

**Berman Jewish DataBank
@ The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA)**

FAQ Series #1

**U.S. JEWISH POPULATION ESTIMATES:
LOCAL JEWISH COMMUNITIES**

Ron Miller

Senior Research Consultant, Berman Jewish DataBank @ JFNA, and
Vice-President, Research, Ukeles Associates, Inc.

Ira M. Sheskin

Professor, Department of Geography and Regional Studies,
University of Miami and
Director, Jewish Demography Project
Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies

Arnold Dashefsky

Director Emeritus, Berman Jewish DataBank and
Doris and Simon Konover Chair of Judaic Studies and
Professor of Sociology Emeritus, University of Connecticut

Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz

Director, Berman Jewish DataBank and
Senior Director, Research & Analysis, JFNA

Revised February 18, 2015

**FAQ Table 1: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates –
Alphabetical Listing**

FAQ Table 1 alphabetically organizes Jewish population estimates — number of Jewish households, number of all people living in these households (including non-Jews), and Jews — for 57 American Jewish communities where the Jewish community survey utilized random digit dialing (RDD) as part of the survey design and population estimation process.¹ The 57 communities represent a significant part of the American Jewish landscape, but not the entire American Jewish community.

FAQ Table 1-a reorganizes these data by the estimated size of the Jewish community.²

FAQ Table 1-b organizes the local community Jewish population estimates by the percentage of all people living in the households who are Jewish.

**FAQ Table 1: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates
for Local Jewish Communities: Alphabetical**

Community	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons³
Atlanta	2006	61,300	156,900	119,800
Atlantic County	2004	10,000	23,100	20,200
Baltimore	2010	42,500	108,100	93,400
Bergen	2001	28,400	78,000	71,700
Boston	2005	113,800	285,500	226,900 ⁴
Broward County	1997	133,000	269,100	240,600
Buffalo	2013	5,770	13,250	12,050
Charlotte	1997	4,000	10,600	7,800
Chicago	2010	148,100	381,900	291,800
Cincinnati	2008	12,500	33,000	27,000
Cleveland	2011	38,300	98,300	80,800
Columbus	2013	14,200	37,000	25,500
Denver/Boulder ⁵	2007	47,500	117,200	83,900

**FAQ Table 1: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates
for Local Jewish Communities: Alphabetical**

<i>Community</i>	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons³
Detroit	2005	30,000	78,000	72,000
East Bay (CA)	2011	51,400	176,800	100,700
Harrisburg	1994	3,200	8,600	7,100
Hartford	2000	14,800	36,900	32,800
Howard County (MD)	2010	7,500	20,400	17,200
Jacksonville	2002	6,700	16,200	13,000
Las Vegas	2005	42,000	89,000	67,500
Lehigh Valley (PA)	2007	4,000	9,800	8,050
Los Angeles	1997	247,700	619,000	519,200
Martin-St. Lucie	1999	3,600	7,700	6,650
MetroWest (NJ) ⁶	1998	47,000	117,100	96,000
Miami	2014	55,700	129,700	123,200
Middlesex (NJ)	2008	24,000	56,000	52,000
Milwaukee	2011	15,000	35,300	30,100
Minneapolis	2004	13,850	35,300	29,300
Monmouth	1997	26,000	72,500	65,700
New Haven	2010	11,000	27,800	23,000
New York	2011	694,000	1,769,000	1,538,000
Orlando	1993	9,000	23,400	19,200
Palm Springs	1998	7,850	15,850	13,850
Philadelphia	2009	116,700	251,400	214,700
Phoenix	2002	44,000	106,900	82,900
Pittsburgh	2002	20,900	54,200	42,200
Portland (ME)	2007	4,300	11,800	8,350

