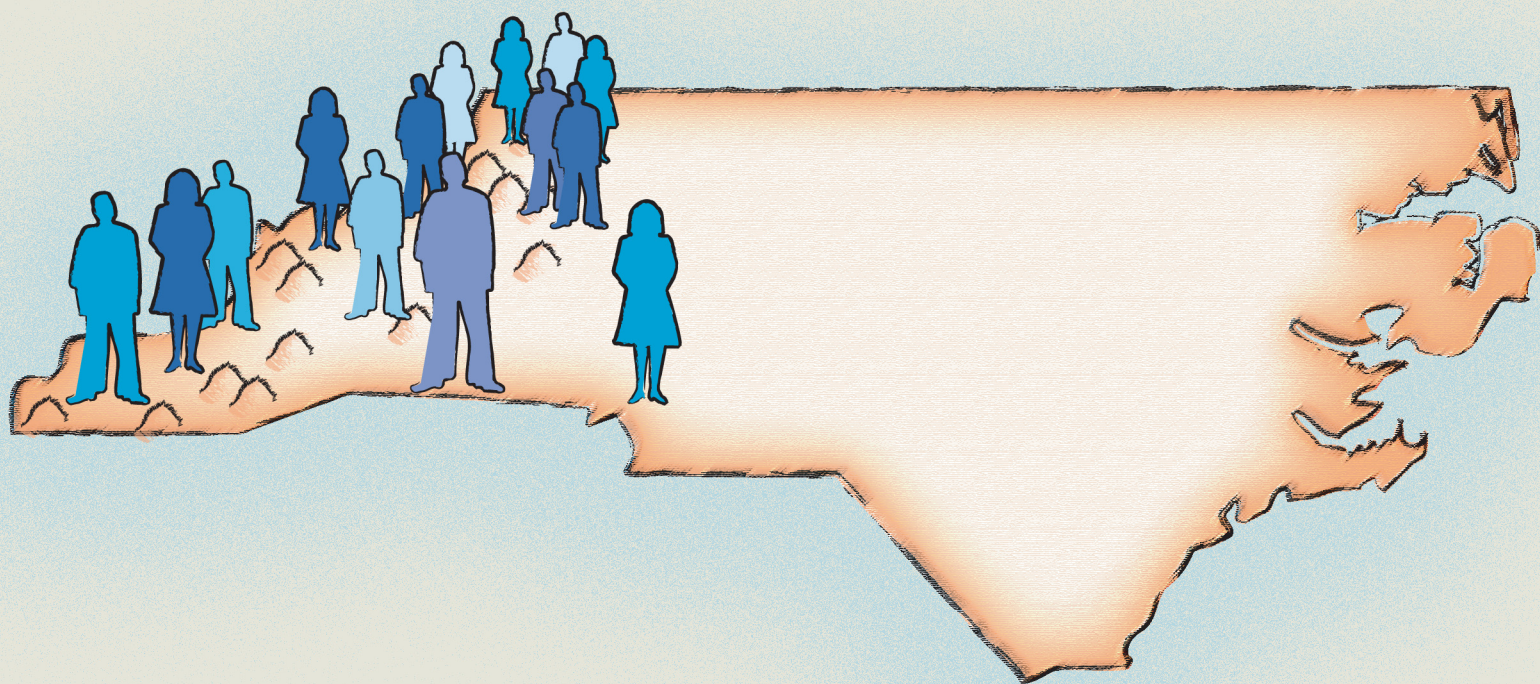


Brandeis University

Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

The 2010 Western North Carolina Jewish Demographic Study

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Background

The idea for the Western North Carolina Jewish Demographic Study originated with the Asheville Jewish Leadership Collaborative (AJLC).¹ The AJLC recognized that the Jewish community of Asheville had grown significantly since the mid-1990s, with an increase of 41% in the number of area Jewish homes in the Asheville Jewish Community Center's database between 2003 and 2008. This growth led to the development of several new programs and the expansion of existing programs, but it also challenged the community to be more efficient in planning and allocating its limited resources.

There had never before been an attempt to conduct a scientific study of the Asheville Jewish community, and the AJLC determined that such a study was necessary. A demographic study can be an essential tool for productive planning and resource allocation in the Jewish community. Without systematic data, communal organizations cannot know which of their initiatives serve their constituents effectively, which do not work, and which can be improved and in what specific ways. Data collected and analyzed scientifically, however, can yield a far more accurate and precise understanding of who the members of the Jewish community are, how they participate in Jewish communal life, and what their specific needs are for programs and services. Accordingly, the AJLC was eager to obtain such data for the community to be able to maximize the benefits its member institutions could provide to the local Jewish community.

In addition to meeting these goals, the AJLC

was particularly interested to test three key assumptions widely held within the Asheville Jewish community:

1. The Asheville Jewish community is growing faster than the non-Jewish community, and this growth is primarily among retirees and young families who are locating in the south and west suburbs.
2. Asheville is not as affluent as other Jewish communities, with less median income than other Jewish communities of the same size. Many potential donors with capacity to be philanthropic are not identified.
3. The unaffiliated Jewish community is uninformed about what Jewish Asheville has to offer. Younger unaffiliated Jews are less wealthy and unaffiliated due to costs of joining Jewish organizations; older, frequently retired unaffiliated Jews are wealthy and choose to be unaffiliated because they want to be “off the radar”; some have second homes in Asheville and an active, primary affiliation in another community.

In the course of developing a plan for the study, it became clear that Jewish communities near Asheville could and should benefit from the study as well. The nearby Jewish communities of Hendersonville and Brevard were recruited to participate, as was the Jewish community of Franklin about 70 miles' drive to the southwest. Including these communities changed the study from a demographic study of the Jewish community of Asheville into a regional study.

This report addresses the assumptions of the AJLC and seeks to describe the Jews of Western North Carolina, the ways in which they engage in Jewish communal life, the services that are provided by the communities, and the communities' needs. It is intended to help the communities examine their own priorities and make decisions about resource allocation and program development and maintenance.

Study Design

The study was conducted by researchers at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University on behalf of the Jewish communities of Western North Carolina. Designing a survey requires balancing the need for a large, high quality sample with the cost of producing it. Two techniques are traditionally used in demographic studies: 1) area probability sampling, in which randomly selected geographic units (e.g., ZIP codes or city blocks) yield a sample of households, and 2) random digit dialing, in which telephone numbers are selected at random within local exchanges, yielding a sample of households. Either method would produce a high quality sample of Jewish households but would be prohibitively expensive in a small Jewish community. For instance, if 2% of area households were Jewish-connected – a proportion roughly equivalent to the proportion of the US population that is Jewish, and higher than the proportion of the North Carolina population that is Jewish – and Jewish-connected households were evenly distributed across Western North Carolina, 50 households would need to be contacted to identify each Jewish-connected

household. To identify 10 households, 500 would need to be contacted; to identify 100, we would need to contact 5,000; and so on. Alternative methods were required in order to develop a large enough sample for analysis.

CMJS developed a sampling frame consisting of households on the mailing lists of the organizations in the AJLC, the Brevard Jewish Community, and Mountain Synagogue of Franklin; these households included the “known” Jewish community – households that appear on the mailing list of one or more Jewish organizations.² Additional mailing lists from AccuData, a data broker, were added to the sample, consisting of households that were identified as ethnically or religiously Jewish or of Russian or Belarusian descent and that lived for at least part of the year in the counties in which Asheville, Hendersonville, Brevard, and Franklin are located (Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and Macon Counties); these households included the “unknown” Jewish community – households that are not affiliated with participating local Jewish organizations but that may nevertheless have Jewish members. Because many households were on multiple lists, CMJS researchers cleaned the lists to remove duplicates wherever possible to ensure that no household would have more than one entry on the combined list. The combined list included 2,890 households that appeared on at least one Western North Carolina Jewish organization's mailing list and 5,231 households that did not appear on any such list. Households were then stratified into six groups defined as follows:

1. Households appeared on the mailing list of at least one area Jewish organization but had primary residences outside of Western North Carolina.
2. Households on the Franklin mailing list that appeared to be year-round residents of Western North Carolina.
3. Households on the Brevard mailing list that appeared to be year-round residents of Western North Carolina.
4. Households that appeared on at least one Jewish organization's mailing list but did not fit the criteria for any of the first three strata; these households are the majority of the Jewish-connected households in Asheville and Hendersonville.
5. Households that appeared to have secondary addresses in Western North Carolina and came from the AccuData list but did not appear on any Jewish organization's mailing list.
6. Households that appeared to be year-round residents of Western North Carolina and came from the AccuData list but did not appear on any Jewish organization's mailing list.

A stratified random sample of 1,250 households was selected, with about two-thirds (800 households) coming from the organizational lists and about one-third (450 households) coming exclusively from the AccuData lists. This approach permitted maximum coverage of the known Jewish community while allowing for assessment of the extent and characteristics of the Jewish population not known to the community. These 1,250 households were sent prenotification letters by mail on April 19, 2010, with unique links to the online survey,

inviting them to complete it. Beginning May 4, callers from CMJS called each household that did not complete the survey on its own and attempted to get them to complete the survey over the phone. Where available mailing addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses proved to be outdated for selected households, extensive effort was made to track down new contact information through online public records databases and to get an adult member of the household to complete the survey. On June 15, a shortened paper survey was sent to all households with useable mailing addresses that had not yet completed the survey. Calling efforts ceased on June 25, and the survey was closed on August 24, by which time 676 households had completed the survey.

Reading This Report

Throughout this report, the data are presented by resident status – year-round and seasonal residents. Each of these categories includes households from both the Jewish organizational lists and the AccuData lists. Although some groups are believed to be undercounted (e.g., adults in institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes; adults not on any Jewish organization's mailing list who live in Western North Carolina but outside of Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, or Macon Counties), we do not believe this introduces any significant bias in our estimates. Finally, each chart refers to the number of respondents who answered the relevant question (n=#) and notes the statistical significance of the analysis. When a measure is statistically significant, it is

unlikely that the distribution between the variables being tested has happened by chance. The significance value represents the amount of error present in the analysis. Following standard social science practice, this report relies on a standard of 5% or less error (i.e., $p < .05$), which means we can be 95% confident that the findings are not the product of chance but rather the result of particular variables.

