



2025 Greater Boston Jewish Community Study.



Families and
households.

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cjp.org/CommunityStudy2025

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Introduction.

2025 Greater Boston Jewish Community Study

This study is an independent research initiative sponsored by Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP). The mission of CJP is to inspire and mobilize the diverse Greater Boston Jewish community to engage in building communities of learning and action that strengthen Jewish life and improve the world.

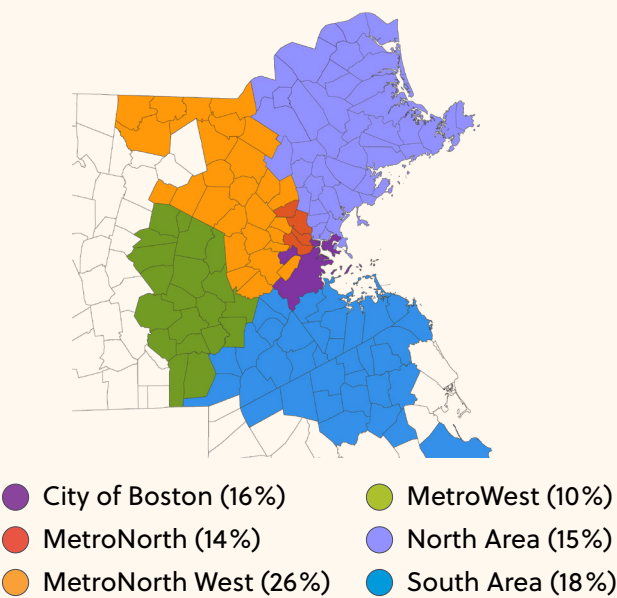
The goal of this study is to provide a transparent, fact-based picture of the community today. Conducted once every decade, this study gives the community the chance to step back and ask: Who are we today? Where are we thriving? And what does our community need to build a strong and safe future?

The research is based on 4,776 responses from a probability survey of a randomly selected sample of Jewish households across Greater Boston and is supported by follow-up interviews and focus groups. These reports remind us that every

data point represents a real person—a life, a story, and a lived experience in our community. Readers are encouraged to approach the findings with curiosity and openness to the diverse experiences they represent. The reports present two types of data: estimates of the number of Jewish households and the people in them, and percentages describing their characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors. As with all probability-based surveys, these estimates are not exact and include a margin of error of about ± 2.6 percentage points for the full sample. For smaller groups, the margin of error is wider. Throughout the reports, estimates are rounded to whole numbers and populations to the nearest hundred, so categories may not equal the total.

To read all the reports and access a detailed explanation of the survey methodology, visit cjp.org/CommunityStudy2025.

Map of Jewish households



For a detailed map, visit: cjp.org/regionalmap

Population estimates of Greater Boston

Jewish households	138,200
Individuals in Jewish households	333,100
Adults	277,900
Jewish	184,500
Not Jewish	93,400
Children	55,200
Jewish	44,000
Not Jewish	10,800
Unknown	400

Glossary

Terms used in the reports

Jewish household: A home in which one or more Jewish adults reside. All Jewish households have at least one Jewish adult living in them. About half of them are also home to one or more adults or children, or sometimes both, who are not Jewish.

Adults

- **Jewish adults:** A person who identifies as Jewish by religion, ethnicity, culture, parentage, or how they were raised, so long as they do not also identify with another religion.
- **Adults who are not Jewish:** Adults living in Jewish households who do not identify as or consider themselves Jewish by religion, ethnicity, culture, parentage, or how they were raised.

Children

- **Jewish children:** A person ages 0-17 who is being raised Jewish by religion, or Jewish and another religion, or is considered Jewish aside from religion, including ethnically or culturally Jewish.
- **Children who are not Jewish:** Children ages 0-17 who are living in Jewish households who are not being raised Jewish by religion, or Jewish and another religion, or considered Jewish aside from religion.

Index of Jewish Connection

A system to measure how Jewish adults connect with Jewish life in Greater Boston

Contemporary Jewish life is multidimensional. There is a wide range of different and diverse ways to connect to it. To measure and categorize this diversity among Jewish adults in Greater Boston, an Index of Jewish Connection was developed and is used throughout the series of reports about the study.

The index—which is based on a statistical procedure called latent class analysis—captures the primary ways that five segments of Jewish adults connect to Jewish life in Greater Boston. It is not designed to place the groups in a hierarchy of engagement, with some doing “more” and some doing “less.”

Instead, it highlights what makes each group distinctive in how they connect in ways that are personally meaningful to Jewish life, distinctions that are reflected in the names given to the groups.



Seeking the Social - 29%

The *Seeking the Social* group is similar to *Family Focused* and, additionally, is more active in communal and organizational events, activities, and programs.



Tenuously Tethered - 27%

The *Tenuously Tethered* group is minimally involved in Jewish life, with infrequent participation in personal, home, and family-based Jewish activities or organizational events and programs.



Family Focused - 17%

The *Family Focused* group is focused on personal, home, and family-based Jewish activities and holiday observances.



Deeply Devoted - 15%

The *Deeply Devoted* group is similar to *Enthusiastically Engrossed* and, additionally, is more focused on synagogue involvement and religious observance.



Enthusiastically Engrossed - 12%

The *Enthusiastically Engrossed* group has a wide range of family, personal, home, organizational, and cultural connections to Jewish life.

Families and households in Greater Boston.

