

**Berman Jewish DataBank  
@ The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA)**

**FAQ Series #2  
INTERMARRIAGE DATA:  
U.S. JEWISH COMMUNITIES**

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**Berman Jewish DataBank @ The Jewish Federations of North America**  
**FAQs on American Jews – Number 2**  
**Intermarriage Data: U.S. Jewish Communities**

## Introduction

The Berman Jewish DataBank regularly receives inquiries which focus on the intermarriage rate among American Jews. Frequently asked questions (FAQs) include:

- What is the intermarriage rate among American Jewish couples?
- What is the percentage of Jews who are married to non-Jews?
- What is the percentage of children (age 0-17) with intermarried parents who are being raised as Jews?
- What is the percentage of intermarried Jewish couples who are members of a synagogue?

Almost every national and local community Jewish study archived at the DataBank includes data on these topics. FAQ Tables 2, 2-a, 2-b and 2-c in the Data Bank's FAQ series respond to these frequently asked questions by summarizing data from 55 American Jewish communities which have included RDD (random digit dialing) as part of the sampling design and population estimation process,<sup>1</sup> and two national studies of American Jews: (1) the National Jewish Population Survey: NJPS 2001 and (2) the 2013 Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews.

FAQ Table 2 organizes the data alphabetically by community and shows: (1) the percentage of currently married couples who are intermarried, and (2) the percentage of children with intermarried parents who are being raised as Jewish-only or as “partially Jewish” (sometimes designated as “Jewish and something else,” “part Jewish,” or “half Jewish”).<sup>2</sup>

FAQ Table 2-a reorganizes the data from to provide a rank ordering of local communities from highest to lowest in terms of the estimated percentage of intermarried couples in order to facilitate comparisons among communities.

FAQ Table 2-b compares two different methods of calculating an intermarriage rate which are often confused, but are quite different:

- Intermarriage rates of couples (the “couple’s rate”) which answers the question: “What percentage of American Jewish couples are intermarried — one spouse is Jewish, while the other spouse is not Jewish?”
- Intermarriage rates of Jewish persons (the “individual rate”). The individual rate answers the question: “What is the percentage of married Jewish persons who are currently married to non-Jewish persons?”
- The mathematical calculations for these two measures always result in an individual intermarriage rate which is lower than the couples intermarriage rate (for the identical data).

FAQ Table 2-c organizes data from the Jewish community studies in terms of the percentage of intermarried couples who are synagogue (or temple) members – in decreasing order from the highest to the lowest — and provides comparative data for inmarried Jewish households.

**FAQ Table 2: Intermarriage Data: U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Alphabetical Listing**

FAQ Table 2 alphabetically organizes approximately 55 local American Jewish communities in terms of the “couples” intermarriage rate and the percentage of children with intermarried parents who are being raised as Jewish-only or as “partially Jewish” (sometimes labeled “Jewish and something else,” “part-Jewish,” or “half-Jewish”).

In the first community listed alphabetically in FAQ Table 2, the 2006 Atlanta study, an estimated 50% of currently married couples were intermarried.<sup>3</sup> In these intermarried households, 39% of all minor children were being raised Jewish-only and another 15% were being raised “partially Jewish.” Combining the two statistics, 54% of all children with intermarried parents in Atlanta were being raised “Jewish” or “partially Jewish.” In the recent Baltimore study (2010), 20% of all Jewish couples were intermarried; moreover, 30% of all children with intermarried parents were being raised as Jewish-only, and another 18% were being raised partially Jewish.

From a Jewish communal policy perspective, both percentages — the percentage of intermarried couples and the percentage of children ages 0-17 with intermarried parents who are being raised Jewish — are important.

- In communities with a high percentage of intermarried couples and a low percentage of children with intermarried parents who are being raised Jewish, Jewish continuity is obviously a major concern, and represents a significant challenge facing the community. The Denver/Boulder 2007 study, for example, estimated the couples intermarriage rate at 53%, with 18% of children with intermarried parents being raised Jewish-only and another 11% being raised partially Jewish. In communities like Denver/Boulder, the policy focus needs to be on innovative strategies and initiatives which would increase the percentage of children with intermarried parents being raised Jewish.
- There are other communities, however, such as Bergen County (NJ) where the latest RDD-based studies showed a “couples” intermarriage rate under 20% and a 60% (approximately) Jewish-only raised percentage for children with intermarried parents. Policy decisions in these communities regarding outreach to intermarried Jewish families are obviously made in a radically different context than in those communities with higher intermarriage rates and lower percentages of children being raised Jewishly.

