

# 2022-2023 Washtenaw County Area Jewish Community Study Highlights



**Jewish Federation**  
of Greater Ann Arbor

## Made possible with generous support from:



## Research conducted by:



## Other participating organizations:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan • Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation • Chabad House of Ann Arbor  
Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor • Jewish Communal Leadership Program at the University of Michigan  
Jewish Cultural Society • Pardes Hannah

# The Findings

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, in partnership with local Jewish community organizations and congregations, is delighted to present the results of the 2022-23 Washtenaw County Area Jewish Community Study: A Data-Driven Collaboration.

This document contains highlights of the study's results. We invite you to review the complete report at [JewishAnnArbor.org/CommunityStudy](https://JewishAnnArbor.org/CommunityStudy).

This study provides a current portrait of our local Jewish community and gives needed insight that will enable us to build the most welcoming, innovative, and vibrant Jewish community possible.

The survey that resulted in the data presented here inquired about a wide range of topics related to the local Jewish community. It asked about the types of households we live in, Jewish education, the ways we relate to being Jewish, how we interact with Jewish organizations, and our needs as a community. It also helped identify opportunities for welcoming more people and broadening programming to meet the needs of our diverse Jewish community.

Through this study, we've discovered that we're more numerous than many people thought—20,000 people, including 3,900 children, identify as Jews in our region.

Of note, the survey was conducted between November 2022 and January 2023, well before the October 7, 2023 attacks and the ensuing war in Israel and Gaza. It is important to acknowledge that some of the results might have differed if they had been collected after October 7, especially in responses addressing views of antisemitism and Israel.

We thank all of the volunteers who worked to bring this report to fruition, the 955 households who responded to the survey, and our research team, made up of two preeminent research institutions: the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University and NORC at the University of Chicago.

While this Community Study is complete, our community's work to translate data into action is just beginning. We hope this report will be the starting point for deeper conversation and collaborative strategic planning for the Washtenaw County area Jewish community.



## Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Demographic Snapshot.....              | 3  |
| Geographic Distribution.....           | 4  |
| Patterns of Jewish Engagement.....     | 5  |
| Children and Jewish Education.....     | 6  |
| Congregations and Ritual Life.....     | 7  |
| Community Values and Philanthropy..... | 8  |
| Community Connections .....            | 9  |
| Connections to Israel.....             | 10 |
| Antisemitism .....                     | 10 |
| Health and Social Service Needs .....  | 11 |
| Financial Well-Being .....             | 11 |

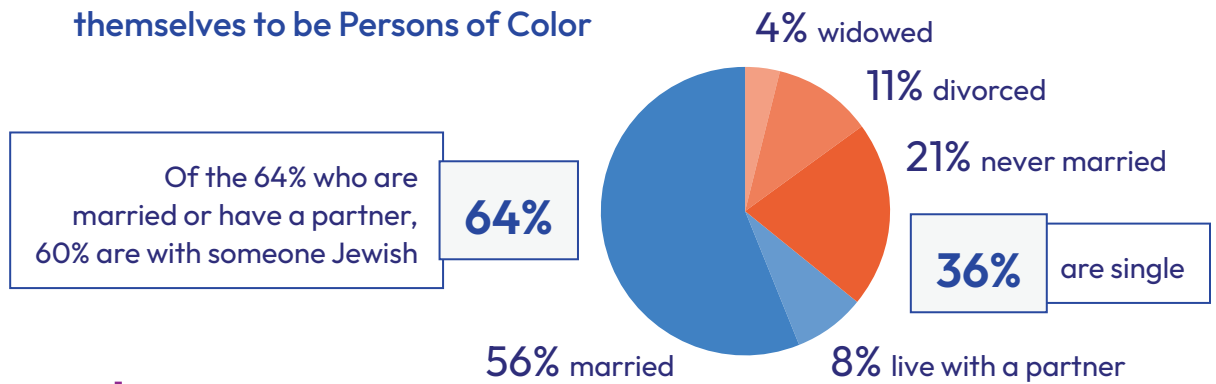
# Demographic Snapshot

Unless otherwise specified, percentages in this document refer to Jewish adults in Washtenaw County. Of those included, 10% were graduate students. Undergraduate students were not included in the survey.