Demographics

Community Size

Until now, there has never been a systematic demographic study of the Western North Carolina Jewish community. Estimates of the size of the Jewish community of Asheville were reported to the American Jewish Year Book from 1948 (estimated 600 people) until the final edition was published in 2008.³ The most recent published estimate – 1,300 people in Buncombe, Haywood, and Madison Counties – was made some time between 1997 and 2001; at the same time, an estimate was also made for Henderson County of 250 people. It was clear, however, that the community experienced substantial growth since that estimate was made – between 2003 and 2008, the Asheville Jewish Community Center’s list of area Jewish homes grew from about 850 families to about 1,200 families, an increase of 41%. However, none of these estimates was derived scientifically. Accordingly, the estimates provided in this report, calculated using the methods described herein, cannot be used in direct comparison with prior estimates.

Based on the scientific survey, we estimate that there are approximately 4,720 year-round residents in Jewish-connected homes in Western North Carolina and at least another 1,000 seasonal residents.

What is a “Jewish-Connected Household”?

A Jewish-connected household was defined as any household in which at least one adult (age 18 or above) who usually resides in the household considers him- or herself to be

Jewish in any way (religiously, ethnically, culturally, etc.). Answering “no” to this question screened those households in which no members were Jewish out of the survey.

Who Counts as a Jew?

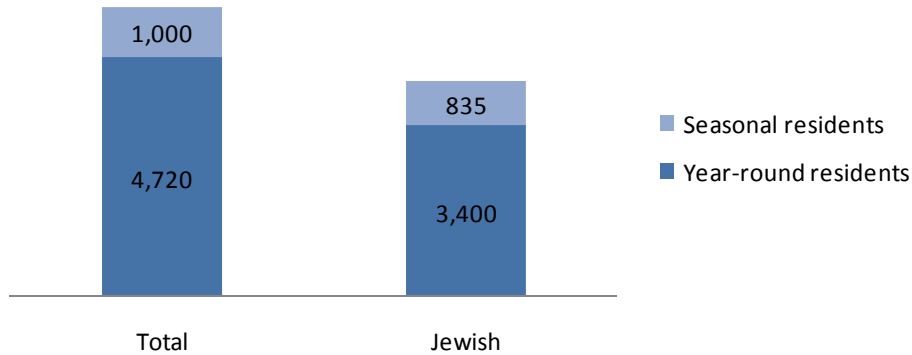
Not everyone who lives in a Jewish-connected household is Jewish. Any respondent who self-identified as a Jew and any adults identified by respondents as Jews were counted, while respondents who did not identify as Jewish in any way and adults identified by respondents as non-Jews were not counted. If there were any children in the household, the respondent was asked if they were being raised exclusively as Jews, Jewish and something else, or exclusively as non-Jews; children who were identified in either of the first two categories were counted as Jews for the purposes of this study.

We estimate that approximately 3,400 Jews live in Western North Carolina year-round, with at least an additional 835 Jews who reside in the area seasonally (Figure 1).

Where in Western North Carolina Are the Jewish-Connected Households?

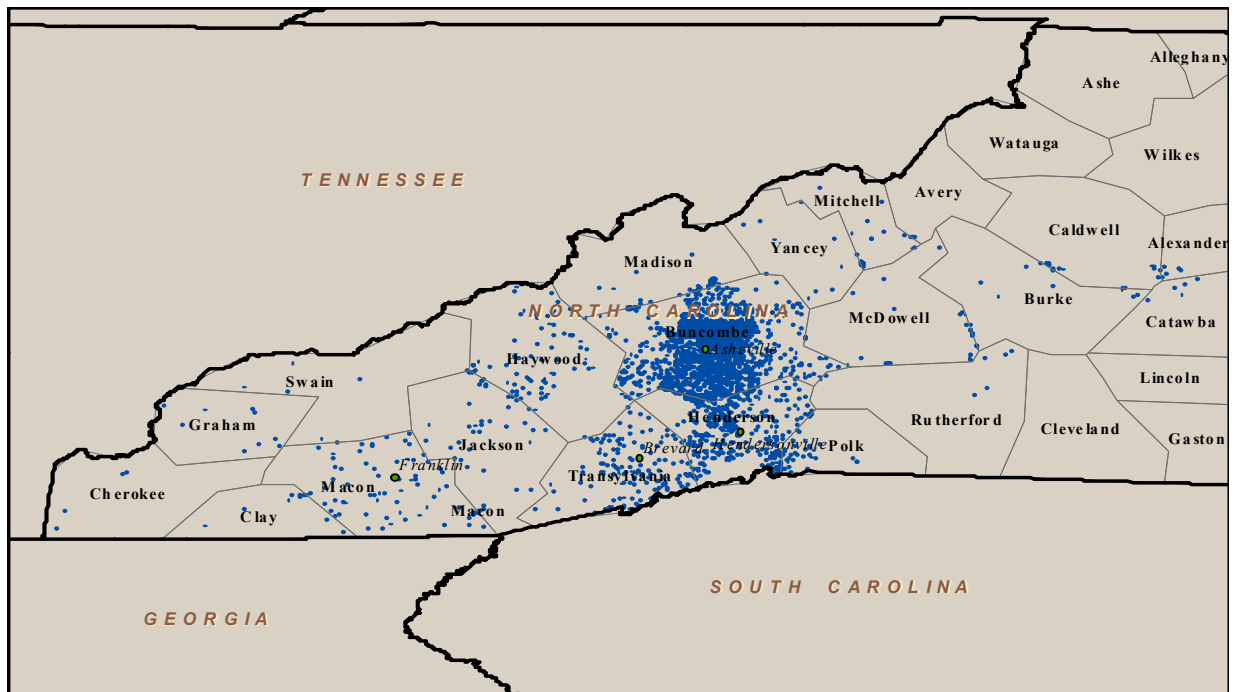
We estimate that 72% of the Jewish-connected households in Western North Carolina are located in Buncombe County. Another 13% are in Henderson County, 5% in Transylvania County, and 3% in Macon County; the remaining 7% of households we found were spread among 14 other counties in Western North Carolina. Figure 2 provides a good illustration of the residential density of Jewish-connected households in

Figure 1. Population Estimates from Survey Sample (weighted)



Note: Year-round: $n=292$; Seasonal: $n=65$

Figure 2. Dot Density Map of Jewish-Connected Households in Western North Carolina (1 dot = 1 household)



Western North Carolina – each dot is randomly placed within a ZIP code to identify a single Jewish-connected household residing there. Clearly there are far more Jewish-connected households in Asheville and the immediate surrounding area in Buncombe County than anywhere else in Western North Carolina.

Not surprisingly, this pattern remains when we estimate the number of Jewish residents of Western North Carolina, broken down into year-round and seasonal residents and by county of residence. We estimate that there are 4,235 Jewish residents, of which 3,400 live in the area year-round and 835 are seasonal residents. About 70% are located in Buncombe County, including nearly three-quarters of year-round residents and about half of seasonal residents. Interestingly, we found more Jewish seasonal residents than year-round residents in Transylvania County, the location of just 2% of year-

round households but 17% of seasonal households (Table 1).

Because the estimates are so small when broken down by county, this report does not present further data by county. Instead, data are presented by residency (year-round vs. seasonal) or in the aggregate (year-round and seasonal residents combined).

Tenure of Residence

Nearly 60% of all Jewish-connected households in Western North Carolina first moved to the area in the last ten years, and nearly 80% arrived in the last 20 years. On average, year-round residents have resided in Western North Carolina for 14 years, while seasonal residents have spent at least part of the year residing there for 11 years (Table 2).

Table 1. Estimated Jewish Population of Western North Carolina by County and Residence (weighted estimates)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Total
Buncombe County	2,530	415	2,945
Henderson County	510	100	610
Transylvania County	80	130	210
Macon County	60	30	90
Everywhere else	220	160	380
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,400</i>	<i>835</i>	<i>4,235</i>

The ten most common ZIP codes reported among Jewish-connected households that moved to Western North Carolina in the last decade are 28804 (Asheville), 28803 (Asheville), 28805 (Asheville), 28806 (Asheville), 28801 (Asheville), 28704 (Arden), 28787 (Weaverville), 28712 (Brevard), 28739 (Hendersonville), and 28715 (Candler). Although we cannot effectively assess the degree to which other Jewish-connected households have moved *out* of Western North Carolina from these or other ZIP codes in the area, these data suggest that the areas of most rapid growth in the Western North Carolina Jewish community are in the city of Asheville proper and nearby communities south and west of Asheville, confirming the AJLC's assumption.

Seasonal Residents

The Jewish-connected seasonal residents of Western North Carolina live in a diverse set of communities when they are not in Western North Carolina. Forty-six percent of the seasonal residents we found live in Florida for at least part of the year, with another 10% in each of South Carolina and other parts of North Carolina and 6% in each of Connecticut, New York, and Oregon. The remainder live in Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, Ohio, and Virginia, as well as Israel and Mexico. For 31% of the seasonal residents, Western North Carolina is their primary home.

On average, seasonal households report that they spent a little over five months in Western North Carolina in 2009. Just over half (54%) say they spend at least two months in Western North Carolina between May and August, while 23% say they spend

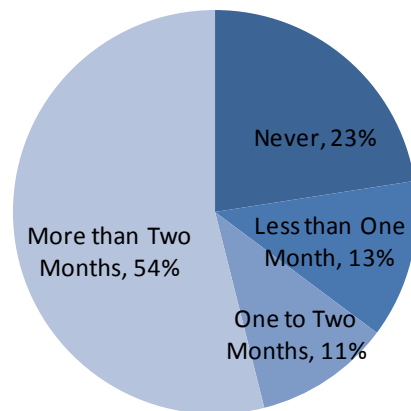
Table 2. Year Moved to Western North Carolina (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Pre-1970	6	2	6
1970s	8	3	7
1980s	6	7	6
1990s	22	30	23
2000 to date	58	58	58

no time in Western North Carolina between May and August (Figure 3). Between September and April, 46% spend more than two months in the area while 20% live elsewhere throughout the fall, winter, and the first part of spring (Figure 4).