**FAQ Table 2: Intermarriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Alphabetical Listing**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>% of Currently Married Couples Who Are Intermarried</b>	<b>% of Children with Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Jewish-only</b>	<b>% of Children with Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Partially Jewish</b>
Atlanta	2006	50%	39%	15%
Atlantic County (NJ)	2004	26%	60%	17%
Baltimore	2010	20%	30%	18%
Bergen County (NJ)	2001	17%	59%	8%
Boston	2005	46%	60%	4%
Broward County (FL)	1997	18%	43%	14%
Charlotte	1997	47%	34%	20%
Chicago	2010	33% <sup>4</sup>	49%	26%
Cincinnati	2008	34%	60%	7%
Cleveland	2010	38%	33%	22%
Columbus	2013	52%	11%	27%
Denver/Boulder <sup>5</sup>	2007	53%	18%	11%
Detroit	2005	16%	31%	7%
East Bay (CA) <sup>6</sup>	2011	61%	N/A	N/A
Harrisburg	1994	33%	57%	NA
Hartford	2000	23%	59%	15%
Howard County (MD)	2010	29%	62%	17%
Jacksonville	2002	44%	49%	11%
Las Vegas	2005	48%	42%	12%
Lehigh Valley (PA) <sup>7</sup>	2007	36%	36%	27%
Los Angeles	1997	23%	43%	NA
Martin-St. Lucie (FL)	1999	27%	18%	47%
Miami	2014	16%	46%	30%
Middlesex (NJ)	2008	14%	33%	33%
Minneapolis	2004	33%	30%	33%
Monmouth County (NJ)	1997	17%	31%	18%

**FAQ Table 2: Intermarriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Alphabetical Listing**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>% of Currently Married Couples Who Are Intermarried</b>	<b>% of Children with Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Jewish-only</b>	<b>% of Children with Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Partially Jewish</b>
New Haven	2010	34%	43%	22%
New York	2011	22%	31%	11%
Orlando	1993	32%	39%	NA
Palm Springs (CA)	1998	19%	19%	19%
Philadelphia	2009	28%	29%	30%
Phoenix	2002	40%	26%	18%
Pittsburgh	2002	36%	36%	11%
Portland (ME)	2007	61%	47%	26%
Rhode Island	2002	34%	35%	24%
Richmond	1994	34%	36%	NA
Rochester	1999	30%	32%	20%
San Antonio	2007	37%	39%	25%
San Diego	2003	44%	21%	29%
San Francisco	2004	55%	38%	12%
Sarasota	2001	20%	74%	9%
Seattle	2000	55%	23%	6%
Seattle	2015	56%	37%	16%
South Palm Beach (FL)	2005	9%	75%	11%
St. Louis	2015	48%	27%	18%
St. Paul	2004	39%	37%	28%
St. Petersburg	1994	29%	29%	NA
Tidewater (VA)	2001	43%	45%	9%
Tucson	2002	46%	45%	26%
Washington (DC)	2003	41%	45%	14%
West Palm Beach (FL)	2005	16%	34%	31%

## FAQ Table 2: Intermarriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities: Alphabetical Listing

Community	Year of Study	% of Currently Married Couples Who Are Intermarried	% of Children with Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Jewish-only	% of Children with Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Partially Jewish
Westport (CT)	2000	33%	56%	10%
Wilmington (DE)	1995	33%	36%	NA
York (PA)	1999	46%	43%	10%
NJPS (U.S. National)	2001	48%	33%	
PEW (U.S. National) <sup>8</sup>	2013	61%	20%	41%

**NOTE:**

The data on the percentage of children of intermarried couples being raised “Jewish-only” and “partially Jewish” from the 2013 Pew Survey of U.S. Jews (as reported directly above) has been included in Table 2 and Table 2a even though the Pew 2013 study reported data on children-of-the-intermarried being raised Jewish in a slightly different format than is traditional, using a different base for analysis and somewhat different categories.

The base used for reporting children’s Jewish status in the Pew study is the marital status of the Jewish respondent in a household with children — not the individual children’s Jewish status, which is the more traditional analytic base. Thus, for all surveyed intermarried Jewish respondents, Pew reports that 20% are raising their children/child as “Jewish by religion,” 25% are raising their children as “partly Jewish by religion” and 16% are raising their children as either Jewish-not-by-religion or have multiple children with some being raised Jewish and others being raised partially Jewish.

In all other studies reported in the FAQ, the base is the total number of children in the household and their status – Jewish, partially Jewish, or not Jewish. Thus, NJPS 2001 found that 33% of children of intermarried couples were being raised as Jewish-only; all of the local community studies in this FAQ also focus on the percent of the total number of children in intermarried households who are being raised Jewish-only or partially Jewish (all others are not being raised as Jews).

Despite these differences, the Jewish DataBank has reported the 2013 Pew data for the intermarried as 20% Jewish-only (“Jewish-by-religion) and 41% partially Jewish (25% partially Jewish and 16% Jewish-no-religion and or at least one child being raised partially Jewish) in order to provide some comparative data.

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**FAQs on American Jews**

**FAQ Table 2-a:**

**Intermarriage Data: U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Communities Organized by the Percentage of Couples  
Who Are Intermarried**

FAQ Table 2-a reorganizes the FAQ Table 2 intermarriage data in decreasing order from the communities with the highest “couples” intermarriage rate (East Bay, CA and Portland, ME: 61%) to the community with the lowest “couples” intermarriage rate (South Palm Beach: 9%). For each community, the percentage of children with intermarried parents who are being raised Jewish-only and the percentage being raised partially Jewish is also included. Please note that data on children in *inmarried* Jewish households with two Jewish parents are not presented here since almost every child in these households is being raised Jewish-only.<sup>9</sup>

In Portland (ME), 61% of married couples were intermarried. Almost half (47%) of all children with intermarried parents were being raised Jewish-only, while another 26% were being raised partially Jewish. The “couples” intermarriage rate is high, but so also is the percentage of children being raised Jewish.

