

FAQs on American Jews Comparative Tables: American Jewish Demography

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All tables in this series are based upon comparative data initially compiled by Dr. Ira M. Sheskin in his community study reports. The tables are based on studies available at the Mandell L. Berman Institute American Jewish Data Bank (NAJDB). Drs. Dashefsky, Sheskin and Miller have revised these tables and for this online publication which will be updated as community studies are completed.

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FAQ Table 1: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates – Alphabetical

FAQ Table 1 alphabetically organizes Jewish population estimates — number of Jewish households, number of all people living in these households (including non-Jews), and Jews — for approximately 50 American Jewish communities based upon data from Jewish community surveys which utilized random digit dialing (RDD) as part of the survey design and population estimation process.¹

The 50 communities represent a significant part of the American Jewish landscape, but not the entire American Jewish community. At the bottom of FAQ Table 1, the total U.S. Jewish population estimates from the National Jewish Population Study 2000-2001 (NJPS) and the 2007 *American Jewish Yearbook (AJYB)* are included for comparison.

FAQ Table 1a reorganizes these data by the estimated size of the Jewish community.²

FAQ Table 1: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates for Local Jewish Communities: Alphabetical				
<i>Community</i>	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons³
Atlanta	2006	61,300	156,900	119,800
Atlantic County	2004	10,000	23,100	20,200
Baltimore	1999	36,600	99,900	91,400
Bergen	2001	28,400	78,000	71,700
Boston	2005	105,500	265,500	210,500 ⁴
Broward County	1997	133,000	269,100	240,600
Buffalo	1995	11,500	31,600	26,400
Charlotte	1997	4,000	10,600	7,800
Chicago	2000	137,700	327,200	270,500

**FAQ Table 1: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates
for Local Jewish Communities: Alphabetical**

Community	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons³
Cincinnati	2008	12,500	33,000	27,000
Cleveland	1996	33,700	88,300	81,500
Columbus	2001	11,900	32,000	22,000
Denver/Boulder ⁵	2007	47,500	117,200	83,900
Detroit	2005	30,000	78,000	72,000
Harrisburg	1994	3,200	8,600	7,100
Hartford	2000	14,800	36,900	32,800
Howard County (MD)	1999	6,500	20,100	16,000
Jacksonville	2002	6,700	16,200	13,000
Las Vegas	2005	42,000	89,000	67,500
Lehigh Valley (PA)	2007	4,000	9,800	8,050
Los Angeles	1997	247,700	619,000	519,200
Martin-St. Lucie	1999	3,600	7,700	6,650
MetroWest (NJ) ⁶	1998	47,000	117,100	96,000
Miami	2004	54,000	121,300	113,300
Middlesex (NJ)	2008	24,000	56,000	52,000
Milwaukee	1996	10,400	25,400	21,100
Minneapolis	2004	13,850	35,300	29,300
Monmouth	1997	26,000	72,500	65,700
New York	2002	643,000	1,666,000	1,412,000
Orlando	1993	9,000	23,400	19,200
Palm Springs	1998	7,850	15,850	13,850
Philadelphia	2009	116,700	251,400	214,700
Phoenix	2002	44,000	106,900	82,900

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Community	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons³
Pittsburgh	2002	20,900	54,200	42,200
Portland (ME)	2007	4,300	11,800	8,350
Rhode Island	2002	9,550	23,000	18,750
Richmond	1994	6,000	15,300	12,150
Rochester	1999	10,200	25,600	21,000
San Antonio	2007	4,500	11,200	9,200
San Diego	2003	46,000	118,000	89,000
San Francisco ⁷	2004	125,400	291,500	213,800
Sarasota	2001	8,800	17,500	15,500
Seattle	2000	22,500	53,500	37,200
South Palm Beach	2005	73,000	136,800	131,300
St. Louis	1995	24,600	59,400	54,000
St. Paul	2004	5,150	13,400	10,900
St. Petersburg	1994	13,000	30,200	25,700
Tidewater	2001	5,400	13,800	10,950
Tucson	2002	13,400	28,600	22,400
Washington (DC)	2003	110,000	267,800	215,600
West Palm Beach	2005	69,000	137,300	124,250
Westport (CT)	2000	5,000	13,600	11,450
Wilmington	1995	5,700	15,100	11,900
York (PA)	1999	900	2,400	1,800
Total of Communities Above		2,571,200	6,248,850	5,223,050
NJPS	2000-01	2,900,000	6,700,000	5,200,000
<i>American Jewish Year Book (AJYB)</i> ⁸	2008	NA	NA	6,489,110

