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OF GREATER METROWEST NJ

## 2020 Greater MetroWest NJ **Jewish Community Study**



# **Philanthropy and Volunteering**

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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.

The Cohen Center is also the home of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI). Established in 2005, SSRI uses innovative research methods to collect and analyze sociodemographic data on the Jewish community.

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# INTRODUCTION

The 2020 Greater MetroWest Jewish Community Study, conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University, employed innovative state-of-the-art methods to create a comprehensive portrait of the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of the Jewish community in Greater MetroWest New Jersey (GMW). The principal goal of this study is to highlight data and findings that will be useful for the Greater MetroWest Jewish Federation and other community organizations and funders for communal planning. This study is intended to promote an understanding of the community and to aid strategic planning, program development, and policies to support and enhance Jewish life.

The study overview report<sup>1</sup> serves as an introduction to all of the topic reports. It provides key findings, terminology, and a summary of the methodology used in the study.

This topic report focuses on philanthropy and volunteering. Related reports cover:

- Community connections
- Finances
- Geography
- Israel
- Jewish children
- Jewish engagement
- Seniors/Health and disability

More details about each item are available in the report appendix and through analysis of the dataset.

## Greater MetroWest Jewish population, 2020

Total Jewish households	56,800
Total people in Jewish households	155,000
Total Jews	122,300
<b>Adults</b>	
Jewish	96,900
Non-Jewish	26,600
<b>Children</b>	
Jewish	25,400
Non-Jewish	4,300

Numbers do not add up to total due to rounding.

The present study provides a portrait of the Greater MetroWest Jewish community as it was in the fall of 2020, six months into the COVID-19 pandemic. Although some survey responses were likely to be influenced by the special circumstances of the pandemic, the questions were designed to

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<sup>1</sup> View at <<https://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/community-studies/greater-metrowest-nj-report.html>>

provide a demographic and attitudinal portrait of the stable characteristics of the community. The survey questionnaire was developed by CMJS in consultation with the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ. As necessary, questions were modified to account for changes in usual patterns of behavior during the pandemic.

In total, 3,295 eligible households completed surveys between October 1 and December 11, 2020. The response rate for the primary sample, which was designed to be representative of the entire community, was 33.4% (AAPOR RR4<sup>2</sup>).

### Notes on this report:

- In order to extrapolate respondent data to the entire community, individual respondents were assigned a “survey weight” so that their survey responses represent the proportion of the overall community that has similar demographic characteristics. Unless otherwise specified, this report presents weighted survey data in the form of percentages or proportions. Accordingly, these data should be read not as the percentage or proportion of respondents who answered each question in a given way, but as the percentage or proportion of the population that we estimate would answer each question in that way if each member of the population had been surveyed.
- 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 “—”.
- 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. In the tables in this report, we designate these differences by shading them light gray. Findings that are not statistically significant are not shaded. 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, even when a table is statistically significant, differences between any two numbers of less than 10 percentage points may not reflect true differences in the population.
- When reporting qualitative or open-ended data, the report indicates the total number of responses that mentioned a particular code or theme. This number appears in parentheses after the response without a percent sign, or in tables labeled as “n” or number of responses. In most cases, sample quotes are also included, with identifying information removed and edited for clarity. These responses are not representative of the views of all community members but add context and depth to the representative quantitative data included in the report.

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<sup>2</sup> American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) is a professional organization that sets standards for survey research.

- Comparisons across surveys: As part of the goal to assess trends, we made comparisons of answers to data from national studies (in particular, the CMJS/SSRI American Jewish Population Project ([ajpp.brandeis.edu](http://ajpp.brandeis.edu)) and the Pew Research Center report, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020” (Washington DC: Pew Research Center, 2021). <https://www.pewforum.org/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>

# KEY FINDINGS: PHILANTHROPY AND VOLUNTEERING

- About two thirds of GMW households donated to Jewish organizations in the past year. About one-in-five Jewish households (19%) donated only to non-Jewish causes, and 13% made no charitable donations.
- Among Jewish households that donated to any Jewish organization, more than one third donated to a synagogue (aside from dues).
- Among Jewish households that donated to any Jewish organization, 16% donated to Federation. This represents 10% of all GMW Jewish households.
- Other than the youngest age group, Jewish households of all ages donated to Jewish organizations at roughly equal rates. However, older households were more likely to donate to Federation. The youngest age groups made the fewest donations of any type.
- A larger share of Essex Jewish households donated to Federation. Western GMW includes the smallest share of Federation donors. Long-time Jewish residents are more likely to be Federation donors than are newcomers.
- Although well-off Jewish households have the highest *rate* of donation to Federation, they do not constitute the majority of Federation donors because they represent only 17% of all households. The largest *share* of Federation donors described their financial situation as having “enough” money, despite a significantly lower rate of giving.
- Nearly three quarters of all Jewish adults reported they are familiar with Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ.
- About one-in-three GMW Jewish adults gave Federation a positive rating, with 11% describing it as excellent and 23% as good.
- Among Jewish households that made any donations, 61% said that one of the primary reasons was their interest in a particular cause. Just over half of Jewish households (53%) said they donated because the organization benefited them or someone close to them.
- Nearly half of Jewish adults selected human service needs as a top philanthropic cause. Other top causes include social justice, environment and climate, and health care and research.
- One-in-five Jewish adults (21%) reported that they volunteered with or served in a leadership role in a Jewish organization in GMW in the past year.