In San Francisco, a much larger Jewish community with a relatively similar couples intermarriage rate (55%), 38% of the children with intermarried parents were being raised Jewish-only and 12% partially Jewish. In the Seattle 2000 study, 55% of couples were intermarried, but only 23% of children with intermarried parents were being raised Jewish-only and 6% partially Jewish.

On a national basis, the 2013 Pew report noted that only a small proportion of intermarried Jewish respondents were raising their child/all of their children as Jewish-only – in the Pew study, Jewish-by-religion. Please see the extended discussion on page 6 following Table 2.

<b>FAQ Table 2-a: Intermarriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities: Communities Organized by the Percentage of Intermarried Couples</b>				
<b>Community</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>% of Currently Married Couples Who Are Intermarried</b>	<b>% of Children With Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Jewish-only</b>	<b>% of Children With Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Partially Jewish</b>
East Bay (CA)	2011	61%	N/A	N/A
Portland (ME)	2007	61%	47%	26%
PEW (U.S. National)	2013	61%	20%	41%
San Francisco	2004	55%	38%	12%
Seattle	2014	56%	37%	16%
Seattle	2000	55%	23%	6%

**FAQ Table 2-a: Intermarriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Communities Organized by the Percentage of Intermarried Couples**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>% of Currently Married Couples Who Are Intermarried</b>	<b>% of Children With Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Jewish-only</b>	<b>% of Children With Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Partially Jewish</b>
Denver/Boulder	2007	53%	18%	11%
Columbus	2013	52%	11%	27%
Atlanta	2006	50%	39%	15%
Las Vegas	2005	48%	42%	12%
St. Louis	2015	48%	27%	18%
NJPS (U.S. National)	2001	48%	33%	
Charlotte	1997	47%	34%	20%
Boston	2005	46%	60%	4%
Tucson	2002	46%	45%	26%
York (PA)	1999	46%	43%	10%
Jacksonville	2002	44%	49%	11%
San Diego	2003	44%	21%	29%
Tidewater (VA)	2001	43%	45%	9%
Washington (DC)	2003	41%	45%	14%
Phoenix	2002	40%	26%	18%
Cleveland	2010	38%	33%	22%
St. Paul	2004	39%	37%	28%
San Antonio	2007	37%	39%	25%
Lehigh Valley (PA)	2007	36%	36%	27%
Pittsburgh	2002	36%	36%	11%
Cincinnati	2008	34%	60%	7%
New Haven	2010	34%	43%	22%
Rhode Island	2002	34%	35%	24%
Richmond	1994	34%	36%	NA
Chicago	2010	33%	49%	26%
Harrisburg	1994	33%	57%	NA



**FAQ Table 2-a: Intermarriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Communities Organized by the Percentage of Intermarried Couples**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>% of Currently Married Couples Who Are Intermarried</b>	<b>% of Children With Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Jewish-only</b>	<b>% of Children With Intermarried Parents Who Are Being Raised Partially Jewish</b>
Minneapolis	2004	33%	30%	33%
Westport (CT)	2000	33%	56%	10%
Wilmington (DE)	1995	33%	36%	NA
Orlando	1993	32%	39%	NA
Rochester	1999	30%	32%	20%
Howard County (MD)	2010	29%	62%	17%
St. Petersburg	1994	29%	29%	NA
Philadelphia	2009	28%	29%	30%
Martin-St. Lucie (FL)	1999	27%	18%	47%
Atlantic County (NJ)	2004	26%	60%	17%
Hartford	2000	23%	59%	15%
Los Angeles	1997	23%	43%	NA
New York	2011	22%	31%	11%
Baltimore	2010	20%	30%	18%
Sarasota	2001	20%	74%	9%
Palm Springs (CA)	1998	19%	19%	19%
Broward County (FL)	1997	18%	43%	14%
Bergen County (NJ)	2001	17%	59%	8%
Monmouth County (NJ)	1997	17%	31%	18%
Detroit	2005	16%	31%	7%
Miami	2014	16%	46%	30%
West Palm Beach (FL)	2005	16%	34%	31%
Middlesex (NJ)	2008	14%	33%	33%
South Palm Beach (FL)	2005	9%	75%	11%

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***FAQs on American Jews***

**FAQ Table 2-b: Intermarriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Couples Rate vs. Individual Rate**

FAQ Table 2-b compares the “couples” intermarriage rate and the “individual” intermarriage rate for the American Jewish communities included in FAQ Tables 2 and 2-a. The “couples” rate answers the question: “Of all married couples where at least one spouse is Jewish, what percentage of couples is intermarried?” The individual rate answers a slightly different question: “What percentage of married Jewish persons is married to a non-Jewish spouse?”