Jewish households in Greater Boston are diverse. Some residents live by themselves, with their families, or with housemates. Most households only contain adults, and some have children between 0-17 years old. And there are a small proportion of multigenerational (two or more related adult generations ages 18 and older living together) and interfaith families. Overall, more than two-thirds (70%) of Jewish adults are married or partnered; 12% are divorced, separated, or widowed; and 18% are single and have never married.

Across all of them, residents vary in their ages and life stages. Even with so much variation, these households can be categorized into four types, accounting for nearly all (98%) Jewish households in the study.¹

- 46%** Families and households with no children under 18 years old
- 22%** Families and households with children 0-17 years old living in the household
- 20%** Single adults living by themselves
- 10%** Families and households with shared living arrangements

A final section of the report examines interfaith families, including their household composition, characteristics, connections and experiences. For the purposes of this report, interfaith families are defined as couples living as spouses or partners, one of whom identifies as Jewish and the other does not.

Key takeaways



Jewish households differ in connection and need

Over two-thirds of households have married or partnered adults while one-third consists of single adults or unrelated adults without children. Younger adults in shared living arrangements tend to be more socially active and less formally engaged. Older and multigenerational households often experience greater financial pressure, which impacts their formal and informal Jewish engagement.



Interfaith families feel welcome and participate less in Jewish communal life

Interfaith households are similar to those with two Jewish partners in family traditions and holiday celebrations. While most Jews in interfaith homes say they feel welcome, they are significantly less likely to participate in Jewish communal life or identify with a Jewish denomination.



Emotional well-being and financial stability vary by type of household and age


Younger adults across household types report higher rates of loneliness, depression, and anxiety compared to older adults in similar household types. Single adults living by themselves and multigenerational households report higher levels of economic vulnerability. In contrast, families with children and couples without children tend to have higher incomes, though families with children still report financial stress due to the costs of raising children.

Families and households with no children.


Married and partnered Jewish adults, who also do not have children under 18 years old living with them, make up nearly half (46%) of all Jewish households in Greater Boston. This group reflects a wide range of life stages, from young couples who are just starting their lives together, to empty nesters whose children are no longer with them, to older adults who are retired.

While they mirror the broader Jewish population in many ways, they tend to be older, financially stable, and highly educated. Their Jewish engagement is consistent with the overall population, and their well-being, especially among older adults, is generally strong.

Population



141,000 adults



63,400 households

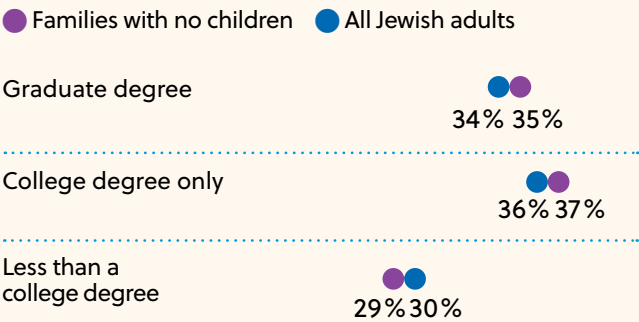
Ages

The Jewish adults living in these households resemble the overall Jewish population in many respects, though they skew somewhat older. About 35% are 65 and older, compared to 27% of all Jewish adults. Another 21% are under the age of 30, similar to 22% of all Jewish adults.

Age	Families with no children	All Jewish adults
18-29 years old	21%	22%
30-44 years old	18%	25%
45-64 years old	26%	26%
65 years and older	35%	27%

Education

Educational attainment is high among these Jewish adults. Approximately 70% have a college degree, including 35% who hold a graduate or professional degree. These levels are similar to all Jewish adults.



Residence

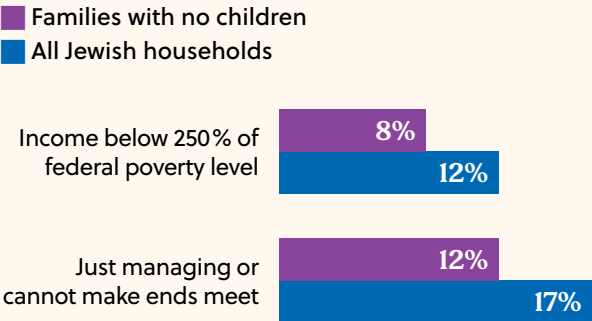
Married and partnered adults live across Greater Boston, with a modest concentration in MetroNorth West (29%). However, location varies by age, particularly among households that are not multigenerational. In those households, younger adults (ages 18-29) live primarily in the City of Boston (35%) and MetroNorth (31%), while older adults (ages 65 and older) live in MetroNorth West (31%) and South Area (25%).

Financial status

The median household income is \$163,000. Nearly half (45%) of these households earn \$175,000 or more annually.






Close to nine in 10 (88%) are economically stable, with only 12% who say they are just managing to make ends meet or cannot make ends meet. Similarly, only 8% of these households have incomes below 250% of the federal poverty level.

Economic vulnerability



Jewish connections

Married and partnered adults without children look much like the general Jewish population in regard to their connection and participation in Jewish life, as defined by the Index of Jewish Connection.

Index of Jewish Connection		Families with no children	All Jewish adults
	Seeking the Social	28%	29%
	Tenuously Tethered	27%	27%
	Family Focused	19%	17%
	Deeply Devoted	14%	15%
	Enthusiastically Engrossed	12%	12%

Similar to all Jewish adults, 63% have attended in-person or online events, activities, or programs hosted by Jewish organizations in the 12 months before the survey. Of those who participated, 22% participated at least once or twice a month. In the 12 months before the survey, about 57% of Jewish adults in these households donated to Jewish causes or organizations, slightly more than all Jewish adults, and 23% volunteered for Jewish causes or organizations, similar to all Jewish adults. In addition, one quarter of these households (25%) belong to synagogues.

