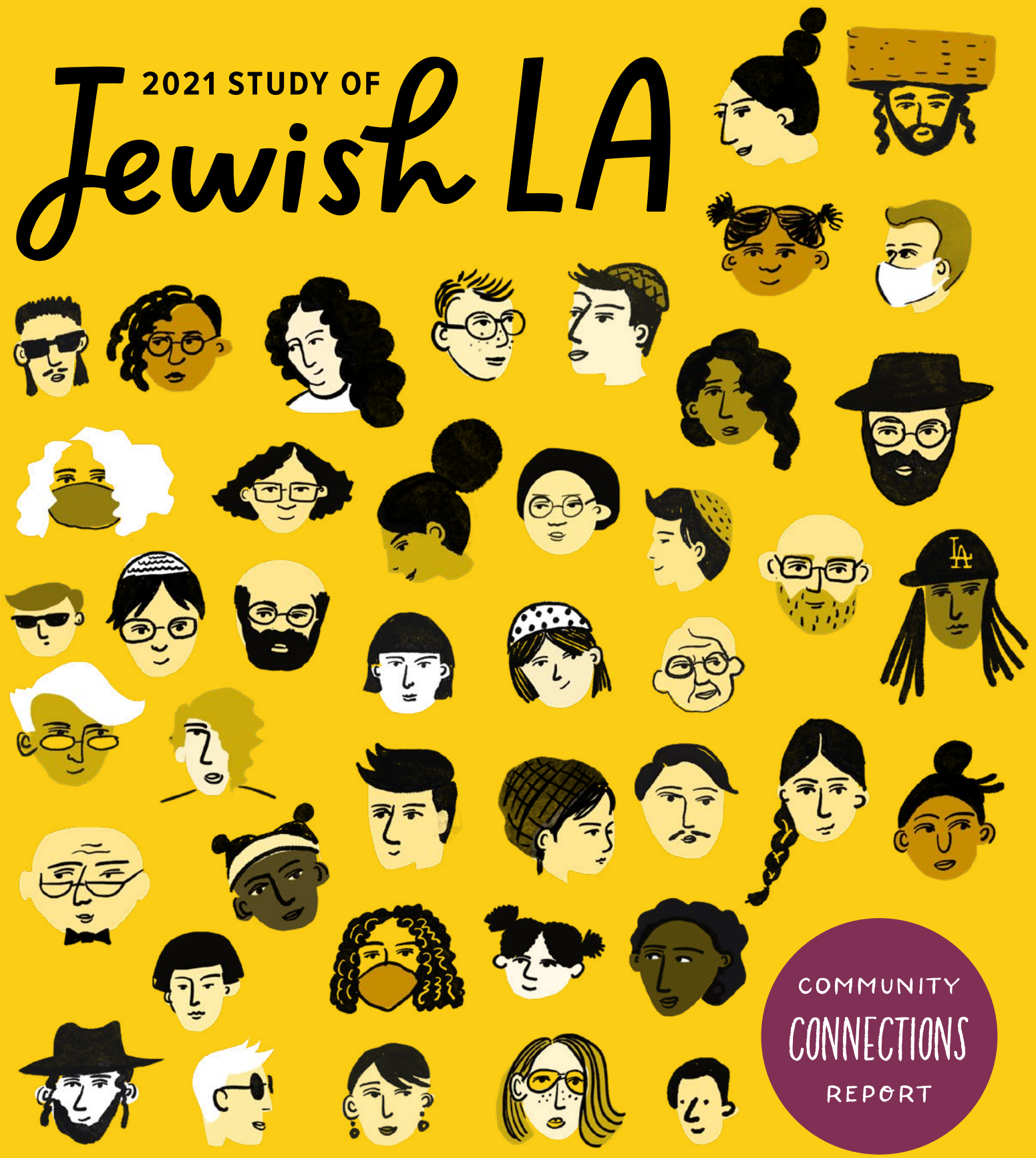


# 2021 STUDY OF *Jewish* LA



COMMUNITY  
CONNECTIONS  
REPORT

Brandeis

MAURICE AND MARILYN  
COHEN CENTER FOR  
MODERN JEWISH STUDIES

NORC at the University of Chicago

Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS)  
at Brandeis University and NORC at the University of Chicago



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# 2021 STUDY OF *Jewish* LA

**Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University and NORC at the University of Chicago**

Janet Krasner Aronson, Matthew A. Brookner,

Leonard Saxe, Adina Bankier-Karp, Matthew Boxer,

Zachary H. Seeskin, David Dutwin



COMMUNITY  
CONNECTIONS  
REPORT

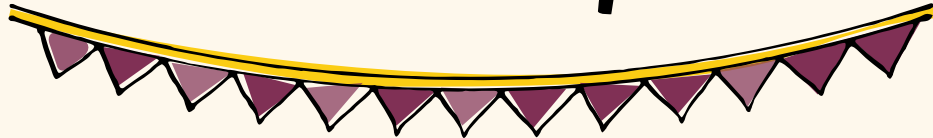
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Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies  
[www.brandeis.edu/cmjs](http://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs)

The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS), founded in 1980, is dedicated to providing independent, high-quality research on issues related to contemporary Jewish life.

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## PREFACE

This is one of a series of reports describing findings from the 2021 Study of Jewish LA. The study was conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and NORC at the University of Chicago. For an introduction to the study, along with additional reports and material, visit [www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/community-studies/los-angeles-report.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/community-studies/los-angeles-report.html) or [studyofjewishla.org](http://studyofjewishla.org)

### JEWISH POPULATION ESTIMATES OF LA, 2021

|                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS | 294,200 |
|-------------------|---------|

|                             |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| PEOPLE IN JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS | 737,900 |
|-----------------------------|---------|

|                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| NON-JEWISH INDIVIDUALS | 173,800 |
|------------------------|---------|

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| JEWISH INDIVIDUALS | 564,700 |
|--------------------|---------|

#### ADULTS

|        |         |
|--------|---------|
| JEWISH | 462,900 |
|--------|---------|

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| NON-JEWISH OR UNKNOWN | 143,900 |
|-----------------------|---------|

#### CHILDREN

|        |         |
|--------|---------|
| JEWISH | 101,800 |
|--------|---------|

|                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|
| NON-JEWISH OR UNKNOWN | 29,900 |
|-----------------------|--------|

