

Highlights From *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002* Focus on Single-Parent Jewish Households¹

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The literature on single-parent households typically presents them as households with significant needs — households with higher poverty rates than two-parent households,² households in which children need to overcome negative stereotypes, and households in which even computer and Internet usage is lower than among two-parent households. In the Jewish community, approximately 3 percent of all United States Jewish households include a single adult and minor children, one-third the U.S. national rate of 9 percent.

OVERVIEW: HOUSEHOLD AND POPULATION ESTIMATES

Population Size: In the eight-county New York area — the five boroughs of New York City and the three adjacent New York State counties (Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester) — there are an estimated 21,000 single-parent Jewish households — just over 3 percent of all households in the New York Jewish community.

Single-Parent Jewish Households, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Number	Percent of Eight-County Total
Jewish Households	20,900	3%
Jewish People	55,400	4%
All People Living in Jewish Households (Including Non-Jews)	74,400	5%

Geographic Distribution: Approximately one third of single-parent Jewish households in the eight-county New York area reside in Brooklyn.

Geographic Distribution of Single-Parent Jewish Households, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

Brooklyn	Queens	Manhattan	Nassau	Westchester	Suffolk	Staten Island	Bronx
6,800	3,900	2,800	2,000	1,200	1,500	1,300	1,300
33%	18%	14%	10%	6%	7%	6%	6%

* Here and throughout, numbers and percentages may not add precisely due to rounding for presentation.

Gender: In nearly three-quarters of single-parent Jewish households, the single parent is a woman.

¹ Note: For additional information about the Jewish community of New York, its demographic profile, vulnerable populations, Jewish connections, intermarriage, philanthropy, and other topics of interest, see Jacob B. Ukeles and Ron Miller, *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002* (October 2004). PDF versions of all Jewish community study reports are available at www.ujafedny.org/jewishcommunitystudy.

² For summary data on U.S. single-parent households, see Parents Without Partners website at www.parentswithoutpartners.org/Support1.htm. The introductory section of the website notes: "The problems are many in bringing up our children alone, contending with the emotional conflicts of divorce, never-married, separation, or widowhood." Similarly, any Internet search on "single-parent households" results in references to both demographic data and "problems" associated with single-parent households.

Gender of Respondent, Single-Parent Jewish Households, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

Female	Male
15,300	5,700
73%	27%

Marital Status: The majority of single-parent Jewish households are products of divorce or separation. However, fully one third of single-parent Jewish household respondents are never-married.

Marital Status, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Married	Living Together	Separated	Divorced	Widowed	Never-Married
Single-Parent Jewish Households	0%	4%	9%	43%	11%	33%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	57%	2%	1%	8%	12%	20%

Age: Nearly 80 percent of respondents in single-parent households are under age 50.

Age of Respondent, Single-Parent Jewish Households, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

18 – 34	35 – 49	50 – 64	65 – 74	75+
34%	44%	20%	<1%	1%

Household Composition: Although just 3 percent of all households in the New York Jewish community are single-parent households, more than 10 percent of all Jewish children in the eight-county area live in single-parent households. In addition to a single parent and at least one minor child, many of these households include at least one additional adult (including adult children, grandparents, an elderly parent, an unmarried partner, and other relatives).

Age of Household Members, Single-Parent Jewish Households, 2002

Age	Number	Percent of People Living in Jewish Households in Eight-County Area
0 – 17	36,100	10%
18 – 39	21,100	5%
40 – 64	16,200	3%
65+	1,000	<1%

Number of Children Per Household, Single-Parent Jewish Households, 2002

1 child	2 children	3 children	4 or more children
55%	28%	9%	8%

Number of Adults Per Household, Single-Parent Jewish Households, 2002

1 adult	2 adults	3 adults	4 or more adults
42%	32%	16%	10%

Secular Education: Respondents in single-parent Jewish households are less likely to hold advanced degrees than respondents and their spouses in all eight-county New York-area households. Gender differences are minor; similar statistics are found when examining only female responses.

Education: Respondents and Spouses, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	High School or Technical School	Some College/ Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree/ Doctoral Degree
All Single-Parent Jewish Households	29%	19%	29%	23%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	22%	13%	29%	36%
Females Ages 18 – 64, Single-Parent Jewish Households	27%	23%	27%	23%
Females Ages 18 – 64, All Eight-County Jewish Households	18%	14%	30%	38%

Employment Status: Respondents in single-parent Jewish households are more likely to be employed than respondents and their spouses in all eight-county New York-area households. When age and gender are considered, working-age women in single-parent households are less likely than other women their age to be homemakers.

