

2014

GREATER SEATTLE JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDY



SECTION M: YOUNG ADULTS

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for Modern Jewish Studies

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Introduction and Overview

For the purposes of this study, young adults are defined as those between the ages of 18-35 who do not yet have children. They include college students living at school whose parents still consider them part of the household; college graduates living at home with their families, and young adults who have moved to the areas for jobs or school. Like others of the “millennial generation,” Jewish young adults are less likely to join established institutions and therefore have been difficult to attract to the organized Jewish community.¹ Those who live with or near their families might participate in Jewish activities through family connections, but those new to the area might have particular challenges in developing ties to the local community.

Jewish young adults	
Total Jewish young adults	9,800
Living with parents	5,200
Living away from parents	4,600
Households with young adults	6,000

Among Greater Seattle Jewish adults, 17% are between the ages of 18 and 35 and either live with their parents or live in households without any children.² Of all Jewish households, 9% are composed only of young adults. About 18% of households include at least one young adult.³

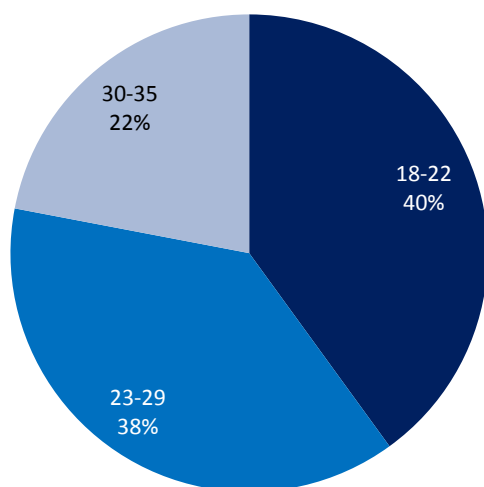
Below, analyses of individual attributes, such as religion raised and employment status, compare Jewish young adults with the rest of the adult Jewish population. Analyses of household-level information, such as synagogue membership or standard of living, compare Jewish households in which at least one young adult resides compared to all other Jewish households.

Two batteries of questions were asked about young adults in this study. One battery was answered by other adults in the household, typically parents whose young adult children live with them; the second battery was answered by young adults who responded to the survey themselves. About 40% of young adults responded to this survey themselves, and the information about the other 60% was gained from respondents in households in which they live. Parents provided information about their adult children’s schooling, work, and reasons for living with parents. Questions about Jewish engagement and attitudes were asked only of the young adults themselves.

Demographics of Jewish Young Adults

Of the 9,800 Jewish adults age 18-35 who do not have children, slightly more than half (53%) are female. The age distribution is shown in Figure M.1.

Figure M.I. Age of Jewish Young Adults



Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=703

Just over half (53%) usually live with their parents. About two-thirds (70%) of those who are part of their parents' household, however, are students who live elsewhere for some or most of the year. Those who live outside their parents' household primarily live throughout all of the sections of the City of Seattle except the Southwest; three-quarters (75%) live within the city. In contrast, over half (52%) of those who live in their parents' household live outside Seattle (Table M.1).

Table M.I. Residence of Young Adults

	Outside parent HH	In parent HH
Southeast Seattle	19	15
Northeast Seattle	18	17
Northwest Seattle	19	12
Downtown and Surrounding Neighborhoods	19	3
Southwest Seattle	1	1
Other King County	9	18
Outside King County	6	10
Bellevue	5	11
Mercer Island	3	11
Redmond	1	2

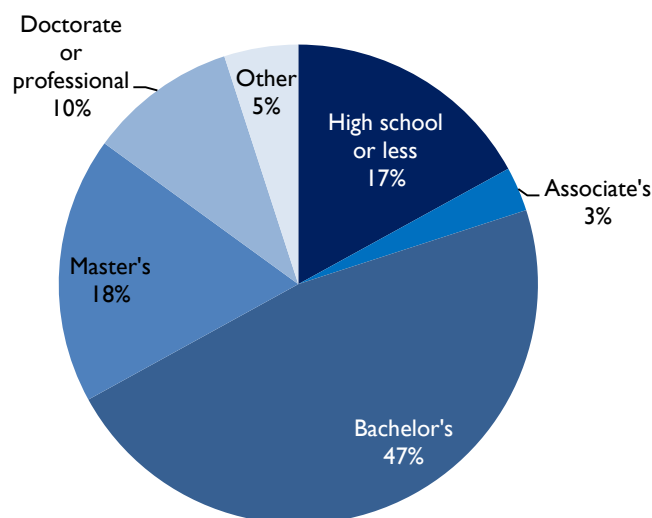
Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=703

Schooling and Employment

Almost half (47%) of young adults are currently enrolled in school (n=668), either full-time (42%) or part-time (5%). Among those who are students, 9% are earning associate's degrees, two-thirds (64%) are undergraduates, and 27% are in graduate or other programs (n=326).

