



2025 Greater Boston Jewish Community Study.



Well-being.

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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.

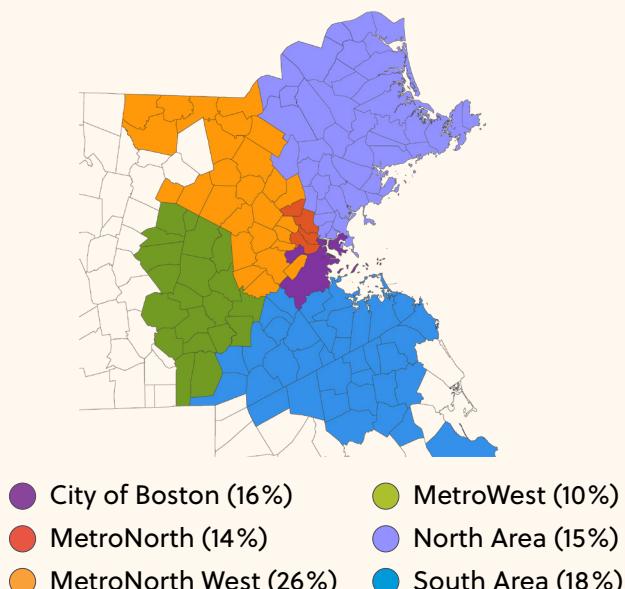
The goal of this study is to provide a transparent, fact-based picture of the community today. Conducted once every decade, this study gives the community the chance to step back and ask: Who are we today? Where are we thriving? And what does our community need to build a strong and safe future?

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.
- **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 which 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.

Well-being in the Greater Boston Jewish community.

The Greater Boston Jewish community has long provided care for those in need, prioritizing the well-being of residents through financial aid as well as physical and mental health services. To understand these needs, which can in turn shape the next decade of support, survey respondents answered questions about their well-being and access to services.

This report analyzes pervasive challenges, which impact nearly three quarters (73%) of Jewish households who face at least one of the following obstacles:

- Finances
- Physical health or disabilities that limit activities outside of the home
- Mental health concerns like loneliness, depression, and anxiety
- Human-service needs

More than a quarter (27%) of households report one of the above challenges, 24% report two of them, and 22% report three or all four.

The report also covers additional service needs, including transportation, childcare, and senior living facilities, as well as the care and support that Jews in Greater Boston provide to and receive from each other.



Key takeaways



Majority of Jewish households face social and economic challenges

Most Jewish households in Greater Boston face financial, physical health, mental health, or human-service challenges. These issues are more pronounced among young adults, Orthodox Jews, LGBTQIA+ individuals, Jews of color or people of color, Russian-speaking Jews, and those with disabilities.



Health issues are twice as common in economically vulnerable households

People in economically vulnerable households are more than twice as likely to report a health issue or disability that limits their capacity to work, go to school, or engage in other activities outside of their home.



Many adults face mental health issues

Jewish adults in Greater Boston experience loneliness, depression, or anxiety, but certain groups are more at risk, including: young adults, those struggling with financial insecurity, and people who identify as nonbinary, LGBTQIA+, Jews of color or people of color, and as having a disability.



Personal networks of support are strong, but few know where to turn for help

Many adults in Jewish households feel supported by the community and personal networks, but fewer know which organizations can help with health needs. Those with weaker community ties or personal challenges are least likely to have strong support systems.

Economic vulnerability.

A number of Jewish households are economically vulnerable and struggle to meet basic needs, such as paying for housing or groceries.

No single indicator of economic struggle tells the full story, but aggregating them shows **33% of Jewish households were experiencing one or more of the indicators at the time of the survey or in the year prior.**

There are two complementary ways to view this percentage.

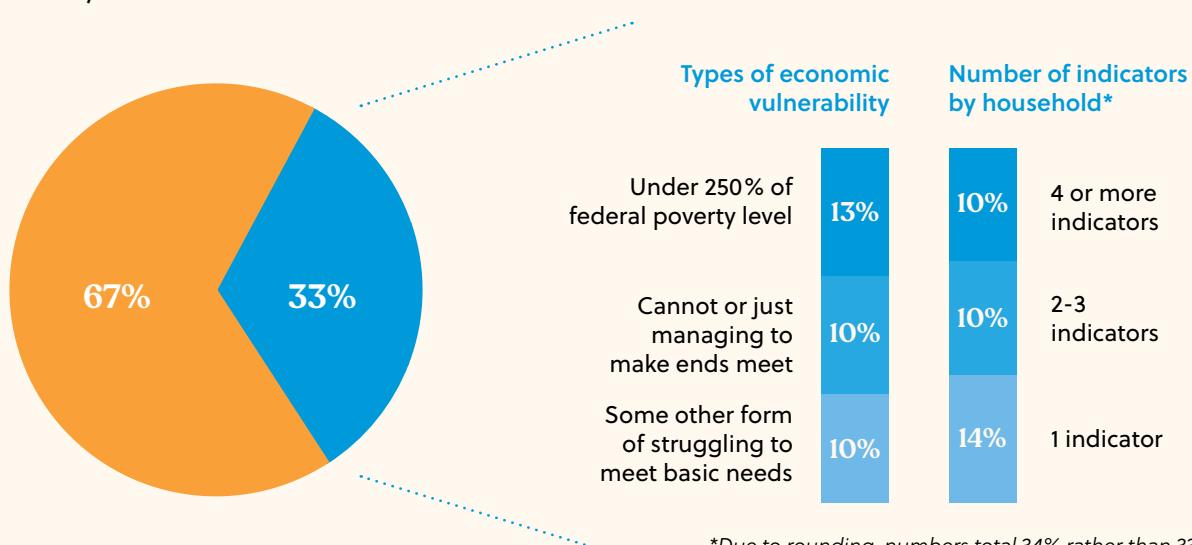
The first: Analyze each indicator by household, one at a time. Among the 33% of economically vulnerable households, 13% fall under 250% of the federal poverty level. An additional 10% assess their current financial situation as cannot or just managing to make ends meet (as opposed to having enough money, having some extra money, or being well off), but do not fall under 250% of the federal poverty level. A final 10% indicated another form of struggle to meet basic needs,¹ but are neither under 250% of the federal poverty level nor self-assess as cannot or just managing to make ends meet.