**FAQ Table 1: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates
for Local Jewish Communities: Alphabetical**

<i>Community</i>	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons³
Greater Portland (OR) ⁷	2008	21,200	46,000	36,400
Rhode Island	2002	9,550	23,000	18,750
Richmond	1994	6,000	15,300	12,150
Rochester	1999	10,200	25,600	21,000
San Antonio	2007	4,500	11,200	9,200
San Diego	2003	46,000	118,000	89,000
San Francisco ⁸	2004	125,400	291,500	213,800
Sarasota	2001	8,800	17,500	15,500
Seattle	2014	33,700	85,600	63,400
South Palm Beach	2005	73,000	136,800	131,300
St. Louis	2014	32,900	89,300	61,100
St. Paul	2004	5,150	13,400	10,900
St. Petersburg	1994	13,000	30,200	25,700
Tidewater	2001	5,400	13,800	10,950
Tucson	2002	13,400	28,600	22,400
Washington (DC)	2003	110,000	267,800	215,600
West Palm Beach	2005	69,000	137,300	124,250
Westport (CT)	2000	5,000	13,600	11,450
Wilmington Area (DE)	1995	5,700	15,100	11,900
York (PA)	1999	900	2,400	1,800

Table 1-a: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates Organized by the Numbers of Jews Living in Each Local Community

FAQ Table 1-a organizes the number of Jews estimated to live in these 57 American Jewish communities in terms of the total number — in decreasing order — in each of the communities which have had an RDD-based survey used for estimation purposes.

New York — the five boroughs of New York City and three contiguous New York State suburban counties: Nassau, Westchester and Suffolk — is the most populous Jewish community with 1,538,000 Jews in the eight-county area studied.

York (PA) is the smallest community with a randomly-based Jewish community study: an estimated 1,800 Jews live in 900 Jewish households, with another 600 non-Jews also living in these households.

FAQ Table 1-a: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates Organized by the Number of Jews in Local Jewish Communities: Descending Order				
<i>Community</i>	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons
New York	2011	694,000	1,769,000	1,538,000
Los Angeles	1997	247,700	619,000	519,200
Chicago	2010	148,100	381,900	291,800
Broward	1997	133,000	269,100	240,600
Boston	2005	113,800	285,500	226,900
Washington (DC)	2003	110,000	267,800	215,600
Philadelphia	2009	116,700	251,400	214,700
San Francisco	2004	125,400	291,500	213,800
South Palm Beach	2005	73,000	136,800	131,300
West Palm Beach	2005	69,000	137,300	124,250
Miami	2014	55,700	129,700	123,200
Atlanta	2006	61,300	156,900	119,800
MetroWest (NJ)	1998	47,000	117,100	109,700

**FAQ Table 1-a:
U. S. Jewish Population Estimates Organized by the
Number of Jews in Local Jewish Communities: Descending Order**

<i>Community</i>	<i>Year of Study</i>	<i>Number of Jewish Households</i>	<i>Number of People in Jewish Households</i>	<i>Number of Jewish Persons</i>
East Bay (CA)	2011	51,400	176,800	100,700
Baltimore	2010	42,500	108,100	93,400
San Diego	2003	46,000	118,000	89,000
Denver/Boulder	2007	47,500	117,200	83,900
Phoenix	2002	44,000	106,900	82,900
Cleveland	2011	38,300	98,300	80,800
Detroit	2005	30,000	78,000	72,000
Bergen	2001	28,400	78,000	71,700
Las Vegas	2005	42,000	89,000	67,500
Monmouth	1997	26,000	72,500	65,700
Seattle	2014	33,700	85,600	63,400
St. Louis	2014	32,900	89,300	61,100
Middlesex (NJ)	2008	24,000	56,000	52,000
Pittsburgh	2002	20,900	54,200	42,200
Greater Portland (OR)	2008	21,200	46,000	36,400
Hartford	2000	14,800	36,900	32,800
Milwaukee	2011	15,000	35,300	30,100
Minneapolis	2004	13,850	35,300	29,300
Cincinnati	2008	12,500	33,000	27,000
St. Petersburg	1994	13,000	30,200	25,700
Columbus	2013	14,200	37,000	25,500
New Haven	2010	11,000	27,800	23,000
Tucson	2002	13,400	28,600	22,400
Rochester	1999	10,200	25,600	21,000

**FAQ Table 1-a:
U. S. Jewish Population Estimates Organized by the
Number of Jews in Local Jewish Communities: Descending Order**