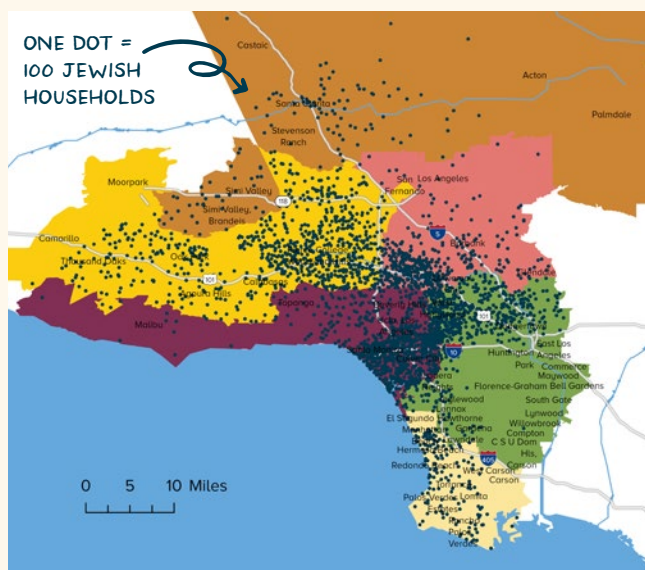
Note: Numbers do not add up to total due to rounding.

### How many Jewish people in Los Angeles?

As of 2021, it is estimated that the Los Angeles catchment area is the home to nearly 300,000 Jewish households. These households include almost 740,000 individuals, of whom 564,700 are Jewish.

For this study, Jewish individuals are those who identify as Jewish, whether by religion or ethnicity, and who either have a Jewish parent or converted to Judaism. Jewish households are any households that include at least one Jewish adult.

### MAP OF JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS IN LA



### PERCENTAGE OF JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS IN EACH REGION:

- 4% NORTH COUNTY VALLEYS
- 26% WEST VALLEY
- 15% EAST VALLEY
- 24% CENTRAL/METRO/MID
- 26% WESTSIDE
- 5% SOUTH BAY

### What are the boundaries of Jewish LA?

The Los Angeles Jewish community encompasses all cities and neighborhoods

- East from the coastline
- West from Silver Lake/Downtown/the 710 freeway
- North from San Pedro, including the San Fernando, Conejo, Simi, Santa Clarita, and Antelope Valleys.

For analysis purposes, this report divides the community into six regions: West Valley, East Valley, Westside, Central/Metro/Mid, South Bay, and the North County Valleys.

## Index of Jewish Engagement

Jewish life is complex and multidimensional and includes cultural and religious behaviors that are practiced at home, with friends and family, as well as with formal and informal organizations and institutions. Jewish engagement is associated with attitudes, such as feelings of attachment to the Jewish people, and with beliefs, such as valuing social justice.

The 2021 Study of Jewish LA uses a typology of patterns of Jewish engagement as one of its primary analytic tools for understanding Jewish life in LA. LA Jews were categorized into five groups using a statistical analysis (latent class analysis) of levels of participation across 20 different Jewish behaviors, including ritual and cultural behaviors. The names of the five groups reflect the primary ways in which each group engages in Jewish life. This typology is unique to the LA Jewish community and is used throughout this report to highlight the diversity of expressions of Jewish life.

## Overview of Methodology

This study is based on analysis of a rich set of data collected from 3,767 eligible households between June and September 2021. Survey respondents were randomly selected from all households in the Los Angeles catchment area (see map). The study design integrated an Address Based Sample (ABS) with known households on Jewish organizational lists. Households were contacted by mail, email, and telephone and invited to complete the survey online or by telephone. Responses were statistically weighted to represent all LA Jewish households. The response rates for the main sample were 11.2% unweighted and 10.2% weighted (see Technical Appendix for details).

Although some survey responses were likely influenced by the special circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2020, the questions were designed to provide a demographic and attitudinal portrait of the stable characteristics of the community. As necessary, questions were modified to account for changes in usual patterns of behavior during the pandemic.

### INDEX OF JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

Jewish engagement groups and primary activities of each group



23%

#### MINIMALLY INVOLVED

Few Jewish activities



27%

#### HOLIDAY

Passover seder, Hanukkah candles, occasionally mark Shabbat



16%

#### COMMUNAL

Passover seder, Hanukkah candles, High Holiday services, attend Jewish programs, donate to Jewish causes, partake in Jewish books/TV/music



16%

#### RITUAL

Passover seder, Hanukkah candles, High Holiday services, mark Shabbat regularly, follow some Kosher rules, donate to Jewish causes, half are congregation member



17%

#### IMMERSED

All holidays, mark Shabbat weekly, attend Jewish programs, donate to Jewish causes, read Jewish publications, most are congregation members



## HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

### AS YOU READ THIS REPORT, KEEP IN MIND THE FOLLOWING:

**TERMS:** Unless otherwise specified, references to “all Jewish adults” or “all Jewish households” refer to Jewish adults and Jewish households in Los Angeles.

Throughout this report, the term “couples” includes those who are legally married and those who are partnered and living together. Unless otherwise specified, “children” refers to minor children under age 18.

**RESPONSES:** Information in this report is based on over 3,700 survey responses. Responses to survey questions are often subjective and reflect respondents’ interpretation of survey questions. Data presented in this report reflect an estimate of the distribution of responses to a particular question if every member of the community had been interviewed.

**ESTIMATES:** Because estimates are based on a probability survey, no one estimate should be considered an exact measurement. As a guideline, the reader should assume that all estimates have a range of plus or minus five points; therefore, reported differences between any two numbers of less than 10 percentage points may not necessarily reflect true differences in the population.

When a percentage is between 0% and 0.5% and would otherwise round down to 0%, the number is denoted as < 1%. When there are insufficient respondents in a particular subgroup for reporting reliable information, the estimate is shown as “—”.

**QUOTES** in this report may have been edited for clarity and to protect privacy. While representing an individual experience, the quotes illustrate the themes identified in the numeric data.

**COMPARISONS ACROSS SUBGROUPS:** When there is a statistically significant difference among subgroups, we are 95% confident that at least some of the differences in estimates reflect actual differences and are not just the result of random chance. However, even in cases where there are statistically significant differences in a full set of responses, it is unlikely that there are statistically significant differences between every pair of numbers. As noted above, as a rule of thumb, differences between any two numbers of less than 10 percentage points may not reflect true differences in the population.

**DIFFERENCES THAT ARE NOT STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT** are indicated in this report by gray text in tables. This means that even though the numbers are different, these differences are the result of random chance and are not meaningful.