Family composition

About one in six (16%) live in multigenerational households. In nearly all of these multigenerational households (97%), there is an adult child age 18 or older living in the same house with their parents. In very few (3%), an older parent of one of the spouses or partners resides in the household.

More than half (52%) of Jewish adults in these households are married or partnered with someone who is Jewish, and 48% are married or partnered with someone who is not.

Well-being

Jewish adults in these households report slightly lower rates (11%) of loneliness and anxiety than average, which is 14% among Jewish adults in Greater Boston.

These feelings vary by age. Younger adults (ages 18-29) in these types of households were more likely to report being lonely, depressed, or anxious all the time or often in the month before the survey (34%) than those ages 30-44 (20%), 45-64 (10%), and 65 and older (3%).

Families with children.

Jewish families with children make up about one in five households in Greater Boston.²

Parents tend to be middle aged, well educated, and financially secure. Their Jewish connections include synagogue membership, volunteering, and charitable giving. Education is a central part of family life, though fewer families are choosing to send their children to Jewish schools compared to secular or public options.

Population



66,700
adults



52,200
children ages 0-17



30,400
households

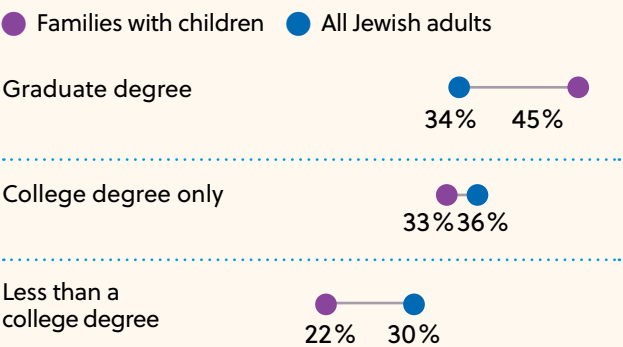
Ages

The majority of Jewish adults in these homes (52%) are between 30-44 years old, followed by those who are 45-64 (32%) and 18-29 (14%). Very few are 65 years and older.

Age	Families with children	All Jewish adults
18-29 years old	14%	22%
30-44 years old	52%	25%
45-64 years old	32%	26%
65 years and older	2%	27%

Education

The majority (78%) of these Jewish adults have college degrees. Just under half hold graduate or professional degrees.



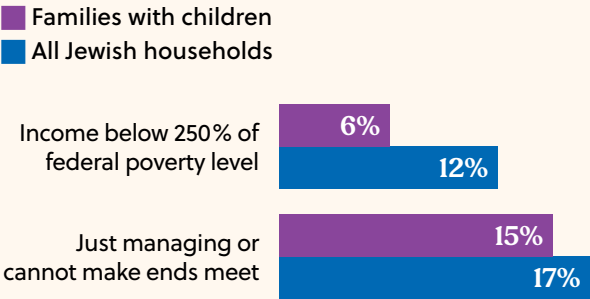
Residence

Jewish adults with children are most prevalent in MetroNorth West (34%), followed by the South Area (17%), City of Boston (15%), and North Area (14%). Families with children 14-17 years old are more likely to live in MetroNorth West (33%) than those with children 0-5 years old (23%).

Financial status

The median household income is \$213,000. Two-thirds of these households earn \$175,000 or more annually. About 6% have incomes below 250% of the federal poverty level. Nonetheless, 15% describe themselves as just managing to make ends meet or cannot make ends meet, possibly indicating that expenses, especially related to housing and raising children, may offset higher incomes.

Economic vulnerability








Education of children

Among all children in these households, about equal proportions are 0-5 years old (41%) and 6-13 years old (39%), while 21% are 14-17 years old. Altogether, 80% of these children are being raised or are considered Jewish, and 20% are not. About three quarters of those 0-5 years old (72%) are enrolled in early childhood education programs, including 33% in secular programs, 18% in public programs, and 12% in Jewish programs.

Of those children over 5 years old, 42% are in grades K-5, 26% are in grades 6-8, and 32% are in grades 9-12. The vast majority (79%) of children ages 6 and older are in public schools, while 9% are in Jewish day schools or *yeshivas*.³ Among children being raised Jewish, just over one in 10 attend Jewish day schools or *yeshivas* (11%).

Jewish connections

Families with children are, on the whole, comparatively well connected to the Jewish community. Adults in these households are more likely than all adults to be *Deeply Devoted* (20%) and *Enthusiastically Engrossed* (15%).

Index of Jewish Connection		Families with children	All Jewish adults
	<i>Seeking the Social</i>	31%	29%
	<i>Tenuously Tethered</i>	23%	27%
	<i>Family Focused</i>	12%	17%
	<i>Deeply Devoted</i>	20%	15%
	<i>Enthusiastically Engrossed</i>	15%	12%

A much larger share of families with children (74%) have attended in-person or online events, activities, or programs hosted by Jewish organizations in the 12 months before the survey, compared with 65% of all Jewish adults. Of those who participated, 30% participated at least once or twice a month. In the 12 months before the survey, nearly six in 10 (57%) donated to Jewish causes, and 27% volunteered for a Jewish cause or organization. One-third (34%) of these households belong to a synagogue, and 8% have children enrolled in Jewish day schools.