Considerable confusion about these two rates exists, especially since some studies report the individual rate, while many more studies report the couples rate and/or use the couples data as the basis of further analysis. At a major conference discussing the results of NJPS 2000-01 (the most recent National Jewish Population Survey), a researcher reported that just about half of the Jews married in the last five-to-ten years were intermarried. A rabbi responded to this statement by saying that his experience was different, that two-thirds of all newly married couples were intermarried. They were, in fact, talking about the same reality, describing the same data, calculated and expressed from two different perspectives.

The two intermarriage rates are often — and incorrectly — used interchangeably. An effort to simplify the calculations and the concepts follows. Given the mathematical calculations involved, the “couples” intermarriage rate is always higher than the “individual” rate.

**Imagine 10 couples walking into a Jewish community center.**

**Half are inmarried; half are intermarried.**

- A. Couples Intermarriage Rate: Among married couples, what percentage is intermarried?
- How many couples? 10
  - How many couples are intermarried? 5
  - **Couples intermarriage rate = 50% (5/10).**
- B. Individual Intermarriage Rate: Among married Jews, what percentage is intermarried — married to non-Jews?
- Inmarried Jews: in 5 of the couples, two Jews are married to each other, so there are 10 inmarried Jews;
  - Intermarried Jews: in the other 5 couples, a Jewish person is married to a non-Jewish person; 5 Jews are married to 5 non-Jews;
  - Total number of Jewish persons: 15 (10 + 5);
  - Total number of Jewish persons married to a non-Jewish person: 5;
  - **Individual intermarriage rate = 33% (5/15).**

The Atlanta 2006 data reflect these calculations precisely. Half (50%) of the married couples are intermarried. The corresponding individual intermarriage rate is 33% — one-third of currently married Atlanta Jews are married to a non-Jew. The 50% couples rate and the 33% individual rate reflect the same data; they are alternative measures used to summarize the extent of intermarriage within Jewish communities.<sup>10</sup>

It is often said by skeptics that statistics can prove anything. In this case, the skeptics might have a valid argument! If a community leader wanted to stress the high rate of intermarriage, she might cite the couples rate — half the community! If that community leader’s spouse wanted to stress a lower rate of intermarriage, he might stress the individual rate — only one-out-of-three Jews is intermarried.

And, as in so many domestic differences, both are right!!

<b>FAQ Table 2-b: Intermarriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities: Percentage Intermarried: Couples Rate vs. Individual Rate</b>			
<b>Community</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b><i>Couples Rate:</i> % of Currently Married Couples Who Are Intermarried</b>	<b><i>Individual Rate:</i> % of Married Jews Who Are Married to Non-Jews</b>
East Bay (CA)	2011	61%	44%
Portland (ME)	2007	61%	44%
PEW (U.S. National)	2013	61%	44%
Seattle	2014	56%	39%
Seattle	2000	55%	38%
San Francisco	2004	55%	38%
Denver/Boulder	2007	53%	36%
Columbus	2013	52%	35%
Atlanta	2006	50%	33%
Las Vegas	2005	48%	32%
St. Louis	2015	48%	31%
NJPS (U.S. National)	2001	48%	31%
Charlotte	1997	47%	30%
Boston	2005	46%	30%
Tucson	2002	46%	30%
York (PA)	1999	46%	29%
Jacksonville	2002	44%	28%

**FAQ Table 2-b: Intermarriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Percentage Intermarried: Couples Rate vs. Individual Rate**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b><i>Couples Rate:</i> % of Currently Married Couples Who Are Intermarried</b>	<b><i>Individual Rate:</i> % of Married Jews Who Are Married to Non-Jews</b>
San Diego	2003	44%	28%
Tidewater (VA)	2001	43%	28%
Washington (DC)	2003	41%	26%
Phoenix	2002	40%	25%
St. Paul	2004	39%	25%
Cleveland	2010	38%	23%
San Antonio	2007	37%	23%
Lehigh Valley (PA)	2007	36%	22%
Pittsburgh	2002	36%	22%
Cincinnati	2008	34%	21%
New Haven	2010	34%	21%
Rhode Island	2002	34%	21%
Richmond	1994	34%	21%
Chicago	2010	33%	20%
Harrisburg	1994	33%	20%
Minneapolis	2004	33%	20%
Westport (CT)	2000	33%	20%
Wilmington (DE)	1995	33%	19%
Orlando	1993	32%	19%
Rochester	1999	30%	17%
Howard County (MD)	2010	29%	17%
St. Petersburg	1994	29%	17%
Philadelphia	2009	28%	16%
Martin-St. Lucie (FL)	1999	27%	15%
Atlantic County (NJ)	2004	26%	15%
Hartford	2000	23%	13%