The second: Examine the number of indicators by household. The results show that 14% of households have experienced one indicator, 10% have experienced two or three, and 10% have experienced four or more.

The survey paints a stark picture: A substantial number of Jewish households are under economic strain, which in turn, impacts their well-being.

Indicators of economic vulnerability in Jewish households

- Economically vulnerable
- Financially stable or secure

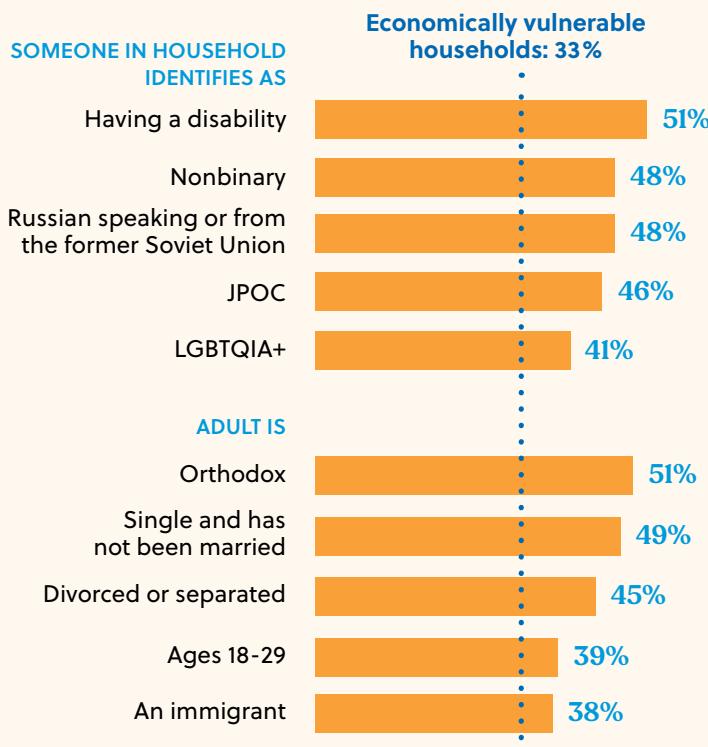


Compared to the 33% of Jewish households mentioned above, elevated levels of economic vulnerability are found among certain groups in Greater Boston. These include Jewish households in which someone identifies as: LGBTQIA+,² nonbinary, a Jew of color or person of color (JPOC),³ having a disability, and someone who is Russian speaking or from the former Soviet Union.

In addition, adults with the following characteristics are more likely to live in a household with heightened levels of economic vulnerability: those between ages 18-29, immigrants, people who are single and have not been married, people who are divorced or separated, and Orthodox Jews.

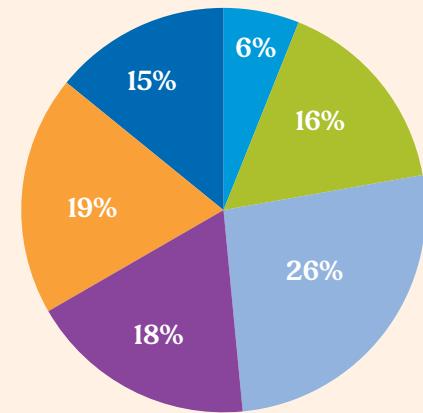
In contrast, economic vulnerability varies little across the groups defined by the Index of Jewish Connection and by the six Greater Boston regions surveyed in the study. The exception: economic vulnerability is higher among Jews who are *Seeking the Social* (40%) and slightly lower in MetroNorth West (25%).