Family composition

One in six (17%) of these households are multigenerational, including 15% that have adult child(ren) over 18 years old, and 3% of which have a parent of one of the spouses or partners. Just under half (45%) of Jewish adults in these households are married or partnered with someone who is Jewish, and 55% are married or partnered with someone who is not. In total, two-thirds (65%) of all families with children ages 0-17 are interfaith.

Well-being

Well-being indicators among families with children are comparable to others. One in seven (15%) Jewish adults in these households said they were lonely, depressed, or anxious all the time or often in the month before the survey.



Single adults living by themselves.

Single adults who live by themselves represent one in five Jewish households and span all ages and backgrounds.

These adults tend to be older and face greater economic challenges compared to their married or partnered peers. Over half of single adults who live by themselves participated in Jewish events, activities, or programs, though their pattern of connection is lower than Jewish adults overall.

Population



27,200 adults



27,200 households

Ages

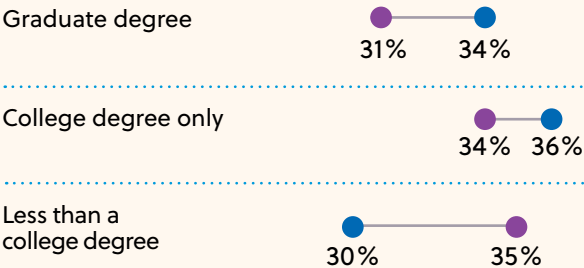
Nearly half (47%) of Jewish adults who live by themselves are 65 or older, compared to 27% of all Jewish adults living in Greater Boston. Fewer than one in 10 single adults (6%) who live by themselves is 18-29 years old, compared to 22% of all Jewish adults living in Greater Boston.

Age	Single adults living by themselves	All Jewish adults
18-29 years old	6%	22%
30-44 years old	23%	25%
45-64 years old	24%	26%
65 years and older	47%	27%

Education

Educational attainment is lower among single adults. About 35% do not have a college degree, compared with 30% of all Jewish adults. The percentage is driven primarily by lower levels of college education among adults over 65 years old. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of adults living by themselves have a college degree, and 31% of them hold a graduate or professional degree.

● Single adults living by themselves ● All Jewish adults



Residence

Single adults live across all six regions of Greater Boston. Half (51%) of adults under 45 years old live in the City of Boston and MetroNorth. Over a quarter (27%) of adults under 45 live in the suburban regions of MetroWest, North Area, and South Area, and just under a quarter (22%) live in MetroNorth West.

In contrast, close to two-thirds (62%) of those 65 and older live in MetroWest, North Area, and South Area. About 17% live in the City of Boston and MetroNorth. A similar percentage of older adults (21%) live in MetroNorth West.

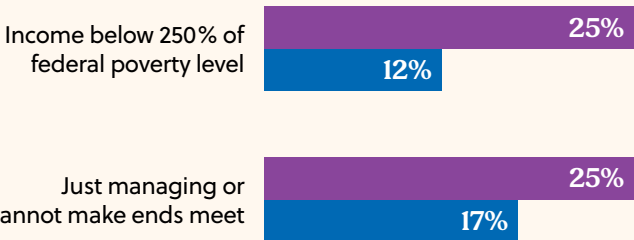
Financial status

This group faces financial challenges. The median household income is \$71,200. One quarter (25%) report they are just managing to make ends meet or cannot make ends meet.

One quarter (25%) of single adults have income that falls below 250% of the federal poverty level. Self-reported economic insecurity is especially pronounced among middle-aged single adults between 45-64 years old.

Economic vulnerability






- Single adults living by themselves
- All Jewish households



Jewish connections

Most adults who live by themselves are *Tenuously Tethered* (36%) or *Seeking the Social* (29%), and less likely to be *Enthusiastically Engrossed* (8%) or *Deeply Devoted* (11%). Those ages 30-44 and 45-64 are especially likely to be *Tenuously Tethered* (50%), whereas more than half (55%) of adults 18-29 are *Seeking the Social*.

Findings show that adults living alone attend Jewish events less frequently, donate and volunteer at lower rates, and are less likely to belong to a synagogue (22%), compared to all adults and especially to married or partnered adults. In the past 12 months before the survey, 56% attended in-person or online events, activities, or programs hosted by Jewish organizations. Of those who participated, 22% participated at least once or twice a month.

Index of Jewish Connection		Single adults living by themselves	All Jewish adults
	Seeking the Social	29%	29%
	Tenuously Tethered	36%	27%
	Family Focused	16%	17%
	Deeply Devoted	11%	15%
	Enthusiastically Engrossed	8%	12%

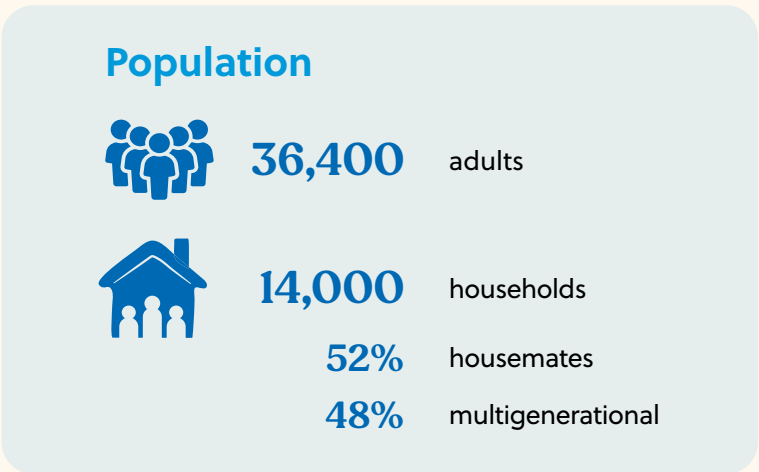
Well-being

Single adults who live by themselves were not more likely than other adults to report feeling lonely, depressed, or anxious all or most of the time in the month before the survey. However, single adults 30-44 years old are more likely to report these feelings (25%) than those under 30 (18%), 45-64 years old (19%), or over 65 years old (9%).