<i>Community</i>	<i>Year of Study</i>	<i>Number of Jewish Households</i>	<i>Number of People in Jewish Households</i>	<i>Number of Jewish Persons</i>
Atlantic County (NJ)	2004	10,000	23,100	20,200
Orlando	1993	9,000	23,400	19,200
Rhode Island	2002	9,550	23,000	18,750
Sarasota	2001	8,800	17,500	15,500
Palm Springs	1998	7,850	15,850	13,850
Howard County (MD)	2010	7,500	20,400	17,200
Jacksonville	2002	6,700	16,200	13,000
Richmond	1994	6,000	15,300	12,150
Buffalo	2013	5,770	13,250	12,050
Wilmington Area (DE)	1995	5,700	15,100	11,900
Westport (CT)	2000	5,000	13,600	11,450
Tidewater	2001	5,400	13,800	10,950
St. Paul	2004	5,150	13,400	10,900
San Antonio	2007	4,500	11,200	9,200
Portland (ME)	2007	4,300	11,800	8,350
Lehigh Valley (PA)	2007	4,000	9,800	8,050
Charlotte	1997	4,000	10,600	7,800
Harrisburg	1994	3,200	8,600	7,100
Martin-St. Lucie	1999	3,600	7,700	6,650
York (PA)	1999	900	2,400	1,800

**FAQ Table 1-b: U. S. Jewish Population Estimates
Percent of All Jewish Household Members Who Are Jewish**

FAQ Table 1-b below organizes the local Jewish communities which have had an RDD-based study (in part, at least) by the percentage of household members who are currently Jewish. Of the 57 communities listed, the East Bay of California, across from San Francisco, reported the lowest percentage of all household members who are Jewish — 57% — in its 2011 study.

In general, the western Jewish communities have lower Jewish proportions of all their household members, with the exception of Los Angeles (84%), which has not had a study since 1997. Of the ten Jewish communities that have the lowest percentage of Jewish household members (and the highest proportion of non-Jewish persons), six of them are located in the western United States: East Bay 57%, Denver/Boulder 72%, San Francisco 73%, Seattle 74%, San Diego 75% and Las Vegas 76%.

In contrast, only Los Angeles and San Francisco are among the top ten Jewish communities in terms of size, the number of Jewish persons (see Table 1-a).

FAQ Table 1-b: Percent of All Jewish Households Members Who are Jewish Organized by Percentage Jewish: Ascending Order				
Community	Year of Study	Total Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons	Percent of All Household Members Who Are JEWISH
East Bay (CA)	2011	176,800	100,700	57%
St Louis	2014	89,300	61,100	68%
Columbus	2013	37,000	25,500	69%
Portland (ME)	2007	11,800	8,350	71%
Denver/Boulder	2007	117,200	83,900	72%
San Francisco	2004	291,500	213,800	73%
Charlotte	1997	10,600	7,800	74%
Seattle	2014	85,600	63,400	74%
York (PA)	1999	2,400	1,800	75%

**FAQ Table 1-b:
Percent of All Jewish Households Members Who are Jewish
Organized by Percentage Jewish: Ascending Order**

Community	Year of Study	Total Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons	Percent of All Household Members Who Are JEWISH
San Diego	2003	118,000	89,000	75%
Las Vegas	2005	89,000	67,500	76%
Atlanta	2006	156,900	119,800	76%
Chicago	2010	381,900	291,800	76%
Phoenix	2002	106,900	82,900	78%
Pittsburgh	2002	54,200	42,200	78%
Tucson	2002	28,600	22,400	78%
Wilmington Area (DE)	1995	15,100	11,900	79%
Greater Portland (OR)	2008	46,000	36,400	79%
Boston	2005	285,500	226,900	79%
Tidewater	2001	13,800	10,950	79%
Richmond	1994	15,300	12,150	79%
Jacksonville	2002	16,200	13,000	80%
Washington (DC)	2003	267,800	215,600	80%
St. Paul	2004	13,400	10,900	81%
Rhode Island	2002	23,000	18,750	82%
Cincinnati	2008	33,000	27,000	82%
MetroWest (NJ)	1998	117,100	96,000	82%
Rochester	1999	25,600	21,000	82%
Orlando	1993	23,400	19,200	82%
Lehigh Valley (PA)	2007	9,800	8,050	82%
San Antonio	2007	11,200	9,200	82%