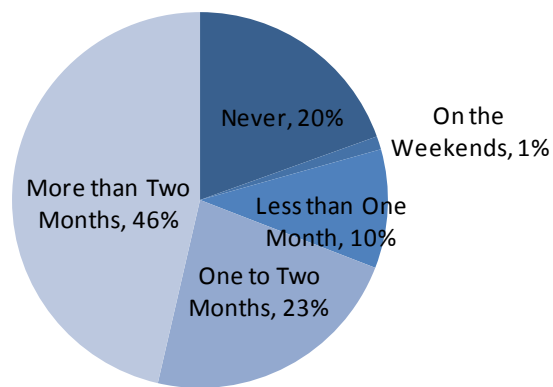
Although the youngest seasonal residents spend part of the year in Western North Carolina primarily because they are undergraduate students at one of the local colleges or universities, most seasonal residents are older and have three different

Figure 3. Seasonal Residents' Length of Stay in Summer (May-August, weighted estimates)



Note: seasonal residents, $n=57$.

Figure 4. Seasonal Residents' Length of Stay During the Rest of the Year (September-April, weighted estimates)



Note: seasonal residents, $n=57$.

motivations. The most common motivation cited by seasonal residents for spending at least part of the year in the area is the beauty of the landscape. Second, several cite the weather, saying that Western North Carolina provides an escape from the summer heat or harsher winter at their primary residences. Finally, some have business interests or family in the area.

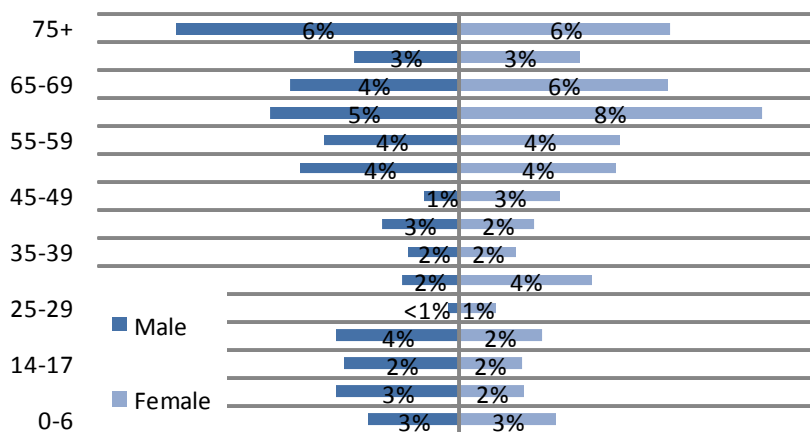
Age-Sex Composition

The shape of the age-sex distribution of Jewish residents of Western North Carolina, shown in Figure 5, is similar to that of other Jewish communities around the United States, but its goblet-like shape – widest at the top, narrowest in the middle, and in between at the bottom – reflects a sizeable retiree and elderly population. We estimate that 28% of the Jewish population of Western North Carolina is aged 65 years or older, with an additional 21% aged 55 or

older. Children (aged 17 or younger) make up 15% of the population, and while there is a substantial population of college-aged Jews (18-24), there are very few Jews in the immediate post-college demographic (25-29).⁴ The mean age of Jewish residents of Western North Carolina is estimated at 49.3 years.

Other than that there are almost no children living in seasonal households, there is no significant difference between year-round and seasonal residents by age. Given that such a large proportion of the population is elderly or nearing retirement age, the Jewish communities of Western North Carolina should expect increasing demand for elder care services such as meals, assistance with daily activities and tasks, institutional or home care, health-related services, and visitation. There will likely be greater demand for special programming for older adults as well.

Figure 5. Age-Sex Distribution of Jewish Residents of Western North Carolina (weighted estimates)



Educational Attainment

Jewish residents of Western North Carolina display patterns of educational attainments that are similar to American Jews in general. They are a highly educated group, with 44% overall having attained an advanced degree and another 31% having received a bachelor's degree (Figure 6).

If the analysis is limited to Jewish adults aged 25 or older, who are therefore old enough to have had the chance to pursue a

college education, the results are similar. Nearly half have attained an advanced degree, and nearly another third have graduated from college. Less than one-quarter have not earned at least a bachelor's degree (Figure 7).

Labor Force Participation

Year-round Jewish residents of Western North Carolina are more likely than their seasonal counterparts to be employed. Just over half of Jewish year-round residents

Figure 6. Educational Attainment of Adult Jewish Residents of Western North Carolina (full sample, weighted estimates)

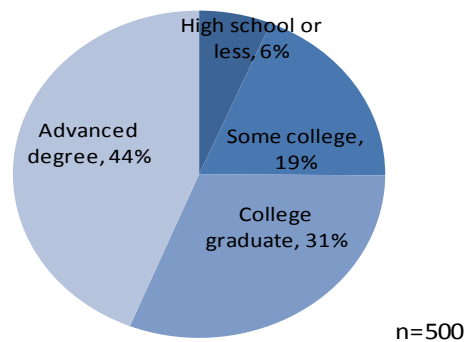
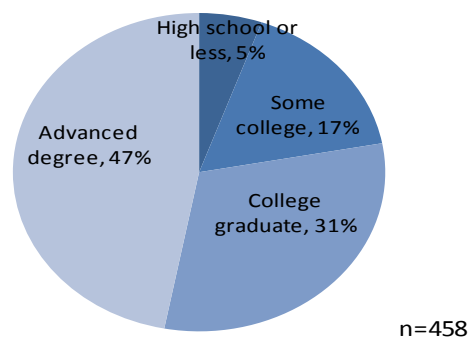


Figure 7. Educational Attainment of Adult Jewish Residents of Western North Carolina (25 or older, weighted estimates)



work at least part time, compared to about two-fifths of Jewish seasonal residents. About two-fifths of both year-round and seasonal Jewish residents are retired (Table 3).

Only 7% of respondents, all year-round residents, indicated they have a need for vocational counseling or services.

Business Ownership

We estimate that about one-third of Jewish adults in Western North Carolina own their own businesses (35% of year-round residents and 30% of seasonal residents). Of

those businesses owned by Jewish year-round residents, 93% operate only in Western North Carolina and 7% operate both in Western North Carolina and elsewhere; of those businesses owned by Jewish seasonal residents, 29% operate only in Western North Carolina, 44% operate only outside of Western North Carolina, and 27% operate both in Western North Carolina and elsewhere.

Household Income⁵

Overall, we found no statistically significant differences in household income between year-round and seasonal residents, but it is

Table 3. Labor Force Participation (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Employed full-time	35	25	33
Employed part-time	17	14	17
Looking for full-time work	3	3	3
Unemployed, not looking for full-time work	5	14	7
Retired	40	44	41

likely that a larger sample would have indicated that seasonal residents tend to fall in higher income categories. Indeed, if we use a .2 standard of significance instead of the usual .05, seasonal residents are more likely to fall in either of the top two categories than year-round residents, though no other category reveals a significant difference (Table 4).

Marital Status, Children, and Intermarriage

Approximately three-quarters (78%) of Jewish-connected households in Western North Carolina include a married couple. Forty percent of these couples are interfaith (47% year-round residents, 6% seasonal residents).

We estimate that 20% of households include children (24% year-round residents, 7% seasonal residents). Among households that include married couples, 27% include children (30% year-round residents, 11% seasonal residents).

Most of the children in these households are younger; 70% were enrolled in fifth grade or below during the 2009-10 academic year, including 39% who had not yet started kindergarten.

Sixty-four percent of the children are being raised exclusively Jewish, with another 19% being raised Jewish and something else. Seventeen percent are being raised exclusively non-Jewish.

Table 4. Household Income (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Less than \$15,000	4	9	5
\$15,000 - \$24,999	18	19	18
\$25,000 - \$34,999	8	0	7
\$35,000 - \$49,999	13	8	12
\$50,000 - \$74,999	23	6	21
\$75,000 - \$99,999	15	10	15
\$100,000 - \$199,999	14	33	17
\$200,000 or more	5	15	6

Denomination

Twenty-two percent of the adults in Jewish-connected households in Western North Carolina identify as not Jewish (25% in year-round households and 11% in seasonal households). Of the Jewish adults, the largest denominational group is Reform, followed by secular/cultural Jews, Conservative, and those who identify as

“just Jewish.” There is no significant difference in denominational affiliation of Jewish adults between year-round and seasonal households.

Among children being raised at least partly Jewish, over a third are being raised Reform and about a fifth are being raised Conservative (Table 5).

Table 5. Denominational Affiliation (weighted estimates, %)

	Adults	Children
Orthodox	3	9
Conservative	19	21
Reconstructionist	2	0
Reform	41	38
Secular/cultural Jew	23	17
Just Jewish	12	8
Chabad	<1	1
Other	0	6

Religious Life

Synagogue Affiliation

Thirty-seven percent of households indicated that they belong to at least one synagogue, temple, *minyan*, *chavura*, or High Holy Day congregation in Western North Carolina. We estimate that 38% of year-round households and 36% of seasonal households belong to at least one such institution, with a total of 930 households belonging to one and about 40 households belonging to two.⁶ Forty-four percent of households identifying with at least one congregation identified with Congregation Beth HaTephila (Asheville). Nineteen percent identified with Congregation Beth Israel (Asheville), 13% with Agudas Israel (Hendersonville), 12% with Chabad House (Asheville), 8% with Mountain Synagogue (Franklin), and 7% with Brevard Jewish Community. A very small number of households identified with Temple Beth Shalom (Hickory). The mean tenure of affiliation is about ten years.

Respondents who did not identify with any congregation were asked why they chose not

to affiliate.⁷ Common reasons cited include identifying as secular (42 respondents), cost of membership (23 respondents), discomfort with either congregational settings in general or the local congregation in particular (23 respondents), and the distance from home (13 respondents). Three respondents specifically cited their poor health, indicating that they would join if they were better able to participate in congregational life.

Thirty-nine percent of seasonal households belong to a congregation outside of Western North Carolina. Of these, 43% identify with at least one congregation in Western North Carolina. Of those seasonal households that do not identify with a congregation outside of Western North Carolina, 38% do identify with at least one in Western North Carolina.

