

News Release

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To: **All Western PA Media**

**JEWISH FEDERATION TO RELEASE STUDY SHOWING GROWTH IN
PITTSBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY**

The Jewish population of Pittsburgh has grown to 47,600 according to a new study the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh will release at 5:30pm on February 20 at Rodef Shalom. The Pittsburgh Jewish Community Study covers topics related to Jewish life and needs in the Greater Pittsburgh area Jewish community.

Other key findings include the decline of Jewish concentration in Squirrel Hill; a dip in the percentage of Jews aged 30-49; the fact that a quarter of Jewish households have someone with an impairment, a disability or a chronic physical or mental health problem; and an increase in the number of Jews not affiliated with the Reform, Conservative or Orthodox movements.

The study's preliminary findings indicate that an estimated 47,600 Jews in Pittsburgh (a 13% increase since 2002) live in 24,300 households with at least one Jewish adult (a 22% increase since 2002). The study shows the total number of individuals living in Jewish households is 56,500.

The Jewish Federation's Jewish Community Foundation funded the study to provide relevant data and analytic frameworks that can support informed decision making by the Federation and service providers. This data and analysis will improve planning, service delivery, and fundraising and marketing as well as help Jewish agencies connect people to Jewish community life.

The Jewish Federation published the last such study in Pittsburgh in 2002.

The purpose of the study is to enhance the community's ability to plan for the future by focusing on the most pressing communal needs. Community leaders will use the study as a roadmap to help guide the strategic planning efforts of service providers throughout Jewish Pittsburgh.

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The Jewish Federation selected the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) at Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) to lead the study.

Unlike in 2002, when nearly 50% of the community lived in Squirrel Hill or adjacent areas, the Jewish population now appears much more spread out, with roughly 25% of the community's households residing in Squirrel Hill or its adjacent neighborhood.

Another major demographic shift has been the age composition of the community. In 2002, Jews aged 30-49 comprised roughly 26% of the Jewish population; in 2017, they constitute an estimated 20% of the population. This decline mirrors the general population trends for this age group according to U.S. Census data.

As a direct result of the decline in the number of adults in their 30s and 40s, there is also a decline in the number of children from about 8,300 in 2002 to approximately 6,400 in 2017.

Nearly every other age demographic has increased over the last 15 years, including both millennials and seniors.

Beyond demographic information, the study captured data related to community members' social service needs.

In an estimated 25% of Jewish households, there is at least one individual who has been limited in the kind or amount of work, school, or housework s/he can do because of an impairment or a disability, or a chronic, physical, or mental health problem. Of that 25%, an estimated 26% did NOT receive the services needed to help, 40% received the services needed to help, and 34% did not need services.

In the past year, in an estimated 32% of households, someone required counselling or another mental health service AND received services. An estimated 5% needed counseling or other mental health services and did NOT receive services. Roughly 63% of households reported that no services were needed.

The study also covered economic well-being: roughly 7% of the population reported that their standard of living is either "poor" or "nearly poor" with another 15% "just getting by."

Additional data around behaviors and attitudes about Jewish practice and about the Jewish community show declining synagogue membership,

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following the national trend. An estimated 38% of households belong to a synagogue, compared to 53% in 2002. Roughly one-third of all Jews, up from 17% in 2002, now consider themselves of "no denomination" as opposed to Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, or Orthodox.

The Jewish Federation plans to incorporate the study's data and analysis into the Pittsburgh Jewish Community Scorecard, an online tool for people and organizations to review data about Jewish community performance. Using the Scorecard, programs and institutions can assess progress toward becoming a more vibrant, thriving, and engaged Jewish community. The data collected will add directly to the Pittsburgh Jewish Community Scorecard as it defines, spurs and measures the definition of a community of excellence.

The Pittsburgh Jewish Community Scorecard committee plans follow-up research studies that will continue to measure community members' behaviors and attitudes every two years. The first, primary study will serve as a baseline. Subsequent studies will track the fluctuation of those measures.

The Cohen Center is a nationally renowned research firm directed by Dr. Leonard Saxe, Ph.D. In addition to conducting Jewish community studies throughout the United States, the center's research areas include Jewish education, Israel travel (e.g., Birthright Israel) and national demography (e.g., the American Jewish Population Project). The center recently concluded Jewish community studies for Jewish Federations in Seattle, Nashville, Boston, and Naples, FL.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, one of 151 independent Federations associated with The Jewish Federations of North America, raises and allocates funds to build community locally, in Israel and around the world. With the vision of a thriving, vibrant and engaged Jewish community, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh aims to carry out its work in the context of cooperation and inclusiveness.

For more information, visit www.jfedpgh.org.