Households with shared living arrangements.

These households are home to two or more adults, no married spouses or partners, and no children under age 18.

They include multigenerational families, often parents and adult children, as well as groups of unrelated adults sharing space as housemates. These two household types differ in age, economic stability, and Jewish engagement.



Ages

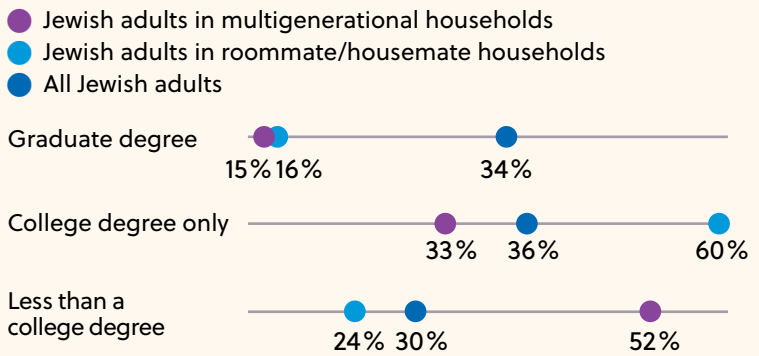
Jewish adults in households with housemates are overwhelmingly younger compared to other types of households. Approximately 77% are under 30 years old, compared to 45% of adults in multigenerational households.

In contrast, 41% of adults living in multigenerational households are age 45 or older—a much higher share than in households with housemates (9%). Of that 41%, about 29% are between 45 and 64 years old, while 12% are 65 or older.

Age	Jewish adults in multigenerational households	Jewish adults in roommate/housemate households	All Jewish adults
18-29 years old	45%	77%	22%
30-44 years old	14%	15%	25%
45-64 years old	29%	5%	26%
65 years and older	12%	4%	27%

Education

Adults in multigenerational households are less likely to hold a college degree (33%) or graduate degree (15%), likely due to the number of young adult children living in these households. Graduate education among households with shared living arrangements is lower than single adults living by themselves, as well as married or partnered adults with or without children.



Residence

Jewish adults in multigenerational and housemate households have very different residential patterns. Those in multigenerational households are mainly found in the South Area (38%) and MetroNorth West (21%), while adults in housemate households cluster in MetroNorth (48%) and the City of Boston (27%).

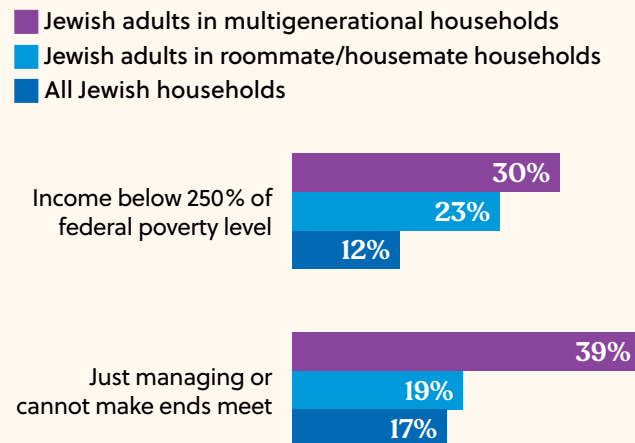
Region	Jewish adults in multigenerational households	Jewish adults in roommate/housemate households	All Jewish adults
City of Boston	7%	27%	15%
MetroNorth	7%	48%	13%
MetroNorth West	21%	22%	28%
MetroWest	12%	<1%	11%
North Area	16%	4%	16%
South Area	38%	<1%	18%

Financial status

Compared to all Jewish households, incomes are lower among this group as a whole, and self-assessments of economic vulnerability are somewhat higher. Households with housemates report less income (74% make \$100,000 or less) than multigenerational households (54% make \$100,000 or less).






However, multigenerational households are more likely to report they are economically struggling (39%) than households with housemates (19%). Multigenerational households are also slightly more likely (30%) to make an annual income below 250% of the federal poverty level than housemate households (23%).

Economic vulnerability



Jewish connections

Jewish adults in multigenerational households are more likely to be *Enthusiastically Engrossed* (20%) than those in housemate households (11%), while the latter are more likely to be *Seeking the Social* (37% vs. 27%).

Index of Jewish Connection	Jewish adults in multigenerational families	Jewish adults in roommate/housemate families	All Jewish adults
 <i>Seeking the Social</i>	27%	37%	29%
 <i>Tenuously Tethered</i>	17%	21%	27%
 <i>Family Focused</i>	22%	17%	17%
 <i>Deeply Devoted</i>	14%	14%	15%
 <i>Enthusiastically Engrossed</i>	20%	11%	12%

These households resemble the overall Jewish population in patterns of Jewish connection, as defined by the Index of Jewish Connection.

Nearly three quarters of Jews in multigenerational households (71%) attended events, activities, or programs hosted by Jewish organizations, in-person or online in the 12 months before the survey. Attendance in events, activities, or programs is similar for Jews in housemate households (67%).

Jews in multigenerational households donate to Jewish causes (56%) far more than Jews in housemate households (31%).

