

# BRONX BROOKLYN MANHATTAN QUEENS STATEN ISLAND NASSAU SUFFOLK WESTCHESTER

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDY OF NEW YORK: 2011

### SPECIAL STUDY ON JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS WITH LGBT (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, OR TRANSGENDER) INDIVIDUALS

**JUNE 2014**

#### Definitions and Population Estimates

Understanding the diversity of the Jewish population in the New York area — including households with someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) — was deemed a priority in designing the survey for the Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011.<sup>1</sup> In order to explore the characteristics of Jewish households with someone who is LGBT, toward the end of the interview, interviewers asked:

On another topic, do you consider yourself (or does anyone in the household consider themselves\*) to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender?

\* *Language in parentheses added if two or more persons in household.*

Respondents representing 33,400 households — about 5% of all Jewish households in the eight-county New York area — answered affirmatively.<sup>2</sup> These households are home to 75,500 people, of whom 50,500 are Jewish. Because strong stigmas exist about homosexuality and gender nonconformity within segments of the community, and consistent with the tendency for people to give “socially desirable” responses to strangers interviewing them over the phone, in all likelihood this is a minimum estimate as respondents may have underreported the presence of LGBT individuals in their households.

#### Exhibit 1: Number of Households, Jews, and People in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	Percent of All Jewish Households/ Jews/People in Jewish Households in the Eight-County Area
Households	33,400	5%
Jews	50,500	3%
People (Jews and Non-Jews)	75,500	4%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

<sup>1</sup>This special study draws from and expands upon the material presented on pages 247 to 249 of the *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 Comprehensive Report*, UJA-Federation of New York (2012), and page 426 of the *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 Geographic Profile*, UJA-Federation of New York (2013). Additional data compiled by UJA-Federation’s Research Department based on the Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 data file.

<sup>2</sup>The Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 is based on 5,993 telephone interviews with randomly selected Jewish households in the eight-county UJA-Federation of New York service area: the five boroughs of New York City and the suburban counties of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester. In all, 223 respondents answered the question about the presence of LGBT household members affirmatively. An additional 22 respondents answered the question negatively, even though they reported a same-sex spouse or partner. We did not include the latter in the LGBT analysis on the conservative methodological assumption that gender may have been miscoded and that researchers should accept respondents at their word absent strong evidence to the contrary. The inclusion of these 22 respondents would increase the estimate of the number of Jewish households with LGBT individuals from 33,400 to 35,800. The total number of people living in such households would increase from 75,100 to 82,500.

It is important to note that because of the way the question was worded, for all households with two or more people, we do not know who or how many people in the household identify as LGBT. The respondent could be a non-LGBT parent or adult sibling of an LGBT teen or young adult who is living at home. As such, we can speak only of the characteristics of *households* with LGBT individuals; we generally are not able to focus on the attributes specifically of LGBT Jews unless we are speaking of one-person households.

## Demographic and Social Characteristics

Fully three-quarters (75%) of all people living in Jewish households with LGBT individuals are working-age adults 18 – 64. The proportions of children and seniors in these households are about half of what they are in other Jewish households.

**Exhibit 2: Age Distribution of People in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With People in All Other Jewish Households**

Age Ranges	Percent of All People in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	Percent of All People in All Other Jewish Households
0 – 17 (Children)	13%	24%
18 – 39 (Young Adults)	33%	23%
40 – 64 (Middle Aged)	42%	36%
65+ (Seniors)	11%	20%
Total	100%*	100%*

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

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

The age profile of respondents, spouses, and partners in LGBT households (all age 18 or older) reflects a surprising difference by sex. The men are much more likely to be middle aged (40 – 64) than the women (61% of male respondents, spouses, and partners, compared to 50% of female respondents, spouses, and partners). A third of female respondents, spouses, and partners (33%) in LGBT households are young adults compared to just 22% of male respondents, spouses, and partners in LGBT households.

LGBT respondents are more likely to live alone (43%) than other respondents (29%). The differences seen in the below table are less pronounced when you exclude the Orthodox population — with their average household size of 3.9 — from the “All Other Jewish Households” column. Like the households with LGBT individuals, other non-Orthodox Jewish households have just 2.2 people per household, with about 33% in one-person households, 37% in two-person households, and 30% with three or more people in the household.