For more information about the data presented here, you can find the complete report at [JewishAnnArbor.org/CommunityStudy](http://JewishAnnArbor.org/CommunityStudy).

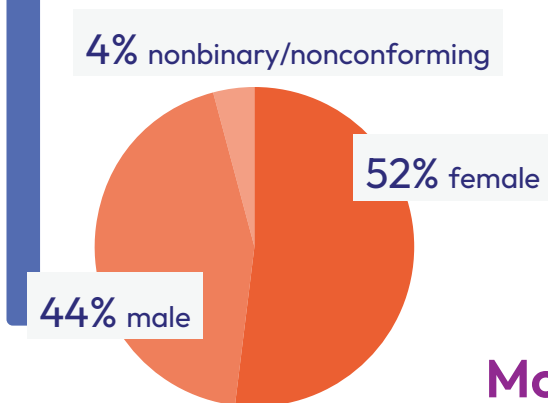
**20,000** Jews live in Washtenaw County in 11,000 households, 5% of the total population

**3,900** (20%) are under 18  
**2%** of Jewish adults consider themselves to be Persons of Color

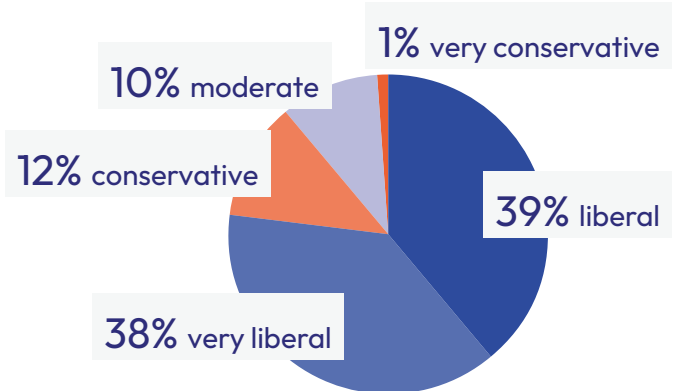


## Gender and Sexual Orientation

**13%** of households include a member who identifies as LGBTQ+, including 3% with a person who identifies as transgender



## Political Orientation



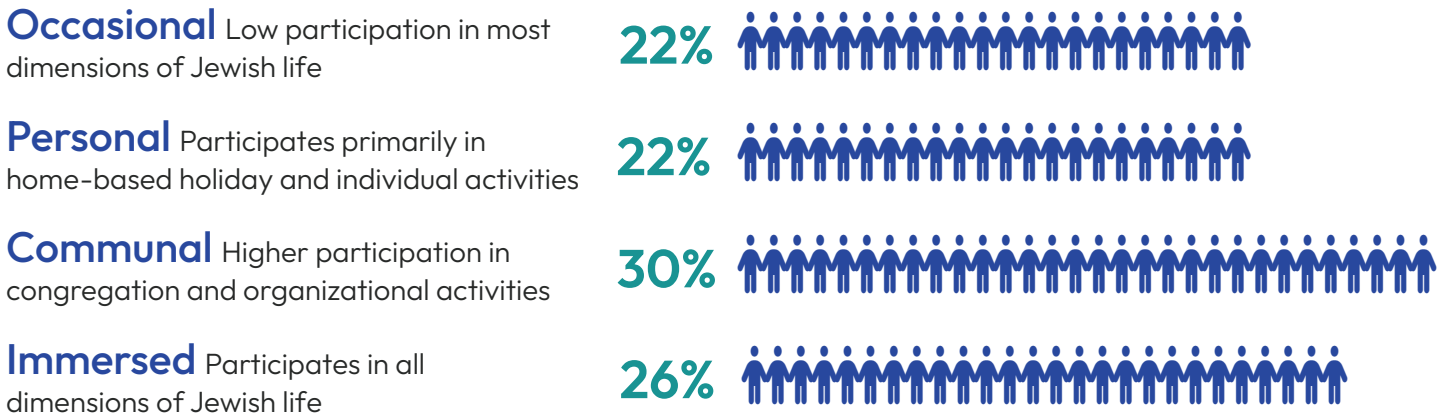
## Mobility

**75%** of Jewish adults come from outside of Michigan  
**29%** of Jewish adults have moved here within the last 4 years  
**25%** say they will move away in the next 3 years