Religious Services

Sixty percent of respondents never attend religious services or attend only once or twice a year. Just under a quarter say they attend at least once a month (Table 6).

Table 6. Frequency of Attending Jewish Religious Services (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Never	36	31	35
Once or twice a year	23	32	25
Every few months	16	21	17
About once a month	11	7	10
Two or three times a month	8	4	8
Once a week or more	5	5	5

Over 90% of respondents who ever attend services in Western North Carolina felt warmly welcomed the last time they attended. Over three-quarters say the prayers were meaningful and relevant, that they were inspired or emotionally involved, and that they felt connected to the other people there (Table 7).

Ritual Practices

Respondents were asked about their current levels of observance of selected Jewish rituals. Figure 8 shows that the Western North Carolina Jewish community has a low rate of lighting Shabbat candles (55% of all households never do) and a moderate rate of attending a Seder for Passover (20% never do). While there is no significant difference

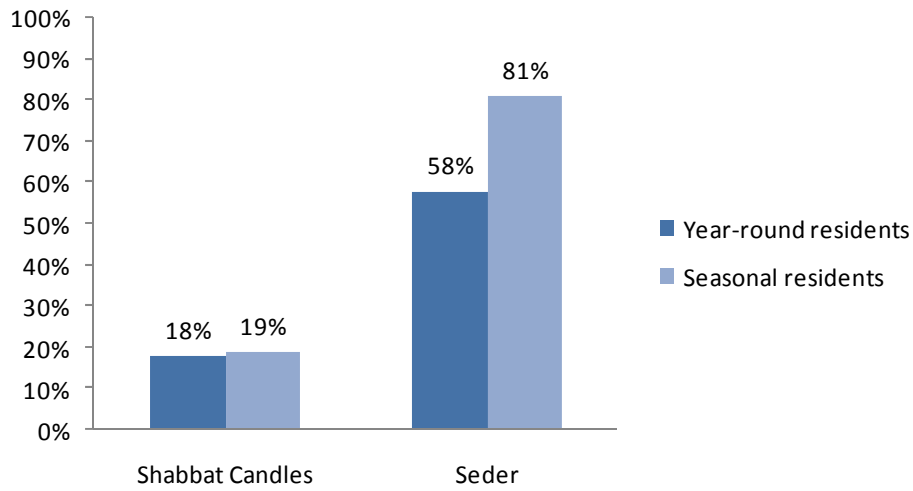
between year-round and seasonal households in the rate of lighting Shabbat candles, seasonal residents are far more likely to attend a Seder ($p < .05$).

Respondents were also asked about their observance of the laws of *kashrut*. Seventy-nine percent of all households say they do not keep kosher at all. Fourteen percent follow some of the rules, such as avoiding pork or shellfish. Two percent keep kosher only at home, and five percent keep kosher at all times. There is no significant difference in *kashrut* observance patterns between year-round and seasonal residents ($p = .916$).

Table 7. Perception of Religious Services (weighted estimates, %)

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
I felt warmly welcomed. ($n=238$)	4	5	19	72
The prayers were meaningful and relevant. ($n=228$)	4	13	33	51
I was inspired or emotionally involved. ($n=231$)	8	12	42	38
I did not understand what was going on. ($n=236$) ⁸	67	18	9	5
I felt connected to the other people there. ($n=236$)	6	16	38	40
I was bored. ($n=230$)	53	20	23	4
It was a spiritual experience. ($n=228$)	11	19	35	35

Figure 8. Observance of Jewish Rituals “Always” or “Usually” (weighted estimates)



Programs

Although religious life is perhaps the most traditional way of measuring engagement in the Jewish community, it is hardly the only way. Respondents were asked several questions about their involvement with the Asheville Jewish Community Center, their attendance at programs presented or sponsored by the Jewish community, and their volunteer activities.

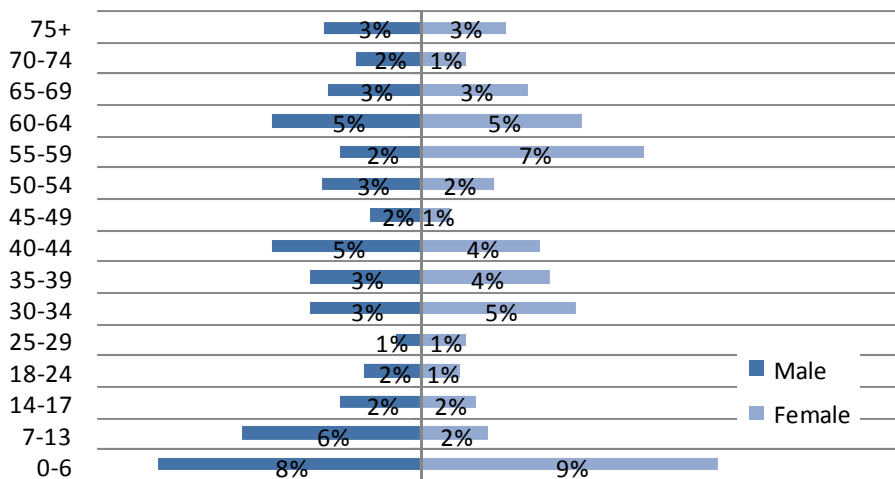
JCC

Sixteen percent of households indicated that they belong to the Asheville JCC, including 17% of year-round households and 12% of seasonal households. (Only 5% of seasonal households reported membership in a JCC outside of Western North Carolina.) Common reasons for joining include supporting the JCC and its mission (30 respondents); opportunities to socialize with

other Jews (14 respondents); the recreational facilities, particularly the pool (10 respondents); youth programs, especially the preschool (10 respondents); and adult programming (seven respondents).⁹

The age-sex structure of JCC members is nearly inverted from the age-sex structure of the Western North Carolina Jewish community as a whole. Families with children are more likely than anyone else to join the JCC; although children make up only 15% of the Jewish population of Western North Carolina, 29% of the members of JCC-affiliated households are children, including 17% who are six years old or younger. This is likely in no small part due to the strength of the JCC’s early childhood educational program, the cost of which is reduced significantly for JCC members (Figure 9).¹⁰

Figure 9. Age-Sex Structure of Asheville JCC Members (weighted estimates)



Note: Includes all members of all JCC-affiliated households, n=66.

General Program Attendance

Two-thirds of respondents (67% of year-round residents and 66% of seasonal residents) indicated that they had attended at least one program presented or sponsored by the Western North Carolina Jewish community in the past year. Of the remaining one-third of respondents who did not attend any programs, 29% were invited to attend one or more programs, typically through mailings from area Jewish organizations or via social networks. Respondents cited several common reasons for not attending any programs: they were not interested in the specific programs offered or in Jewish programs in general (31 respondents), they were too busy (nine respondents), distance from home (seven respondents), disability (six respondents), belief that the programs were targeted toward interest groups to which they do not belong (five respondents), and the expense associated with attendance (three respondents).¹¹

Of those respondents who attended at least one program in the past year, 25% attend at least one program per month (Table 8).

Volunteering

Members of Jewish-connected households in Western North Carolina are active volunteers for a wide variety of causes. Fifty-four percent of year-round residents and 40% of seasonal residents ($p=.050$) report volunteering their time for at least one organization in the past month. Of those who volunteered, 37% of year-round residents and 57% of seasonal residents volunteered for at least one Jewish organization ($p=.079$), and for an average of 11.4 hours. Although these differences between year-round and seasonal residents are not quite substantial enough to be statistically significant, they nevertheless have implications for Jewish organizations in Western North Carolina: they suggest that year-round residents are generally more likely to volunteer their time to an

Table 8. Frequency of Program Attendance (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Once or twice	47	30	44
Every few months	30	40	31
About once a month	10	15	11
Two or three times a month	9	11	10
Once a week or more	4	4	4

Note: Includes only those respondents who attended at least one program; year-round: $n=208$; seasonal: $n=51$; $p=.387$.

organization they deem worthy, but of people who do volunteer, seasonal residents may be more inclined to volunteer for Jewish organizations.

Respondents who did not volunteer their time for any Jewish organization over the past month cited several common reasons for not volunteering: they were not interested in volunteering for Jewish organizations or for any organization in general (21 respondents), distance from Jewish organizations (20 respondents), they were busy volunteering for other

organizations (19 respondents), they were not familiar with local Jewish organizations and the volunteer activities they offer (11 respondents), they were too busy (10 respondents), they were not asked to volunteer (four respondents), poor health (four respondents), and they could not afford to volunteer (three respondents).¹² Additionally, 11 respondents indicated either that there was no particular reason why they had not volunteered for a Jewish organization in the past month or that they often did volunteer but merely had not in the past month.

Philanthropy

General Philanthropy

Nearly all households made philanthropic donations other than membership dues in the past year. One-quarter donated mostly or exclusively to Jewish causes, while nearly half contributed mainly or exclusively to non-Jewish causes (Table 9).

Donations to the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation and Other Organizations

Of those households that made any contributions to Jewish charities and causes in the past year, 33% (34% of year-round residents and 28% of seasonal residents, $p=.489$) donated to the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation. Eleven percent (5% of year-round residents and 35% of seasonal residents, $p<.001$) donated to another Jewish Federation, 55% (52% of year-round residents and 71% of seasonal residents, $p=.107$) donated to a synagogue (not including membership dues), and 58% (58% of year-round residents and 59% of seasonal residents, $p=.911$) contributed to another Jewish organization.

Respondents cited seven common reasons for not making a donation to the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation:¹³

1. Financial constraints (44 respondents).
2. They were unaware there was a Federation in Western North Carolina or were not sufficiently familiar with it to feel comfortable making a donation (36 respondents).
3. They have no interest in donating to the Federation (25 respondents).
4. They donate to other organizations instead (24 respondents).
5. They were not asked to make a donation (20 respondents).
6. They do not use the Federation's services (14 respondents).
7. They have no particular reason for not making a donation (13 respondents).