**Exhibit 3: Size of Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With All Other Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households
Average Number of People Per Household	2.2	2.6
One-Person Household	43%	29%
Two-Person Household	33%	35%
Three or More People in Household	24%	36%
Total	100%	100%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

Again, an interesting difference arises when taking into account the sex of the respondent: nearly half (47%) of male respondents in households with LGBT individuals live alone compared to 35% of female respondents in such households. In contrast, in all other Jewish households women are more likely than men to live alone (33% of female respondents compared to 26% of males; this likely reflects the difference in age and marriage profiles seen in exhibits 2 and 4, with such high proportions of seniors and widows). The difference among LGBT respondents may reflect their different age profile discussed above: the younger age profile of female respondents in LGBT households may make them more likely to live with their parents or roommates.

Relatively few respondents in households with LGBT individuals are married (21%, compared to 54% for all other Jewish households), though this trend may change in light of recent legal changes permitting same-sex marriages in New York and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibit 4: Marital Status of Respondents in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With Those in All Other Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households
Married	21%	54%
Living With A Partner	14%	4%
Never Married	46%	19%
Divorced or Separated	14%	10%
Widowed	5%	12%
Total	100%	100%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

The economic profile of Jewish households with LGBT individuals is very similar to that of all other Jewish households. (In both LGBT and other Jewish households, female respondents are more likely than males to have household income under \$100,000, and males more likely than females to have household income over \$150,000. The difference is more pronounced among LGBT households, again likely reflecting the younger age profile of female respondents in these households.)

**Exhibit 5: Household Income and Poverty Status of Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With All Other Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households
<b>Household Income</b>		
Under \$100,000	73%	69%
\$100,000 – \$149,999	11%	16%
\$150,000+	16%	16%
Total	100%	100%
<b>Poverty Status</b>		
Poor* or Near Poor** Households	28%	29%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

\*Household income below 150% of the federal poverty guideline.

\*\*Household income between 150% and 250% of the federal poverty guideline.

Male respondents and spouse/partners in households with LGBT individuals have attained higher levels of secular education than their counterparts in other Jewish households (69% of the former group have a bachelor's or higher degree compared to 58% of the latter). In contrast, women in LGBT households do not exceed the education levels of their counterparts: 53% of female respondents and spouse/partners in

<sup>3</sup>At the time of this survey, only five states recognized same-sex marriages: Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. New York approved same-sex marriage on July 24, 2011, two weeks after the close of this survey. At the time of this writing, 19 states have legal same-sex marriage, and 31 states have same-sex marriage bans.

LGBT households have a bachelor's or higher degree, slightly fewer than the 58% of their counterparts in all other Jewish households. While the differences among women could also reflect a difference in age profile (the 18 – 39 segment is 33% of female respondents, spouses, and partners in LGBT households, but just 22% of their counterparts in other households), there could be other factors at play that derail or postpone high school graduation for LGBT women or their family members.

**Exhibit 6: Secular Educational Attainment of Male and Female Respondents and Spouses/Partners in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With Those in All Other Jewish Households**

Sex of Respondent/Spouse/Partner	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals		All Other Jewish Households	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
High School or Less	20%	31%	20%	23%
Some College or Associate's Degree	11%	16%	22%	19%
Bachelor's Degree	33%	21%	28%	23%
Master's, M.D., Ph.D., J.D., etc.	36%	32%	30%	35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

Employment patterns are relatively similar among male respondents and spouses/partners in Jewish households with LGBT individuals compared with all other Jewish households, with the exception of there being a slightly higher proportion employed among the former and more retirees among the latter. More significant differences arise when comparing female respondents and spouses/partners. Women in households with LGBT individuals are much more likely than women in other households and men in LGBT households to be unemployed or disabled, and less likely than other women to be homemakers or retired.

**Exhibit 7: Employment Status of Male and Female Respondents and Spouses in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With Those in All Other Jewish Households**

Sex of Respondent/Spouse/Partner	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals		All Other Jewish Households	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Employed (Full-Time, Part-Time, or Self-Employed)	72%	60%	67%	55%
Unemployed	4%	10%	4%	3%
Student	4%	2%	5%	2%
Disabled	5%	7%	3%	3%
Homemaker/Volunteer	<1%	3%	<1%	11%
Retired	15%	18%	22%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

Households with LGBT individuals are more than twice as likely as other Jewish households to be nonwhite, Hispanic, or multiracial, but three times less likely to be Russian-speaking.