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*Each report brings a fresh analysis of the data in the hope of stimulating community members to ask new questions, engage in strategy conversations, and consider the implications for our community. These thematic reports are intended to act as a starting point and designed to spark curiosity."*

RABBI NOAH FARKAS, PRESIDENT AND CEO  
JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER LOS ANGELES

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# Community Connections

A fundamental element of Jewish identity is feeling a connection with other Jews and with a Jewish community. Feelings of connection to the Jewish people and Jewish community can foster participation in Jewish life; at the same time, involvement in Jewish life can lead to feelings of connection. Strengthening the connections that members of the community feel to one another is a central goal of communal organizations.



This report begins with a discussion of the degree to which Jewish adults in LA feel connected to their community and to the Jewish people, and how these feelings differ across groups. The report also describes the conditions that make Jewish Angelenos feel welcome and comfortable in Jewish spaces and those that limit their desired level of connection. Understanding the factors that inhibit and encourage participation in Jewish life can help guide Jewish organizations in strengthening Jewish engagement.

# FEELINGS OF BELONGING

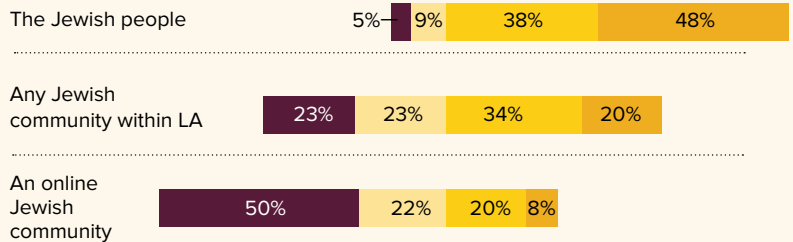
The vast majority of Jewish Angelenos feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people. Their ties, however, to a local Jewish community in LA are less strong. Nearly half of Jewish adults feel a great deal of belonging to the Jewish people, but only 20% indicate a great deal of belonging to any Jewish community in LA.

Not surprisingly, feelings of belonging are strongly correlated with overall Jewish engagement. We describe Jewish engagement among LA Jewish adults using the Index of Jewish Engagement (see report preface). When we examine patterns of engagement, nearly all members of the Immersed engagement group feel some (33%) or a great deal (60%) of belonging to the LA Jewish community. The Communal and Ritual groups also indicate high levels of belonging to the local Jewish community. Only the Minimally Involved and Holiday groups have a majority of members who do not feel a sense of belonging to the local Jewish community.

## FEELING OF BELONGING TO A JEWISH COMMUNITY

Percent of Jewish adults

■ NOT AT ALL ■ NOT MUCH ■ SOME ■ A GREAT DEAL



Question text: How much, if at all, do you feel a sense of belonging to...

## FEELING OF BELONGING BY JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

|                          | JEWISH PEOPLE |              | ANY JEWISH COMMUNITY IN LA |              | ONLINE JEWISH COMMUNITY |              |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
|                          | SOME          | A GREAT DEAL | SOME                       | A GREAT DEAL | SOME                    | A GREAT DEAL |
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b> | <b>38%</b>    | <b>48%</b>   | <b>34%</b>                 | <b>20%</b>   | <b>20%</b>              | <b>8%</b>    |
| ⬡ MINIMALLY INVOLVED     | 35%           | 21%          | 20%                        | 2%           | 10%                     | <1%          |
| ⬢ HOLIDAY                | 53%           | 37%          | 32%                        | 5%           | 14%                     | 3%           |
| ⬣ COMMUNAL               | 35%           | 60%          | 52%                        | 25%          | 32%                     | 11%          |
| ⬤ RITUAL                 | 35%           | 57%          | 47%                        | 20%          | 17%                     | 7%           |
| ⬥ IMMERSED               | 13%           | 86%          | 33%                        | 60%          | 33%                     | 26%          |



A sense of belonging to an LA Jewish community is directly related to participation in Jewish programs. Among Jewish adults who feel the strongest sense of belonging to an LA Jewish community, 33% attend programs often, and 40% attend programs sometimes. Of those who do not feel part of an LA Jewish community at all, three quarters never participate in any Jewish programs. The relationship between belonging and participation is bi-directional. Participation in activities with other Jewish Angelenos is likely an outcome of feeling that the community cares about them, but engaging with other LA Jews also enhances a feeling of belonging.

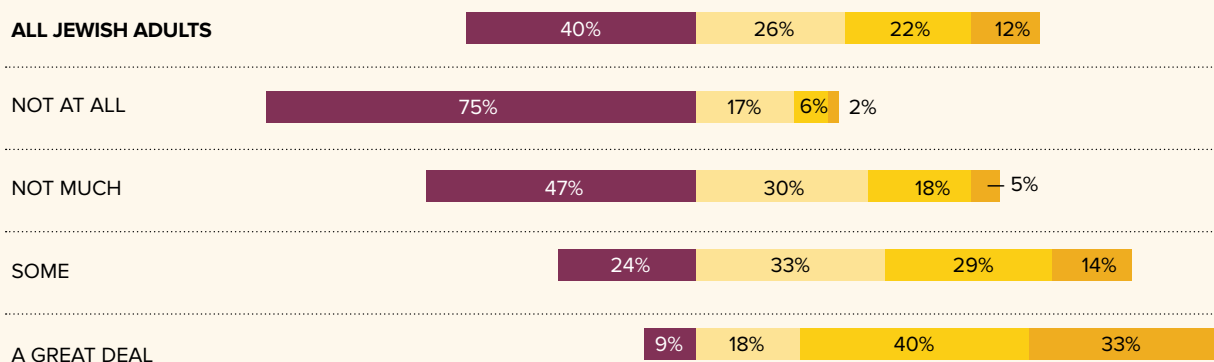


*I do not follow or even think about the Jewish community.”*

### JEWISH PROGRAM PARTICIPATION BY FEELING OF BELONGING

Frequency of program participation: ■ NEVER ■ RARELY ■ SOMETIMES ■ OFTEN

Among Jewish adults who feel they belong to an LA Jewish community at this level:



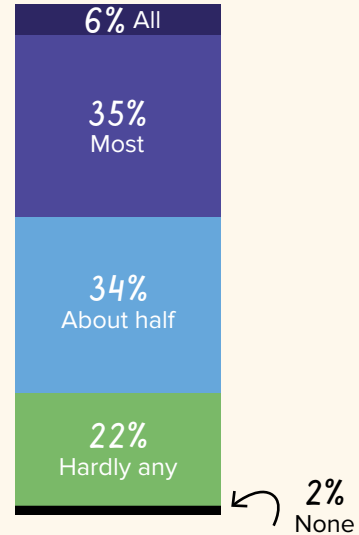
# JEWISH FRIENDSHIPS

Social networks form a basis for a feeling of Jewish belonging. Over 40% of Jewish adults in LA report that most or all of their close friends are Jewish. Very few (2%) say that they have no close Jewish friends. Jewish Angelenos have more close Jewish friends than do all US Jews; nationally, about one quarter of Jewish adults say most (23%) or all (5%) of their close friends are Jewish.