Of young adults not in school, about half (47%) have completed a bachelor's degree and another quarter (28%) hold graduate degrees (Figure M.2).⁴

Figure M.2. Educational Attainment of Jewish Young Adults Not Currently in School



Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=390

About half (52%) of Seattle young adults are currently working, with 47% working full-time and 5% working part-time (Table M.2). About one-third (32%) are both working and in school either full or part-time. Ten percent are neither employed nor in school. About one-third (29%) are currently looking for work, including 20% of those who currently work full-time (n=620).

Table M.2. Employment and Student Status

Employment status	Student status			Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Not a student	
Full-time	8	19	20	47
Part-time	1	4	1	5
Not employed	9	29	10	48
Total	18	51	31	100

Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=620

Occupations

The most common occupational fields held by young adults are science, engineering, and software development (19%); research or data analysis (15%); business ownership or management (13%); and marketing, sales, or retail (10%). All occupations that were listed by at least 5% of young adults are shown in Table M.3.

Table M.3. Occupations

Occupation category	%
Engineer/scientist/software	19
Research/data analysis	15
Business - owner or manager	13
Marketing/sales/retail	10
Higher education	9
Medical/healthcare	9
Non-profit, government, public policy	8
Economics/finance/accounting	7
Social services/social work	7
Art/design	6
Jewish professional	6
Writer/editor	6
Pre-K-12 education	5
Other professional	5

Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=248. Total does not add to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one occupation. Only occupations indicated by 5% or more of respondents are shown.

Religious Background

Religion information was provided by the respondent, typically the parent, when the young adults live in a parent's house and by the young adult himself or herself when he or she was the respondent. For that reason, religious identification may differ reflecting how parents describe their adult child's Jewish identity compared to how those young adults describe themselves. To illustrate this difference, among those who do not live with their parents, 58% consider themselves to be JBR and the remaining 42% are JNR; of those for whom information was provided by parents, 70% are JBR and 30% are JNR (n=693). Comparing denominational affiliation for the two groups, the group living away from parents are more likely to be Conservative and secular/cultural Jews, and less likely to be Reform and "Just Jewish" (Table M.4).

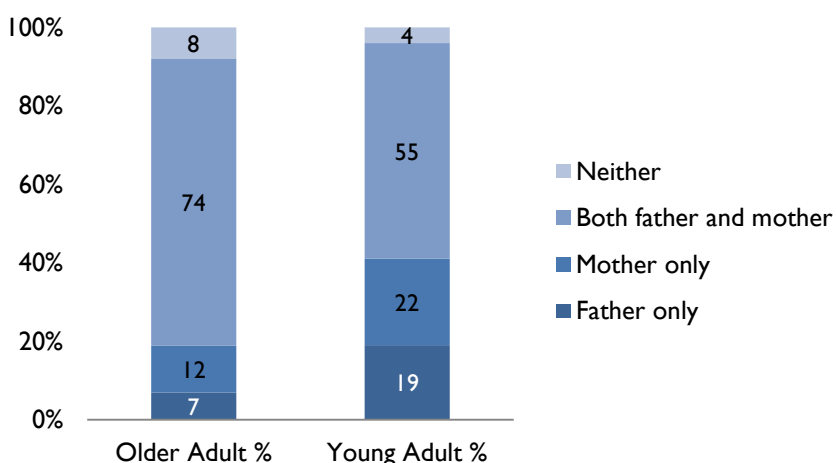
Table M.4. Denominational Affiliation of Jewish Young Adults

Denomination	Outside parent HH	In parent HH	Total
Orthodox	8	6	7
Conservative	17	10	14
Reconstructionist	1	2	2
Reform	21	32	27
Renewal	<1	<1	<1
Secular/culturally Jewish	32	21	26
Just Jewish	19	28	24
Other	1	<1	1

Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=693

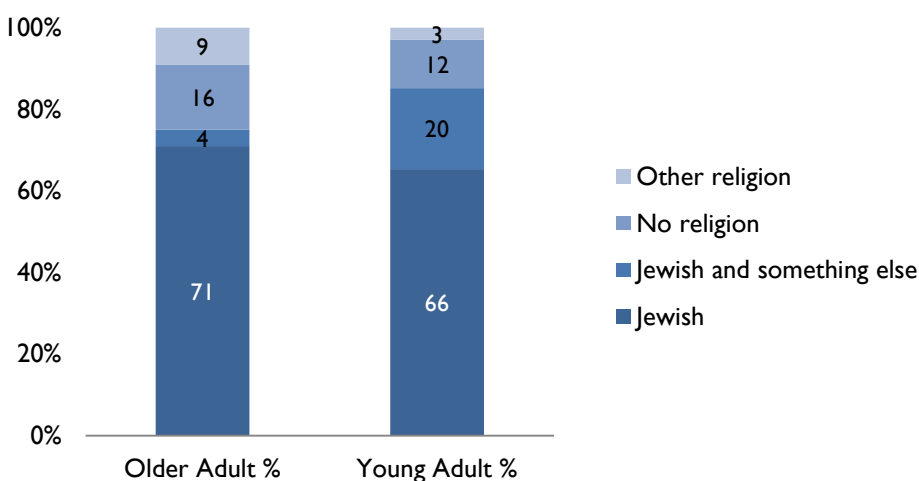
Today's young adults are much more likely to have been raised by one Jewish parent (41%), compared to older adults (19%; Figure M.3). Similarly, young adults are far more likely to have been raised in Judaism and another religion (20%) compared to older adults (4%), as shown in Figure M.4.

Figure M.3. Jewish Parent



Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,911*

Figure M.4. Religion Raised



Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,922*

Dating and Marriage

Concerns about marriage, and particularly intermarriage, are a frequent theme in examinations of the lives of young adults. Age of marriage is later than it was for previous generations, particularly for non-Orthodox Jews. This trend is evident in the Greater Seattle Jewish community as well. Overall, one-third of young adults are married or living with a fiancée or partner (Table M.5). Of those age 30-35, 40% are married, compared to just 10% of those in their 20s.

Because Orthodox Jews tend to marry at younger ages and almost universally marry Jews, the analysis of Jewish marriage and dating (Table M.6) is limited to non-Orthodox Jews. Among non-Orthodox Jewish young adults, few partners and significant others are Jewish. For those who are living with a significant other, only 27% of those partners are Jewish; among those who are dating but not living with someone, only 18% of those boy- or girlfriends are Jewish. However, for those who are married or engaged, about half (48% of married; 52% of engaged) of partners are Jewish.

Table M.5. Marital Status by Age

Status	18-22	23-29	30-35	Total young adults
Married	3	10	40	21
Living with fiancé/e	0	5	4	5
Living with significant other/partner	3	17	7	13
Unmarried, in a relationship	10	14	8	11
Unmarried, not in a relationship	84	54	40	50
Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=337				

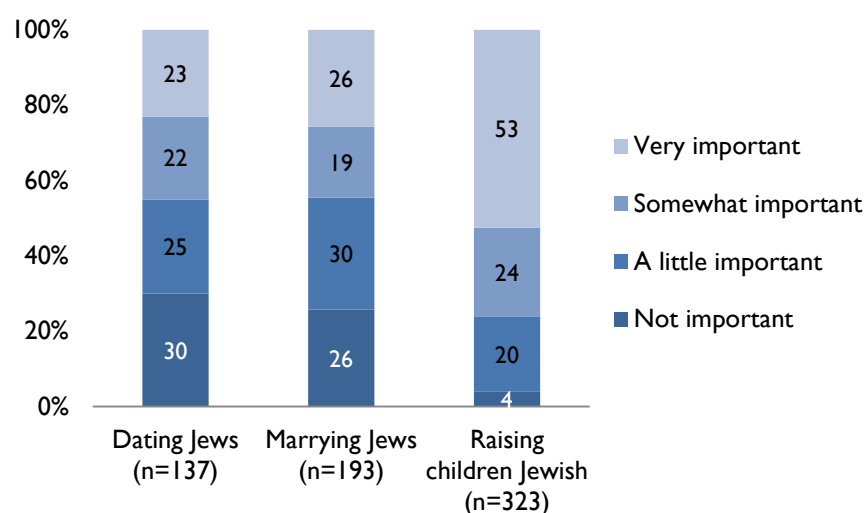
Table M.6. Marital Status and Religion of Partner, Non-Orthodox only

Status	% (n=332)	% Jewish (n=187)
Married	20	48
Living with fiancé/e	5	52
Living with significant other/partner	13	27
Unmarried, in a relationship	12	18
Unmarried, not in a relationship	50	N/A
Note: Weighted estimates, %		

This higher rate of Jewish partners among married and engaged young adults compared to those in less permanent relationships could indicate that Jewish young adults are willing to have relationships with non-Jewish partners but less willing to marry them. However, it does not appear that those who are not currently in a relationship think it is more important to marry Jews than to date Jews. Young adults who are not in a relationship are evenly split on the importance of dating someone Jewish, and young adults who are unmarried are similarly divided on the importance of marrying someone Jewish (Figure M.5).