Employment Status: Respondents and Spouses, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Self- Employed	Full-Time Employed	Part-Time Employed	Student	Unemployed	Homemaker/ Volunteer	Retired	Disabled
All Single-Parent Jewish Households	18%	47%	11%	4%	10%	5%	5%	1%
All Eight-County Respondents/Spouses	15%	38%	6%	3%	6%	7%	23%	2%
Females Ages 18 – 64, Single-Parent Jewish Households	18%	45%	12%	3%	11%	7%	3%	2%
Females Ages 18 – 64, All Eight-County Jewish Households	12%	45%	11%	3%	8%	15%	4%	2%

Russian-Speaking Households³ and Place of Birth: Immigrants are a smaller proportion of single-parent Jewish households than that of eight-county Jewish households. As in the eight-county New York Jewish population, just 3 percent of Russian-speaking Jewish households are single-parent households. Yet in New York City (in which Russian-speaking Jewish households represent 19 percent of all Jewish households), 14 percent of single-parent Jewish households are Russian-speaking households.

³ Russian-speaking households include households in which the respondent was born in the former Soviet Union, as well as households (many Eastern European) in which the respondent completed the interview in Russian.

Place of Birth of Respondents in the Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Eight-County Area	Other U.S.	Former Soviet Union	Other Non-U.S.
Single-Parent Jewish Households	65%	15%	9%	11%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	59%	15%	11%	16%

Household Composition of Russian-Speaking Jewish Households, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

Adult Household, No Children, No Seniors	Households With Children		Senior Households, No Children
	Married	Single-Parent	
34%	21%	3%	42%

Russian-Speaking Jewish Households as a Percent of All Jewish Households in New York City, 2002

Single-Parent Jewish Households	All New York City Jewish Households
14%	19%

ECONOMIC STATUS AND HUMAN-SERVICE NEEDS

Single-parent households struggle with a variety of challenges that do not confront two-person families, not the least of which is financial burdens. While national general-population data shows that single-parent households are more likely to live below poverty levels,⁴ many of the Jewish single-parent households are financially vulnerable, but not necessarily below poverty.

Income: Almost one in three Jewish households reports an annual income of less than \$35,000. Single-parent households have lower incomes than other households on average. Gender does appear to be statistically significant here, with female-headed single-parent households in greater percentages at the low end of the income scale.

Annual Household Income, Jewish Households, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Under \$35,000	\$35,000 – 49,999	\$50,000 – 99,999	\$100,000 – 149,999	Over \$150,000
Single-Parent Jewish Households	36%	21%	26%	11%	6%
Female-Headed Single Parent Jewish Households	43%	21%	23%	9%	5%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	31%	14%	24%	15%	17%

Poverty: The 16 percent of eight-county single-parent households below the 150 percent poverty standard parallels the overall eight-county Jewish community percentage. Among New York City single-parent households, 18 percent are below 150 percent poverty, compared with the citywide 21 percent Jewish household poverty average.

⁴ Parents Without Partners Fact Sheet: "Forty-five percent of single-parent families headed by a woman and 19 percent of single-parent families headed by a man live in poverty, as compared to only eight percent of married couples with children under the age of 18."

**Poor and Near-Poor Status of Single-Parent Households, Two-Parent Households, and
Non-Senior Households Without Children, Eight-County New York Area, 2002**

	Percent Below 150% Poverty	Percent Near Poor	Percent Above Poverty and Near Poverty
Single-Parent Jewish Households With Minor Children	16%	15%	69%
Married, Two-Parent Households With Minor Children	10%	4%	86%
Non-Senior Households, No Minor Children	10%	8%	82%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	15%	8%	77%

Health Insurance Coverage: Single-parent Jewish households are less likely than other Jewish households in the eight-county area to have health insurance coverage.

Health Insurance Coverage of Jewish Households in the Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Has Some Health Insurance Coverage	Does Not Have Any Health Insurance Coverage	Respondent or Household Member was Temporarily Without Health Insurance Coverage at Some Point in the 12 Months Prior to Survey
Single-Parent Jewish Households	80%	20%	18%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	93%	7%	9%

Health Status: Respondents in single-parent Jewish households assess their own health as good.

Self-Assessment of Own Health, Jewish Respondents in the Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Single-Parent Jewish Households	44%	40%	22%	4%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	37%	41%	17%	5%

Residential Status: Single-parent Jewish households are more likely to rent than own their residence.

Residential Status, Jewish Households in the Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Rent	Own
Single-Parent Jewish Households	51%	49%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	45%	55%

Accessing Human Services: Single-parent households are more likely than other Jewish households to require human-services assistance. Overall, 56 percent of single-parent households (versus 51 percent of

two-parent households) report having sought assistance for one of the indexed services, but the differences vary by topic.

