



## First-ever *Portrait of Bay Area Jewish Life and Communities* depicts one of America’s largest and most diverse Jewish populations

*New study finds a third of Bay Area Jews are young adults, overall Jewish population reflects a wide spectrum of engagement with community*

San Francisco, CA – **The first-ever *Portrait of Bay Area Jewish Life and Communities* depicts one of America’s largest and most diverse Jewish populations**—as reported in a new social scientific study released today. Commissioned by the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties (The Federation), the *Portrait* aims to deeply explore and richly understand the Bay Area Jewish community’s social landscape. **The online survey interviewed more than 3,000 respondents from 10 counties** -- Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma.

**The Bay Area is home to the 4<sup>th</sup> largest Jewish population in the U.S., with 350,000 Jews and 123,000 non-Jews living in 148,000 Jewish households.**

While the total **Jewish population in the Bay Area has likely been stable over recent years, it is growing in the East Bay** and shrinking in San Francisco. Of Jews in the Bay Area, 1/3 live in the East Bay, 1/3 live in the Peninsula and South Bay, and 1/6 live in San Francisco County.

**Young adults (18-34) comprise 37% of all adults in Jewish households, a higher percentage than in any other recently conducted major American Jewish community study.** They move around significantly within the region, in part due to the cost of living in certain areas, but also reflective of national trends that have de-stabilized the economic and family lives of today's younger adult generation. Because of high rates of financial and geographic insecurity, young adults seek out community services. **The Boomer generation – born between 1946 and 1964 – is the second largest major age cohort**, comprising 34% of all adults in Jewish households.

**The Bay Area Jewish population is diverse.** One-in-ten households overall, and one-in-five in San Francisco specifically, include a lesbian, gay, or bisexual person. 25% of Bay Area Jewish households include a Hispanic, Asian-American, African-American, or a mixed or other ethnic or racial background (other than white) individual. And, inter-group marriage (defined as marriage between Jewish and non-Jewish persons) rates vary widely by age, from a low of 42% among those 65 and older to a high of 66% among those 35 and under.

**As with apparent national trends, there is rising neutrality toward Israel.** In particular, younger Jews (and liberals, intermarried, and the unaffiliated) are less likely to be very attached to or sympathize with Israel.

**The study revealed wide economic disparities**, with major concentrations of wealth alongside significant numbers of economically insecure households. While 22% of households report they are “just managing” financially or “cannot make ends meet,” 17% say they are “well off.” In terms of family income, 11% earn under \$50,000 annually, and 13% report \$250,000 or more.

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**In examining engagement in Jewish life**, a relatively small, highly engaged affiliated population is offset by a much larger unaffiliated population that is substantially less engaged, particularly young adults. One half of young adults attend Passover Seders, and one quarter regard being Jewish as very important.

Study Highlights and Principal Investigator profiles are available at [www.jewishfed.org/communitystudy](http://www.jewishfed.org/communitystudy)

Nearly 200 community leaders, lay and professionals, including philanthropists, rabbis, educators, executives, board members, volunteers, activists, and thought leaders, were consulted in the development of the Study.

“These pioneering research results will inform and shape the work of the Jewish institutions, philanthropists, innovators, and activists,” says Danny Grossman, CEO of the Federation. “The Study represents an essential step for the Bay Area Jewish community to chart a path forward in its communal policy and planning. We welcome a robust conversation to think collaboratively about the many opportunities and challenges the study highlights. The Portrait is groundbreaking in its findings about the population’s youthfulness and diversity, how the cost of living affects Jewish engagement, and how the population is shifting geographically. These and other findings are provocative and rich in detail, and we are eager to get to work.”

“With the Portrait, we now have a better understanding of our community, enabling us to identify and quantify our needs and to amplify our strengths,” adds Richard Fiedotin, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Federation. “Using this data, we can, as a community, develop approaches to the challenges we face and better determine where we want to dedicate our precious resources.”

The Study was prepared by a highly experienced and independent professional research team led by Professor Steven M. Cohen of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and Dr. Jacob B. Ukeles. Combined, they have completed more than 25 studies of local Jewish communities in the United States. Dr. Ashley Grosse of YouGov led the data collection.

“The Bay Area Jewish population both resembles and differs from Jews in other communities around the United States,” says Professor Steven M. Cohen, a Principal Investigator for the research. “As in much of the West, Bay Area Jews report relatively low rates of engagement in Jewish life, both at home and in the community—even as a significant minority of the population is both highly active and Jewishly committed. The Bay Area is home to a very high number and percentage of young adults, no doubt owing to the educational and professional opportunities in the region.”

“The study results present community leadership with an extraordinary set of challenges and opportunities, adds Dr. Jacob B. Ukeles, also a Principal Investigator for the research. “On the one hand, the relatively low levels of Jewish engagement, the distancing of liberals and young adults from Israel, and substantial pockets of economic hardship are tough issues for any community. On the other hand, the unusually high levels of education, the rich diversity of the population, and the core of committed active Jewish people are powerful building blocks for a better future.”

The Portrait provides the potential to begin tracking changes in the population over time. Community meetings open to the public to present and discuss the findings are being held on February 13 and 14. Other meetings with key stakeholders will be held throughout the year to unpack the findings and to further discuss how the Study affects the community. The complete analysis of the data set, anticipated to be released in spring 2018, will be complemented by the Bay Area Jewish Community Digital Portrait Tool, an interactive website including a dynamic map of organizations and institutions that help to create and support Jewish life in the Bay Area. The tool will be accessible to anyone who wants to explore and learn more.

Academic advisors who provided guidance throughout the study include Professor Susan Folkman, University of California, San Francisco; Professor Ari Y. Kelman, Stanford University; Professor Shaul Kelner, Vanderbilt University; Dr. Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz, Jewish Federations of North America; Professor Aliya Saperstein, Stanford University; and Professor Lee Shulman, Stanford University. Julie Golde, Senior Director of Community Impact, led the study process on behalf of the Federation.

The Study was supported by the Jim Joseph Foundation; Koret Foundation, Laszlo N. Tauber Family Foundation, Levine-Lent Family Foundation, Lisa & John Pritzker Family Fund, Newton and Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust, Sinai Memorial Chapel, Taube Philanthropies; Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley, and individual donors.

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*The Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties connects people of all ages, backgrounds, and perspectives to the power of the Jewish community to improve the world. We partner with donors, organizations, and foundations to address pressing issues facing our community, and develop innovative strategies that result in deep and lasting impact locally, in Israel, and around the world. Learn more at [www.jewishfed.org](http://www.jewishfed.org)*