Notably, over half (53%) of all young adult Jews thought it was very important to raise their children Jewish and nearly all (96%) thought it was at least a little important. Given the prevalence of Jewish young adults who have been raised by one Jewish parent, it seems that Jewish young adults expect that they will raise their children Jewish regardless of the religion of their spouse. This expectation suggests that these Jewish young adults will be open to re-engagement with the Jewish community if and when they eventually have children.

Figure M.5. Importance of Jewish Relationships and Children



Note: Weighted estimates, %

Jewish Education

Consistent with the overall rise in American Jews' participation in Jewish education documented by Pew,⁵ Jewish young adults in Greater Seattle are more likely to have participated in some form of Jewish education (76%) than are older adults (66%, n=2,977). Young adults are more likely to have had a bar or bat mitzvah as a child (62%) than are older Jewish adults (46%, n=2,712) and are more likely to have attended a Jewish camp. The forms of education in which Jewish young adults have participated are shown in Table M.7.

Table M.7. Past Jewish Education

Form of education	Other adult%	Young adult %
Day school (n=2,400)*	13	26
Supplementary school (n=2,607)	67	67
Jewish camp (n=2,530)*	45	60
Jewish youth group (n=2,497)	47	53
Note: Weighted estimates, %		

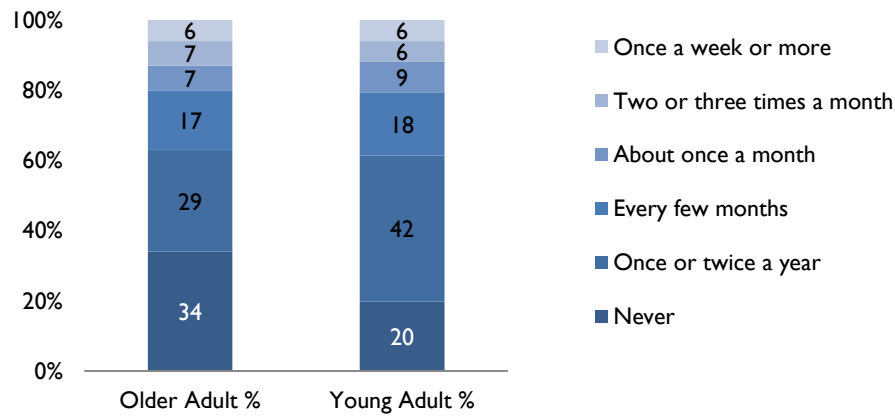
Synagogue Membership and Participation

One-quarter of young adults (27%) are synagogue members or reside in a household in which someone is a synagogue member, compared to 41% of other adults Jews (n=2,857). This rate, however, is dependent upon living in a parent's household. Among those who live with parents, 59% live in a synagogue-member household; among those who do not live with parents, 27% live in a synagogue-member household (n=667).

Although frequent synagogue attendance is similar between young adults and the overall population (Figure M.6), young adults are more likely to attend services once or twice a year (42%) compared to the rest of the population (29%). Their once-a-year attendance is not necessarily for High Holiday

services; there is no significant difference in their level of High Holiday service attendance (64%) from that of the rest of the population.

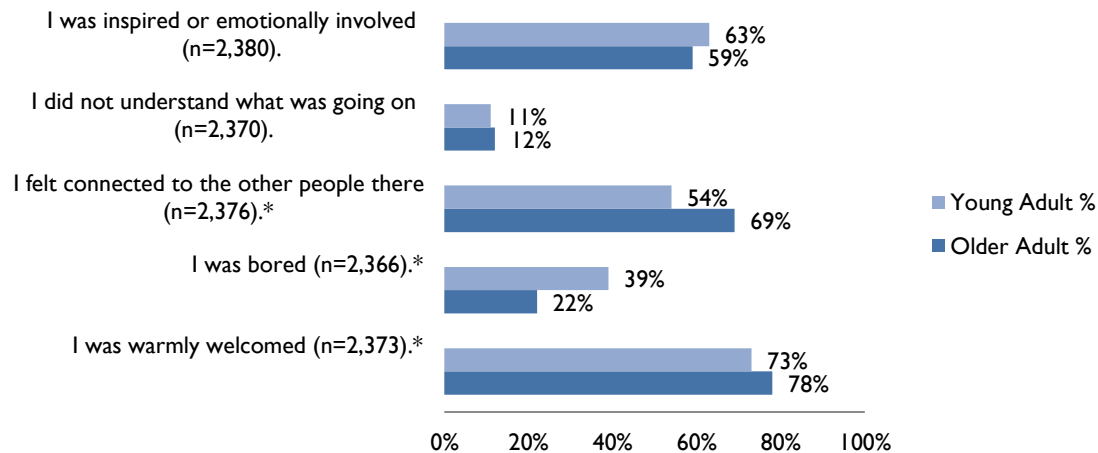
Figure M.6. Attendance at Religious Services



Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,818*

Respondents were asked about their most recent experiences at a Jewish religious service (Figure M.7). Young adults were significantly less likely to report receiving a warm welcome or to feel connected during services, and were more likely to feel bored than were other Jewish adults.