Percent of Single-Parent and Two-Parent Households Which Sought Human-Service or Health-Needs Assistance, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

In 12 Months Prior to Study, Household Member Sought Assistance:	Single-Parent Households	Two-Parent Households
In Coping with a Serious or Chronic Illness	26%	15%
In Finding a Job or Choosing an Occupation	23%	13%
For Services for an Older Adult	9%	11%
For a Person With a Disability	9%	8%
For a Child With a Learning Disability	16%	13%
For Personal, Marriage, or Family Counseling	13%	9%
With Infant or Child Care	10%	10%
With Adoption Services (any time)	3%	4%
For Services for Refugees, Such as Resettlement	3%	<1%
With HIV/AIDS Services or Testing	3%	1%
For an Alcohol or Drug Problem	<1%	1%
Any of 11 Services	56%	51%

JEWISH CONNECTIONS

Denominational Identification: Single-parent Jewish households are slightly less likely than other Jewish households to identify with a denomination.

Jewish Respondent Denomination, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Reform	Conservative	Orthodox	No Denomination, "Just Jewish"	Secular and No Religion	Miscellaneous Answers
Single-Parent Jewish Households	26%	21%	20%	22%	9%	3%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	29%	26%	19%	15%	9%	2%

Jewish Organization Affiliation: Single-parent Jewish households are more likely than other Jewish households to identify with and join a congregation, equally likely to belong to a Jewish community center, and less likely to belong to other Jewish organizations.

Connections to the Organized Jewish Community, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Belong to a Synagogue	Participate in JCC Activities	Belong to or Regularly Participate in Another Jewish Organization
Single-Parent Jewish Households	49%	34%	7%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	43%	34%	20%

The Cost of Being Jewish: Single-parent households are much more likely than two-parent households with children to cite cost as a factor preventing membership in Jewish organizations and participation in Jewish activities.

Percent of Households That Report Financial Cost Prevented Participation in the Five Years Preceding the Survey, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Belonging to a Synagogue	Going to Israel	Belonging to a JCC	Sending a Child to Day School
Single-Parent Jewish Households	26%	38%	24%	27%
All Eight-County Jewish Households	15%	24%	14%	15%

Jewish Connections: Single-parent families are more likely to light Chanukah and Shabbat candles than other eight-county Jewish households. They are less likely to feel part of a Jewish community and place priority on being part of a Jewish community, to give to Jewish charitable causes, and to view giving children as “very important.” On most other measures, they are similar to other eight-county Jewish households in beliefs, experiences, and practices.

Jewish Connection Variables by Household, Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Single-Parent Jewish Households	All Eight-County Jewish Households
Survival of the State of Israel is Very Important to Respondent	93%	92%
Giving Children a College or University Education is Very Important to Respondent	87%	86%
Making the World a Better Place is Very Important to Respondent	86%	88%
Attends Passover Seder	78%	77%
Lights Chanukah Candles	78%	70%
Jewish Respondent Fasts on Yom Kippur	71%	72%
Learning About Jewish History and Culture is Very Important to Respondent	68%	66%
Jewish Value of <i>Tzedakah</i> is Very Important to Respondent	63%	68%
Lights Shabbat Candles	63%	53%
Being Jewish is Very Important to Respondent	60%	65%
Giving Children a Jewish Education is Very Important to Respondent	59%	66%
Jewish Respondent Feels Part of a Jewish Community	57%	65%
Household Contributed to Any Jewish Charitable Cause (Including Synagogues, Federation)	47%	58%
Jewish Respondent Has Visited Israel	44%	50%
Being Part of a Jewish Community is Very Important to Respondent	43%	52%
Jewish Art, Music, and Culture is Very Important to Respondent	36%	41%
Visits Jewish Websites on the Internet	35%	37%
Household Attended JCC Activity in Prior Year	34%	34%
Jewish Respondent Attends Services at Least Monthly	29%	29%

Information from this study can be obtained from:

- **The reports**
 - Available at www.ujafedny.org/jewishcommunitystudy
 - *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002*
 - *Geographic Profile*
 - *Report on Jewish Poverty*
 - *Special Report on Nazi Victims in the New York Area*
- **The data file**
 - Available at the North American Jewish Data Bank, www.jewishdatabank.org
- **Inquiries to UJA-Federation of New York**
 - Address inquiries to Jennifer Rosenberg, director of research, at rosenbergj@ujafedny.org or 1.212.836.1298.