The two groups are much more similar in regard to volunteering for Jewish causes or organizations (27% and 19%, respectively). Only 19% of multigenerational households and 12% of housemate households are synagogue members.

Well-being

Jewish adults in these households are more likely to report loneliness, depression, or anxiety than all Jewish adults. About 26% said they had these feelings often or all the time in the month before the survey, compared to 15% for all Jewish adults. Those in multigenerational and housemate situations do not differ here.



Interfaith families.

Interfaith families, defined as having one spouse or partner who identifies as Jewish and one who does not, make up 40% of all Jewish households in Greater Boston.

Interfaith families and families with two Jewish partners are fairly similar to each other on many social and demographic characteristics, but often differ in regard to Jewish connections. This section profiles the defining characteristics and variations of interfaith families and their members.

Population



120,700
adults



31,900
children



55,900
households

59,600

Jewish adults

22,000

Jewish children

61,100

adults who are
not Jewish

9,900

children who
are not Jewish

Social and demographic characteristics

Consistent with increasing rates of interfaith relationships over time, Jewish adults in interfaith families skew younger, with over half (52%) under the age of 45.

Jewish adults in interfaith families have high levels of education, with 75% having earned a college and 36% a graduate degree. The median household income is \$176,200. Some interfaith families report they are just managing or are unable to make ends meet (14%), with 8% of households with incomes under 250% of the federal poverty level.

Geographically, the most common area where interfaith families reside is MetroNorth West (29%). The least common area is MetroWest (11%).



Is “interfaith” the right word?

As families that include someone who identifies as Jewish and someone who does not have become an integral part of the Jewish community, the language used to describe them has evolved. A common term is “interfaith,” and these reports use that term.

However, that term does not resonate with everyone who has the lived experience of building relationships and families where one partner is Jewish and the other is not.

In interviews and focus groups, most participants shared that the term “interfaith” does not, in fact, resonate strongly with them. Feelings about the term range from mild acceptance to indifference to aversion. Reasons for this vary.

Some say the term fails to describe their family because faith is either not the most relevant aspect of their Jewish identity or because they only practice Judaism.

“

I have nothing against the term ‘interfaith,’ but I’ve never once had an occasion to use it. I’m not sure exactly why this is the case. Possibly because interfaith to me evokes a situation where both partners are very religious. Both my partner and I are pretty secular, so it doesn’t seem totally appropriate. ... I see it as kind of a bureaucratic term. I don’t know how many people actually say, ‘I’m in an interfaith couple.’

The word ‘interfaith’ doesn’t really apply to us because my wife is Japanese and she’s not like Buddhist or anything, she just doesn’t really identify with a certain faith. Most of the faith-based things that we do are Jewish.

Some participants said they prefer more descriptive labels:

I guess I don’t use that phrase [interfaith]. I know what it means, of course, but I don’t use it. I think when I describe people, I just say what it is. We’re mixed, and she’s not religious, and I am Jewish.

For others, the term feels both out of date and unnecessary. Families like theirs have become so common that they see their identity as nearly unremarkable, and they simply want to be treated like others in the Jewish community.






I think the term ‘interfaith’ feels very 90s. ‘We are welcoming of interfaith families,’ as in, we know you married a non-Jew, but I guess you can still come. And it just feels like we’re so far beyond that. There are so many more people of a variety of backgrounds [and] from different tracks [who are part of the Jewish community]. And so, I don’t understand why we need a label at all for that.

”

Jewish connections

Jews in interfaith families find meaning in Jewish life and community through personal and family activities, holiday and Shabbat celebrations, programs and events, charitable giving, and Jewish educational experiences for their children. However, these connections are not as extensive as those of Jews who are married to or partnered with other Jews.

The distribution of Jews in interfaith families on the Index of Jewish Connection reflects that four in 10 (40%) are *Tenuously Tethered*, while 26% are *Seeking the Social* and 22% are *Family Focused*. Relatively few are *Enthusiastically Engrossed* (7%) or *Deeply Devoted* (4%).

Index of Jewish Connection	Jewish adults in interfaith families	Jewish adults in families with two Jewish spouses/partners	All Jewish adults
 <i>Seeking the Social</i>	26%	31%	29%
 <i>Tenuously Tethered</i>	40%	10%	27%
 <i>Family Focused</i>	22%	12%	17%
 <i>Deeply Devoted</i>	4%	28%	15%
 <i>Enthusiastically Engrossed</i>	7%	18%	12%

Jews in interfaith families generally feel welcome in the Jewish communities they are part of. Most said the Jewish community in Greater Boston is very (58%) or somewhat (31%) welcoming to interfaith families, while few said just a little (9%) or not at all (3%).⁴ Consistent with this, when asked about specific factors that may have limited their participation, only 5% of Jews in interfaith families indicated that the community does not feel welcoming to people like them.

Among interfaith families with children not enrolled in Jewish educational experiences last year, concerns about inclusion were nearly negligible and did not play a role in their decision making. The same is true for those who are not synagogue members.

Follow-up interviews and focus groups with community members gave more insight on their feelings of inclusion and belonging. Most are avid synagogue participants who generally feel welcome in the spaces they choose to be in. In these settings, concrete signs of inclusion of diverse families, as well as explanations of terms or rituals, help people feel comfortable.

“If I'm ever participating in a Jewish community event, [my non-Jewish spouse] will come as well and participate and I don't think he feels unwelcome. ... In most Jewish spaces that I've been in, they're not discriminating between are you Jewish or are you not. They don't even ask, they just are like, anyone's invited, anyone's welcome to experience the culture, and learn about Jewish culture and religion. That aspect is really nice, it doesn't feel exclusive at all.”