Figure M.7. Perception of Religious Services

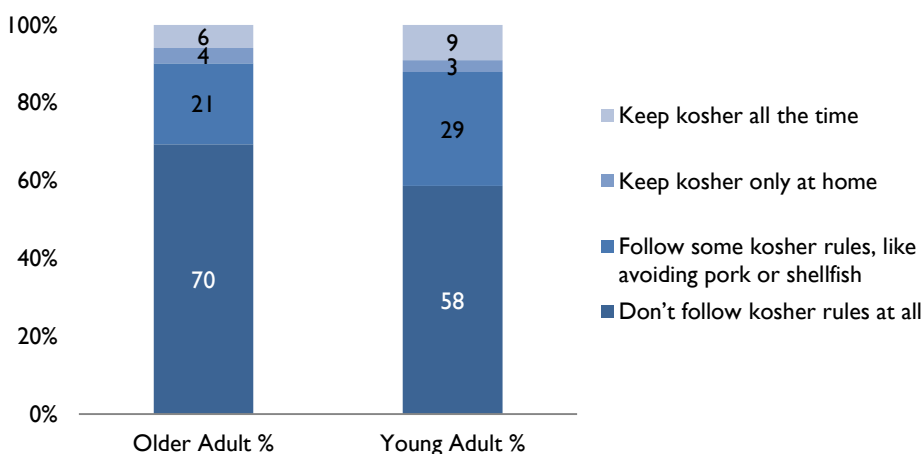


Note: Jewish respondents only, weighted estimates, %; n=2,818*

Home-Based Ritual Behavior

Nearly all (95%) young adults light Hanukkah candles, a significant difference from the 81% among the rest of the population (n=2,860). Young adults are also more likely to participate in Passover seders (85%) than the older Jewish adult population (77%; n=2,866). Young Jewish adults are slightly more likely to follow some form of kashrut than are other Jewish adults (Figure M.8).

Figure M.8. Kashrut Observance



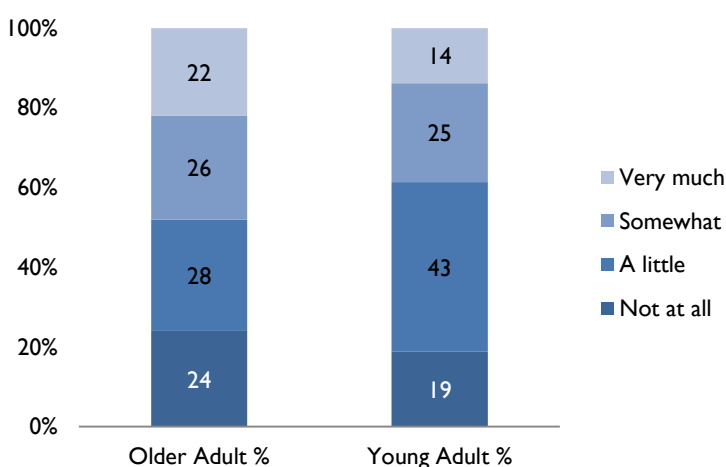
Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,771*

Social Networks

Young adults have a somewhat moderate attachment to the local Jewish community. Although few (14%) feel very connected, four-in-five (81%) feel at least a little connected (Figure M.9). In most measures of connection to the Jewish community, including Israel and the worldwide Jewish community, young adults are similar to the overall population. In addition, young adults do not have more or fewer Jewish friends than do the rest of the population.

Compared to the rest of the community, young adults are less likely to be completely disconnected (19% compared to 24%) and less likely to be very connected (14% compared to 22%). They are more likely to be a little connected (43% compared to 28%).