**FAQ Table 1-b:
Percent of All Jewish Households Members Who are Jewish
Organized by Percentage Jewish: Ascending Order**

Community	Year of Study	Total Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons	Percent of All Household Members Who Are JEWISH
Cleveland	2011	98,300	80,800	82%
Harrisburg	1994	8,600	7,100	83%
New Haven	2010	27,800	23,000	83%
Minneapolis	2004	35,300	29,300	83%
Los Angeles	1997	619,000	519,200	84%
Westport (CT)	2000	13,600	11,450	84%
Howard County (MD)	2010	20,400	17,200	84%
Milwaukee	2011	35,300	30,100	85%
St. Petersburg	1994	30,200	25,700	85%
Philadelphia	2009	251,400	214,700	85%
Martin-St. Lucie	1999	7,700	6,650	86%
Baltimore	2010	108,100	93,400	86%
New York	2011	1,769,000	1,538,000	87%
Palm Springs	1998	15,850	13,850	87%
Atlantic County	2004	23,100	20,200	87%
Sarasota	2001	17,500	15,500	89%
Hartford	2000	36,900	32,800	89%
Broward County	1997	269,100	240,600	89%
West Palm Beach	2005	137,300	124,250	90%
Buffalo	2013	13,250	12,050	91%
Monmouth	1997	72,500	65,700	91%
Bergen	2001	78,000	71,700	92%

**FAQ Table 1-b:
Percent of All Jewish Households Members Who are Jewish
Organized by Percentage Jewish: Ascending Order**

Community	Year of Study	Total Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons	Percent of All Household Members Who Are JEWISH
Detroit	2005	78,000	72,000	92%
Middlesex (NJ)	2008	56,000	52,000	93%
Miami	2014	129,700	123,200	95%
South Palm Beach	2005	136,800	131,300	96%

Source: Data originally compiled by Ira M. Sheskin, Ph. D., Department of Geography and Regional Studies and Director, Jewish Demography Project, Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Jewish Studies, University of Miami, isheskin@miami.edu; his table, and all reports in the FAQ series were originally based on data compiled by Dr. Ira M. Sheskin in his monograph, *How Jewish Communities Differ*, 2001, published by the North American Jewish Data Bank, and in his subsequent Jewish community study reports.

In 2012 and 2013, Dr. Sheskin compiled an expanded series of Jewish community comparisons for the Berman Institute - North American Jewish Data Bank at the University of Connecticut, Dr. Arnold Dashefsky, Director. These Jewish community comparisons are available online at the Berman Jewish DataBank@JFNA under DataBank Resources: [2013 Comparisons of Jewish Communities: A Compendium of Tables and Bar Charts](#): Ira M. Sheskin (author), Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz, series editor.

The current versions of the FAQ analyses have been updated by Dr. Ron Miller and Dr. Kotler-Berkowitz based on recently completed Jewish community studies.

¹ A number of American Jewish communities are not included in this table, typically because they have not conducted a Jewish community study, or the study that was conducted did not include any random digit dialing (RDD) as part of Jewish population estimation procedures. Excluded communities had estimates which relied solely on the Jewish community list of known Jewish households and/or distinctive Jewish names (DJN) from local telephone directories. The DataBank: (www.jewishdatabank.org) has archived many of these studies, but does not include them in the current U. S. Jewish population estimate tables.

The Jewish population estimates for Buffalo, 2013 and Greater Seattle, 2014 are included, though those studies did not have a direct RDD component in their recent local survey. Instead, their estimates are based in part on a data-synthesis project conducted by researchers at the Brandeis University Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and Steinhardt Social Research Institute. The data-synthesis project combines the results of hundreds of RDD-based general population surveys which include data on

respondent religion and generates an estimate of the number of adult Jews by religion (JBRs) for the study area. Using the data-synthesis estimates of adult JBRs as a starting point, estimates of the number of adult Jews not by religion (JNRs) and Jewish children are added based on data collected in local surveys. The local surveys, in turn, use sampling frames constructed from Jewish organizational lists and lists of ethnic Jewish surnames purchased from data vendors.