**Exhibit 8: Racial and Ethnic Diversity Among Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With All Other Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households
Nonwhite, Hispanic, or Multiracial Jewish Households	27%	12%
Russian-Speaking Households	5%	16%
Households With an Israeli	5%	6%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

## Geographic Distribution

Jewish households with LGBT individuals are more likely to be found in New York City than the also-primarily urban rest of the Jewish community. Within New York City, they are heavily concentrated in Manhattan, being twice as likely to live there as other Jewish households.

**Exhibit 9: Geographic Distribution of Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With All Other Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals*	All Other Jewish Households
<b>City/Suburbs</b>		
New York City	81%	71%
Suburban Counties	19%	29%
Total	100%	100%
<b>Boroughs/Counties</b>		
Manhattan	42%	21%
Brooklyn	17%	29%
Queens	14%	14%
Nassau	10%	14%
Westchester	6%	9%
Bronx	5%	4%
Suffolk	4%	6%
Staten Island	3%	9%
Total	100%	100%

Among the primary areas of Jewish residence defined in the Geographic Profile report,<sup>4</sup> the 12 with an average or higher proportion of households with LGBT individuals are:

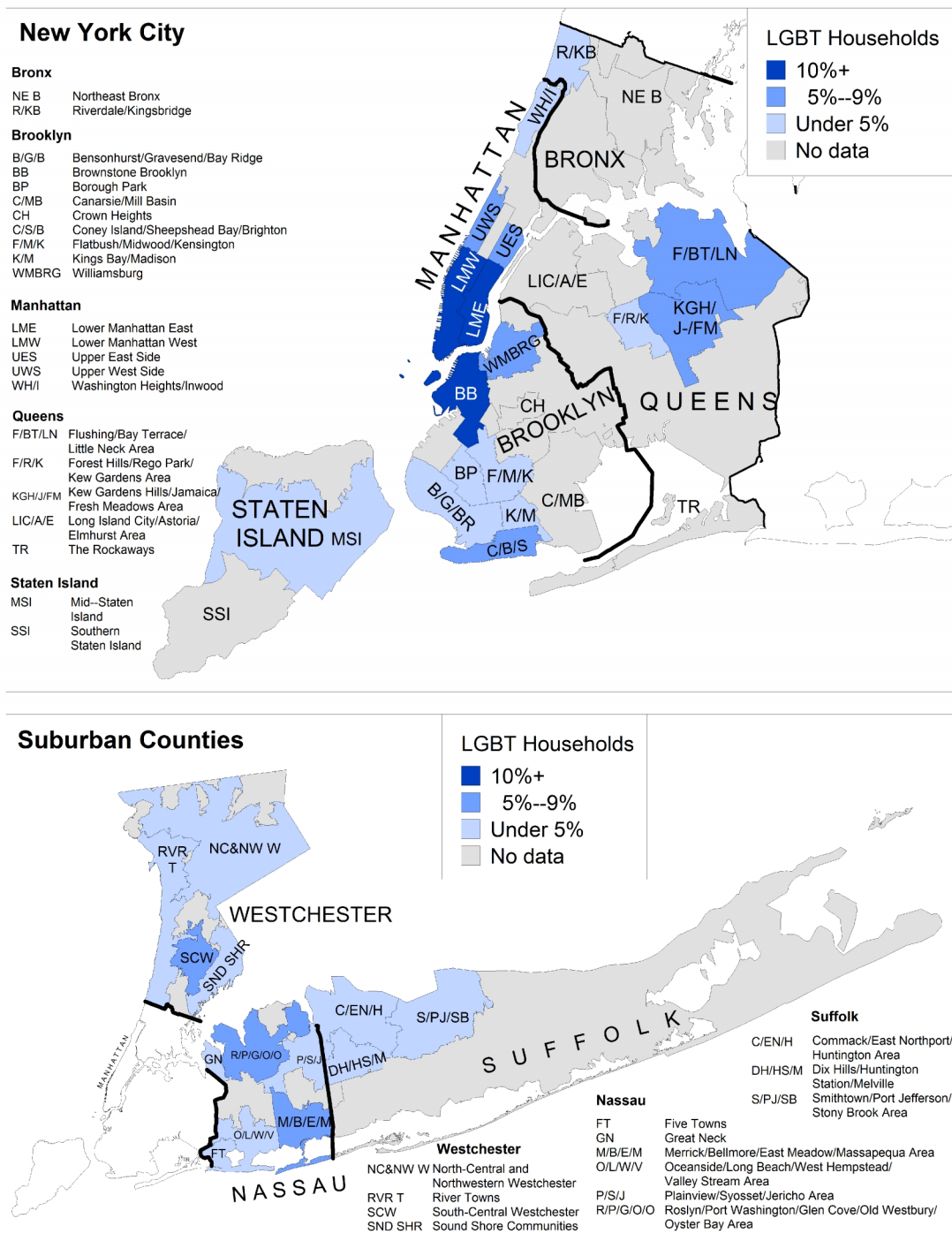
- Lower Manhattan West (23%)
- Lower Manhattan East (14%)
- Brownstone Brooklyn (11%)
- Flushing/Bay Terrace/Little Neck Area (9%)
- Upper East Side (8%)
- Roslyn/Port Washington/Glen Cove/Old Westbury/Oyster Bay Area (8%)
- Coney Island/Brighton Beach/Sheepshead Bay (6%)
- Kew Gardens Hills/Jamaica/Fresh Meadows Area (6%)
- South-Central Westchester (5%)
- Upper West Side (5%)
- Williamsburg (5%)
- Merrick/Bellmore/East Meadow/Massapequa Area (5%)