All respondents were asked if they had received any request to make a donation to the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation in the past year; 43% (44% of year-round residents and 38% of seasonal residents, $p=.539$) did receive such a request. Of these, 65% (65% of year-round residents and 66% of seasonal residents, $p=.935$) made donations. Of households that did not receive any request to donate to the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation, only one responding household indicated that they made a donation anyway.

Table 9. Donations to Charities and Causes in the Past Year (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Exclusively Jewish	5	2	4
Mostly Jewish	19	31	21
About equal	19	25	20
Mostly non-Jewish	28	24	27
Exclusively non-Jewish	23	13	21
Made no charitable donations	6	5	6

Note: year-round: $n=240$; seasonal: $n=50$, $p=.502$

Some Personal Characteristics

Social Networks

The proportion of one's closest friends who are Jewish is often a marker of engagement in the Jewish community, partly because most of the people with whom one may interact in a Jewish organization are Jewish and partly because those people who are more interested in Jewish life and culture tend to seek out like-minded friends and participate more frequently in Jewish organizations.

Overall, 53% of respondents indicated that half or more of their closest friends are Jewish. Forty-nine percent of year-round residents had such Jewishly dense social networks, compared with 73% of seasonal residents (Table 10). Because we observed no significant difference between year-round and seasonal residents in synagogue membership, attendance at services, and JCC membership in Western North Carolina, it is possible that this difference is a reflection of seasonal residents' high level

of engagement in their Jewish communities at their other places of residence.

Examining the social network data by affiliation with synagogues and the Western North Carolina JCC confirms the expected pattern: those who are more engaged in the Jewish community tend to have more Jewishly dense social networks. Nearly two-thirds of respondents from households that do belong to a synagogue, temple, *chavura*, or High Holy Day *minyan* in Western North Carolina reported that half or more of their closest friends were Jewish, compared with just under half of respondents who did not belong to any congregation (Table 11).

Similarly, over 80% of respondents from households identifying as members of a JCC in Western North Carolina¹⁴ indicated that half or more of their closest friends were Jewish, compared with just fewer than 50% of respondents from non-member households (Table 12).

Table 10. Proportion of Closest Friends Who Are Jewish by Residence (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Total
None	10	12	10
A few	41	15	37
About half	33	37	34
Most	13	33	16
All	3	3	3

Note: non-members: $n=140$; members: $n=159$; $p<.05$

Institutional Awareness

Two key media through which Jewish organizations convey information about their activities to members of the community are publications (e.g., newsletters and e-mail) and websites. Respondents were asked whether they had received any e-mails, newsletters, or other publications from any Jewish organization in Western North Carolina in the past month, and whether they had ever visited the website of a Western North Carolina Jewish organization in the past month. While 70% of year-round residents reported receiving some sort of

publication from at least one Jewish organization in the past month, only 53% of seasonal residents did ($p=.086$). However, 45% of seasonal residents visited the website of at least one Western North Carolina Jewish organization in the past month, compared with 31% of year-round residents. This suggests that seasonal residents are more active than year-round residents in seeking out information about events and programs in the Jewish community, but Jewish organizations are not reaching them as effectively.

Table 11. Proportion of Closest Friends Who Are Jewish by Congregational Membership in Western North Carolina (weighted estimates, %)

	Non-members	Members	Total
None	14	5	10
A few	40	32	37
About half	34	33	34
Most	11	24	16
All	1	7	3

Note: non-members: $n=237$; members: $n=58$; $p<.05$

Table 12. Proportion of Closest Friends Who Are Jewish by JCC Membership in Western North Carolina (weighted estimates, %)

	Non-members	Members	Total
None	12	3	10
A few	41	15	37
About half	30	52	34
Most	15	22	16
All	2	8	3

Note: non-members: $n=237$; members: $n=58$; $p<.05$

Some Personal Values

The AJLC requested a series of items about respondents' personal values toward various aspects of community. These questions were designed to help congregations determine how to attract and increase membership. Overall results are presented in Table 13.

Only one of the items, a sense of belonging to your local Jewish community, reveals significant differences between year-round and seasonal residents. It was scored as somewhat or very important by 75% of seasonal residents, compared with 61% of year-round residents ($p < .05$). Several of the items reveal significant differences between households that belong to congregations and those that do not. Eighty-four percent of congregationally-affiliated respondents reported that a spiritual environment was somewhat or very important, compared with 73% of unaffiliated respondents ($p < .05$); 86% of the affiliated said a sense of belonging to their local Jewish community was somewhat or very important, compared with 46% of the unaffiliated ($p < .001$); and

86% of affiliated and 59% of unaffiliated respondents rated learning about Jewish history, ethics, and values as somewhat or very important ($p < .001$). There were virtually no differences between affiliated and unaffiliated respondents in rating the importance of an open-minded community and *tikkun olam*, both of which are rated as somewhat or very important by about 90% of respondents. These data suggest that Western North Carolina congregations searching for new members may find some success by reaching out to those seasonal residents seeking to be better integrated into the local Jewish community. There may also be opportunities to recruit new members by emphasizing existing and developing new social justice programming. These measures, however, may do little more than confirm that spiritually-inclined individuals who seek to be engaged in their local Jewish community, and for whom learning about Judaism is important, are more likely to affiliate with a congregation.

Table 13. "How important are each of the following to you in your life?" (weighted estimates, %)

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very much
A spiritual environment ($n=292$)	11	12	34	44
A sense of belonging to your local Jewish community ($n=290$)	22	15	27	36
Learning about Jewish history, ethics, and values ($n=293$)	13	17	31	39
An open-minded community ($n=296$)	2	2	7	88
<i>Tikkun olam</i> (repairing the world) ($n=287$)	6	5	21	67

Children's Education¹⁵

Pre-Kindergarten

Of those children who had not yet started kindergarten by the 2009-10 academic year, we asked whether the children had attended day care, preschool, or a part-time Jewish school (such as Hebrew or Sunday school) at any time since September 2009. We also asked if the children were cared for at home by a nanny or other non-family caregiver, or by a parent or other family caregiver during that time frame. Most respondents, 89%, indicated that they used more than one of these of these options.

We estimate that 43% have attended day care at some point since September 2009. Forty-nine percent attended preschool and 19% attended a part-time Jewish school (such as Hebrew or Sunday school). Fifty-one percent were cared for at home by a nanny or other non-family caregiver, and 86% were cared for at home by a parent or other familiar caregiver. Of those who have attended a day care or preschool, 36% attended a Jewish program, which was selected for the atmosphere of the program, its perceived quality, its content or structure, convenience, or simply because it was the option preferred by one or both parents.

Kindergarten through Eighth Grade

Of those children enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2009-10 academic year, 70% were enrolled in public school, 6% in a Jewish day school, 9% in a non-Jewish private school, and 15% in a charter school. For those enrolled in Jewish day school, the only key factor cited in selecting the school was the quality of the

Judaic education offered there. Common reasons cited for not sending children to day school included that it was too expensive, satisfaction with local public schools, distance from home, desire for a more diverse set of classmates for the child, and satisfaction with the religious education available elsewhere.

Of children who were not currently enrolled in day school, only thirty-nine percent have ever had any formal Jewish education. However, there were only 26 cases on which to base this estimate, and an 80% confidence interval ranges from 19% to 54%. If all children enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2009-10 academic year, including those in day school, are included in the analysis, we estimate that only 43% have ever had any formal Jewish education, with an 80% confidence interval ranging from 29% to 58%.

Thirteen percent participated in a Jewish youth group since September 2009;¹⁶ 66% attended a day camp in summer 2009, and 15% attended a residential summer camp.

High School

Of those children enrolled in high school during the 2009-10 academic year, 86% attended public school, 8% attended non-Jewish private school, and 6% attended other schools. Eighty-two percent have had some formal Jewish education; of these, 41% attended day school and 80% attended supplementary school, with 25% currently enrolled in supplementary school. Three-quarters had celebrated a bar/bat mitzvah.

Twenty-six percent participated in a Jewish youth group since September 2009;¹⁷ 14% attended a day camp in summer 2009, and 32% attended a residential summer camp.

Financial Planning

Standard of Living

As may have been expected, seasonal residents tend to report significantly more comfortable standards of living than year-round residents. Just over two-thirds of seasonal residents report their standard of living as “prosperous” or “living very comfortably,” compared with just under one-quarter of year-round residents. Nineteen percent of year-round residents, compared with just 4% of seasonal residents, report a standard of living of “just getting along” or lower (Table 14). Although these measures are subjective, they are reasonable assessments of individual household’s financial situations.

Despite the substantial difference in standard of living, there is no statistically significant

difference between year-round and seasonal residents in confidence that they will have enough money to be able to live comfortably through their retirement years. Just over one-quarter of respondents are very confident, with nearly half somewhat confident (Table 15).

Financial Assistance and Need

Thirty-one percent of households (28% of year-round residents and 42% seasonal residents, $p=.115$) provide financial assistance to someone who does not usually live in the household, typically children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, and siblings. Fourteen percent (14% year-round, 10% seasonal, $p=.471$) receive financial assistance from someone who does not usually live in the household, typically

Table 14. Self-Reported Standard of Living (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Prosperous	2	12	4
Living very comfortably	20	56	26
Living reasonably comfortably	58	28	53
Just getting along	16	2	14
Nearly poor	2	2	2
Poor	1	0	1

Note: year-round: $n=239$; seasonal: $n=53$; $p<.001$

parents, children, ex-spouses, or government assistance. Four percent of households (4% year-round, 2% seasonal, $p=.558$) skipped meals or cut the size of meals at any time in the past year because they did not have

enough money for food, and 6% of households (8% year-round, no seasonal respondents, $p=.159$) went without prescription medications at some point in the past year because they were too expensive.

Table 15. Confidence in Having Enough Retirement Savings (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Very confident	27	32	27
Somewhat confident	41	47	42
A little confident	18	6	16
Not at all confident	14	15	15

Note: year-round: $n=239$; seasonal: $n=51$; $p=.386$

Health and Social Services

General Health

Overall, respondents indicate that household members tend to be healthy, with 90% of adults and 98% of children in good, very good, or excellent health (Table 16).