Households and respondents with elevated levels of economic vulnerability



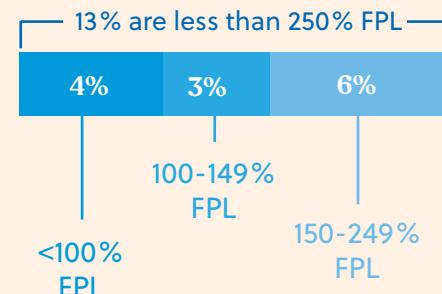
Household income

- <\$50,000
- \$50,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000-\$250,000
- \$250,000-\$499,999
- \$500,000 +



UNEMPLOYED 2%

Jewish households within 250% of federal poverty level (FPL)



In Greater Boston, home to a Jewish community with higher than average income levels and where most people are economically secure or stable, those who struggle with financial insecurity can feel misunderstood. One person said:

“

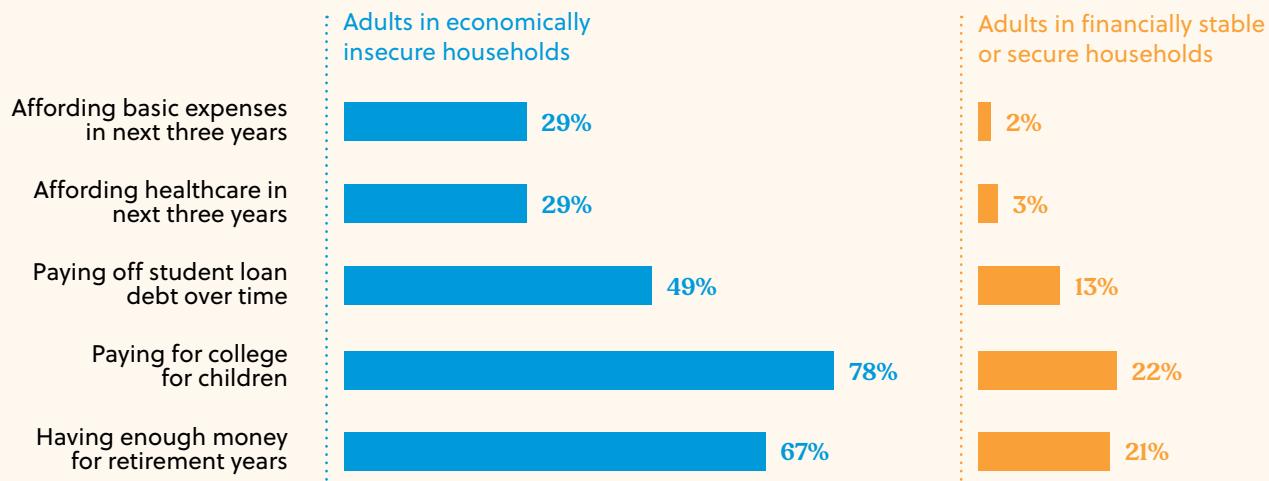
I'm living probably below the poverty line. I just struggle every day through it, and it is hard because it doesn't really coordinate with the Jewish community.

”

Financial struggles and challenges to make ends meet do not only affect people in the present, they also shape their confidence in the future. People who live in economically insecure households today are significantly more pessimistic than others about their future economic security and ability to make ends meet.

More specifically, they are much more likely than others to say they have little or no confidence in their ability to: afford basic living expenses and healthcare in the next three years; pay off student loan debt over time (among those who have debt); pay for college for their children (among those with children at home); and have enough money for their retirement years.

Little or no confidence in affording future expenses



Health-related limits on activities inside and outside of the home.

A quarter of households (25%) have someone who is affected by a health issue or disability that limits their capacity to work, go to school, or do other activities outside of their home. In almost all of these households, adults are the only residents (92%) whose outside activities are affected. Children are the only ones affected in 4% of these households, and both adults and children are affected in 4% of these households. Furthermore, 69% reported one health-related condition or disability, and 31% reported two or more.

The most common sources of health-related limits: chronic physical health problems and persistent mental health struggles.

Health-related limits on work, school, or other activities outside the house	Percent of all households	Percent of all households with health-related limits
Chronic physical health issue	13%	52%
Persistent mental health issue	11%	44%
Physical disability	6%	26%
Developmental disability	2%	8%
Other health-related issue or disability	2%	8%
One or more of the above	25%	
One health-related issue or disability	17%	69%
Two or more health-related issues or disabilities	8%	31%

About one in 20 Jewish households (7%) reported the need for help with daily activities inside of their home. Those activities include: housework, meal preparation, dressing and undressing, bathing or showering, and walking up and down the stairs.

A large majority (84%) of these households also reported having someone with a health problem or disability that impacts their ability to do activities outside of their home. Of these households, 91% report that adult residents are the only ones in need of help with daily activities, 6% report that children are the only ones who need assistance, and 3% report that both adults and children need help.

For households needing assistance, family members, friends, or paid care providers typically help with daily activities. However, receiving help is not always possible. A third of the households (36%) that need assistance with daily activities do not receive it on a regular basis.

Households in which someone needs a caregiver to help with daily activities inside the home	Percent of all households	Percent of households with someone who needs help daily
Family member or friend who lives in the household	1%	23%
Family member or friend who does not live in the household	<1%	4%
Paid care provider who lives in the household	<1%	1%
Paid care provider who does not live in the household	2%	25%
Someone else	1%	11%
Does not receive help on a regular basis	2%	36%
Total	6%	100%

Economic vulnerability is associated with health-related limits on activities inside and outside of the home. Among households with one or more indicators of economic vulnerability, 39% report limits on both inside and outside activities, compared to 17% of other households.