# PHILANTHROPY

Across all Jewish *households* of GMW, 65% donated to Jewish organizations in the past year (Table 1). About one-in-five (19%) Jewish households donated only to non-Jewish causes, and 13% made no charitable donations. Nationally, 48% of Jewish *adults* donated to a Jewish cause.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1. Donor type**

	All Jewish households (%)
Any Jewish organization	65
Only to non-Jewish	19
No donation	13
Don't know	3
Total	100

Among Jewish households that made any charitable donations in the past year, just over three quarters gave to at least one Jewish charity. Four percent gave only to only Jewish charities (Table 2).

**Table 2. Jewish versus non-Jewish charitable donations**

	Jewish households that made a donation in the past year (%)
All Jewish	4
Mostly Jewish	12
About equal	26
Mostly non-Jewish	35
All non-Jewish	23
Total	100

Among Jewish households that donated to any Jewish organization, more than one third donated to a synagogue (aside from dues) (Table 3). Among Jewish households that donated to any Jewish organization, 16% donated to Federation. This represents 10% of all GMW Jewish households.

**Table 3. Types of organizations that received donations**

	Jewish households that donated to a Jewish organization (%)	All Jewish households (%)
Synagogue, other than dues	38	24
Other Jewish organization	34	22
Federation	16	10
Jewish-sponsored local agency	15	10
Jewish school or camp	12	8
None of these	30	20

Note: Columns do not sum to 100%; respondents could select multiple options.

<sup>4</sup> Pew Research Center, "Jewish Americans in 2020."

Among Jewish households that made any donations, 61% said that one of the primary reasons for the donation was their interest in a particular cause (Table 4). Just over half of Jewish households (53%) said they donated because the organization benefited them or someone close to them.

**Table 4. Reasons for charitable donations in the past year**

	Jewish households that made a donation in the past year (%)
An opportunity to be directly involved in a cause of interest	61
A desire to support an organization that benefited you or someone close to you	53
Being asked to give by someone you know personally	44
As part of your commitment to being Jewish	38
To support organizations that allocate funds on your behalf	14
None of these	8

Note: Does not sum to 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

## Characteristics of donor households

In GMW, about two thirds of Jewish households donated to Jewish organizations, and 10% contributed to the Jewish Federation of Greater Metro West NJ (Table 5).

Other than the youngest age group, Jewish households of all ages donated to Jewish organizations at roughly equal rates. However, older Jewish households were more likely to donate to Federation. The youngest age groups made the fewest donations of any type.

Jewish households that are more Jewishly engaged and those that feel more connected to the local Jewish community were more likely to donate to any Jewish organization and specifically to Federation. A larger share of Essex Jewish households donated to Federation (12%). Western GMW includes the smallest share (5%) of Federation donors. Long-time residents are more likely to be Federation donors than are newcomers.

Jewish households that are financially well-off were more likely to make donations both to Jewish and non-Jewish organizations.

Table 5. Rates of Jewish charitable and Federation giving by household characteristics

	Types of donations in past year				Federation donor (%)
	None or don't know (%)	Only to non-Jewish (%)	Any Jewish (%)	Total (%)	
<b>All Jewish households</b>	15	19	65	100	10
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	42	15	43	100	2
35-49	14	24	62	100	5
50-64	12	19	69	100	9
65-74	13	22	64	100	11
75+	23	10	67	100	18
<b>Region</b>					
Essex	16	17	66	100	12
Union	12	20	68	100	10
Morris	14	20	66	100	11
Western GMW	20	18	61	100	5
<b>Jewish engagement</b>					
Minimally Involved	31	30	38	100	3
Familial	13	35	53	100	6
Personal	18	8	74	100	9
Involved	7	6	86	100	16
Immersed	5	<1	95	100	26
<b>Household composition</b>					
Households with minor children	15	20	65	100	5
Couple, no children	16	16	67	100	14
Single, no children	17	17	66	100	15
Multiple adults, no children	13	21	66	100	9
<b>Years in area</b>					
0-4 years	7	24	69	100	5
5-9 years	20	16	64	100	4
10-19 years	12	23	65	100	9
20+ years	16	18	66	100	11
<b>Financial situation</b>					
Struggling	28	13	60	100	4
Enough	15	23	61	100	9
Extra	8	21	70	100	11
Well-off	13	13	74	100	17
<b>Connection to local Jewish community</b>					
Not at all	21	35	44	100	3
A little	15	20	65	100	6
Somewhat	13	3	84	100	14
Very much	8	1	91	100	27