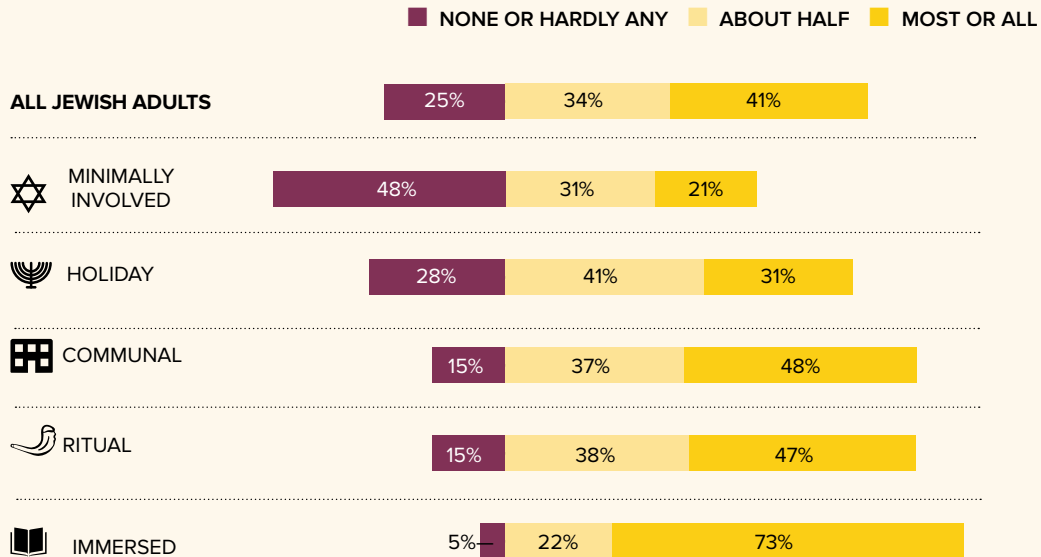
Close friendships among Jewish adults are related to Jewish engagement. Half of the adults in the Minimally Involved group have no or hardly any close Jewish friends. For adults in the Communal and Ritual engagement groups, about half say that most or all of their close friends are Jewish. Three quarters of those in the Immersed group say that most or all of their close friends are Jewish.

## SHARE OF CLOSE FRIENDS WHO ARE JEWISH

Percent of Jewish adults

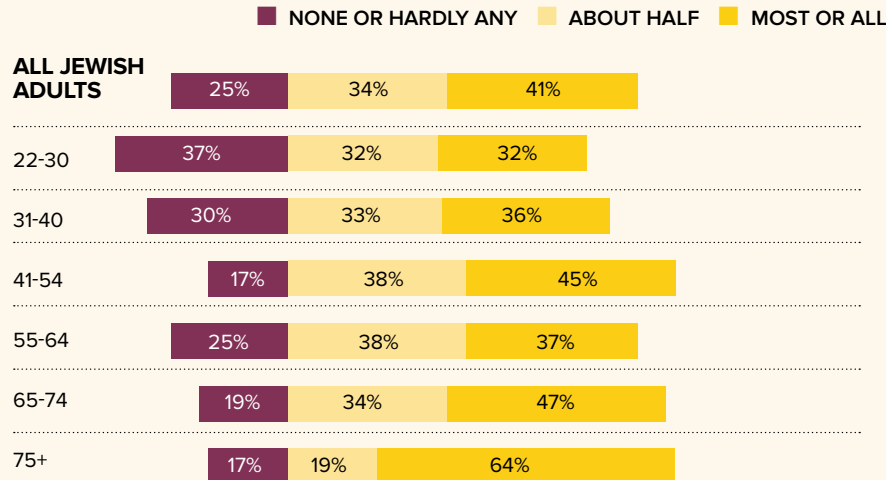


## JEWISH FRIENDSHIPS BY JEWISH ENGAGEMENT



There are significant differences across age groups in the size of their Jewish friendship networks. About one third of Jewish adults ages 40 and younger have few or no close Jewish friends. In contrast, among those ages 75 and older, two thirds say that most or all of their close friends are Jewish.

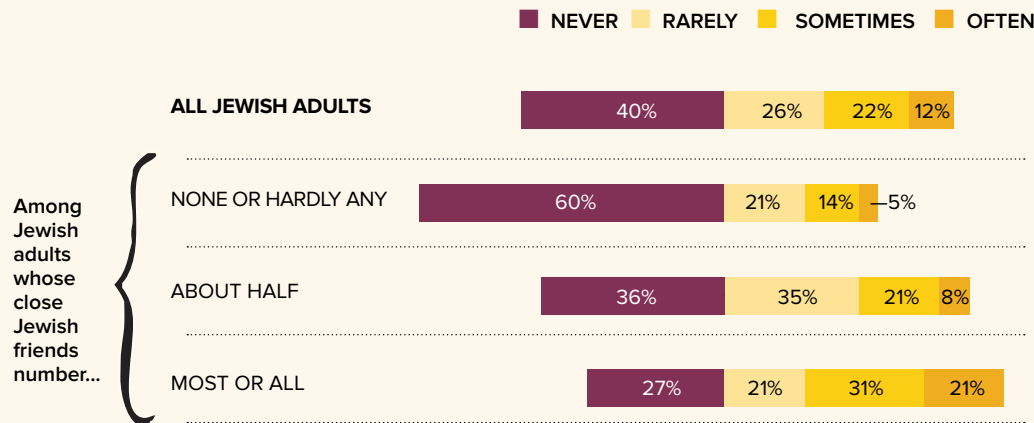
### JEWISH FRIENDSHIPS BY AGE



About  
**1/3**  
of Jewish  
adults ages 40 and  
younger have few or no  
close Jewish friends

To illustrate the importance of Jewish social networks, we examined the relationship between having close Jewish friends and participation in Jewish programs. Among Jewish adults whose close friends are mostly or all Jewish, half participate in programs sometimes or often. Among those with none or hardly any close Jewish friends, 60% never participate in any Jewish programs.