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Table 1a: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates Organized by the Numbers of Jews Living in Each Local Community

FAQ Table 1a organizes the number of Jews estimated to live in approximately 50 American Jewish communities in terms of the total number — in decreasing order — in each of the communities which have had an RDD-based survey used for estimation purposes.

New York — the five boroughs of New York City and three contiguous New York State suburban counties: Nassau, Westchester and Suffolk — is the most populous Jewish community with over 1.4 million Jews in the eight-county area studied.

York (PA) is the smallest community with a randomly-based Jewish community study: an estimated 1,800 Jews live in 900 Jewish households, with another 600 non-Jews also living in these households.

FAQ Table 1a: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates by Number of Jews for Local Jewish Communities				
<i>Community</i>	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons
New York	2002	643,000	1,666,000	1,412,000
Los Angeles	1997	247,700	619,000	519,200
Chicago	2000	137,700	327,200	270,500
Broward	1997	133,000	269,100	240,600
Washington (DC)	2003	110,000	267,800	215,600
Philadelphia	2009	116,700	251,400	214,700
Boston	2005	105,500	265,500	210,500
San Francisco	2004	125,400	291,500	213,800
South Palm Beach	2005	73,000	136,800	131,300
West Palm Beach	2005	69,000	137,300	124,250

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U. S. Jewish Population Estimates by Number of Jews
for Local Jewish Communities**

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Atlanta	2006	61,300	156,900	119,800
Miami	2004	54,000	121,300	113,300
MetroWest (NJ)	1998	47,000	117,100	96,000
Baltimore	1999	36,600	99,900	91,400
San Diego	2003	46,000	118,000	89,000
Denver	2007	47,500	117,200	83,900
Phoenix	2002	44,000	106,900	82,900
Cleveland	1996	33,700	88,300	81,500
Detroit	2005	30,000	78,000	72,000
Bergen	2001	28,400	78,000	71,700
Las Vegas	2005	42,000	89,000	67,500
Monmouth	1997	26,000	72,500	65,700
St. Louis	1995	24,600	59,400	54,000
Middlesex (NJ)	2008	24,000	56,000	52,000
Pittsburgh	2002	20,900	54,200	42,200
Seattle	2000	22,500	53,500	37,200
Hartford	2000	14,800	36,900	32,800
Minneapolis	2004	13,850	35,300	29,300
Cincinnati	2008	12,500	33,000	27,000
Buffalo	1995	11,500	31,600	26,400
St. Petersburg	1994	13,000	30,200	25,700
Tucson	2002	13,400	28,600	22,400
Columbus	2001	11,900	32,000	22,000
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U. S. Jewish Population Estimates by Number of Jews
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Rochester	1999	10,200	25,600	21,000
Atlantic County (NJ)	2004	10,000	23,100	20,200
Orlando	1993	9,000	23,400	19,200
Rhode Island	2002	9,550	23,000	18,750
Howard County (MD)	1999	6,500	20,100	16,000
Sarasota	2001	8,800	17,500	15,500
Palm Springs	1998	7,850	15,850	13,850
Jacksonville	2002	6,700	16,200	13,000
Richmond	1994	6,000	15,300	12,150
Wilmington	1995	5,700	15,100	11,900
Westport (CT)	2000	5,000	13,600	11,450
Tidewater	2001	5,400	13,800	10,950
St. Paul	2004	5,150	13,400	10,900
San Antonio	2007	4,500	11,200	9,200
Portland (ME)	2007	4,300	11,800	8,350
Lehigh Valley (PA)	2007	4,000	9,800	8,050
Charlotte	1997	4,000	10,600	7,800
Harrisburg	1994	3,200	8,600	7,100
Martin-St. Lucie	1999	3,600	7,700	6,650
York (PA)	1999	900	2,400	1,800
Total of Communities Above		2,571,200	6,248,850	5,223,050
NJPS	2000-01	2,900,000	6,700,000	5,200,000
<i>Year Book (AJYB)</i>	2008	NA	NA	6,489,110