These areas cluster in distinct patterns, as shown in the following exhibit.

<sup>4</sup>See *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 Geographic Profile*. New York: UJA-Federation of New York. Available as PDF at [www.ujafedny.org/geographic-profile-report](http://www.ujafedny.org/geographic-profile-report).

**Exhibit 10: Geographic Distribution of Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Primary Areas of Jewish Residence, Eight-County New York Area, 2011**

**Jewish Households That Include Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender People  
by Jewish Area, 2011**





## People in Need

There appears to be little difference in patterns of social service utilization with one exception: households with LGBT individuals are twice as likely as other Jewish households to seek help for an adult with a disability. This difference is consistent with the higher proportion of respondents, spouses, and partners who are unemployed due to a disability as seen in exhibit 7.

**Exhibit 11: Service Utilization Among Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With All Other Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households
<b>Sought in the Year Prior to the Survey ...</b>		
Services for an Adult With a Disability	27%	14%
Services for a Household Member's Serious or Chronic Illness	18%	16%
Help Finding a Job or Choosing an Occupation	15%	14%
Food, Housing	7%	8%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

Despite having relatively few seniors in their households, Jewish households with LGBT individuals are equally likely (23%) as other Jewish households (24%) to have someone in their household responsible for caring for an aging family member or friend. This might reflect the higher rates of disability in this population suggested by the data on employment and service-seeking.

## Jewish Engagement

Jewish respondents in households with LGBT individuals are more likely than other respondents to identify as Reform, and twice as likely to say they have no religion. Only 4% are Orthodox.

**Exhibit 12: Denominational Identification of Jewish Respondents in Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With Those in All Other Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households
Orthodox	4%	20%
Conservative	12%	20%
Reform	29%	23%
Reconstructionist	1%	1%
Jewish Religion, No Denomination	17%	19%
No Religion	27%	13%
Non-Jewish Religion	10%	5%
Total	100%	100%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

In general, Orthodox Jews significantly outscore all other Jews on almost every measure of Jewish engagement. Their strong presence among “All Other Jewish Households” and very small proportion among LGBT households would skew comparisons of Jewish engagement. As such, the remainder of this analysis excludes Orthodox households from the non-LGBT “All Other Jewish households” group (but continues to include them in LGBT households).

Patterns of household-level engagement are quite similar for Jewish households with LGBT individuals and all other non-Orthodox households. Both groups have similarly low rates of belonging to synagogues and participating in JCCs, and equal rates of keeping kosher. Households with LGBT individuals are, however, slightly less likely to engage in holiday celebrations, including lighting Hanukkah or Shabbat

candles and participating in seders. While their connection to the primary gateway institutions in Jewish life is on par with their non-Orthodox counterparts, they are much less likely to participate regularly in Jewish organizations other than a synagogue or JCC.

**Exhibit 13: Household-Level Indicators of Jewish Engagement in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With All Other (Non-Orthodox) Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households — non-Orthodox
Seder — someone in household usually or always participates	60%	64%
Hanukkah Candles Lit in Household — usually or always	54%	62%
Synagogue Member — anyone in household	33%	34%
JCC — anyone in household went to a program, past year	30%	32%
Kosher Home	17%	18%
Jewish Organization, Belong or Regularly Participate — anyone in household	11%	19%
Sabbath Candles Lit in Household — usually or always	15%	21%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

When looking at respondent-level indicators of communal connection, different patterns emerge, though overall the levels of connection for both groups are relatively low. Respondents in Jewish households with LGBT individuals are slightly more likely than other non-Orthodox respondents to go to Jewish cultural events.<sup>5</sup> However, they are twice as likely to feel uncomfortable attending most Jewish events and activities, and half as likely to have close friends who are mostly Jewish. Despite this discomfort and comparatively weaker Jewish social networks, they are equally likely (24% versus 25%) to feel part of a Jewish community.