Assisted Living and Elder Care

Eleven percent of households (11% year-round, 10% seasonal, $p=.765$) report having a close relative living in an assisted living facility. Of these, 44% are in facilities in Western North Carolina. Seven percent of households (8% year-round, 5% seasonal, $p=.751$) report having aging parents in need of special elder care services, generally involving domestic chores or arranging logistics for medical care.

Special Needs

Six percent of households (6% year-round, 1% seasonal, $p=.088$) report having a

member of the household with special needs; issues cited include visual or auditory impairment, physical disability, cancer treatment, autism, mental health issues, and respiratory problems.

Counseling and Mental Health Services

Among households with children, 13% (14% year-round, no seasonal residents, $p=.448$) required counseling or other mental health services for children during the past year. Among households with adults aged 18 to 54, 29% (31% year-round, 16% seasonal, $p=.310$) required such services. Among households with adults aged 55 or older, 13% (13% year-round, 16% seasonal, $p=.778$) required such services. Of those households that utilized counseling or mental health services, one-fifth had all costs other than co-pays covered by insurance, and about two-fifths had to pay entirely out-of-pocket (Table 17).

Table 16. Health of Household Members (weighted estimates, %)

	Adults	Children
Excellent	33	76
Very good	37	20
Good	20	2
Fair	8	1
Poor	2	0

Note: adults: $n=638$; children: $n=118$

Jewish Family Services

In times of difficulty, many people find it comforting to be able to turn for help to others who are substantially similar to themselves in some key way they deem particularly salient. Respondents were asked whether they had a preference for a Jewish or non-Jewish provider should they ever require social services and whether the services offered by a Jewish agency were equal in quality to other offerings. Over half would prefer a Jewish provider, and just over a third have no preference (Table 18).

Respondents had many suggestions for what kinds of services Jewish Family Services (JFS) should offer. Most were general, and the most common included elder care services; counseling of all sorts (drug and

alcohol, marriage, family, bereavement, mental health, etc.) and referrals when necessary; general aid to the poor, particularly food banks – several respondents noted that one in six people in Western North Carolina suffered from food insecurity; transportation to both programs in the Jewish community and medical appointments for the elderly and infirm; Meals on Wheels (especially kosher); hospice; and vocational services and financial advice. Other suggestions included parenting classes, general mental health services, services for people who are developmentally challenged, assistance for people who cannot afford medical care or prescription medications, adoption services, aid for victims of abuse, and assistance for people who need help applying for government assistance. Although there were

Table 17. Payment for Counseling or Mental Health Services (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Paid for entirely by insurance (except for co-pays)	20	19	20
Paid for partly by insurance and partly out-of-pocket	46	9	41
Paid for entirely out-of-pocket	34	72	39

Note: year-round: $n=50$; seasonal: $n=6$; $p=.131$

Table 18. Preference for Social Services Provider (weighted estimates, %)

	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Overall
Much more likely to use a Jewish provider	34	42	35
A little more likely to use a Jewish provider	22	23	23
No preference	41	31	39
A little more likely to use a non-Jewish provider	2	0	2
Much more likely to use a non-Jewish provider	1	3	1

Note: year-round: $n=234$; seasonal: $n=51$; $p=.541$

a handful of negative comments about JFS, including a couple questioning the need for a social services system parallel to the governmental system, and several respondents who were unaware of the services they provided, a clear consensus emerged that JFS is doing outstanding work providing most – if not all – of the services respondents would like. A common note in the comments is that JFS could and surely would do more if only they had more resources available.

Looking to the Future

Addressing the Assumptions of the Study

From the beginning of this study, the AJLC sought to test three key assumptions: that the Western North Carolina Jewish population was growing faster than the Western North Carolina general population, that the Jewish community was less affluent than Jewish communities of similar size and shape and some potential donors were being left unrecognized, and that the unaffiliated Jews are either unaware of what the Jewish community has to offer or choose not to affiliate due to concerns about costs.

1) Is the Jewish Community Growing Faster Than the Non-Jewish Community?

Without a precise estimate against which to compare, we cannot say exactly how much the Jewish community has grown. However, if we assume that the 41% increase in households in the Asheville JCC's database between 2003 and 2008 is indicative of a roughly 41% increase in the Jewish population of Western North Carolina, we have a baseline against which to compare the overall change in population.

Table 19 shows the 2000 United States Census counts and 2006-2008 American Community Survey estimates for

Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and Macon Counties.

Even if the increase in households on the JCC's list overestimates the growth of the area Jewish population by 200% – and we assess it to be an accurate estimate of the growth of the community – it is clear that the Jewish community is indeed growing more rapidly than the local population as a whole.

The age distribution of this growth reflects the overall age distribution of the community. We estimate that 20% of the residents of Jewish-connected households who moved into Western North Carolina since 2000 are aged 65 years or older, with another 18% between the ages of 55 and 64. Thirty-two percent of the newcomers are children aged 17 years or younger, many of whom were born in the region. Of adult newcomers since 2000, 41% are retired. Thus, over two-thirds of the growth is among the oldest and youngest residents, with many of the older adults moving to Western North Carolina after retiring elsewhere.

Seasonal residents are also driving the increase in population; 18% of Jewish-connected households who moved into

Table 19. Population of Selected Counties (2000 and 2006-2008)¹⁸

County	2000 Census Count	2006-2008 Estimate	Growth
Buncombe	206,330	225,992	9.53%
Henderson	89,173	100,364	12.55%
Transylvania	29,334	29,993	2.25%
Macon	29,811	32,586	9.31%

Western North Carolina since 2000 are seasonal residents. Of the adults in these households, 64% are retired.

2) Is the Jewish community less affluent than similar communities?

It is exceedingly rare for a small Jewish community to sponsor a community study that meets the rigorous scientific standards required for direct comparisons. Only one small community with a sizeable seasonal population has conducted such a study in the last decade: Berkshire County, Massachusetts.¹⁹

Table 4 showed the household income distribution of Western North Carolina Jewish-connected households. The Berkshire County study divided respondents into fewer income level categories and only analyzed the household income of year-round residents, so our analysis in Table 20 combines some of the categories in Table 4 and is limited to year-round residents to allow for comparisons.

The median category for both groups is \$50,000 to \$99,999, but there are more Western North Carolina households at the low end of the scale and fewer at the high end. Thirty percent of Western North Carolina Jewish-connected year-round households report income below \$35,000 compared with just 9% of Berkshire County Jewish-connected year-round households, and 19% of Western North Carolina Jewish-connected year-round households and 40% of Berkshire County Jewish-connected year-round households report income of at least \$100,000.

The Berkshire County study also examined the self-reported standard of living of residents aged 55 years or older. Table 14 of this study showed the self-reported standard of living of all respondents in this survey; Table 21 shows those figures only for respondents aged 55 years or older in comparison with the Berkshire County respondents.

Like the household income data, these data suggest that older Jewish-connected year-

Table 20. Household Income of Western North Carolina and Berkshire County (MA) Jewish-Connected Year-Round Households (year-round residents only, %)

	Western North Carolina	Berkshire County
Less than \$15,000	4	2
\$15,000 - \$34,999	26	7
\$35,000 - \$49,999	13	9
\$50,000 - \$99,999	38	42
\$100,000 - \$199,999	14	28
\$200,000 or more	5	12

round residents of Western North Carolina perceive themselves as slightly less affluent than their counterparts in Berkshire County, though the difference is very small. Overall, older Jewish-connected seasonal residents of Western North Carolina perceive themselves as slightly more affluent than their Berkshire County counterparts, but the difference is again very small.

Together, the comparisons with the Berkshire County Jewish community suggest that those members of the Western North Carolina Jewish community who reside there year-round are less affluent than their counterparts in Berkshire County, while the seasonal population may actually be more affluent. However, these direct comparisons, particularly of the income levels, are misleading if they do not account for regional variance in economic structure. Therefore, we must consider the affluence of

these communities relative to their non-Jewish neighbors. The general trend is that Jewish communities tend to be more affluent than their non-Jewish neighbors, largely as a function of their higher overall educational attainment. We have already shown that the Jewish residents of Western North Carolina are very well educated, with 47% having earned an advanced degree and another 31% having earned a bachelor's degree; the Jewish residents of the Berkshires are comparable, with 58% having earned an advanced degree and another 30% having earned a bachelor's degree. How does their household income compare with that of their surrounding local populations?

We turned again to the most recent data from the US Census Bureau. Table 22 displays the median household income for the four counties we used to develop the geographic frame for this study.

Table 21. Self-Reported Standard of Living by Resident Status (residents aged 55+ only, %)

	Western North Carolina		Berkshire County	
	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents	Year-round residents	Seasonal residents
Prosperous	1	13	4	17
Living very comfortably	26	63	31	46
Reasonably comfortable	58	19	52	33
Just getting along	13	2	11	4
Poor or nearly poor	2	3	3	0

The household income question on this survey was asked categorically so direct comparison is not possible, but the overall median household income of respondents falls in the \$50,000-74,999 category, as does the median for year-round residents. For seasonal households, the median falls in the \$75,000-99,999 category. These data suggest that Jewish residents of Western North Carolina tend to have higher levels of income than the surrounding non-Jewish population. Similarly, members of the Berkshire County Jewish community, noted above to have a median household income in the \$50,000-99,999 range, tend to have higher levels of income than their surrounding non-Jewish population; the US Census Bureau reports that the median household income in Berkshire County over the 2006-2008 period was \$48,448. Accordingly, we believe it is likely that controlling for community size, the prevalence of seasonal residents, and regional economics, the Jewish community

of Western North Carolina is slightly less affluent than the Jewish community of Berkshire County, but is as affluent as other similarly situated communities.

It is probable, however, that some likely potential donors have not been identified. We have already shown that most people who are asked for a donation to the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation provide one. Table 23 shows the breakdown of household income by whether a household was asked for a donation to the Federation.

While those households that were not solicited for donations do tend to fall in lower household income categories than households that were solicited, 43% of unsolicited households fall into categories above those of each of the county-level median income levels reported above. It seems certain that there are potential donors among these households.