Source: Data originally compiled by Ira M. Sheskin, Ph. D., Department of Geography and Regional Studies and Director, Jewish Demography Project, Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Jewish Studies, University of Miami, isheskin@miami.edu. Data revised and updated by Dr. Sheskin and Dr. Ron Miller (Associate Director, Berman Institute-North American Jewish Data Bank) based on recently-completed Jewish community studies.

¹A number of American Jewish communities are not included in this table, typically because they have not conducted a Jewish community study, or the study that was conducted did not include any random digit dialing (RDD) as part of Jewish population estimation procedures. Excluded communities had estimates which relied solely on the Jewish community list of known Jewish households and/or distinctive Jewish names (DJN) from local telephone directories. The Data Bank: (www.jewishdatabank.org) has archived many of these studies, but does not include them in the current U. S. Jewish population estimate tables. Jewish population estimates for these communities are included in the annual *American Jewish Yearbook* population articles (also available at the Data Bank after permission has been received from the American Jewish Committee)..

²Data summarized in the table are Jewish population estimates for the year the local Jewish community study was completed, rounded to the nearest hundred, except for the few studies which reported their estimate rounded to "50." Where the study author has included an estimate of the number of Jewish persons who live in non-residential "group" quarters without having a telephone number on which they could be reached during the survey; these numbers are included in the Number of Jewish Persons column. Otherwise, the number of Jews equals the number living in residential households who were reachable by telephone calls, which were at least partially RDD-based.

Current population estimates used by the local Federation may differ from those numbers reported here, which reflect a scientific sampling framework for estimation. The annual *American Jewish Yearbook* article on the American Jewish population includes these non-study-based estimates, many of which are based on local informant guesstimates. The most recent article (2007) includes an analysis of the correspondence between informal estimates prior to a study and the actual study data. Please see the Data Bank collection of *Yearbook* articles, including the 2007 article by Dr. Sheskin and Dr. Dashefsky (<http://www.jewishdatabank.org/ajyb.asp>).

³Readers should always consult the local community study reports when they are interested in the number of Jewish persons in a specific Jewish community since the FAQ summary tables must necessarily summarize data and cannot identify all specific details of a particular study. All data based on the definition of Jewish used in the study. The definition of Jewish adults is relatively consistent across Jewish population study reports, with self-definition the basis of categorization. Adults who self-define as Jewish, those who self-define as Jewish and something else, and (often) those raised/born Jewish who do not identify as Jewish but do not have a religion are included in the "Jewish" total.

Decisions on "counting" children as Jews are less consistent across studies; decisions are based on respondent reports of how each child is being raised. Children being raised Jewish are always included in the Jewish total. Children being raised "Jewish and something else" are counted as Jews in many studies, although not in studies completed by Ira Sheskin. Children who are not being raised Jewish, but who are being raised without a religion are counted as Jewish in some studies, but are not counted as Jewish in all studies completed by Ukeles Associates. Inc. Finally, most studies do not count as Jewish those children whose status is undecided, but at times even the report does not indicate whether these children were counted as Jews in the specific study. The FAQ tables, therefore, present a conservative estimate of the number of Jews, since some studies tend to use inclusive definitions while other studies utilize much less inclusive definitions of who counts as a Jew. Again, specific definitions used in each study need to be consulted when a particular study is the focus of concern, as opposed to an overall U.S. Jewish community comparison. For a related discussion, please see the second series of FAQ tables which focus on intermarriage rates and raising children as Jews.