Figure M.9. Feeling of Connection to Local Jewish Community

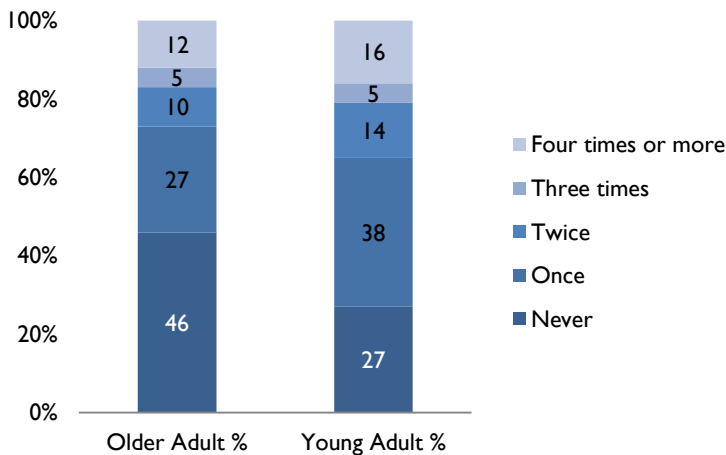


Note: Jewish respondents only, weighted estimates, %; n=2,818*

Travel to Israel

Young adults are more likely to have visited Israel than are older adults. Three-quarters (73%) of young adults have been to Israel compared to 54% of older adults (Figure M.10). Among young adults, 42% went to Israel on a Taglit-Birthright Israel program and another 10% applied to Taglit-Birthright Israel but did not participate (n=715). Despite reports of declining attachment to Israel among young adults, there is no significant difference between young adults' connection to Israel and that of older adults on all of the measures included in this report.

Figure M.10. Visited Israel

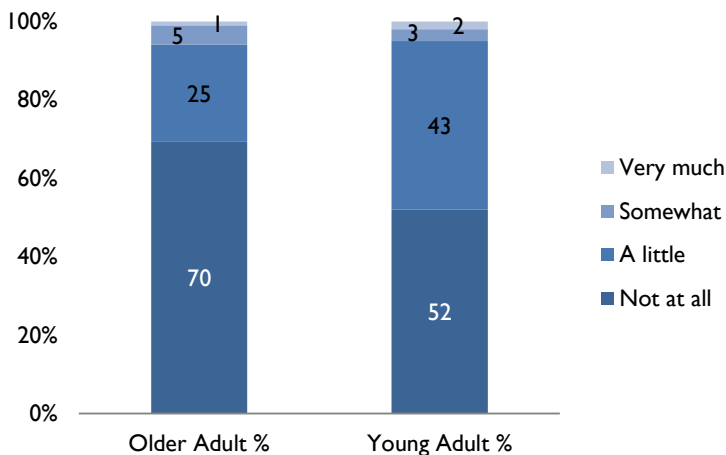


Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,729*

Antisemitism

Young Jewish adults are somewhat more likely to have reported experiences of antisemitism in the past year than are older adults (Figure). Just under half (48%) of young adults reported experiencing at least a little antisemitism in the prior year compared to 30% of older respondents. It is possible that young adults are exposed to or are aware of antisemitic incidents or anti-Israel expressions that they feel are antisemitic on college campuses.

Figure M.11. Reports of Antisemitism in Past Year



Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,759*

Jewish Community Involvement

Young adults are interested in a variety of programs including religious, educational, social, and community service activities. It is important for them to join programs that fit their own age group. Although participation in Jewish-sponsored programs is high (56%), participation in programs sponsored by non-Jewish organizations is somewhat higher (64%).

Past Program Participation

Over half (56%) of young adults have attended at least one Jewish-sponsored program in the past six months. Nearly all (89%) of the young adults say they have been invited in the past six months to a program sponsored by a Jewish organization. Table M8 indicates, for each program sponsor, whether the respondents were invited to their events and whether they attended.⁶ Organizations with the highest participation included Hillel and the JCC. Other Jewish programs' sponsors were described by 114 respondents. Sixty-eight attended programs sponsored by a synagogue or independent minyan. About 15 mentioned each of the following: Jewish school or camp, Jewish Family Service, the Seattle Federation, Jewish Voice for Peace, and the Washington Holocaust Education Resource Center.

Table M.8. Program Invitations and Participation

Sponsor	Not invited, did not participate %	Not invited, participated %	Invited, did not participate %	Invited, participated %
Hillel	24	0	39	37
JCC	69	0	14	16
Chabad	75	0	17	8
Stand With Us	79	2	14	6
AIPAC	84	3	11	3
J Street / J Street U	85	0	10	5
Other	48	2	21	30

Note: Jewish respondents only, weighted estimates; n=316

Types of programs that respondents attended included religious, educational, social, and community service activities. Program types were described by 206 respondents. Eighty-two attended a Shabbat or holiday program and 66 attended a religious service. Sixty-one attended a lecture or participated in a class. Fifty-seven attended a social program. The focus of these programs included sports and the outdoors (31), arts and culture (21), and Israel or Taglit/Birthright (19). Forty-five volunteered to local organizations or did other community service.

Program Interest

Only a small proportion (16%) are very interested in becoming more involved in the local Jewish community, but almost all (92%) say they would be at least a little interested in becoming more involved (Table M.9).

Table M.9. Interest in Jewish Communal Involvement

Interest in Jewish Involvement	%
Very interested	16
Somewhat interested	41
A little interested	35
Not at all interested	8
Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=326	

Young adults who were interested in deepening their engagement with the Jewish community were asked to describe the ways they would like to become more involved. Of 224 responses, the most frequently mentioned were social activities (74), Shabbat and holiday celebrations (54), young adult programs (43), education (42), volunteering (33), and politics (22).