### PROGRAM PARTICIPATION BY JEWISH FRIENDSHIPS



# Conditions

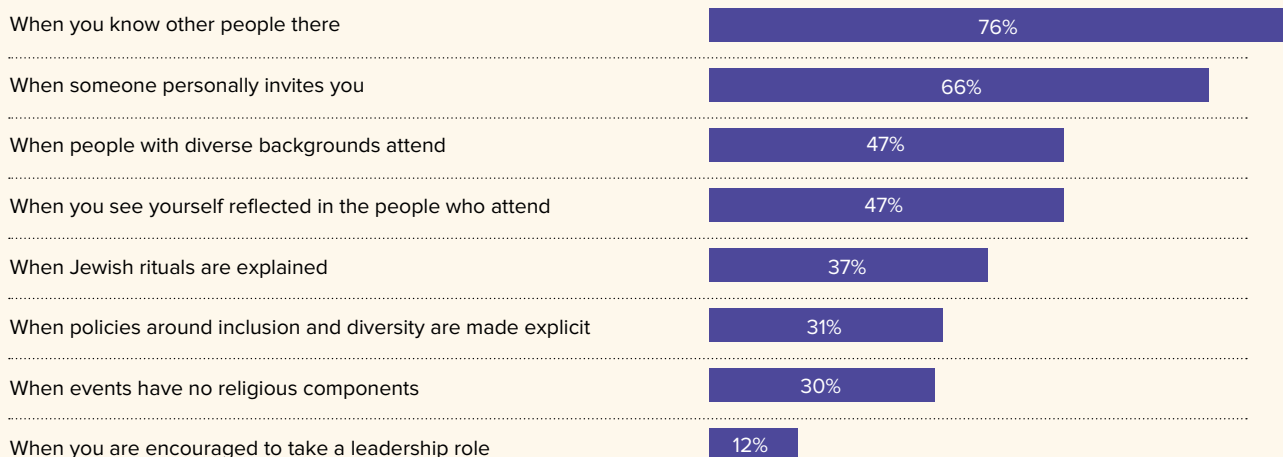
## THAT ENCOURAGE AND LIMIT JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

We asked Jewish adults who participate in Jewish life at any level to describe the conditions that encourage them to participate and make them feel welcome, as well as the conditions that limit engagement. Understanding these factors, and how they differ across groups, can guide organizations in developing programs to meet the needs of community members.

When asked about the factors that make them feel welcome and comfortable at Jewish events, the most commonly cited conditions by Jewish adults in LA include knowing other participants and being personally invited.

### CONDITIONS THAT HELP PARTICIPANTS FEEL WELCOME AND COMFORTABLE (WELCOMING CONDITIONS)

Percent of Jewish adults



Question text: Which of the following makes you feel welcome and comfortable at Jewish events?  
Note: 4% indicated something not listed.

### TERMS

“WELCOMING CONDITIONS” are described as conditions that make individuals feel welcome and comfortable

“LIMITING CONDITIONS” are described as conditions that limit participation

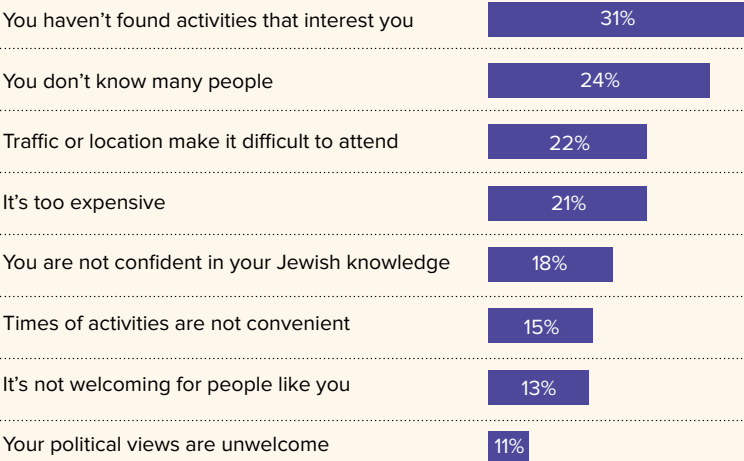
The study also asked about conditions that limit Jewish participation. We assumed that for most respondents, conditions related to the pandemic would obscure most other limitations. Consequently, the survey asked about conditions that limited Jewish participation prior to the pandemic. For two thirds of Jewish adults, even before the pandemic, there was at least one condition that limited their participation in LA Jewish community activities.

One third of all Jewish adults did not indicate any limiting conditions to their Jewish involvement. This finding is best understood as indicating that for these adults, their choices about participation in the Jewish community are driven by internal factors and not by external limitations.

Nearly one third of all Jewish Angelenos note a lack of interesting activities as a limiting condition to their Jewish involvement. About one quarter did not participate in the LA Jewish community because they did not know many people at events or programs.

**CONDITIONS THAT LIMIT PARTICIPATION IN LA JEWISH COMMUNITY (LIMITING CONDITIONS)**

**Percent of Jewish adults**



**Question text:** Thinking about typical times before the pandemic, did any of the following conditions limit your participation in the LA Jewish community?

**Note:** 4% indicated something not listed.



In the sections below, we explore some of the limiting conditions to Jewish involvement as well as key differences in their perceived importance across demographics groups.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Personal connections are among the most important factors that help members of the community feel comfortable and welcome at Jewish events. Three quarters of all adults feel welcome and comfortable when they know other people at Jewish programs, and two thirds feel welcome when they are personally invited to the event.

For Jewish adults across demographic and engagement groups, knowing other people is one of the top conditions that make them feel welcome at Jewish programs.

Regardless of the number of close Jewish friends an individual has, the majority feel more welcome when they know others who attend programs. For those with few Jewish friends, this is more of a limiting condition. More than one third of Jewish adults with few or no Jewish friends indicate that not knowing many people limits their participation in Jewish life. However, even among Jewish adults who report that most or all of their close friends are Jewish, 18% indicate that not knowing people limits their participation in Jewish life.

**For Jewish adults across demographic and engagement groups, knowing other people is one of the top conditions that make them feel welcome at Jewish programs**

### IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL CONNECTIONS BY NUMBER OF JEWISH FRIENDS

Among Jewish adults whose close Jewish friends number...

|                          | WELCOMING CONDITION     |                                     | LIMITING CONDITION     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
|                          | KNOW OTHER PEOPLE THERE | WHEN SOMEONE PERSONALLY INVITES YOU | DON'T KNOW MANY PEOPLE |
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b> | <b>76%</b>              | <b>66%</b>                          | <b>24%</b>             |
| NONE OR HARDLY ANY       | 68%                     | 61%                                 | 37%                    |
| ABOUT HALF               | 78%                     | 68%                                 | 21%                    |
| MOST OR ALL              | 81%                     | 69%                                 | 18%                    |

The importance of personal connections for feeling welcome at Jewish events differs by age group. Although for Jewish adults of all ages, knowing other people is important in making them feel welcome, younger adults place a higher priority on personal invitations to Jewish programs than do their older counterparts. Larger shares of younger adults also indicate that not knowing many people is a barrier for participation in Jewish life.