# Patterns of Jewish Engagement

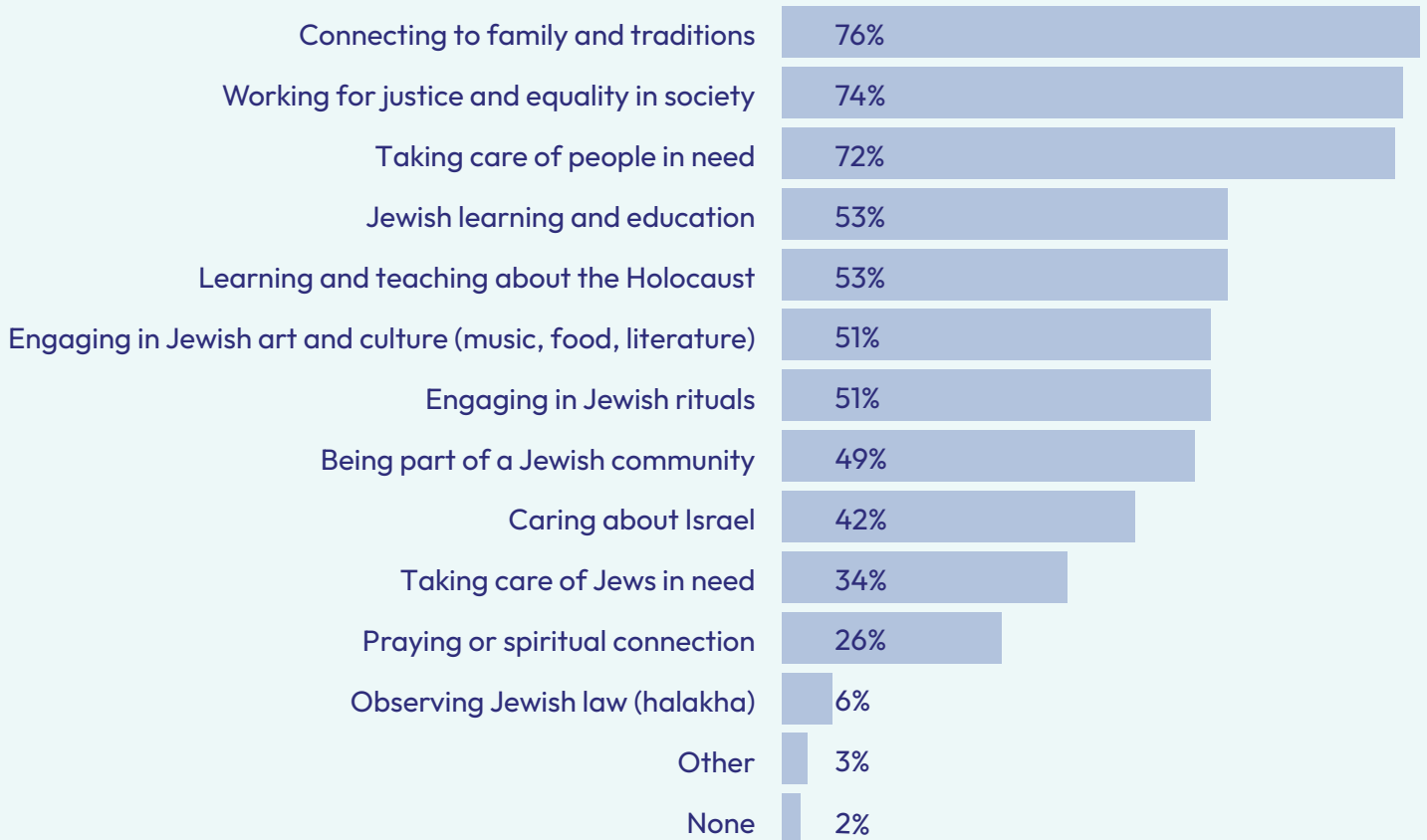
## Index of Jewish Engagement in Washtenaw County