Young adults expressed more interest in every type of program than the overall population (Table M.10). Nearly all of them (91%) would attend a cultural program, and three-quarters are interested in community service (77%), social events (77%), and Jewish holiday programs (75%). In addition, young adults are interested in programs geared toward the LGBT population, intermarried families, and singles, and are less interested in programs for other groups.

Table M.10. Interest in Programming

Program type	Other adult %	Young adult %
Jewish and Israeli culture (n=2,599)	65	91
Social (n=2,501)	42	77
Community service (n=2,552)	51	78
Jewish holidays (n=2,511)	45	75
Programs for specific groups		
LGBT (n=2,358)	12	28
Seniors (n=2,452)	22	11
Intermarried (n=2,416)	24	35
Parents (n=2,408)	26	7
Jewish singles (n=2,405)	14	42
Empty nesters (n=2,431)	14	1
Note: Weighted estimates, %*		

Respondents explained that they want to be involved in the Jewish community, but have not found a comfortable fit. Some wanted programs targeted to their age group: “I’m tired of having to rely either on my parents or on Hillel/Jconnect for ways to be Jewish. There’s nothing really for people in their late 20s-early 30s.” Another commented: “I feel like there aren’t any groups for younger married adults. I would be interested in groups that targeted that demographic. I feel like the Jconnect environment is more for singles.”

Non-Jewish Programs

Almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents said they participated in a program not sponsored by a Jewish organization. One hundred eighty-one listed programs, including community service/social justice (52), sports and the outdoors (51), arts and cultural program (41). Groups mentioned

included college alumni (28), professional groups (27), as well as political and civic groups (27). Activities were conducted with a variety of organizations, including arts or cultural organizations (92), fitness clubs (81), community service (52), social groups (49), and outdoor activity groups (46).

Volunteering and Charity

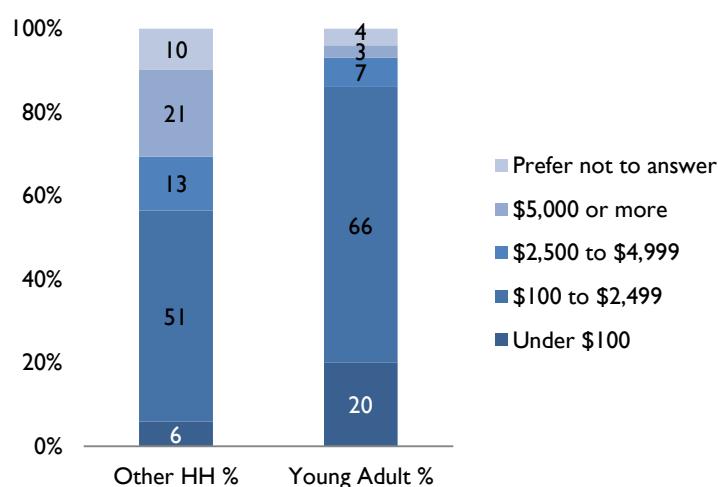
Just under half (46%) of young adults volunteered in the past month, but they contributed less time than older adults who volunteered. Three-quarters (76%) of those who volunteered committed 10 hours or less in the past month (Table M.11).

Table M.11. Hours Volunteered in the Past Month

Number of hours	Other adult %	Young adult %
Under one hour	1	7
1-10 hours	65	69
11-20 hours	21	15
21-40 hours	9	6
41+ hours	4	4
Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=1,547*		

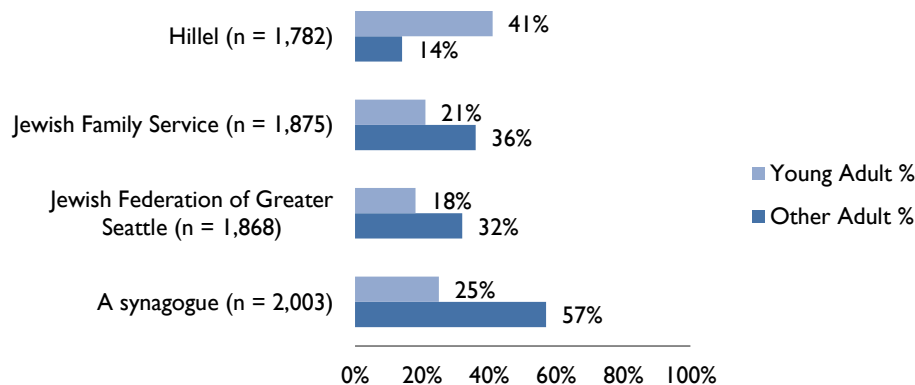
Young adults in the Greater Seattle Jewish community are less likely to have donated money to charity in the previous year than the rest of the community; 78% of young adults have donated money, compared to 93% of the rest of the community (n=2,691). Of those who donated, most donations were under \$2,500 (Figure M.12). Young adults donate less to synagogues, the Federation, and JFS, and donate more frequently to Hillel (Figure M.13).