Jewish population estimates for communities without RDD population estimates are included in the annual *American Jewish Yearbook* population articles, and are currently available in the DataBank's *Jewish Population in the United States, 2012, Current Jewish Population Reports*, compiled by Ira M. Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky.

²Data summarized in the table are Jewish population estimates for the year the local Jewish community study was completed, rounded to the nearest hundred, except for the few studies which reported their estimate rounded to "50." Current population estimates used by the local Federation may differ from those numbers reported here, which reflect a scientific sampling framework for estimation. The annual *American Jewish Yearbook* article on the American Jewish population had traditionally included these non-study-based estimates, many of which are based on local informant guesstimates, in their calculations. In November, 2010, the *Yearbook* was supplanted by the Berman Institute North American Jewish Data Bank publication, *Jewish Population of the United States, 2010*, co-authored by Dr. Sheskin and Dr. Arnold Dashefsky, the Director of the North American Jewish Data Bank. For a past analysis of the correspondence between informal estimates prior to a study and the actual study data, please see the DataBank collection of *Yearbook* articles, including the 2007 article by Dr. Sheskin and Dr. Dashefsky (<http://www.jewishdatabank.org/ajyb.asp>). As of December 2012 - January 2013, Drs. Dashefsky and Sheskin became co-editors of the new *American Jewish Yearbook*. Please see the DataBank home page under "DataBank Resources" for the most recent estimates from this publication.

³Readers should always consult the local community study reports when they are interested in the number of Jewish persons in a specific Jewish community since the FAQ summary tables must necessarily summarize data and cannot identify all specific details of a particular study. All data based on the definition of Jewish used in the study. The definition of Jewish adults is usually, but not always, consistent across Jewish population study reports, with self-definition the basis of categorization. Adults who self-define as Jewish, those who self-define as Jewish and something else, and (often) those raised/born Jewish who do not identify as Jewish but do not have a religion are included in the "Jewish" total. In some studies, however, those raised/born Jewish who do not consider themselves Jewish and have another religion are sometimes included in the Jewish total — sometimes without the report being particularly clear.

In the Metropolitan Chicago Jewish community studies, only Jewish adults who are unambiguously Jewish ("Jewish-only") are included in the Jewish count; adults who are defined by the survey respondents as Jewish and something else (or Jewish and another religion) are not included in the Jewish totals.

Decisions on "counting" children as Jews are less consistent across studies; decisions are based on respondent reports of how each child is being raised. Children being raised Jewish are always included in the Jewish total.

- Children being raised "Jewish and something else" are counted as Jews in many studies, although not in studies completed by Ira Sheskin, nor in the Chicago studies.
- Children who are not being raised Jewish, but who are being raised without a religion are counted as Jewish in some studies, but are not counted as Jewish in all studies completed by Ukeles Associates, Inc.

Finally, most studies do not count as Jewish those children whose status is undecided, but at times even the report does not indicate whether these children were counted as Jews in the specific study. The FAQ Jewish population estimate tables, therefore, present a conservative estimate of the number of Jews, since some studies tend to use inclusive definitions, while other studies utilize much less inclusive definitions of who counts as a Jew. Again, specific definitions used in each study need to be consulted when a particular study is the focus of concern, as opposed to an overall U.S. Jewish community comparison. For a related discussion, please see the second series of FAQ tables which focus on intermarriage rates and raising children as Jews.

⁴ Greater Boston Jewish number of 226,900 Jews is the number of Jewish persons living in households with a Jewish adult (it excludes 2,000 institutionalized Jews “guesstimate” in 2005 Boston report). The 2013 reported number in FAQ #1 adds North Shore data from 1995 to the 2005 reported data for Boston, since the Jewish Federation of the North Shore and Combined Jewish Philanthropies have merged as of July 1, 2013. The separate numbers are Boston: 105,500 Jewish households, 208,500 Jews in these households and a total of 265,500 people (including non-Jews); for the North Shore, we have used 8,300 Jewish households, 18,400 Jewish persons and 20,000 total people.