However, there are times when assumptions of Jewish knowledge among congregants can feel exclusionary to interfaith couples.



At different synagogue spaces, it's the really subtle things where people will, like, use a Hebrew or Yiddish term and just expect everyone to know what's going on. My [non-Jewish] spouse has learned a lot at this point, but there are still certain things that I need to explain to him or he doesn't feel comfortable asking.

Holiday celebrations, personal activities, families, and friendships tie some interfaith families to Jewish life, Jewish traditions, and to other Jews. In a typical year, interfaith families celebrate holidays in personal, meaningful ways. Three quarters (73%) celebrate Hanukkah, 61% participate in a Passover Seder, and close to half observe Rosh Hashanah (47%) and Yom Kippur (44%).

We found a family through our local parent group that has a similar setup to us where the mother is Jewish but the father is not. They have the same family style, and so we've kind of come together with them to celebrate a lot of the holidays.

I'm married to a non-Jewish woman. I have an adopted kid who's not Jewish. We do celebrate some Jewish holidays. My parents are still alive and my brother and sister are around, so we do the big three Jewish holidays.

There's the Jewish community with a capital 'C,' and then there's my own Jewish community with a 'small c.' I was mostly connected to the structured, institutional community through my work. I stepped back from that when I had my daughter ... and focused a lot more on ... doing Jewish things with that 'small c' community. It's a lot of the people whom I've met through my past work, who happen to be Jewish. When a holiday comes up, we'll say, 'Hey, do you want to come for Seder?' Or 'We're going to have a Hanukkah party. Do you guys want to come over and make latkes with us?'



In addition to holiday celebrations, a majority say they sometimes (51%) or often (16%) talk with family and friends about Jewish topics. Similar percentages sometimes (52%) or often (14%) cook or eat traditional Jewish foods.

Four in 10 sometimes (31%) or often (9%) visit synagogues or historic Jewish sites while traveling. Between 20% and 30% sometimes or often study or learn about Jewish topics other than religion, seek out and engage with Jewish or Israeli arts and culture, look for publications or podcasts with Jewish or Israeli content, and wear something that is distinctively Jewish.

At the same time, regular observance of other traditional Jewish practices are uncommon among Jews in interfaith families. About 4% mark Shabbat every week in a way that is different from other days, and 14% do so sometimes. Similarly, 11% follow kosher rules in any way.

Many Jews in interfaith families have friendships with other Jews, and many do not. Half (51%) say that about half or most of their closest friends are Jewish (42% and 9%, respectively).

Beyond personal connections, Jews in interfaith families also maintain ties to Jewish organizations, though again less so than Jews who have Jewish spouses or partners. Half of Jews in interfaith families (51%) identify with a Jewish denomination, namely Reform (37%), followed by Conservative (10%).

Also, in the 12 months before the survey, 49% of Jews in interfaith families attended Jewish events, activities, and programs sponsored by Jewish organizations, 37% donated to Jewish causes, and 12% volunteered for Jewish causes. About one in 10 (12%) interfaith households include someone who is a synagogue member.

Other Jewish Connections ⁵	Jewish adults in interfaith families	Jewish adults in families with two Jewish spouses/partners
Identify with a Jewish denomination (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist)	51%	78%
Attended Jewish event, activity, program	49%	83%
Donated to Jewish cause or organization	37%	77%
Volunteered for Jewish cause or organization	12%	36%
Someone in the household is a synagogue member or regular participant	12%	55%

More than half of those who participated in community events, programs, and activities said they provided meaningful Jewish experiences (59%). More than a third (36%) said they created new connections with friends and peers in the Jewish community.

Children in interfaith families

Nearly seven in 10 children (69%) in interfaith families are being raised Jewish. Jewish naming ceremonies, Jewish early engagement programs for families, and Jewish educational experiences are some of the ways that interfaith families help their children connect with Jewish life and community. However, they do so less often than households with two Jewish parents.

For some interfaith families, forming Jewish connections for their children starts early on. Among all interfaith families, 20% had a Jewish naming ceremony or *brit milah* (circumcision) for their most recent child. Among interfaith families with children 0-5 years old, close to half (48%) said they participated in a Jewish family early engagement program, including 9% in Welcome Baby, 44% in PJ Library, 27% in a family-based program at a synagogue, and 10% in a family-based program at a Jewish Community Center (JCC).

In addition, 4% of Jewish children ages 0-5 in interfaith families were enrolled in a Jewish early childhood education program during the 2024-2025 school year. As for Jewish children in interfaith families in grades K-8, one in six (16%) participated in part-time Jewish schooling, such as religious or Hebrew school. And for those in grades 9-12, about 8% participated in Jewish youth groups.

In the summer of 2024, 7% of Jewish children ages 6-17 from interfaith families attended Jewish overnight camp, and 4% attended Jewish summer day camp. Among Jewish children ages 14-17 in interfaith families, a quarter (23%) have had a *bar*, *bat*, or *b'nai mitzvah*.

Family engagement and education experiences	Interfaith families	Families with two Jewish spouses/partners
EARLY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS		
Any early engagement program	48%	87%
Welcome Baby	9%	23%
PJ Library	44%	80%
Program at a synagogue	27%	79%
Program at a JCC	10%	31%
JEWISH EDUCATION		
Early childhood education	4%	27%
Day school or yeshiva (grades K-12)	1%	23%
Part-time education (grades K-8)	16%	61%
Summer overnight camp (ages 6-17)	7%	31%
Summer day camp (ages 6-17)	4%	21%
Had a <i>bar/bat/b'mitzvah</i> (ages 14-17)	23%	82%
Jewish youth group (grades 9-12)	8%	34%

Experiences in Jewish spaces

Adults in interfaith families who do not identify as Jewish generally feel welcome and comfortable in their Jewish communities. Some said they have appreciated warm interactions, participating in activities for their life stage, and that people do not regularly ask them about their Jewish identity.

