Published in *The New York Times*, online edition, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/08/business/florida-retirees.html> Retrieved September 7, 2018.

³⁵ Lavelle, T. A., Weinstein, M. C., Newhouse, J. P., Munir, K., Kuhlthau, K. A., & Prosser, L. A. (2014). Economic burden of childhood autism spectrum disorders. *Pediatrics*, peds-2013.

³⁶ Buescher, A. V., Cidav, Z., Knapp, M., & Mandell, D. S. (2014). Costs of autism spectrum disorders in the United Kingdom and the United States. *JAMA pediatrics*, 168(8), 721-728.

³⁷ Babylonian Talmud, Eruvin 14b.