Similarly, 12% of economically vulnerable households say they need help with daily activities in their home, compared to 4% of other households. Being economically vulnerable triples the likelihood of a health-related limit on activities.



Loneliness, depression, and anxiety.

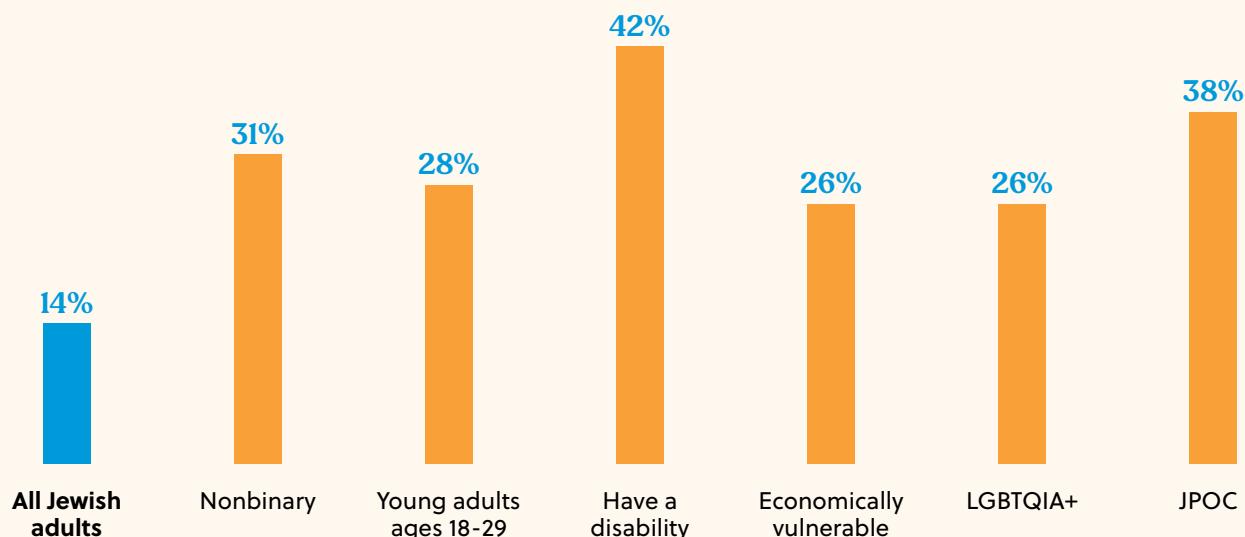
Mental health challenges are widespread in the Greater Boston Jewish community.

Among Jewish adults, 14% said they often or always felt lonely, depressed, or anxious in the month before taking the survey. Another 31% said they sometimes experienced those feelings in the month preceding the survey. In contrast, just over half said they either rarely (30%) or never (24%) felt this way.

Feeling lonely, depressed, or anxious is strongly associated with age, gender identity, and diverse social identities. People with heightened levels of these feelings include: young adults; financially insecure individuals; and those who identify as nonbinary, LGBTQIA+, JPOC, or as having a disability.



Jewish adults often or always feeling lonely, depressed, or anxious in the past month



Service needs, gaps, and barriers.

Services around health, disabilities, and basic needs are necessities, and barriers exist to receiving care.

Forty-one percent of households identified at least one such need in the past year, with 22% identifying one need only and 19% identifying multiple needs. The needs of Jewish households vary, though most are around health and disabilities (37% of all households), with fewer around basic needs (12%).⁴

Basic needs, health, and disability-related service needs among all households in the past year

Basic needs (12%)

Assistance for a victim, bystander, or witness of domestic violence	1%
Housing assistance	2%
Emergency financial assistance	3%
Legal assistance	2%
Helping gain or maintain public benefits	4%
Food assistance	5%
Employment-related assistance	5%

Health- and disability-related services (37%)

Substance abuse treatment	1%
Cognitive impairment, including dementia and Alzheimer's disease	2%
Developmental disability for an adult	2%
Mental health needs for children	5%
Chronic physical health issue	12%
Mental health needs for adults	29%



