

Metropolitan Chicago Jewish Population Study

2000-2001

Information Regarding Chicago's 65+ Population

This information has been compiled using data from the 2000-2001 Metropolitan Chicago Jewish Population Study, the most comprehensive Chicago Jewish Population Study to date – and the third such community-wide study since 1982.

In households randomly selected from the general population and from lists of the Jewish population, 2048 Jewish adults from throughout the metropolitan Chicago area were interviewed. The geographic areas covered included the six counties in Northeast Illinois: Cook, Lake, DuPage, McHenry, Will and Kane.

Please note that all figures are rounded.

1. Size/Age of Population

The Chicago Jewish community has grown in recent decades, from 248,000 in 1982, to 261,000 in 1990-91, to 270,500 in 2000-01. Today, it is projected that there are approximately 46,000 Jews living in Chicago that are 65 years or older, accounting for 17% of the total Jewish population in Chicago. (Please note that this study does not include elderly Jews living in long-term care facilities and other residential facilities for the elderly where they do not have access to an individual phone line). This represents an increase of 3% from the 1990 study.

In addition, the 50-64 age cohort also saw a percentage increase of 3% over the last ten years, further demonstrating the growth and projected growth of elderly in our community. The age breakdown of this population is as follows:

Age Group	Number	Percentage of total 65+ population
Age 65-74	25,000	54%
Age 75-84	17,800	39%
Age 85+	3,200	7%

2. Geographic Dispersion

Approximately three-quarters of Chicago's Jews aged 65+ live in the Near North suburbs, the North Shore suburbs and the north part of the city.

Percentage of population by geographic area		
Area	Percentage of 65+ population	Percentage of total population
Near North Suburb	28%	18%
City North	25%	24%
North Shore Suburb	21%	21%
Northwest	10%	19%
South	6%	4%
West	4%	6%
Rest of Chicago	6%	7%

More specifically, 55% of elderly Jews ages 75-84 and 69% of elderly Jews ages 85 and older live in the city north or near north suburbs.

The following zip codes have the largest concentration of Jews ages 65 and older:

1. 60062 – Northbrook (8%)
2. 60076 – Skokie (6%)
3. 60035 – Highland Park (6%)
4. 60645 – Chicago/Lincolnwood (5%)
5. 60089 – Buffalo Grove (4%)
6. 60025 – Glenview (4%)
7. 60611 – Chicago (4%)
8. 60712 – Lincolnwood (4%)
9. 60714 – Niles (4%)
10. 60657 – Chicago (3%)

3. Marital Status

Approximately 64% of the 65+ population is married, another quarter (25%) reports that they are widowed. The remainder is split between divorced (6%) and single/never married (4%).

4. Origin of Birth

About 81% of Chicago's 65+ population was born in the United States with nearly 62% reporting Illinois as their state of birth. The remaining 19% were born in countries outside the United States, most notably, the Former Soviet Union (7%), Germany (4%) and Poland (2%). About 2,770 describe themselves as Holocaust survivors or refugees from Nazism in Germany; another 1,500 responded that their spouse considers him/herself to be a survivor/refugee.

5. Education & Employment Status

Education - Highest Grade Level Completed		
	Percentage of 65+ population	Percentage of total population
High School Graduate	18%	9%
Some College	28%	29%
College Graduate	24%	32%
Some Graduate	8%	9%
Graduate or professional degree (Master's, MBA, Ph. D).	21%	30%

Approximately 53% of Jewish elderly are college graduates, compared with 71% of the general Jewish population. One-fifth of Chicago Jews age 65 and older hold an advanced degree.

Current Employment Status	
	Percentage of total 65+ population
Employed	25%
Retired	65%
Full-time Homemaker	7%

It is notable that a quarter of Chicago Jews 65 and older are still in the workforce.

6. Household Composition

There are approximately 38,800 households with adults 65 or older. That accounts for approximately 28% of all Jewish households in Chicago (137,000). Nearly 80% of these residences are owned by someone in the household; the remaining 20% are rentals. About half (52%) of Jews ages 65 or older live in a two-person household; about a third live alone. The breakdown is reflected in the chart below:

# of people in Household	% of total 65+ population
1	34%
2	52%
3	10%
4 or more	4%

Family

In 57% of households, at least one member has a parent(s) 62 or older in the Chicago-area. In 25% of households, respondents have assisted one or more elderly parents in the past year.

Of Jewish adults aged 65 or older, about 40% reported that they have at least one sibling living in the Chicago area.

7. Income

Respondents were asked to specify which category represented their household income. It is important to note that 42% of qualifying respondents (aged 65+) did not respond to this particular question. The same is true of the general population. The remaining 58% responded as follows:

Income Range	Percentage of 65+ Population	Percentage of Total Population
Under \$25,000	24%	14%
\$25,000 - \$50,000	27%	21%
\$50,000 - \$75,000	22%	23%
Over \$75,000	28%	43%

Half (51%) of elderly respondents reported an annual income range of less than \$50,000 compared with 35% of the general population. Conversely, only 28% of respondents age 65 and older reported income in excess of \$75,000 compared with 43% of the general population.

8. Jewish Connections

- 45% of Jews ages 65 and older currently belong to a synagogue; this figure is consistent with the general population.
- 36% of Jews ages 65 and older pay membership dues to a Jewish organization other than a synagogue or JCC; this figure is high compared with the general population (22%).

9. Needs: (A) Finances

Respondents were asked to describe their household’s financial situation. Nearly half of this population reports that they are “*comfortable*,” but a fifth note that they are “*just managing*.” These figures are comparable with responses from the general population.

Which one of these statements best describes your household’s financial situation?	
	Percentage of 65+ Population
Can’t make ends meet	1%
Just managing	19%
Comfortable	49%
Very comfortable	17%
Well-off	8%
Don’t know/Refused	6%

(B) Health

Respondents were asked to assess their health. As can be expected, the general population reported feeling in better health than those 65 and older, however, it is notable that 70% of the 65+ population reported feeling in “good,” “very good” or “excellent” health (compared with 86% of the general population.) Conversely, twenty-nine percent, or nearly of those 65+, reported that they were in “fair” or “poor” health, greater than twice the proportion of the total population.

How would you say your health in general is?		
	Percentage of total 65+ Population	Percentage of TOTAL Population
Excellent	17%	33%
Very Good	21%	29%
Good	32%	24%
Fair	22%	10%
Poor	7%	3%
Don’t know or Refused	1%	1%