⁵For a detailed description of the geographic extent of each community, please consult the community reports available under “Local Community Studies” on the DataBank website. In general, the study areas correspond to the local Jewish federation’s service area. In reality, there is not one community where the study area is defined by the legal limits of the city name appearing in these tables. Study areas range in size from the better part of a county to multi-county areas.

⁶1998 Draft Report indicates that there were between 45,000 and 49,000 Jewish households in MetroWest NJ; the DataBank reports the Jewish household number as “approximately” 47,000. The estimate of 96,000 Jewish persons has been extrapolated by Dr. Ira Sheskin and confirmed by Dr. Miller for DataBank reports as of May, 2008. The 1988 MetroWest Report indicates 117,100 people, but does not include an estimate of Jewish persons. An earlier version of these FAQ Tables 1 and 1a used the 109,700 Jewish persons estimate provided in the 2006 American Jewish Yearbook article: Ira M. Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky, “*Jewish Population of the United States, 2006*,” *American Jewish Year Book, 2006*, Volume 106 (David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, Editors, New York: The American Jewish Committee), which was based on a number which had been erroneously reported in earlier versions of the *American Jewish Yearbook*, and appears to be the number of people in Essex and Morris Counties only. The estimate of 96,000 Jewish persons for MetroWest in 1998 which is being used for DataBank reports was calculated by Dr. Sheskin; the percentage of all people living in MetroWest Jewish households is estimated to be 82% Jewish, 18% non-Jewish, which is consistent with similar northeastern Jewish communities. In Dr. Sheskin’s community research reports, and in his *How Jewish Communities Differ*, United Jewish Communities of MetroWest New Jersey is listed as Essex-Morris. The Federation’s service area includes four New Jersey Counties: Essex, Morris, Sussex and part of Union. For the FAQ series, the DataBank will use MetroWest as the geographic name of the area, following the Federation’s formal name.

⁷ Note that the report from the 2008-2009 Jewish community study of Portland, OR has a different Jewish population estimate than the estimate used in this publication. The estimates were based on the 2008 RDD interviews. The official report, whose accuracy was questioned by the Federation before it was issued, estimated 47,500 Jews in the Greater Portland area. After discussions by Dr. Ira Sheskin on behalf of the DataBank with the Federation, a general consensus was reached that the estimate was probably too high. The formal estimate that the DataBank uses in its report is now 36,400, as of 2012. This number was used in the 2012 *American Jewish Yearbook* article on U.S. Jewish population, as well as in the “Pocket Demographics” publication of the North American Jewish Data Bank at the University of Connecticut.

The original Portland Jewish community estimates were 27,700 Jewish households, 47,500 Jews and 12,500 non-Jews for a total population of 60,000. Using the 36,400 Jewish persons estimate, these numbers have been adjusted proportionately to 27,200 Jewish households, 36,400 Jews, 9,600 non-Jews. The total number of people in these households is 46,000; the percent Jewish of all people living in these households remains at 79% after the adjustments.

⁸ The number of Jewish persons living in San Francisco has been re-calculated by Dr. Miller for the DataBank in April, 2008 to reflect standard practices of reporting used in most community studies concerning the definition of children as being raised Jewish. The 213,800 Jewish persons estimate is a reduction of the 227,800 reported in the 2004 *Summary Report* and *Full Findings*. In that report, an exceptionally inclusive definition of being raised Jewish was intentionally used in the population estimate section of the report. The number of children in the 2004 San Francisco report was 55,000; approximately 53,000 children were identified as “Jewish-raised” in the Jewish population summary section — a 95% Jewish-raised rate which is inconsistent with later analyses which indicated that 38% of children in intermarried Jewish households were being raised as Jewish, and 12% as Jewish and something else. The DataBank reanalysis of the data file indicated that 38,800 children were being raised as “Jewish” or Jewish and another religion. Children being raised without a religion, etc., are not included in the 213,800 total.