Table 22. Median Household Income by County (2006-2008)

County	Income
Buncombe	\$44,576
Henderson	\$46,322
Transylvania	\$38,537
Macon	\$40,164

Table 23. Household Income by Request for a Donation to the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation (weighted estimates, %)

	No request received	Request received	Overall
Under \$15,000	4	7	5
\$15,000 to \$24,999	31	6	20
\$25,000 to \$34,999	4	10	6
\$35,000 to \$49,999	18	9	14
\$50,000 to \$74,999	15	25	20
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11	17	14
\$100,000 to \$199,999	11	20	15
\$200,000 or more	6	6	6

3) Do the unaffiliated choose not to affiliate because they are unaware of what the Jewish community has to offer or because of concern over the costs of affiliation?

There is no simple answer to this question. Only 21% of unaffiliated respondents report having been invited in some way to an event or program in the Jewish community in the past year compared with 48% of affiliated respondents; and only 33% say they have received an e-mail, newsletter, or other publication from a Western North Carolina Jewish organization in the past month compared with 80% of affiliated respondents. It is therefore likely that some unaffiliated Jews are unaffiliated simply because they are unaware of what the community has to offer. Similarly, the unaffiliated do fall disproportionately into the low income categories, with 50% earning less than \$25,000 in 2009, and it is likely that the cost of affiliation does prevent

some from joining Jewish organizations.

However, when asked specifically why they do not join congregations or participate in other Jewish organizations, unaffiliated respondents are often aware of the programs offered by the Jewish community, and cost is rarely mentioned. Instead, the unaffiliated cite lack of interest in participating in the organized Jewish community or organized religion in general, the distance of Jewish organizations from where they live, or poor health. These reasons are similar to those given by affiliated Jews who are not highly engaged in the community when they explain why they do not participate more.

Additionally, we asked all respondents who were not born in Western North Carolina what they knew about the Jewish community before moving there, either year-round or seasonally. Very few respondents report having known anything about the community beyond that there was at least

one synagogue and, for more recent arrivals, whatever they might have gleaned from the Internet. Those who knew more typically had family already living in the area. Jewish residents who become affiliated with the Jewish community do not move to the area because of the Jewish community; they move to the area for other reasons having little if anything to do with Jewish life. That they choose to affiliate with the organized Jewish community is a function of the high salience of Jewish identity to them, just as the decision not to affiliate is frequently due to low salience of Jewish identity.

Outlook

The Western North Carolina Jewish population is a microcosm of the American Jewish population as a whole. It is a diverse, highly educated, largely financially secure population with many people who are highly engaged in Jewish life. We have documented several means by which Western North Carolina Jews participate in their local Jewish communities, and the data reveal a small yet vibrant, rapidly growing community with challenges similar to those experienced by larger communities. Those challenges are often compounded by the small size of the community, which corresponds to its relative lack of human, social, cultural, and financial capital needed to develop new initiatives and expand on older offerings.

The population is older than most Jewish communities in the United States, with 28% of the population aged 65 or older and nearly three-fifths aged 50 or older. While

most members of the community are currently in relatively good health, as they age, more and more will begin to report being in “fair” or “poor” health. In turn, they will require greater care and be less able to participate actively in the community. The Jewish community must continue to look for innovative ways to ensure they receive the care they need and that they will be able to continue to participate in the community.

With such a well-educated and relatively affluent population, the community has potential for financial resources to maintain and expand its programs, and an active volunteer base to help run them. There are many potential donors and volunteers who have not yet been enlisted to help fund or volunteer for community initiatives. There are also many households that lack the means or health to donate or volunteer, that are in need of the services the community can provide and may not be aware of them. The former can and must be engaged for whatever assistance they may be willing to provide, and the latter must be informed of the resources available to aid them.

The vast majority of Jewish residents participate in some form of organized Jewish life in Western North Carolina. Both year-round and seasonal residents are active participants in the community, but seasonal residents are seemingly not as actively recruited to participate as year-round residents despite their greater interest in certain activities. The Jewish seasonal residents of Western North Carolina are a valuable resource to the community and must be more actively sought out.

Our one area of disappointment in the study was that the lack of children found in sampled households made it impossible to assess initiatives for children's Jewish education properly. Asheville has one of the smallest Jewish populations, if not the smallest, of any city in the United States with a Jewish day school. It is exceedingly difficult to sustain a day school without a larger base of support, and the community will have to be aggressive in pursuing funding opportunities to help sustain it. Research has shown that both formal and informal Jewish education are crucial in the development of strong Jewish identities that will last from childhood into adulthood. Anecdotal accounts from the community and the limited data available from the survey sample suggest that many excellent options

are available for children's Jewish education in Western North Carolina, but the number of participants was simply too small to be assessable in this study.

The evidence provided by this systematic study makes it clear that the Jewish community of Western North Carolina has grown despite its relative lack of resources. We expect the trend of rapid growth to continue in the near future and expect that the findings from this survey profiling the Jews of Western North Carolina, their engagement in Jewish life, and what they need and want from their Jewish community will be very useful in assisting local Jewish organizations to meet future opportunities and challenges to great advantage.

Notes

1. The AJLC formed in November 2006 for the purpose of enhancing communications and encouraging collaboration among Asheville's Jewish community organizations. Participating organizations include the Asheville/Hendersonville Chapter of Hadassah, Asheville Jewish Business Forum, Asheville Jewish Community Center, UNC-Asheville Center for Jewish Studies, Chabad/Lubavitch of Western North Carolina, Congregation Beth HaTephila, Congregation Beth Israel, Maccabi Academy of Asheville, Western North Carolina Hillel, and Western North Carolina Jewish Federation.
2. It is important to note, however, that not every household that affiliates with a Jewish organization has Jewish members. Indeed, most Jewish organizations that provided their lists include member households in which no one considers him- or herself Jewish.
3. For small communities such as those in Western North Carolina, estimates were provided by local rabbis, Jewish Federations, or other informed Jewish communal leaders.
4. Local informants in Western North Carolina tell us that there are few graduate programs at the local universities and that people in this age range who otherwise might live in the area typically choose to move out-of-state or to the large metropolitan areas in Central or Eastern North Carolina.
5. One-third of respondents specifically indicated that they preferred not to answer the question about household income. The data presented here refer to those respondents who gave a categorical response.
6. We asked the question as follows: "Do you or anyone in your household currently belong to a synagogue, temple, *minyan*, *chavura*, or High Holy Day congregation in Western North Carolina?" We did not ask about dues-paying membership – the individual congregations already know how many dues-paying members they have without needing a survey to tell them. We asked the question in terms of "belonging" for three reasons. First, one of the local options for which we expected to get a large number of responses – Chabad of Western North Carolina – does not charge membership dues. Second, there is a long history of inflated numbers in surveys asking respondents about membership in religious organizations – respondents often claim membership they do not have (or service attendance when they have been absent) due to social desirability bias (see Hadaway, C.K., P.L. Marler, and M. Chaves. 1993. "What the Polls Don't Show: A Closer Look at U.S. Church Attendance." *American Sociological Review* 58:741-752). Finally, "belonging" can be more of a social psychological affirmation of identity; in an economic climate in which some people may feel as though they are members of a particular worship community but cannot afford to pay membership dues, this more subjective standard may be useful for congregations to get a sense of their sphere of influence relative to their actual dues-paying membership.
7. We asked the question as follows: "What are the primary reasons that you/your household does not belong to a congregation in Western North Carolina?" Responses were open-ended and more than one reason could be cited. One hundred thirty-six respondents provided input of any sort, but many of them were too vague to be coded into specific reasons.
8. This was the only item related to perception of religious services for which there was a statistically significant difference between year-round and seasonal residents. Seasonal residents were slightly more likely to agree that they did not know what was going on ($p < .05$).
9. Respondents who indicated that they or a member of their household had joined the JCC were asked: "What are the primary reasons why you or someone in your household joined a JCC?" Sixty-two respondents provided open-ended answers, some including multiple reasons.

10. According to the Asheville JCC's website, the annual membership rate for families is \$495 and rates for the early childhood program are discounted \$25-35 per month for members; over 12 months, those discounts constitute 50-70% of the cost of membership.
11. Respondents who indicated that they had not attended any program, event, or activity in the past year were asked: "What are the primary reasons why you or any member of your household have not attended such programs?" The question was asked open-ended, and 66 respondents provided answers.
12. Respondents who did not volunteer their time for any Jewish organization in the past month were asked: "What are the primary reasons why you did not volunteer for Jewish organizations?" Responses were open-ended and provided by 88 respondents.
13. Respondents who did not make donations to the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation were asked: "What are the primary reasons why you did not contribute to the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation in the past year?" The question was open-ended and answers were provided by 174 respondents.
14. Functionally, this means they are members of the JCC in Asheville, as it is the only JCC in Western North Carolina.
15. In order to minimize the burden on survey respondents, questions about children's education were only asked about the oldest child in each of three categories: those who had not yet started kindergarten as of the 2009-10 academic year, those in kindergarten through eighth grade, and those in high school. Unfortunately, there were only 48 children reported in any household in the survey, which makes it impossible to produce precise and accurate estimates. The data presented in this section can only be used to draw a very general impression about children's Jewish educational experiences in Western North Carolina.
16. The number of children who participated is not sufficient to estimate participation in specific youth groups. Similarly, we cannot reasonably estimate the proportion of children who attended Jewish camps.
17. As with children in kindergarten through eighth grades, the number of households indicating that they had children who participated is not sufficient to estimate participation in specific youth groups or attendance at Jewish camps.
18. All US Census Bureau figures used in this report are gathered from the Bureau's website: <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>.
19. See Parmer, D., B. Phillips, and L. Saxe. 2008. *The 2008 Berkshire Community Survey: For the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires*. Waltham, MA: Steinhardt Social Research Institute, Brandeis University. The authors estimate that there are just over 7,000 Jewish residents of Berkshire County, of which at least 2,750 are seasonal residents.

Methodological Appendix

As survey techniques have become more refined, the barriers to reaching respondents have become increasingly difficult to overcome. Researchers typically experience limitations of cost and methods of reaching respondents (e.g., cell phones or caller ID/blocking). Adding to these difficulties is the small size of the Jewish community relative to the population as a whole. Many larger Jewish communities do have the resources to conduct a random sample, but smaller communities rarely do. As a result, a common approach is to use list-based samples either exclusively or to augment a random sample such as random digit dial (RDD). As a small Jewish community with a relatively large proportion of seasonal residents, several methodological challenges were overcome to reach a representative sample of the Western North Carolina Jewish community.