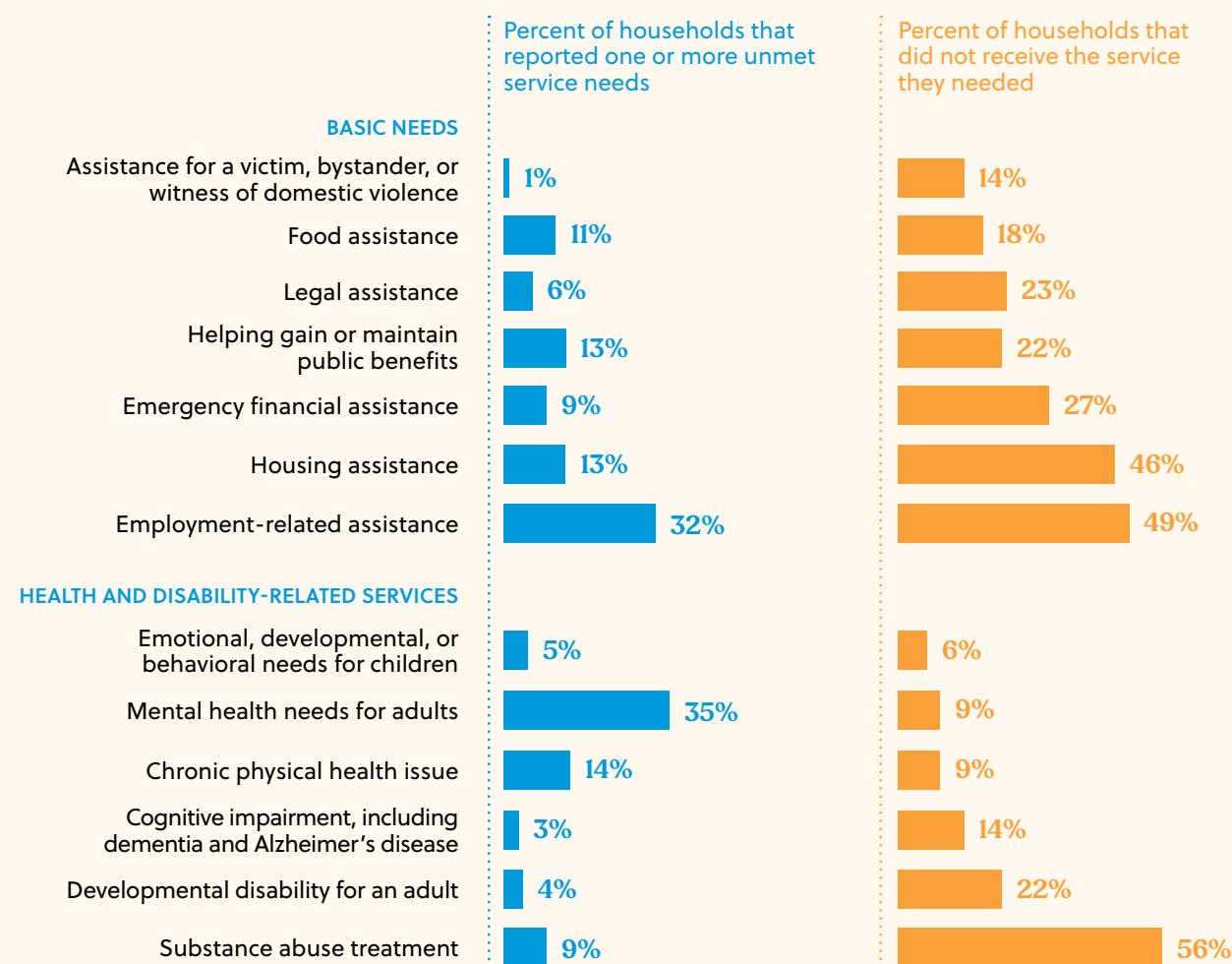
Across the 41% of households that indicated one or more needs, most (83%) received all of the services they needed, while 17% reported that at least one service need was unmet. These households represent a relatively small but critical group that are among the most vulnerable households in the Greater Boston Jewish community.

The service gaps affecting households can be analyzed in two ways.

The first: Look at households with a specific unmet need as a percentage of the 17% who had at least one unmet need. For example, 9% of these households reported not receiving help for substance abuse.

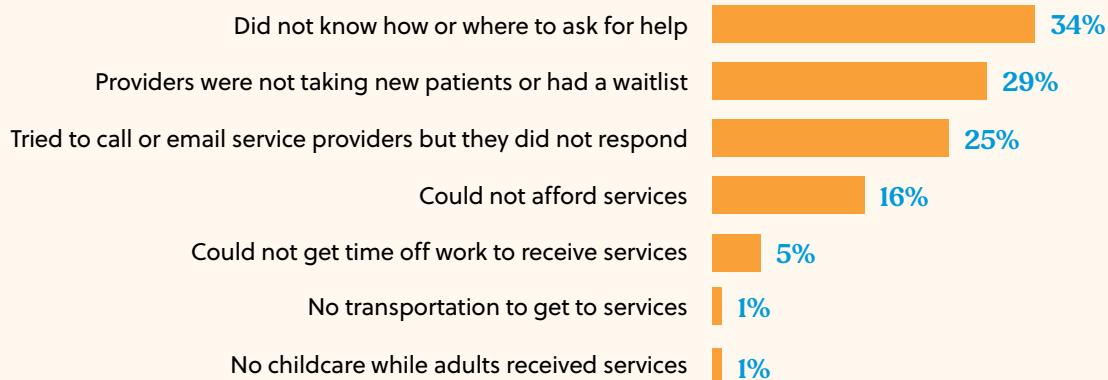
The second: Look at households with an unmet need for a specific service as a percentage of all households that said they needed that service, whether or not their need was met. For example, 56% of households that needed substance abuse treatment said their needs were not met, while 44% said they received the help they needed.

Service gaps for health, disability, and material well-being needs in Jewish households in the past year



Households that did not receive the services they needed said multiple factors prevented them from getting help. The most common reason was not knowing how or where to ask for help (34%), followed by providers not taking new patients (29%), and difficulties contacting service providers (25%). Costs also loomed large as a barrier to accessing necessary services.