**FAQ Table 2-b: Inter marriage Data, U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Percentage Inter married: Couples Rate vs. Individual Rate**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b><i>Couples Rate:</i> % of Currently Married Couples Who Are Inter married</b>	<b><i>Individual Rate:</i> % of Married Jews Who Are Married to Non-Jews</b>
Los Angeles	1997	23%	13%
New York	2011	22%	12%
Baltimore	2010	20%	11%
Sarasota	2001	20%	11%
Palm Springs (CA)	1998	19%	10%
Broward County (FL)	1997	18%	10%
Bergen County (NJ)	2001	17%	10%
Monmouth County (NJ)	1997	17%	9%
Detroit	2005	16%	9%
Miami	2014	16%	9%
West Palm Beach (FL)	2005	16%	9%
Middlesex (NJ)	2008	14%	7%
South Palm Beach (FL)	2005	9%	5%

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***FAQs on American Jews***

**FAQ Table 2-c: Intermarriage Data: U. S. Jewish Communities:  
Percentage of Intermarried and Inmarried Couples  
Who Are Synagogue Members**

FAQ Table 2-c summarizes the percentage of intermarried couples who report belonging to a Jewish synagogue or temple. The U.S. Jewish communities are organized by the percentage of intermarried couples who are reported to be synagogue members (in descending order). Overall, synagogue membership/affiliation rates among *intermarried couples* vary from 38% in Cincinnati to 2% in the Seattle 2000 study.

Synagogue membership rates are much higher among inmarried couples (see the far right column of FAQ Table 2-c) than among the intermarried couples, as would be expected, but the relationship between intermarried synagogue membership rates and inmarried synagogue membership rates is not constant.

For example, in Seattle, where 2% of intermarried couples reported synagogue affiliation, 54% of inmarried couples reported synagogue membership. In contrast, in Las Vegas, the 6% of intermarried couples who were synagogue affiliated compares to 23% of inmarried couples — two major Jewish communities with two very different patterns. In all likelihood, two different strategies are needed for Jewish communal action.<sup>11</sup>

<b>FAQ Table 2c: Intermarriage Data, U.S. Jewish Communities: % Synagogue Membership: Intermarried and Inmarried Couples</b>			
<i>Community</i>	<i>Year of Study</i>	<i>% of Intermarried Couples Who Report Being Synagogue Members</i>	<i>% of Inmarried Couples Who Report Being Synagogue Members<sup>12</sup></i>
Cincinnati	2008	38%	80%
Tidewater (VA)	2001	37%	84%
Charlotte	1997	32%	82%
Sarasota	2001	28%	54%
Boston	2005	27%	63%
Jacksonville	2002	27%	80%
Pittsburgh	2002	27%	83%
Hartford	2000	26%	69%
Lehigh Valley (PA)	2007	26%	71%
St. Louis	2015	26%	72%
San Antonio	2007	25%	81%
Howard County (MD)	2010	24%	58%

**FAQ Table 2c: Intermarriage Data, U.S. Jewish Communities:  
% Synagogue Membership: Intermarried and Inmarried Couples**

<i>Community</i>	<i>Year of Study</i>	<i>% of Intermarried Couples Who Report Being Synagogue Members</i>	<i>% of Inmarried Couples Who Report Being Synagogue Members<sup>12</sup></i>
NJPS (U.S. National)	2001	23%	62%
York (PA)	1999	23%	72%
Miami	2014	22%	51%
Westport (CT)	2000	22%	72%
Minneapolis	2004	21%	77%
Portland (ME)	2007	20%	58%
Rhode Island	2002	20%	67%
Richmond	1994	20%	69%
Philadelphia	2009	19%	50%
St. Paul	2004	19%	81%
Washington (DC)	2003	19%	67%
Harrisburg	1994	18%	74%
Rochester	1999	18%	76%
Bergen County (NJ)	2001	17%	63%
Detroit	2005	17%	70%
New Haven	2010	17%	62%
Chicago	2010	16%	56%
Middlesex County (NJ)	2008	16%	51%
New York	2011	15%	62%
Atlantic County (NJ)	2004	15%	59%
Tucson	2002	15%	53%
PEW (U.S. National)	2013	14%	59%
Columbus	2013	14%	86%
Baltimore	2010	14%	71%
Wilmington (DE)	1995	14%	67%
Cleveland	2010	13%	69%
Denver/Boulder	2007	13%	63%
Monmouth County (NJ)	1997	13%	60%

**FAQ Table 2c: Intermarriage Data, U.S. Jewish Communities:  
% Synagogue Membership: Intermarried and Inmarried Couples**

<i>Community</i>	<i>Year of Study</i>	<i>% of Intermarried Couples Who Report Being Synagogue Members</i>	<i>% of Inmarried Couples Who Report Being Synagogue Members<sup>12</sup></i>
Orlando	1993	13%	54%
San Francisco	2004	13%	45%
South Palm Beach (FL)	2005	13%	40%
Martin-St. Lucie (FL)	1999	12%	49%
Broward County (FL)	1997	11%	38%
Los Angeles	1997	11%	52%
Phoenix	2002	11%	47%
East Bay (CA) <sup>13</sup>	2011	10%	47%
San Diego	2003	10%	52%
West Palm Beach (FL)	2005	10%	38%
Palm Springs (CA)	1998	9%	29%
St. Petersburg	1994	9%	62%
Atlanta	2006	7%	64%
Las Vegas	2005	6%	23%
Seattle	2000	2%	54%
Seattle	2015	17%	64%

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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 Judaic Studies, University of Miami, [isheskin@miami.edu](mailto:isheskin@miami.edu). Data revised and updated by the authors.