Sample

The 2010 Western North Carolina Jewish Demographic Study implemented a multi-mode internet and telephone survey to reach year-round and seasonal residents of Western North Carolina. In the absence of an area probability or RDD frame, we began to build a sampling frame with the combined mailing lists of the member organizations of the AJLC and the Jewish communities of Hendersonville, Brevard, and Franklin. These lists consisted mostly of Jewish-connected households and constituted that portion of the Jewish community of Western North Carolina known to Jewish organizations in the area. In order to find any Jewish-connected households not already known to the organized Jewish community, we supplemented these lists with an ethnic Jewish names list provided by AccuData, a commercial data broker. AccuData's list consisted of households that resided in Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, or Macon Counties for at least part of the year. This list was limited using filters for ethnic Jewish names and Russian and Belarusian nationality (which were assumed to be likely possible identifiers of Jewish-connected households unknown to the organized Jewish community). The list included the most current telephone directory listing for these households, including those on the National Do Not Call List.¹ The organizational and AccuData lists were combined, cleaned, and deduplicated to ensure that no unique household appeared on the list more than once. The combined list included 2,890 households that appeared on at least one Western North Carolina Jewish organization's mailing list and 5,231 households that did not appear on any such list, for a total of 8,121 households. These households were divided into six strata as follow:

1. Listed out of area (606 households): These households appeared on the mailing list of at least one area Jewish organization but had primary residences outside of Western North Carolina.
2. Franklin (42 households): These households were on the Franklin mailing list and appeared to be year-round residents of Western North Carolina.
3. Brevard (118 households): These households were on the Brevard mailing list and appeared to be year-round residents of Western North Carolina.
4. Listed in remainder (2,214 households): These households appeared on at least one

Jewish organization's mailing list but did not fit the criteria for any of the first three strata.

5. Unlisted out of area (463 households): These households appeared to have secondary addresses in Western North Carolina and came from the AccuData list but did not appear on any Jewish organization's mailing list.
6. Unlisted in area (4,768 households): These households appeared to be year-round residents of Western North Carolina and came from the AccuData list but did not appear on any Jewish organization's mailing list.

A stratified random sample of 1,250 households was selected, with 800 households coming from the organizational lists and 450 coming exclusively from the AccuData list. This approach permitted maximum coverage of the known Jewish community while allowing for assessment of the extent and characteristics of the Jewish population not known to the community.²

Prenotification letters were sent by mail to each selected household on April 19, 2010, with unique links to the online survey, inviting them to complete it. Beginning May 4, callers from CMJS called each household that did not complete the survey on its own and attempted to get them to complete the survey over the phone. Where available mailing addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses proved to be outdated for selected households, extensive effort was made to track down new contact information through online public records databases and to get an adult member of the household to complete the survey. On June 15, a shortened paper survey was sent to all households with useable mailing addresses that had not yet completed the survey. Calling efforts ceased on June 25, and the survey was closed on August 24, by which time 676 households had completed the survey.³ The overall response rate was 57% (AAPOR RR2).

Bias

Every effort to create a representative sample was made in order to prevent bias or, where bias was unavoidable, to identify and reduce it. Nevertheless, some groups are particularly likely to be underrepresented in the sample. Most significant among these are unaffiliated Jews (including new residents and intermarried families); residents of counties other than Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and Macon; and young adult Jews. Newcomers who are not known to the community are very likely undercounted, though they may have appeared on the ethnic names list. However, because the ethnic names list was restricted to the counties in which Asheville, Hendersonville, Brevard, and Franklin are located, unaffiliated Jews in adjacent counties in Western North Carolina could not be sampled. Interfaith families may also be underrepresented to the extent that they are unaffiliated and reside in households with directory listings that do not fit the selected ethnic name parameters.

Young adult Jews are also likely undercounted. Young adults in general are notoriously

difficult to reach for telephone surveys, in part due to the increasing rate of cell phone only households and in part because they tend to move more frequently than older adults; both conditions render young adults harder to track. Additionally, a portion of the sampling frame consisted of young adults who were students at the University of North Carolina-Asheville or another local college, who come from households in other parts of North Carolina or other states and do not think of themselves as part of the local Jewish community and were therefore likely to be less inclined to complete the survey. Indeed, it was difficult to find current contact information for households identified as student households, and intense efforts were necessary to track and follow up with them in order to get them to complete the survey.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was designed in collaboration with a special advisory committee of the AJLC. The questions were crafted to minimize potential bias and any burden on respondents. Where possible, questions, language, and definitions were adopted from previously published Jewish community survey questionnaires, allowing for greater confidence in their reliability.

Three versions of the survey were fielded: an online version, a phone version, and an abridged paper version. The online and telephone instruments were nearly identical – when a survey was completed over the phone, the telephone interviewer would fill out the online version – with minor adaptations made in question prefaces and the order in which response categories were read for some questions in order to provide the interviewer a more natural, conversational tone. The third version, the shortened paper survey, was mailed to non-respondents nearly two months after the full survey was launched.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts, a screener and the survey itself. The screener section was asked of all respondents to determine eligibility. Any household in the sample was considered eligible if it contained at least one adult aged 18 or older who lived in Western North Carolina for at least part of the year and considered him- or herself to be Jewish. Qualifying households proceeded to the main survey, which included sections on basic sociodemographic information, engagement in Jewish life, and perceptions of various aspects of Jewish communal life in Western North Carolina. In order to minimize the burden on respondents, a series of complex skip patterns were created to ensure that respondents were only asked questions that pertained to their specific life situation or experience. Thus, for example, a household that lives in Western North Carolina year-round would not be asked questions about having another home in a different location. The online survey took between 15-20 minutes to complete. Respondents completing the survey over the telephone usually completed it in about 25 minutes. However, the amount of time required to complete the survey varied for all respondents, regardless of mode of completion, depending on household composition and the degree of detail respondents were willing to offer for open-ended questions.

Field Procedures

The survey was administered by trained interviewers under the supervision of staff at the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) and the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University. Before launching the survey, the instrument was tested by the interviewers and SSRI and CMJS staff in order to identify any flaws in the design, implementation, or response. A multi-mode approach was selected in order to maximize response rate and minimize costs.⁴ Great care was taken to ensure that any differences between modes were minimized. Prenotification letters were sent by regular mail to every household for which a physical address was available. These letters explained the purpose of the survey and provided each household with a unique link to complete the survey independently online. Households for which one or more e-mail addresses were available also received these letters electronically. After two weeks, households that had not completed the survey were contacted by telephone. The primary goal of telephone contact was to administer the survey over the phone if the respondent was unable or unwilling to complete the survey independently online, or if the respondent simply preferred to complete the survey over the phone. If the respondent was unwilling to complete the survey over the phone at the time of the call, he or she was asked for a better time to be called again or for an e-mail address to re-send the link to the survey online. Households were contacted repeatedly at different days and times to determine whether available contact information was correct. Households whose available contact information was confirmed to be outdated and those for whom the status was uncertain were searched in online public records databases to find updated information. Finally, nonrespondents whose contact information was confirmed were sent a short paper version of the full survey, along with a self-addressed, postage paid envelope that would ensure confidentiality.

Analysis

Analyses were done of Jewish adults (who were specifically identified by respondents as being Jewish) or Jewish-connected households (where respondents discussed household behaviors such as lighting Shabbat candles). All analyses were completed using statistical software Stata, version 11.0. Data were weighted by probability of selection into the sample (design weights) and nonresponse (poststratification).

Notes: Methodological Appendix

1. Current law prohibits individuals or companies from accessing numbers registered on the National Do Not Call List, but survey research is exempt.
2. Subsequent research found that 31 of the householders were deceased and another 24 were duplicates that could not be detected at the time the sample was selected, thus reducing the sample size to 1,195.
3. Callers completed 447 interviews with respondents over the phone. Respondents completed 159 surveys on the internet on their own and 70 paper surveys.
4. Because individuals vary in propensity to respond to various survey modes (e.g., older adults are more likely to respond to a paper or telephone survey, while younger adults are more likely to complete an online survey), multi-mode designs tend to have higher response rates. See Dillman, D.A., J.D. Smyth, and L.M. Christian. 2009. *Internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored-Design Method*. 3rd ed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

About the Research Team

This report was developed by researchers at the Steinhardt Social Research Institute, located at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies of Brandeis University. The Steinhardt Institute conducts quantitative research concerned with the Jewish community. Brandeis University is one of the nation's leading research universities and its faculty are internationally recognized and widely acknowledged for their scholarship.

THE STEINHARDT SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Steinhardt Social Research Institute was established to collect, analyze, and disseminate unbiased data about the Jewish community and about religion and ethnicity in the United States. The Institute collects and organizes existing sociodemographic data from private, communal, and government sources and conducts local and national studies of the character of American Jewry and Jewish organizations. The Steinhardt Social Research Institute was established in 2005 through a generous gift from Michael Steinhardt, chairman of the Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation.

THE MAURICE AND MARILYN COHEN CENTER FOR MODERN JEWISH STUDIES

The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University is a multidisciplinary research center dedicated to bringing the concepts, theories, and techniques of social science to bear on the study of modern Jewish life. Research conducted at the Center explores how contemporary Jewish identity is shaped and how Jewish culture and religious practice are manifested. Faculty at the Center include psychologists, sociologists, and Judaic studies experts, along with methodologists and policy analysts.

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M.A. and Ph.D. in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and Sociology from Brandeis University. His dissertation, “Numbering the Jews: Evaluating and Improving Surveys of American Jews,” analyzes the validity of past and present methods for surveying American Jewish populations and tests a number of innovative approaches.

The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University is a multi-disciplinary research institute dedicated to the study of American Jewry and religious and cultural identity.

The Steinhardt Social Research Institute, hosted at CMJS, is committed to the development and application of innovative approaches to socio-demographic research for the study of Jewish, religious, and cultural identity.

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