Reasons why services were not received



Economic insecurity is associated with service needs and gaps. More than half (55%) of economically vulnerable households reported one or more service needs, compared to a third (34%) of other households.

Among households that reported a service need, 24% of economically vulnerable households said at least one of their service needs went unmet, compared to 11% of other households.

And among households that experienced a service gap, economically vulnerable households were five times as likely (23% to 4%) to report that the reason for the service gap was they could not afford the services.

Additional service needs

Access to transportation

- 85% of adults have reliable access to personal transportation.
- 24% of adults have reliable access to public transportation.
- 6% of adults have no, limited, or unreliable access to private and public transportation.
- Economically vulnerable adults are nearly twice as likely to have no, limited, or unreliable access to private and public transportation (9%).

Childcare needs

- 48% of adults who have children in their household and need childcare report they have full access whenever they need it.
- 43% can usually arrange and afford childcare.
- 10% have no or limited access or cannot afford childcare.
- Economically vulnerable adults are twice as likely to have no, limited, or unreliable access to childcare or cannot afford childcare (15%).

Senior living facilities

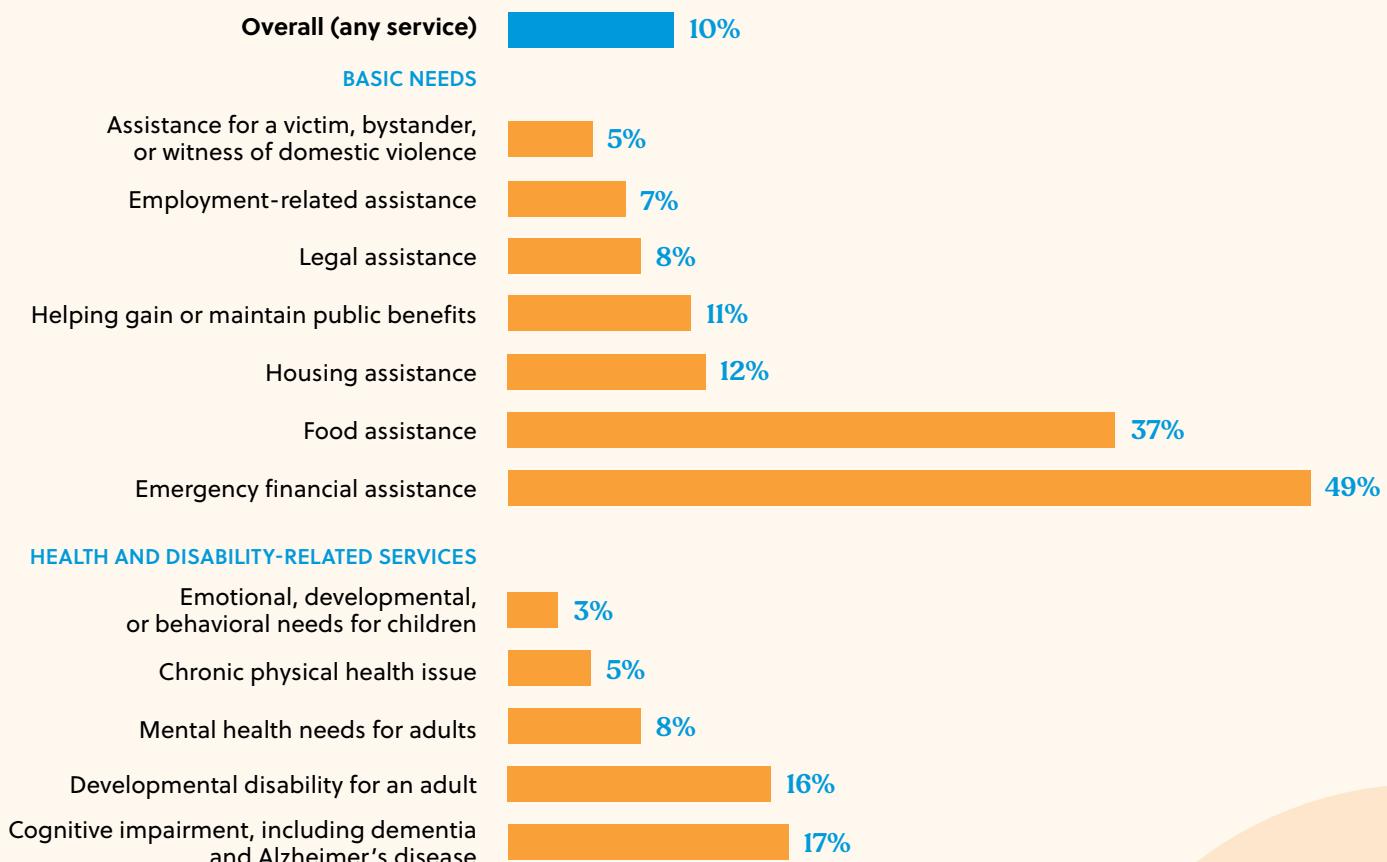
- 3% of adults who are 50 or older reside in a senior living facility (assisted, nursing home, or independent living).
- 6% of adults have a parent who resides in a senior living facility in the Greater Boston area.
- 4% of adults have a parent who resides in a senior living facility somewhere else.