Please note that the DataBank has also published a much more extensive series of comparisons among American Jewish communities, 2013 [Comparisons of Jewish Communities: A Compendium of Table and Bar Charts](#), which covers 36 separate areas of Jewish life. The *Compendium* was compiled by Ira M. Sheskin, University of Miami and edited by Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz, Senior Director, Research & Analysis, Jewish Federations of North America and Director, Berman Jewish DataBank. The *Compendium* totals over 1,400 pages, but each of the thirty-six areas of Jewish life, which include ethnicity, migration, Jewish identification, general social service needs, etc., are separately downloadable.

<sup>1</sup> The one partial exception to this is the recently completed Seattle (2014) study, which did not contain a direct RDD component in its local survey. Instead, this study is based in part on a data-synthesis project conducted by researchers at the Brandeis University Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and Steinhardt Social Research Institute. The data-synthesis project combined the results of hundreds of RDD-based general population surveys which include data on respondent religion, generated an estimate



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of the number of adult Jews by religion (JBRs) for the study area, and used this estimate as an external benchmark for weighting data gathered from a local survey. The local survey, in turn, used a sampling frame constructed from Jewish organizational lists and a list of households with ethnic Jewish surnames purchased from a data vendor.

A number of American Jewish communities are not included in the FAQ #2 Intermarriage Tables, typically because they have not conducted a Jewish community study, or the study that was conducted did not include random digit dialing (RDD) as part of the sampling design and population estimation procedures, or as part of the analysis of intermarried and inmarried households.

Excluded communities from the DataBank intermarriage tables typically had data on intermarried and inmarried Jewish households which relied almost exclusively on Jewish community lists of known Jewish households and/or distinctive Jewish names (DJN) from local telephone directories or purchased from commercial vendors as “ethnic names” list, typically from a variety of public records.

Several other communities are not included in FAQ #2: Metrowest (NJ) and Greater Portland (OR). In MetroWest, NJ, while there was there an RDD-based study, a final report was never issued, the data file does not exist, and a detailed reanalysis of the draft report’s findings on intermarriage by Dr. Sheskin has resulted in a decision not to include MetroWest in this FAQ. The draft report noted that “today” there was a 50% intermarriage rate, without specifying whether the data were based on all respondent/spouse marriages or recent marriages; the draft report also noted that questions on children’s Jewish status focused on expectations, rather than reality. The Greater Portland (OR) study did not report a traditional intermarriage rate; rather, respondents were asked whether anyone in their family — including non-household members — were intermarried. The reported 61% intermarriage rate was computed radically differently from all other Jewish community studies which typically focused on respondent-spouses, so the data have not been included; the authors made an adjustment internally to attempt to compensate for this difference, and estimated that the intermarriage rate was 45%. But, given the lack of an available data file, and the lack of a question that would allow for comparable calculations, the DataBank has omitted the Greater Portland 2008-09 from the intermarriage FAQ.

Data summarized in the FAQ tables are specific for the year the local Jewish community study was completed. Intermarriage numbers, percentages and patterns may have changed in the local area since the study was completed, especially for “older” studies.

<sup>2</sup>Definitional issues are of serious concern in all aspects of Jewish population studies, and even more so in terms of the definition of intermarriage used in local community studies and the questions asked to ascertain how children are being raised in terms of Jewish status. Readers are encouraged to consult the individual studies (which are available for immediate downloading in electronic PDF format through the DataBank: [www.jewishdatabank.org](http://www.jewishdatabank.org)) in order to understand the specific definitions and questions used for all intermarriage-related data. Two issues are addressed below: (a) intermarriage rates based on couples vs. rates based on Jewish individuals, and (b) questions asked to assess the Jewish-raised status of children.

(a) The data presented on intermarriage rates in FAQ Tables 2 and 2a focus upon couples. We have made this decision since much of Jewish communal action and thought revolves around programs designed to encourage intermarried Jewish couples to be active within the organized Jewish community. Similarly, in discussing synagogue/temple membership, rabbis and congregation leaders often talk about the percentage of couples who are intermarried, not the percentage of Jews in their congregation who are intermarried.

At times, however, the focus of intermarriage discussions relates to Jews: what percentage of Jewish-born persons has married a non-Jew. Many of these discussions focus on Jewish individuals, especially when the future marital status of young Jews is the issue and programs designed to encourage inmarriage among young Jewish persons are the subject of communal concern.

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Given this dual reality, FAQ Table 2b compares the communities in terms of the couples intermarriage rate (the percentage of married couples who are intermarried) and individual intermarriage rates (the percentage of currently married Jews who are married to a non-Jew). Please see Table 2b for a discussion of the implications of the two calculations, as well as the calculations involved.