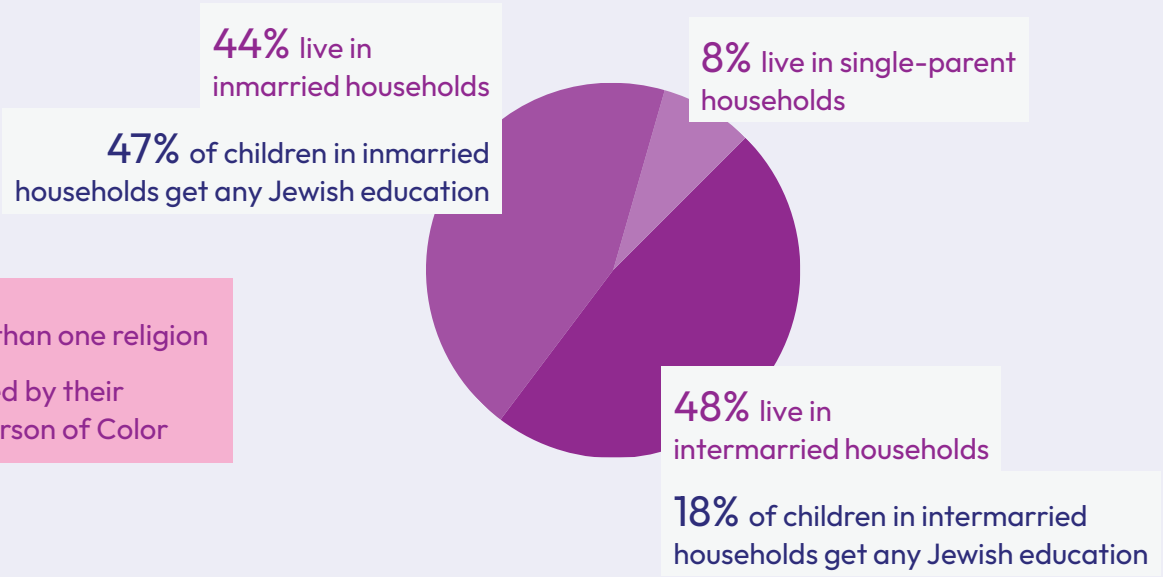
## Select Engagement Characteristics

**Adults** ages 22-39 are the most engaged age group  
**75%** of the Occasional and Personal groups don't identify with a denomination

## Characteristics Essential to Being Jewish



# Children and Jewish Education



23% have more than one religion  
8% are considered by their parents to be a Person of Color

Inmarried: Parents are Jewish  
Intermarried: One parent is not Jewish

## Schooling

- 78% attend public school
- 10% attend non-Jewish private school
- 3% attend Jewish day schools
- 5% of preschool-aged children attend Jewish preschools

### Of children in grades K-8

- 18% are in formal Jewish education
- 24% attend Jewish day camp
- 6% attend Jewish overnight camp



### Of Jewish children ages 12 and older

- 54% have had a bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah, or b-mitzvah ceremony
- 13% plan to have one in the future
- 5% have traveled to Israel