Although for Jewish adults of all ages, knowing other people is important in making them feel welcome, younger adults place a higher priority on personal invitations to Jewish programs than do their older counterparts

**IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL CONNECTIONS BY AGE**

|                          | WELCOMING CONDITION     |                                     | LIMITING CONDITION     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
|                          | KNOW OTHER PEOPLE THERE | WHEN SOMEONE PERSONALLY INVITES YOU | DON'T KNOW MANY PEOPLE |
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b> | <b>76%</b>              | <b>66%</b>                          | <b>24%</b>             |
| 22-30                    | 86%                     | 73%                                 | 41%                    |
| 31-40                    | 85%                     | 80%                                 | 36%                    |
| 41-54                    | 78%                     | 67%                                 | 15%                    |
| 55-64                    | 72%                     | 65%                                 | 19%                    |
| 65-74                    | 70%                     | 57%                                 | 22%                    |
| 75+                      | 72%                     | 61%                                 | 14%                    |



*I don't feel like I know how to navigate attending Jewish events where I won't know anyone else attending, especially because I come from an interfaith household, and because it seems that a lot of these organizations fall along certain class and political lines.”*

## REPRESENTATION AND DIVERSITY

A second factor that emerged as important in making people feel comfortable at Jewish events is the diversity of participants. Nearly half of Jewish adults say that they feel more welcome and comfortable at Jewish events when people with diverse backgrounds attend. A similar proportion feel more welcome and comfortable at events when they see themselves reflected in the people who attend. About one third of Jewish adults report feeling comfortable when policies around inclusion and diversity are made explicit.

Those who participate frequently in programs are more likely to cite the importance of diversity around programming. Those who attend programs sometimes or often are more likely to indicate that seeing themselves reflected in other attendees and having diverse attendees are important welcoming conditions. Half of those who attend programs often also cite policies around inclusion and diversity as important welcoming conditions, compared to between one quarter and one third of those who attend programs never or rarely.

### IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY CONDITIONS BY PROGRAM PARTICIPATION






|  |           | WELCOMING CONDITION                |  |   |
|--|-----------|------------------------------------|--|---|
|  |           | REFLECTED IN THE PEOPLE WHO ATTEND | PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS ATTEND | POLICIES AROUND INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ARE MADE EXPLICIT |
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b>                   |           | <b>47%</b>                         | <b>47%</b>                             | <b>31%</b>  |
| Among Jewish adults who attend programs... | NEVER     | 32%                                | 39%                                    | 24%   |
|  | RARELY    | 47%                                | 48%                                    | 35%   |
|  | SOMETIMES | 61%                                | 51%                                    | 35%   |
|  | OFTEN     | 65%                                | 60%                                    | 50%   |



*Now that I'm single, I feel awkward attending a temple when everyone else is married."*

Among the engagement groups, representation and diversity seem of particular importance to those in the Communal group. More than half want to see themselves reflected in the people who attend programs and to have people with diverse backgrounds attend programs (59% and 61% respectively), and 48% want policies around inclusion and diversity to be made explicit.

### IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY CONDITIONS BY JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

|  | WELCOMING CONDITION                |  |   | LIMITING CONDITION                |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|
|  | REFLECTED IN THE PEOPLE WHO ATTEND | PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS ATTEND | POLICIES AROUND INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ARE MADE EXPLICIT | NOT WELCOMING FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU |
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b>   | <b>47%</b>                         | <b>47%</b>                             | <b>31%</b>  | <b>13%</b>                        |
|  MINIMALLY INVOLVED | 25%                                | 32%                                    | 20%   | 11%                               |
|  HOLIDAY            | 43%                                | 46%                                    | 33%   | 17%                               |
|  COMMUNAL           | 59%                                | 61%                                    | 48%   | 14%                               |
|  RITUAL             | 53%                                | 51%                                    | 36%   | 16%                               |
|  IMMERSED           | 62%                                | 48%                                    | 31%   | 12%                               |

Younger Jewish adults place a higher priority on the diversity welcoming conditions than do older Jewish adults. In addition, younger Jewish adults are more likely to feel that Jewish activities are not welcoming to people like themselves.

### IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY CONDITIONS BY AGE

|                          | WELCOMING CONDITION                |  |   | LIMITING CONDITION                |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|
|                          | REFLECTED IN THE PEOPLE WHO ATTEND | PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS ATTEND | POLICIES AROUND INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ARE MADE EXPLICIT | NOT WELCOMING FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU |
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b> | <b>47%</b>                         | <b>47%</b>                             | <b>31%</b>  | <b>13%</b>                        |
| 22-30                    | 52%                                | 50%                                    | 48%   | 23%                               |
| 31-40                    | 57%                                | 61%                                    | 41%   | 19%                               |
| 41-54                    | 53%                                | 44%                                    | 33%   | 13%                               |
| 55-64                    | 43%                                | 47%                                    | 35%   | 12%                               |
| 65-74                    | 36%                                | 38%                                    | 19%   | 13%                               |
| 75+                      | 43%                                | 43%                                    | 18%   | 5%                                |

## POLITICAL VIEWS

The study was conducted at a time of increased national political polarization. The LA Jewish community is, in this respect, no different. Eleven percent of Jewish adults say that they feel their political views are unwelcome in the LA Jewish community. Jewish adults who are very liberal or very conservative are more likely to feel that their political views are unwelcome in Jewish spaces. For example, 20% of Jewish Angelenos

describe themselves as very liberal; among them, 20% feel unwelcome in Jewish spaces because of their political views. On the other end of the political spectrum, 2% of adults are very conservative; of them, 27% feel unwelcome in Jewish spaces because of their political views. Those who consider themselves liberal or moderate are less likely to feel their political views are a barrier to community involvement.

### FEEL UNWELCOME BECAUSE OF POLITICAL VIEWS

|                   | PERCENT OF JEWISH ADULTS IN THIS GROUP | OF JEWISH ADULTS WITH THIS POLITICAL VIEW, FEEL POLITICAL VIEWS ARE UNWELCOME |
|-------------------|--|---|
| VERY LIBERAL      | 20%                                    | 20%   |
| LIBERAL           | 36%                                    | 8%  |
| MODERATE          | 25%                                    | 6%  |
| CONSERVATIVE      | 17%                                    | 12%   |
| VERY CONSERVATIVE | 2%                                     | 27%   |








# FINDING INTERESTING ACTIVITIES

The condition most frequently cited as limiting Jewish involvement is not finding activities of interest, reported by one third of Jewish adults. This finding is true for people of different ages. Whether individuals are able to find activities of interest to them is a function of what activities are available, what activities they are aware of, and their willingness to seek out activities that appeal to them.