(b) In terms of how children are being raised, and the questions asked to determine a child's Jewish-raised status, the community studies are inconsistent. Some studies ask whether the child is being raised Jewish, Jewish and something else, not Jewish, or the child's status is undecided. Other studies ask whether the "not Jewish" child is being raised in another religion or not in any religion. Many studies just ask whether the child is being raised Jewish or not Jewish; some allow respondents to indicate "part Jewish" answers. A few studies ask the religion in which the child is being raised as an open-ended question, rather than asking whether the child is being raised Jewish, partially Jewish, in another religion, etc.

While issues of comparability of data, therefore, are serious, every effort has been made in these tables to provide comparative data that reflects the reality of contemporary Jewish life, and to make the comparisons (in the vernacular) "oranges to oranges" and not "apples to oranges." All data reflects the numbers reported in the local community studies, or (at times) data file reanalysis by Dr. Sheskin and/or Dr. Miller. Finally, the term "children with intermarried parents" is used as shorthand to describe children living in an intermarried household; we recognize, for example, that for some children from divorced families, one spouse might not be the parent of the child biologically, but for purposes of this analysis is considered the social parent.

<sup>3</sup>The couples rate is often calculated for currently married respondents only, although in some studies other married household members are included in the calculations. Over time, the base for couples intermarriage rates has changed (in some studies) from every household member's marital status in almost every study in the 1970s and the 1980s to respondent-only in many studies in the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, in Dr. Sheskin's studies, when adult children are interviewed, the inmarried-intermarried status of their parents is still determined (assuming they live in the same household); in addition, married adult children living in a household are also included in the questions and the analysis. Readers can find a list of the community studies and the principal researcher(s) at <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/us-local-communities.cfm>, and are encouraged to consult each community study for details on calculations, definitions, etc.

In other studies, the base for calculations has changed away from every adult in the household, especially as time demands in survey interviews have forced communities to make choices on which questions to include and which questions to exclude. In the 1990 NJPS (National Jewish Population Survey), every married person in a household was included in the intermarriage computations where more than one marriage existed within a household. By 2000-02, NJPS only reported intermarriage rates among survey respondents as the basis of the intermarriage rate calculations, partly since the 1990 analyses had shown that restricting the data only to respondents and their spouses did not markedly change the patterns observed. All Ukeles Associates, Inc. studies focus intermarriage rate analysis on respondents only, not on other married household members (if any). Since both models are plausible, one goal of the planned DataBank initiative to help standardize Jewish community population studies is to move towards a uniform policy on intermarriage rate calculations.

<sup>4</sup> The 33% intermarriage rate for Chicago 2010 reported in this FAQ follows the basic model of intermarriage calculation used by the research consultants: JPAR, Jewish Policy and Action Research, a strategic alliance of Ukeles Associates, Inc. (UAI) and Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS), in all of the previous UAI studies. Reports issued by the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago [JUF] report a 37% intermarriage rate, adding another 4% of married couples to this total, in order to preserve comparability with previous Chicago studies.

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In Chicago, only unambiguously Jewish individuals are counted as Jewish (“Jewish-only”) for the total of 291,800 Jews in 2010 in order to have Jewish population trend data over time using the same definition of Jewish for adults and children that was used in previous studies. All individuals defined as “Jewish and something else” or “Jewish and another religion” [earlier studies] are not counted as Jewish by JUF and the JPAR-Ukeles team in 2010; see the note in FAQ #1.

The 33% JPAR-UAI intermarriage rate estimate for married couples in Jewish households in Metropolitan Chicago included in this FAQ reflects all Jewish-only respondents/spouses married to a non-Jewish person. For 4% of the married couples, the research report by the JPAR defines them as “Jewish-and-something-else couples” — at least one of the spouses is ambiguously Jewish, with a dual “religious” identification [in prior study terms]; typically a Jewish-only person is married to a Jewish-and-something-else person. [Another 63% of married couples (respondents and spouses only) are inmarried — both marital partners view themselves as Jewish, even if one was not born as Jewish.] The JUF 37% intermarriage rate adds the 33% clearly intermarried to the 4% ambiguously intermarried (“Jewish-and-something-else couples”), using definitions from prior Chicago studies. Using this JUF definition, the intermarriage rate was 30% in 2000. Thus, JUF reports an intermarriage increase from 30% to 37% over the decade, while the UAI-JPAR report notes an increase from 30% to 33% (previous study reported data not reanalyzed), which may slightly underreport the increase in intermarriage, from a JUF perspective.

Since in all other UAI studies, the “Jewish-and-something else” spouse married to a “Jewish-only” spouse is defined as inmarried, the 33% intermarried rate has been presented for the 2010 study in this FAQ. The percentage of inmarried and intermarried couples who are synagogue members excludes the 4% “Jewish-and-something else” marriages.