### Of children in grades 9-12

Fewer than 1% are in formal Jewish education

- 11% are in Jewish youth groups



41% of Jewish households were not aware of PJ Library

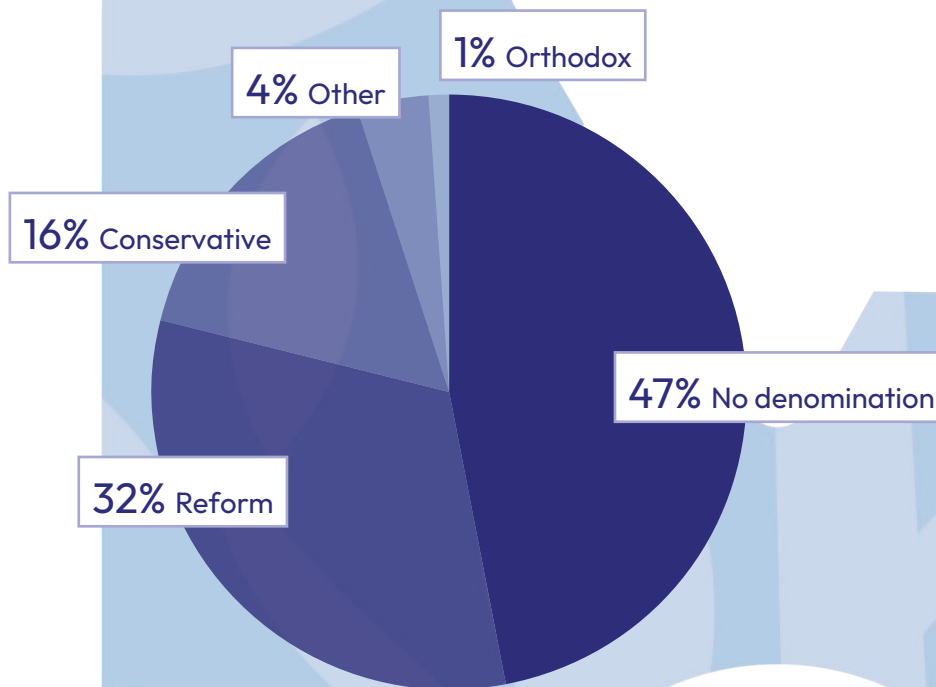
72% of K-12 children are not enrolled in formal Jewish education  
According to respondents in those households  
49% said Jewish education was not important  
29% said that there was not a good religious fit  
19% said that cost was a barrier

# Congregations and Ritual Life

## Congregations

20% of Jewish households belong to a congregation, minyan, or chavurah

## Denominational Preference



## Ritual Life

51% of Jewish adults say engaging in Jewish ritual is essential to being Jewish



In the year preceding the survey:

83% lit Hanukkah candles

80% attended a Seder

67% attended at least one service

51% attended a High Holiday service

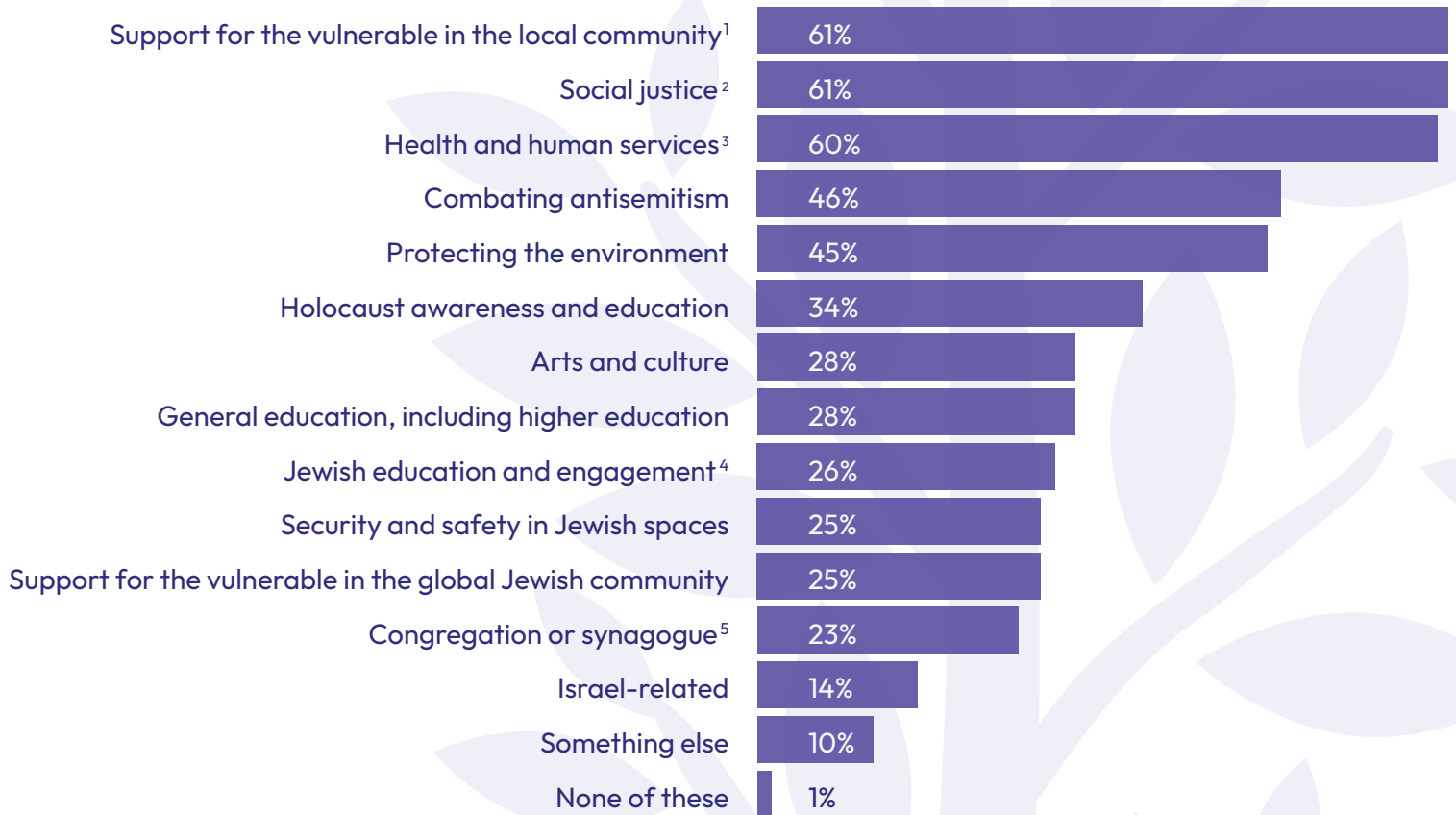
34% fasted on Yom Kippur

31% followed any kosher rules

13% routinely observed Shabbat

# Community Values and Philanthropy

## Important Causes for Jewish Adults



<sup>1</sup> refugee resettlement, food insecurity, aging services

<sup>2</sup> economic, racial

<sup>3</sup> homelessness, poverty, mental health, domestic abuse

<sup>4</sup> including Jewish summer camps, Israel programs, Hillel, etc.

<sup>5</sup> not including dues and tuition

## Philanthropy

In the year preceding the survey

80% of Jewish households made a charitable contribution

Among Immersed households, 100% made a charitable contribution

47% of Jewish households donated to at least one Jewish organization

9% of Jewish households donated to Jewish Federation

## Volunteering

46% of Jewish adults volunteered somewhere in the year preceding the survey

7% of these volunteered exclusively for or with Jewish organizations



# Community Connections

Of Jewish adults in Washtenaw County

**88%** feel connected to the Jewish people

**35%** feel connected to the Washtenaw Jewish community

In the year preceding the survey

**56%** said someone from a Jewish organization reached out to them

**44%** were asked for a financial donation

**63%** attended at least one Jewish program

**5%** belong to the JCC

**22%** belong to a Jewish organization other than the JCC

**11%** belong to informal or grassroots Jewish group

## Opportunities for Connection and Barriers to Participation



**88%** feel more welcome when they know someone at a Jewish event

**40%** said they had few or no close friends who are Jewish

**19%** felt uncomfortable because they were not confident in their Jewish knowledge

**40%** have never participated in a Jewish-sponsored event

**32%** said they had not found Jewish activities that interested them

**43%** are not at all (4%) or not too satisfied (39%) with their level of participation in Jewish life

**95%** of those in interfaith households describe Jewish organizations as somewhat or very welcoming

**21%** felt unwelcome at Jewish events

36% of Jewish people who identify as LGBTQ+ and 19% of Jewish people who identify as a Person of Color feel unwelcome at Jewish events