⁴ Includes estimate of 2,000 institutionalized Jews, following original Sheskin comparative data tables.

⁵For a detailed description of the geographic extent of each community, please consult the community reports available under “Local Community Studies” on the Data Bank website. In general, the study areas correspond to the local Jewish federation's service area. In reality, there is not one community where the study area is defined by the legal limits of the city name appearing in these tables. Study areas range in size from the better part of a county to multi-county areas.

⁶1998 Draft Report indicates that there were between 45,000 and 49,000 Jewish households in MetroWest NJ; the Data Bank reports the Jewish household number as “approximately” 47,000. The estimate of 96,000 Jewish persons has been extrapolated by Dr. Ira Sheskin and confirmed by Dr. Miller for Data Bank reports as of May, 2008. The 1988 MetroWest Report indicates 117,100 people, but does not include an estimate of Jewish persons. An earlier version of these FAQ Tables 1 and 1a used the 109,700 Jewish persons estimate provided in the 2006 American Jewish Yearbook article: Ira M. Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky, “*Jewish Population of the United States, 2006*,” *American Jewish Year Book, 2006*, Volume 106 (David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, Editors, New York: The American Jewish Committee), which was based on a number which had been erroneously reported in earlier versions of the *American Jewish Yearbook*, and appears to be the number of people in Essex and Morris Counties only. The estimate of 96,000 Jewish persons for MetroWest in 1998 which is being used for Data Bank reports was calculated by Dr. Sheskin; the percentage of all people living in MetroWest Jewish households is estimated to be 82% Jewish, 18% non-Jewish, which is consistent with similar northeastern Jewish communities.

In Dr. Sheskin's community research reports, and in his *How Jewish Communities Differ*, United Jewish Communities of MetroWest New Jersey is listed as Essex-Morris. The Federation's service area includes four New Jersey Counties: Essex, Morris, Sussex and part of Union. For the FAQ series, the Data Bank will use MetroWest as the geographic name of the area, following the Federation's formal name.

⁷ The number of Jewish persons living in San Francisco has been re-calculated by Dr. Miller for the Data Bank in April, 2008 to reflect standard practices of reporting used in most community studies concerning the definition of children as being raised Jewish. The 213,800 Jewish persons estimate is a reduction of the 227,800 reported in the 2004 *Summary Report* and *Full Findings*. In that report, an exceptionally inclusive definition of being raised Jewish was used (intentionally) in the population estimate section of the report. The number of children in the 2004 San Francisco report was 55,000; approximately 53,000 children were identified as “Jewish-raised” in the Jewish population summary section — a 95% Jewish-raised rate which is inconsistent with later analyses which indicated that 38% of children in intermarried Jewish households were being raised as Jewish, and 12% as Jewish and something else. The Data Bank reanalysis of the data file indicated that 38,800 children were being raised as “Jewish” or Jewish and another religion. Children being raised without a religion, etc., are not included in the 213,800 total.

⁸The American Jewish Committee's *American Jewish Year Book* estimates report the number of Jewish persons only, and includes many communities which have estimated Jewish population using non-random procedures only.

The 2008 *Year Book* estimate in “Jewish Population of the United States, 20087,” Ira M. Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky, *American Jewish Year Book* 2008, Volume 108 (David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, Editors; New York: The American Jewish Committee, 20087) has been updated to include Jewish persons in Boston's North Shore who were not included in the Boston 2005 study, but had been included in earlier studies. The 2008 *Year Book* estimate of 6,489,110 Jews is considerably higher than the NJPS 2000-01 estimate of 5,200,000. The NJPS report indicates the possibility that the national study produced and underestimate. In contrast, since the community studies were conducted over several years, individuals who moved from one community to another could theoretically have been counted in several studies. Please see the extended discussion of this issue in the 2007 *Year Book* article by Sheskin and Dashefsky.