<sup>5</sup>For a detailed description of the geographic extent of each community, please consult the community reports on the DataBank website. In general, the study areas correspond to the local Jewish federation’s service area, although the Denver/Boulder study focused on a seven-county area (Adams, Arapahoe, Aurora, Boulder, Denver, Douglas and Jefferson counties), and not the entire state, as implied by the name: Allied Jewish Federation of Colorado. In reality, there is not one community where the study area is defined by the legal limits of the name appearing in these tables. Study areas range in size from the better part of a county to multi-county areas to state-wide studies.

<sup>6</sup> The East Bay Jewish Community Study 2011 does not present data on how children are being raised, including children in intermarried Jewish households. The questionnaire did include a question about the Jewish “religion” status of the respondent and the spouse, but did not ask about every other adult (if any) in the household or any/all of the children (if any). The estimate for the number of Jewish persons is based on a separate question asking the respondent the total number of people in the household who are Jewish: Question 14: “In total, how many people in your household consider themselves to be Jewish or were born or raised Jewish, including yourself if applicable?”

<sup>7</sup> The Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania includes Allentown and Bethlehem.

<sup>8</sup> The recently 2013 PEW Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews published on October 1, 2013 (<http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey>), reports that 44% of all currently married American Jews are married to a non-Jewish spouse — which computes to a 61% couples intermarried rate [DataBank calculation — 61% of all currently married couples which include a Jewish adult are intermarried]. The 2001 NJPS study data reflect a 31% individual rate (31% of all married Jews are married to a non-Jewish person) and a 48% couples rate [DataBank calculation following Sheskin] The shift in the individual rate from NJPS 2001 to PEW 2013 was from 31% to 44% over the twelve years between the studies, a significant increase. For those who are interested in the percentage of all Jewish household couples are intermarried, the DataBank analyses summarizes the increase from about 48% in 2001 to 61% in 2013.

Please see the discussion of comparing child-raising as Jewish rates in NJPS 2001 and Pew 2013 which is on page 6 of this FAQ, following Table 2.

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<sup>9</sup>In general, inmarried couples where both spouses were born/raised as Jews invariably (approaching 100%) report that they are raising their children Jewish-only. In conversionary inmarried households (the non-Jewish born/raised spouse now self-identifies as Jewish), the percentage of children raised Jewish-only is typically between 80% and 100%, with most of the other children being raised partially Jewish, and rarely in another religion. Thus, the data in FAQ Table 2a focus on intermarried Jewish households where substantial variation exists in whether children are being raised Jewish-only or partially Jewish.

<sup>10</sup>Unfortunately, Jewish life and statistical calculations are not always as simple and clear-cut as this example would indicate. For example, calculating the “couples” intermarriage rate often involves a number of decisions (in a limited number of problematic cases now, but probably an increasing number of cases in the future). For example, a Jewish-born person who does not self-identify as Jewish, but identifies as a Christian, marries a Jewish-born-and-still-self-identifying Jew; decision: intermarried couple: Christian and Jew. Slightly different scenario: the same Jewish-born person does not consider self Jewish, but reports that he/she does not have a religion — marries same Jewish woman; he is Jewish-born but not Jewish now; she is Jewish-born and Jewish-now. Decision: is this an intermarriage (Jewish person born to non-Jewish person), an inmarriage (two-Jewish-born spouses, NJPS 2001 would define him as counting as a Jew), or do we place this couple into a residual miscellaneous category?

<sup>11</sup> Please note that only a few studies — quite recently — have begun to compare the Jewish behaviors of intermarried couples who are synagogue members with the Jewish behaviors of intermarried couples who are not synagogue members. In general, intermarried Jewish couples who are synagogue/temple affiliated are much more strongly involved in Jewish life than are intermarried couples who are not congregation affiliated — they often behave more like inmarried couples than their intermarried, non-synagogue-affiliated counterparts. Interested readers should see the Denver/Boulder 2007 study at the DataBank which used this comparative theme throughout the Jewish connections-behaviors analysis of the community. In Denver/Boulder, the number of affiliated intermarried who were interviewed (the “sample size”) was sufficient for detailed analysis of their characteristics. In most Jewish community studies, sample size would not be sufficient to allow these comparisons.

<sup>12</sup> New York 2011 data include Orthodox in-married; original report compares non-Orthodox in-married and intermarried.

<sup>13</sup> The East Bay (CA) 2011 study report data were used for this FAQ; data file not available as of January, 2013. The East Bay percentage (47% of same faith couples report being synagogue members) does not differentiate between same-faith couples where both spouses were Jewish-born and current same-faith couples where one of the spouses is a Jew-by-choice (conversionary inmarriages).

In general, FAQ Table 2-c attempts to summarize synagogue membership for inmarried couples by excluding conversionary inmarriages, but not always; for example, when the data file does not distinguish two-Jewish-born inmarried couples from conversionary couples, or a data file is not yet available.

In general, conversionary Jewish households are less connected to synagogues than two-Jewish-born inmarried households, but much more so than intermarried households. While the behaviors of synagogue-member conversionary households that belong to a synagogue/temple are very similar to two-Jewish-born inmarrieds, and very different from conversionary households that are not synagogue members, most community studies do not have sufficient interviews with conversionary inmarried respondents to provide analyses within the community.