**40%** of those who have lived in the area fewer than 5 years see Jewish organizations as very welcoming to newcomers

Among Jewish adults who identify as or live with a Person of Color

**69%** describe Jewish organizations as somewhat welcoming

**12%** describe Jewish organizations as very welcoming

# Connections to Israel

Data collected before  
October 7, 2023

## Connections

Among Jewish adults **58%** feel some level of emotional attachment to Israel

57% have been to Israel

61% closely follow news about Israel



## Feelings About Israel

**89%** believe it is important that Israel give equal recognition to Jews of all denominations

64% strongly feel that Israel should exist as a refuge for the Jewish people

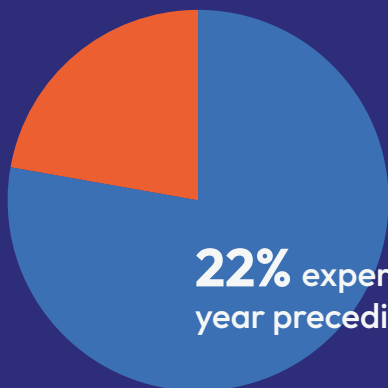
47% strongly feel that Israel's treatment of Palestinians is a violation of human rights

46% strongly feel that Israel is under constant threat from hostile neighbors

About **50%** of respondents, mainly very liberal Jews, feel their views about Israel are not welcome in Jewish settings

**1%** of respondents almost always agree with Israel's policies and actions

# Antisemitism



**22%** experienced antisemitism in the year preceding the survey

69% are concerned about antisemitism in the U.S.

45% are concerned about antisemitism on college campuses

# Health and Social Service Needs

23% of Jewish households include someone with a chronic health issue, special needs, or a disability

48% of Jewish adults needed support for health and social services in the year preceding the survey

More than half of Jewish adults describe their support network as a few people or no one



## Mental and Emotional Health

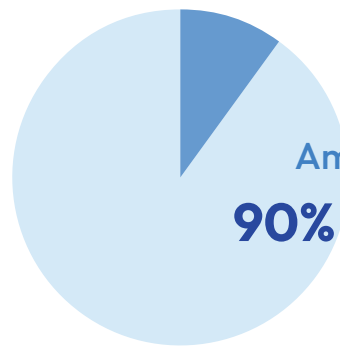
33% say they needed mental health services in the past year

8% say they often or always felt lonely in the previous week

Loneliness is most prevalent among those ages 22-39

## Information and Access

20% of households in which someone had a health issue say services received in the past year were inadequate



## Aging

Among those over 55  
90% wish to age in place

50% are concerned about feeling isolated  
67% worry about future physical and mental health needs

# Financial Well-Being

34% of Jewish households say they have enough money  
25% describe themselves as well-off

35% of struggling households cannot afford a \$400 emergency expense

1 in 6 Jewish households say they are struggling financially

13% of Jewish adults say cost limits participation in Jewish activities

# About the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

## Our Vision

A vibrant, welcoming, inclusive, secure, and sustainable Jewish community in greater Ann Arbor, Israel, and around the world.

## Our Mission

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor provides and inspires philanthropic leadership and community building to nurture a strong, engaged, connected, caring, vibrant, and enduring community locally, in Israel, and around the world.

## Our Pillars

Federation's work is guided by three Pillars: Philanthropy, Engagement, and Convening.



**Jewish Federation**  
of Greater Ann Arbor