Services received from Jewish organizations.

Ten percent of households that reported receiving services related to health, disabilities, and basic needs received them from Jewish organizations or were referred by a Jewish organization to another provider. Economically vulnerable households were more likely to receive one or more services or referrals from Jewish organizations (14%) than other households (7%).

Among the 10% of households that received direct services or referrals to other providers from Jewish organizations, the most common needs were emergency financial assistance (49%) and food assistance (37%). In contrast, the needs that Jewish organizations least often provided services or referrals for were health-related needs, including substance abuse treatment, emotional, developmental, or behavioral support for children, and chronic physical health issues.

Type of services Jewish households received from Jewish organizations



In follow-up interviews, community members said Jewish agencies offered strong physical and emotional support during some of their major life transitions. The presence of agencies that are culturally and religiously sensitive gave them comfort, especially during times of vulnerability or crisis, such as illness or bereavement.

One participant reflected on their experience with a Jewish agency:

“

[It was] absolutely imperative to understand the religious needs, the cultural needs. It made all the difference.

Another noted:

If you get referred to someone at a Jewish organization, you already know there's going to be a degree of commonality no matter what it is. Instead of someone out of the yellow pages, you find out, oh, they're from Jewish Family and Children's Services, okay, they're going to get us.

Even those who did not personally receive services from Jewish agencies felt reassured by their presence in the community. One person said:

I think it's very important, especially in this day and age where a lot of people in the general public are not necessarily feeling so positively about Jews. I think it's important ... to have Jewish organizations that are able to provide that so that I can feel like I can go to one of these organizations and know that I'm feeling safe and know that I'm respected and wanted in a way that I might not feel in a kind of more general space.

Other community members said whether an organization is Jewish or not is not relevant to them:

I think my priority would be to make sure that whatever the agency was could meet my needs. I don't think I would necessarily care about [it being Jewish].

Others noted that Jewish organizations are relevant for certain aspects of their life, but not necessarily for human services:

If I am looking for or in need of moral and spiritual leadership and Jewishly informed advice and help, then yeah [a Jewish agency is important to me]. I think otherwise it doesn't really matter to me. If I just need to talk or if I'm going through something hard but doesn't necessarily have a moral component to it, or if it's something that's hard but within the realm of hard things that I know other people have gone through, I don't need to be Jewishly helped.

Some said their lack of Jewish communal involvement may cause them to feel odd or awkward reaching out to a Jewish agency for help:

I wouldn't think of [reaching out to a Jewish organization or agency for help]. It wouldn't be on my radar right off the bat. It might feel inauthentic in that I haven't in my adult life given a lot to the community. So then to ask for things from the community would feel unbalanced.

”

Providing and receiving care.

Providing care for others, and knowing where to receive care and support, are part of the ecosystem of well-being in the Jewish community.

In 12% of all households, an adult provides or manages care for close relatives or friends who cannot care for themselves.⁵ In more than half of all of these cases, care is being provided to or managed for a parent or in-law (54%). In other cases, care is being provided to or managed for a spouse or partner, an adult child, a child who is 17 or younger with special needs, or someone else.

Children reside in more than a quarter (27%) of the households where an adult provides or manages care for a parent or in-law, putting adults in these households in the position of taking care of older parents or in-laws while simultaneously raising families.

Households in which someone provides and/or manages care for close relatives and/or friends	Percent of all households	Percent of all households in which an adult provides care to relative or friend
ADULT		
Personally provides care	5%	45%
Manages care provided by someone else	2%	19%
Manages and personally provides care	4%	36%
Total	12%⁶	
CARE IS PROVIDED FOR		
Parent or in-law	6%	54%
Spouse/partner	2%	16%
Adult child	2%	20%
Child 17 or younger	<1%	3%
Someone else	1%	11%

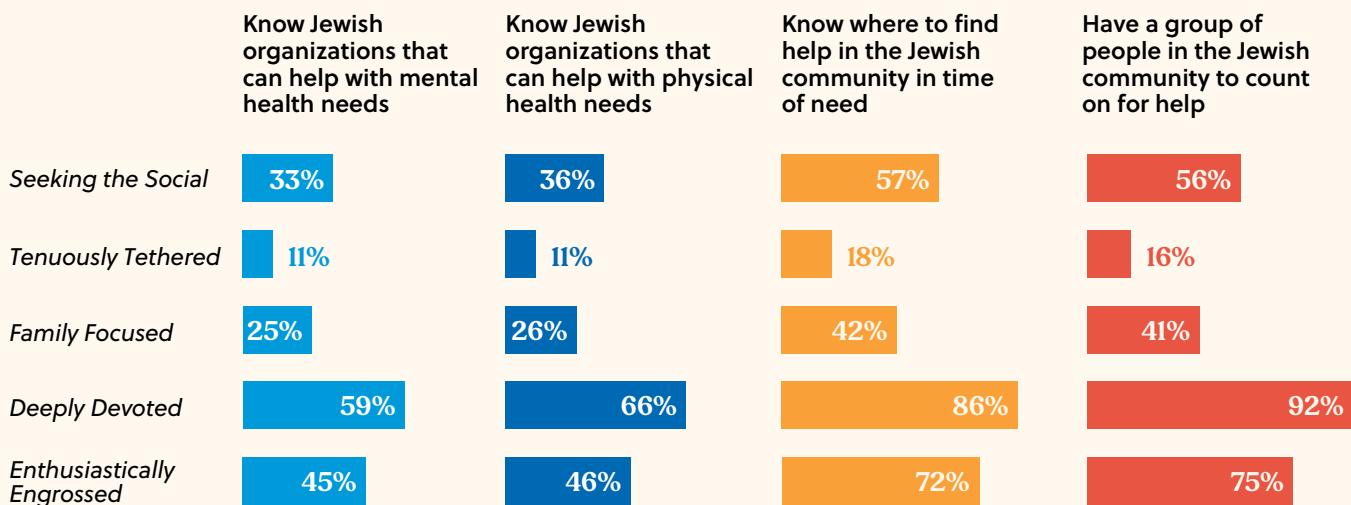
Half of all adults in Jewish households say that in a time of need, they know where to find help in the Jewish community (50%), and half (50%) say they have a group of people in the Jewish community they can count on for help.