Similar shares of the Minimally Involved and Immersed engagement groups report that they cannot find interesting activities. Given their already high levels of engagement, it is likely that those in the Immersed group are open to more participation, assuming they find other activities that interest them.

## LACK OF INTERESTING ACTIVITIES BY JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

| LIMITING CONDITION   |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
| HAVE NOT FOUND INTERESTING ACTIVITIES  |  |     |
| ALL JEWISH ADULTS  |  | 31% |
|  MINIMALLY INVOLVED |  | 23% |
|  HOLIDAY            |  | 38% |
|  COMMUNAL           |  | 32% |
|  RITUAL             |  | 35% |
|  IMMERSSED          |  | 22% |

The condition most frequently cited as limiting Jewish involvement is not finding activities of interest, reported by one third of Jewish adults. This finding is true for people of different ages

## LACK OF INTERESTING ACTIVITIES BY PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

| LIMITING CONDITION                    |  |     |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----|
| HAVE NOT FOUND INTERESTING ACTIVITIES |  |     |
| ALL JEWISH ADULTS                     |  | 31% |
| NEVER                                 |  | 27% |
| RARELY                                |  | 43% |
| SOMETIMES                             |  | 26% |
| OFTEN                                 |  | 23% |

Among Jewish adults who participate in programs...

One important task for Jewish organizations is to identify barriers to participation for those who never or rarely attend programs. For nearly all limiting conditions described in this report, Jewish adults who ever attend programs, at any frequency, identify similar barriers. Jewish adults who never attend programs, however, identify fewer barriers. This pattern suggests that for this group, it is not the specific barriers that prevent participation, but rather an overall disinterest in participation.

For Jewish adults who attend programs rarely, 43% report that they have not found interesting activities. Being less connected to the community, it is likely that they are less aware of what the community has to offer and/or that they do not seek out activities. Of those Jewish adults who attend programs sometimes or often, a smaller share, about one quarter, have not found interesting activities.

For Jewish adults who attend programs rarely, 43% report that they have not found interesting activities. Being less connected to the community, it is possible that they are less aware of what the community has to offer and/or that they do not seek out activities

## JEWISH AND RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING

The assumption that one must be Jewishly knowledgeable in order to participate is one reason that some members of the community are reluctant to attend certain programs. Thirty-seven percent of Jewish adults indicate they appreciate having Jewish rituals explained at programs, and 30% prefer that there be no religious components at Jewish programs they attend. Among all Jewish adults, 18% indicate that their participation is limited because they lack confidence in their level of Jewish knowledge.

Jewish adults in the Communal and Ritual groups express the most interest in having Jewish rituals explained to them. Compared to the other engagement groups, more Jewish adults in the Holiday group prefer programs with no religious components. (However, this share represents less than half of the Holiday group.)






A lack of confidence in Jewish knowledge may not be an indicator of an individual's actual level of knowledge. Rather, it may be related to their perception that they are less knowledgeable than other participants. Consequently, it is not surprising that all of the engagement groups, except the Immersed group, have similar shares of Jewish adults who feel that their participation in Jewish events is limited by their lack of Jewish knowledge.

For all of these conditions, there are no significant differences across age groups.



*I think younger people and families can be better courted by de-emphasizing God and focusing instead on food/ culture and core tenets of Judaism, like making the world better for everyone— not only Jewish people.”*

### IMPORTANCE OF EXPLANATION, RELIGIOUS COMPONENTS, AND JEWISH KNOWLEDGE BY JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

|  | WELCOMING CONDITION          |                         | LIMITING CONDITION                |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|  | JEWISH RITUALS ARE EXPLAINED | NO RELIGIOUS COMPONENTS | NOT CONFIDENT IN JEWISH KNOWLEDGE |
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b>   | <b>37%</b>                   | <b>30%</b>              | <b>18%</b>                        |
|  MINIMALLY INVOLVED | 21%                          | 33%                     | 18%                               |
|  HOLIDAY            | 35%                          | 39%                     | 21%                               |
|  COMMUNAL           | 46%                          | 28%                     | 20%                               |
|  RITUAL             | 41%                          | 30%                     | 23%                               |
|  IMMERSED           | 38%                          | 12%                     | 5%                                |

## PROGRAM LOGISTICS: LOCATION AND TIME

Program logistics also affect participation in Jewish life. Twenty-two percent of Jewish Angelenos report that traffic or the location of programs makes it difficult to attend programs, and 15% indicate that the times of activities are not convenient. Notably, there are not meaningful differences by region for these limiting conditions, despite LA's infamous traffic conditions and the concentration of Jewish institutions in certain areas.

Those who attend programs sometimes (compared to never, rarely, or often) are most likely to cite traffic or location or inconvenient times as a limiting condition to their Jewish involvement. Among those who never attend Jewish programs, few cite either limiting condition, suggesting that the logistics of attendance is not what impedes their attendance.

### TRAFFIC OR PROGRAM LOCATION AND SCHEDULE BY PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

|                          | LIMITING CONDITION  |                          |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
|                          | TRAFFIC OR LOCATION | TIMES ARE NOT CONVENIENT |
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b> | <b>22%</b>          | <b>15%</b>               |
| NEVER                    | 10%                 | 10%                      |
| RARELY                   | 30%                 | 15%                      |
| SOMETIMES                | 35%                 | 24%                      |
| OFTEN                    | 28%                 | 16%                      |

Among Jewish adults who participate in programs...



*My lack of participation has more to do with lack of interest in the programming, or programming that is not scheduled at hours that are conducive to regular work hours or children's bedtime hours."*

### TRAFFIC OR PROGRAM LOCATION AND SCHEDULE BY JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

Relatively few people in the Minimally Involved engagement group feel limited in participating in Jewish programs by traffic, a program's location, or the timing of programs. About one third of people in the Communal, Ritual, and Immersed groups, on the other hand, feel limited in their Jewish involvement by traffic, and greater shares of these groups (compared to the Minimally Involved and Holiday groups) feel limited by program times.






|                          | LIMITING CONDITION  |                          |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
|                          | TRAFFIC OR LOCATION | TIMES ARE NOT CONVENIENT |
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b> | <b>22%</b>          | <b>15%</b>               |
| MINIMALLY INVOLVED       | 5%                  | 2%                       |
| HOLIDAY                  | 17%                 | 15%                      |
| COMMUNAL                 | 32%                 | 17%                      |
| RITUAL                   | 36%                 | 26%                      |
| IMMERSSED                | 32%                 | 20%                      |

## COST OF PARTICIPATION

More than 20 percent of Jewish adults indicate that the expenses of Jewish life limit their Jewish participation. This includes more than one quarter of Jewish adults in all engagement groups aside from the Minimally Involved. Among the Minimally Involved, it is possible that a similar share find activities expensive, but that is not the reason that they choose not to participate.