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For both of [the synagogues where I belonged], everyone was just very open and welcome and actually no one asked me whether or not I was Jewish.

For us, it's pretty easy with anything that involves kids. When we first got started, I was bringing the kids to [PJ Library] events in the baby carriers. At that point, we were just connecting with people more as parents. ... It was just like, here are parents coming together to do something nice with their kids. It felt like a very warm and welcoming community for us to be a part of.

[Our temple's] 20s and 30s group has a pretty large outreach and sway. We started going to that and eventually joined the temple. Before that, I had a [negative] preconception of what a shul is, and that was so far from what the temple [we joined] actually was, what the community was and how the clergy interacted with me. That shattered my mental barrier right there.

Consistent with what has been documented in research literature,⁶ community members who do not identify as Jewish said they are often the driving force behind their family's Jewish practice. Among those who participated in focus groups in Greater Boston, as in broader research, this is most often true for partners who are women.

Honestly, my husband wouldn't have joined a synagogue on his own. I'm the one who said, 'We're going to do this.' And he went, 'Every week??' So if I didn't feel comfortable, the synagogue wouldn't have two members.

I am the one that carries out most of the cooking of the traditional foods, even though it's not something that I ever grew up making. I've perfected my challah. In preparing menus to celebrate holidays—that's all me.

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However, one area in which they reported feeling uncomfortable in Jewish spaces was in conversations about Israel. As people who do not identify as Jewish, they felt that their views on Israel-related issues are often seen as invalid or are just not welcome.

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It does feel like it's best to not have an opinion to an extent, because it's not necessarily that your opinion is wrong, it's just that it's not legitimate. ... But it [Israel] does have an impact for me because it is not just a self-contained thing on another side of the ocean. Obviously, for Jewish people it's happening here, but for other folks also, it's happening here.

Others indicated that they tend to have Israel discussions in private spaces and refrain from participating in public conversations.

I have the discussions with my husband all the time, and we're of the same mind, but I don't raise it elsewhere because I feel like it's not my place. And I know my rabbi started weekly support groups after that [October 7] happened, and I don't go. I'm like, that's not for me. Let everybody air whatever they need to air without my input.

In contrast, one participant who is generally hesitant to discuss Israel in Jewish spaces described a situation in which they had the opportunity to do so and felt their perspective was respected and heard.

It feels like it's better not to have an opinion or just feeling like your opinion isn't as important in some ways. And I will say, mostly I don't share an opinion because I'm not as educated or haven't thought about this as long or as hard as many people. But then at one of our board meetings, we were trying to figure out how to enter into these conversations in our congregation, and we did have a facilitated discussion. And I felt like I was able to share my opinion and it was respected and heard, and some people knew I wasn't Jewish.

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Conclusion.

The Greater Boston Jewish community includes a wide range of households and families. Social and demographic characteristics, financial and emotional well-being, and Jewish connections vary by life stage and household composition.

Single adults living by themselves make up a sizable part of the community and tend to be older and less connected to Jewish life than other adults.

Families without children are the largest household group and generally resemble the community overall in age and engagement. Families with children are often highly educated and financially stable, while balancing the demands of raising children and maintaining Jewish involvement. Interfaith households, in which one spouse or partner is Jewish and the other is not, are an integral part of the Greater Boston Jewish community and are fairly similar to households with two Jewish partners on many social and demographic characteristics, but differ in regard to Jewish connections.

Households made up of adults who are not couples vary widely in their characteristics, mainly by whether they consist of multiple generations of related adults or unrelated adults in housemate situations.

Together, these findings offer a snapshot of a Jewish community characterized by important household and family diversity, highlighting opportunities to strengthen engagement and support for these households.

Did you know?

This report is part of a series of 13 reports across a range of topics that are important to the Greater Boston Jewish community. To explore insights, access additional resources, and read the other reports, visit cjp.org/CommunityStudy2025.

Notes.

1. About 1% of households have missing data that prevent them from being categorized. Additionally, there are too few households with adults who are not married or partnered and have children 0-17 for reliable analysis (about 1% of households). These households include single parents with children and no other adults in the household, as well as single parents with children and another adult or adults in the household, such as adult children of the parent or a grandparent(s) of the children. Individuals who are not married or partnered and have children ages 0-17 in their homes are more difficult to reach for surveys and are likely underrepresented.
2. These families include two parents and one or more children ages 0-17.
3. A *yeshiva* is a traditional Jewish educational institution.
4. The survey asked a series of questions about how welcoming the Greater Boston Jewish community is to certain groups within it, including interfaith families. Although most survey participants shared their opinions, between a quarter to close to half, chose to answer “not sure,” perhaps suggesting they do not have enough experience or knowledge to respond. Nearly half (47%) of Jewish respondents in interfaith relationships answered “not sure” to the question on how welcoming the Greater Boston Jewish community is to interfaith families, and they are not included in the percentage of responses described in the text.
5. Survey respondents were asked about their volunteering, donating and participation rates in the last year. For the purposes of reporting, we refer to this as the 12 months before the survey.
6. Thompson, J. A. (2014). *Jewish on their own terms: How intermarried couples are changing American Judaism*. Rutgers University Press.