Although well-off Jewish households have the highest *rate* of donation to Federation (Table 5), they do not constitute the majority of Federation donors because they represent only 17% of all households. The largest *share* (37%) of Federation donors describe their financial situation as having “enough” money, despite a significantly lower rate of giving (Table 6).

Table 6. Share of Federation donors by financial situation

	Struggling (%)	Enough (%)	Extra (%)	Well-off (%)	Total (%)
<b>All Jewish households</b>	17	41	24	17	100
Federation donor households	7	37	26	30	100

## Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ

As noted above, one-in-ten Jewish households donated to Federation in the past year. A much larger proportion of adults are at least aware of the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ, with three quarters of all Jewish adults reporting they are familiar with the organization (Table 7).

Table 7. Familiarity with Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ

	All Jewish adults (%)
Not aware of Federation	25
Aware of Federation, did not donate	64
Donated to Federation	11
Total	100

Respondents who were familiar with Federation were asked to rate its overall performance for the community. Over half of GMW Jewish adults did not provide a rating because they were unfamiliar with Federation (24%) or were not able to rate its performance (30%) (Table 8). About one-in-three GMW Jewish adults gave Federation a positive rating, with 11% describing it as excellent and 23% as good.

Table 8. Rating of Federation overall performance for the community

	All Jewish adults (%)
Excellent	11
Good	23
Neutral	10
Fair	2
Poor	1
Don't know	30
Not aware of Federation	25
Total	100

# VOLUNTEERING

Jewish adults of GMW connect with the local community as volunteers and leaders in Jewish organizations. Twenty-one percent of Jewish adults reported that they volunteered with or served as a leader for a Jewish organization in GMW in the past year, including 10% who did so one to three times, 4% who volunteered or lead four to nine times, and 7% who volunteered or lead 10 or more times (Table 9).

**Table 9. Volunteering and leadership in Jewish organizations (Jewish adults)**

	Helped as a volunteer (%)	Served in leadership role (%)	Helped as a volunteer or served in a leadership role (%)
Never	83	88	79
1-3 times	11	5	10
4-9 times	3	2	4
10 or more times	4	5	7
Total	100	100	100

There are higher rates of volunteering with Jewish organizations among Jewish adults ages 35-49, Jewish households in the Immersed and Involved engagement groups, Jewish households with children, financially well-off Jewish households, and Jewish households with stronger levels of connection to a local Jewish community (Table 10).

Table 10. Any volunteering in past year with Jewish organizations

	Any volunteering or leadership (%)
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	21
<b>Age</b>	
18-34	20
35-49	30
50-64	22
65-74	19
75+	11
<b>Region</b>	
Essex	25
Union	31
Morris	17
Western GMW	12
<b>Jewish engagement</b>	
Minimally Involved	6
Familial	<1
Personal	7
Involved	62
Immersed	60
<b>Household composition</b>	
Households with minor children	29
Couple, no children	18
Single, no children	14
Multiple adults, no children	18
<b>Financial situation</b>	
Struggling	15
Enough	21
Extra	20
Well off	28
<b>Connection to local Jewish community</b>	
Not at all	3
A little	14
Somewhat	31
Very much	50
<b>Donated in past year</b>	
No/Don't know	8
Only to non-Jewish org.	5
Jewish org., but not federation	25
Federation donor	48

# CAUSES AND CONCERNS

As stated above in Table 4, 61% of Jewish donors indicated that their philanthropy is guided by causes that they care about. Respondents were asked to identify three causes they support or care about most from a selected list (Table 11). Nearly half of Jewish adults (49%) selected human service needs as a top cause. Other top causes included social justice, environment and climate, and health care and research.

Table 11. Top three causes for Jewish adults in GMW

	All Jewish adults (%)
Human service needs (e.g., homelessness, poverty, food insecurity, counseling, domestic abuse)	49
Social justice (e.g., income inequality, racism, discrimination)	40
Environment and climate	38
Health care and research	36
Politics (political campaigns, voter turnout)	31
Antisemitism	27
Israel	22
Arts & culture	22
Jewish life including Jewish education, synagogues, and outreach	18
Other	6

Note: Column does not sum to 100% because respondents could select up to three causes.