Figure M.12. Amount Donated in the Past Year, Among Those who Have Donated



Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,492*

Figure M.13. Where Donations Were Directed



Note: Weighted estimates; n=2,195*

Communication

Young adults prefer to receive information about programs electronically rather than in print (Table M.12). Young adults in the Greater Seattle Jewish community are less likely to be subscribed to JTNews than the rest of the community; 16% of young adults are currently subscribed, compared to 28% of the rest of the community (n=2,712).

Table M.12. Preferred Mode of Receiving Information on the Jewish Community

	Other adult %	Young adult %
In print (newsletters, mailings, etc.)	12	2
Electronically (email, social media, websites, etc.)	52	87
No preference	36	12

Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,712*

If young adults are looking for information about the Jewish community, their most likely source is the Internet, compared to older adults who are most likely to turn to friends (Table M.13).

Table M.13. Whom to Approach about Jewish Programs

Who to approach	Other adult %	Young adult %
Rabbi	8	5
Local Jewish community leader	4	6
Local Jewish community member	8	7
Family member	6	6
Friends	35	33
Internet	30	41
Other	10	2

Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,647*

Need and Poverty

Households that include young adults have a slightly lower standard of living, with more reporting that they are “just getting along” and fewer who consider themselves prosperous (Table M.14). Such households are less confident about their financial preparedness for retirement than are other households. These differences are likely because young adults are still pursuing their educations or just beginning their careers.

Table M.14. Standard of Living

Standard of living	Other HH %	HH With Young Adult %
Prosperous	12	4
Living very comfortably	38	38
Living reasonably comfortably	39	40
Just getting along	9	17
Nearly poor	1	<1
Poor	1	1
Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,671*		

Table M.15. Confidence in Retirement Finances

Confidence level	Other HH %	HH With Young Adult %
Very confident	31	18
Somewhat confident	40	52
Uncertain	20	24
Not very confident	5	3
Not at all confident	4	3
Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,668*		

Households containing at least one young adult in the Greater Seattle Jewish community are less likely to be receiving public benefits (other than SSI) than other households in the community; 6% of households with at least one young adult are currently receiving benefits, compared to 12% of other households in the community (n=2,628).

Health

Young adults are in better health than older respondents, with 85% in excellent or very good health compared with 73% of the older population (Table M.16). Similarly, they are less likely to live in a household in which there is someone in fair or poor health, has a disability, or needs housekeeping assistance (Table M.17).

Table M.16. Overall Health

	Other Adult %	Young Adult %
Excellent	36	38
Very good	37	47
Good	20	12
Fair	7	2
Poor	1	1
Note: Weighted estimates, %; n=2,652*		

Table M.17. Health of the Household

Any member of the household	Other HH %	HH With Young Adult %
In fair or poor health (n=2,055)	10	3
Has impaired function due to physical or intellectual disability (n=2,692)	12	3
Needs assistance with housekeeping and home maintenance (n=2,677)	8	3
Note: Weighted estimates, %*		

Caregiving for Family Members

Very few (2%) young adults in the Seattle Jewish Community have a parent in the Greater Seattle area who requires elder care services. Similarly, only 1% of young adults provide regular care to adult family members.

¹ Pew Research Center. (2010). *Millennials: Confident. Connected. Open to change*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

² Another 10% of Jewish adults are 18 to 35 and live in households with children.

³ Population estimates and proportions of young adults are based on respondents who supplied information about the age of adults in the household (n=2,969). If no ages were specified we assume the adult was not age 18-35 (n=89). As a result the number of young adults and households with young adults might be underestimated.

⁴ It is likely that the 17% of non-students who have only completed high school is an inflated figure. Because the survey took place during the summer, parents of children who were between high school and college could have indicated that the child was not enrolled in school, when in another two months they would have been. Some children could also have been on a gap year before returning to school.

⁵ See Saxe, L., Sasson, T., & Aronson, J.K. (2015). *Pew's Portrait of American Jewry: A reassessment of the assimilation narrative*. In A. Dashefsky & I. Sheskin (eds.), *American Jewish Year Book 2014*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

⁶ Estimates of program participation are somewhat inflated because young adults who are on the mailing lists for any of these organizations were far more likely to be included in the study than those who are completely unknown to any Jewish organization. Nonetheless, those in the sample who are not engaged with the community may be used to understand the reasons for non-participation.