However, fewer adults are able to say they know specifically which Jewish organizations can help them with direct support or with a referral if they have a physical health need (33%) or a mental health need (31%).

There is a strong relationship between the four items listed above and groups in the Index of Jewish Connection. Jews who are *Tenuously Tethered* are the least likely to know where to find help in the Jewish community, have a group of people in the Jewish community they can count on, and know which Jewish organizations can help with physical or mental health needs, while Jews who are *Deeply Devoted* are the most likely.

Adults living in economically vulnerable Jewish households are slightly, but consistently, less likely to say they have or know where to find support in the Jewish community in times of need.

Support in the Jewish community by Index of Jewish Connection



The majority of adults living in Jewish households (80%) have strong support networks with at least three family members or friends living nearby who they can rely on for help and support if needed.

However, a fifth of adults (20%) in Jewish households have weaker support networks, saying they can rely on only two or fewer nearby family members or friends for help and support. Weaker social support networks are found especially among adults who are struggling with financial vulnerability (32%), widowed (34%), or divorced or separated (34%), or who identify as having a disability (36%).

Mirroring their relatively weak support networks in the Jewish community, Jews who are *Tenuously Tethered* are the most likely to have two or fewer family members and friends living nearby that they can rely on for support (26%).

Conclusion.

Jewish households face overlapping challenges in economic security, physical and mental health, and social support, with vulnerability concentrated among specific demographic groups.

Rates are elevated among households in which someone identifies as: LGBTQIA+, nonbinary, JPOC, having a disability, or someone who is Russian-speaking or from the former Soviet Union. In addition, adults between ages 18-29, immigrants, people who are single and have not been married, people who are divorced or separated, and Orthodox Jews are more likely to live in a household with heightened levels of economic vulnerability.

Physical health issues and disabilities that limit activities outside of the home affect a quarter of all households and require assistance in daily activities inside of the home for about one in 20 households.

Loneliness, depression, and anxiety are common mental health concerns for nearly half of all Jewish adults, as are human service needs for Jewish households and adults. In many cases, households and individuals struggling with economic vulnerability, including demographic and social identity groups with elevated levels of vulnerability, are more likely to face these other challenges to their well-being than households and individuals who are financially stable.

Individuals in economically vulnerable Jewish households also have weaker support networks, both within the Jewish community and among family and friends generally, adding to the challenges they face around well-being.

The topics explored in this report—understanding the scope of financial insecurity, health-related limits on activities inside and outside of the home, mental health concerns, and human service needs of community members—are critical for organizations providing care and support to those in need.

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. This percentage includes households that were unable to pay at some point within the past year for food, medicine, housing, utility bills, outstanding debt, phone or internet service, or emergency expenses. The percentage also includes those who obtained food at a food pantry, had less than three months of savings for household expenses, and were receiving government benefits for unemployment, food support, housing assistance, and subsidized day care.
2. This report uses the more inclusive acronym of LGBTQIA+. However, the survey referred to this group as LGBTQ+ and was defined in survey questions as "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer."
3. The survey asked respondents if they or someone else in their household identify as a Jew of color or a person of color. Respondents could select one, both, or neither of the identities, and could indicate whether the identities applied to themselves only, to others, or to both themselves and others in their household. This approach draws on research and recommendations from sources such as the Jews of Color Initiative (JOCI) as well as consultation with those who have lived experience as people who identify as Jews of color, people of color, or both. In this report, Jewish respondents who self-identified as a Jew of color or as a person of color, or with both identities are described as JPOC. Similarly, households in which respondents reported one or more people identify as a Jew of color or a person of color are described as a JPOC household. As noted in "Beyond the Count" (Belzer, et al., Jews of Color Initiative, 2021) these terms may be understood as imperfect but useful ways to encompass a variety of identities and meanings.
4. Nine percent of households reported service needs for both health and disability-related needs as well as meeting their basic needs.
5. The person for whom care is managed or provided does not necessarily live in the same household.
6. Numbers do not sum to 12% due to rounding.