## JEWISH LIFE TOO EXPENSIVE BY JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

| TOO EXPENSIVE  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b>   | <b>21%</b> |
|  MINIMALLY INVOLVED | 10%        |
|  HOLIDAY            | 24%        |
|  COMMUNAL           | 28%        |
|  RITUAL             | 27%        |
|  IMMERSED           | 30%        |

## JEWISH LIFE TOO EXPENSIVE BY FINANCIAL SITUATION

| TOO EXPENSIVE            |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| <b>ALL JEWISH ADULTS</b> | <b>21%</b> |
| STRUGGLING               | 43%        |
| ENOUGH                   | 25%        |
| EXTRA                    | 19%        |
| WELL-OFF                 | 11%        |



*[I feel welcomed] when ... I don't feel like the organization is doing me a favor by allowing me to attend in exchange for a significant donation. When the people are welcoming and not in cliques and judging based on money and connections."*

# HOW WELCOMING ARE LA Jewish Organizations?

For several groups that have reported feeling excluded from Jewish life, including Jews of Color, LGBTQ-identified individuals, those with disabilities, and intermarried couples, the survey examined the degree to which LA Jewish organizations are perceived as welcoming and whether or not that perception has an impact on the Jewish involvement of members of these groups. The majority indicate that LA Jewish organizations are welcoming; however, a substantial share report that they feel the community's attitude toward people like themselves limits their involvement with Jewish life. There is a significant share who have no opinion, suggesting they have not had recent involvement with Jewish organizational life.

Six percent of Jewish adults in LA identify as a person of color. Among them, 40% feel limited in their participation in Jewish life because they find the community unwelcoming, compared to 13% of all Jewish adults. Just over half of Jewish adults of color find that Jewish organizations are somewhat (27%) or very welcoming (27%) to people of color.

Eight percent of Jewish adults in LA identify as LGBTQ. One third report being limited in their connection to the LA Jewish community because they feel it is unwelcoming to people like them. However, more than half of LGBTQ Jewish adults find LA Jewish organizations to be very welcoming (29%) or somewhat welcoming (34%) to those who identify as LGBTQ.

Twenty-four percent of Jewish adults in LA live in a household with a member who has a disability or special need that limits work, school, or activities. Nearly one quarter of adults in who live with someone with

a special need or disability feel limited in their Jewish life by these circumstances. On the question of how welcoming Jewish organizations in LA are to people with disabilities and special needs, 40% of this group believe Jewish organizations are very welcoming, and 21% find Jewish organizations somewhat welcoming.

Twenty-nine percent of Jewish adults are married to or partnered with someone who is not Jewish. A minority of intermarried Jewish adults (12%) feel the Jewish community is not welcoming to interfaith families and, consequently, feel limited in their participation in Jewish life. Although nearly half of intermarried Jewish adults have no opinion on how welcoming LA Jewish organizations are to interfaith families, 24% believe they are somewhat welcoming, and 23% believe they are very welcoming. That nearly half have no opinion on this issue may be connected to the relatively lower degree of involvement in Jewish life among intermarried adults.



**NOT FEELING WELCOME IS A LIMITING CONDITION**

Percent of Jewish adults

|  | PERCENT OF JEWISH ADULTS IN THIS GROUP | OF THIS GROUP, NOT FEELING WELCOME IS A LIMITING CONDITION |
|--|--|--|
| JEWISH PEOPLE OF COLOR (JPOC)                    | 6%                                     | 40%  |
| LGBTQ  | 8%                                     | 32%  |
| IN A HOUSEHOLD WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEED | 24%                                    | 23%  |
| INTERMARRIED ADULTS                              | 29%                                    | 12%  |

**PERCEIVED LEVEL OF WELCOMING OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AMONG MEMBERS OF SELECTED GROUPS**

Percent of Jewish adults within each group

|  | NOT AT ALL WELCOMING | NOT TOO WELCOMING | SOMEWHAT WELCOMING | VERY WELCOMING | NO OPINION |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| JEWISH PEOPLE OF COLOR (JPOC)                    | 13%                  | 16%               | 27%                | 27%            | 18%        |
| LGBTQ  | 3%                   | 11%               | 34%                | 29%            | 23%        |
| IN A HOUSEHOLD WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEED | < 1%                 | 9%                | 21%                | 40%            | 29%        |
| INTERMARRIED ADULTS                              | 3%                   | 5%                | 24%                | 23%            | 45%        |

Question text: Overall, in your opinion, how welcoming are Los Angeles Jewish organizations to...

...people of color?

...LGBTQ people?

...people with disabilities or special needs?

...interfaith families?

## CONCLUSION:

# Promoting Community Ties

This report considers feelings of connection to the Jewish community, the factors that promote connection, and the factors that inhibit it. Understanding the elements that attract or act as barriers to different segments of the community is central to developing strategies that engage Jewish individuals “where they are” and increase their involvement in Jewish life. Key findings that might be considered by Jewish organizations include:

- ✓ Strong community ties rest on connections between individuals. Outreach to community members is likely to be more effective when social networks and personal connections are utilized.
- ✓ To address the diverse needs of community members, activities, programs, and organizational communication should focus on the many ways that individuals can feel “welcomed.” Beyond a sense of friendliness, organizations should thoughtfully engage and encourage the participation of individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and make diversity policies explicit. Organizations should also review their programming to ensure that it addresses the variety of age groups, gender identities, family structures, and the many ways that Jews are educated and express their Judaism in the LA community.
- ✓ To be successful, activities developed by the community will need not only to respond to interests expressed by those who are already engaged, but also to attract those who may not be certain what they are looking for. One approach might be to integrate secular interests within a Jewish communal context. Jewish institutions should continue to innovate in program design, marketing, and implementation.

For many Jewish individuals, feeling connected to the Jewish people and to a Jewish community is the essence of what it means to be Jewish. For the LA Jewish community, facilitating participation with Jewish life means reinforcing this sense of belonging. However, the feeling of belonging is not only the driver of participation, but also the result of being involved. A successful strategic plan will approach engagement from both directions.