Although the pattern of concerns was similar for many subgroups of GMW Jewish adults, there were some notable differences. Differences in interest by Jewish engagement group are illustrated in Table 12. Jewish adults in the Immersed group are most concerned about Jewish life and human service needs. Jewish adults in the Minimally Involved group are most concerned about human service needs and the environment. There were no statistically significant differences in interest in social justice and arts and culture by Jewish engagement groups.

Table 12. Interest in causes by Jewish engagement

	Human service needs	Social justice	Environment and climate	Health care and research	Politics	Antisemitism	Israel	Arts & culture	Jewish life
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	49	40	38	36	31	27	22	22	18
Minimally Involved	50	35	44	36	37	19	21	29	5
Familial	52	46	43	48	32	31	8	20	2
Personal	30	38	31	37	42	39	32	18	13
Involved	54	54	41	31	27	29	14	22	19
Immersed	50	42	22	18	16	29	43	17	52

Differences in interest among Federation donors, donors to other Jewish causes, donors to non-Jewish causes, and non-donors are illustrated in Table 13. Among Federation donors, interest in

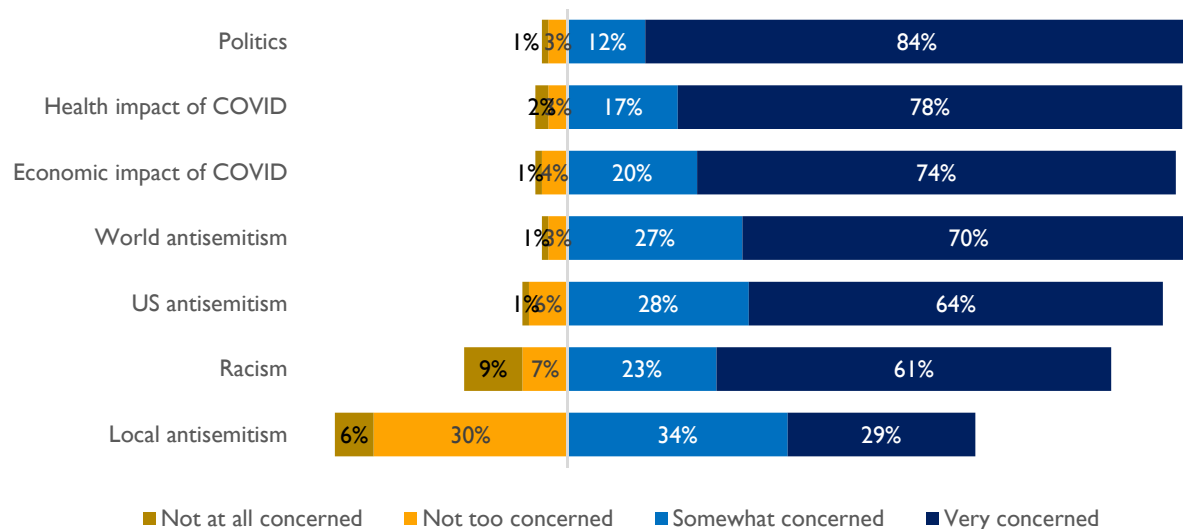
Jewish life was higher than among all other Jewish adults, and interest in the environment was lower. There were no significant differences in interest for many causes for donors and non-donors.

**Table 13. Interest in causes among donors and non-donors in past year**

	Human service needs	Social justice	Environment and climate	Health care and research	Politics	Antisemitism	Israel	Arts & culture	Jewish life
<b>All Jewish adults</b>	49	40	38	36	31	27	22	22	18
Fed donor	51	40	22	36	31	24	31	16	39
Other Jewish	44	43	31	34	33	33	30	22	19
Non-Jewish only	46	53	49	41	38	18	3	27	0
No/Don't know	46	33	51	37	25	42	15	14	5

The 2020 survey was conducted during a tumultuous period in the United States, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, widespread protests about racism, and the run-up to the 2020 presidential election. To contextualize concerns of Jewish adults during this period, the survey asked about Jewish and general concerns. Eighty-four percent of Jewish adults were very concerned about issues related to politics, and 78% were very concerned about the health impact of COVID-19. Twenty-nine percent of Jewish adults were very concerned about local antisemitism.

**Figure 1. Level of concern about current issues**



Question text: Thinking about recent events in the United States and around the world, how concerned are you about each of the following?



# 2020 Greater MetroWest NJ Jewish Community Study

 (973) 929-3198

 [info@jfedgmw.org](mailto:info@jfedgmw.org)

 @jfedgmw

 @jfedgmw

 @JewishGMW

 [jfedgmw.org](http://jfedgmw.org)

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**Headquarters:**  
901 Route 10, Whippany, New Jersey 07981

**Regional Office:**  
1391 Martine Avenue, Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076

(973) 929-3000 • Fax: (973) 884-7361