This last point is particularly interesting, because for Jewish respondents overall and most subgroups of respondents, there is usually a gap between the proportion that say they value being part of a Jewish community and those who actually feel part of a Jewish community (here, 34% vs. 25% respectively, for all other non-Orthodox households). Respondents in households with LGBT individuals are less likely to say that being part of a Jewish community is a high priority (23%), but an equal proportion of respondents (24%) say that they actually feel — a lot — part of a Jewish community.

<sup>5</sup>As noted in the beginning, please keep in mind that this analysis is not limited to LGBT respondents. For households with more than one person, we know that someone in the household identifies as LGBT, but it is not necessarily the respondent. Nevertheless, we believe it is informative to look at some individual-level indicators of Jewish engagement for all respondents in households with LGBT individuals.



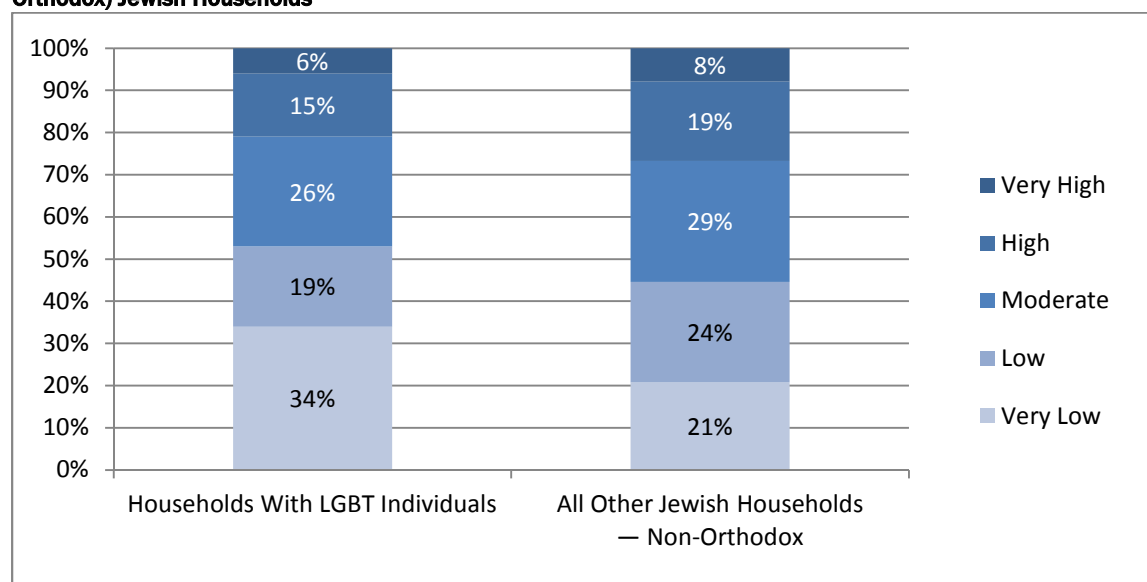
**Exhibit 14: Respondent-Level Indicators of Communal Connection in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With All Other (Non-Orthodox) Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households — non-Orthodox
Went to a Jewish Museum or Jewish Cultural Event — respondent in past year	51%	46%
Shabbat Meal — respondent participates sometimes or regularly	30%	35%
Being Part of a Jewish Community “Very Important” to Respondent	23%	34%
Respondent Feels Part of a Jewish Community — a lot	24%	25%
Respondent’s Closest Friends Are Mostly Jewish	22%	45%
Feels Uncomfortable Attending Most Jewish Events and Activities	25%	12%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

While there are a number of individual measures on which Jewish households with LGBT individuals engage at about the same levels as other non-Orthodox Jewish households, overall levels of Jewish engagement are lower among the former. This analysis uses an index developed for the *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 Comprehensive Report*, based on 12 individual and household measures of communal affiliation, ritual observance, subjective salience of Jewish life, and social interaction.<sup>6</sup> Households were ranked “very high” if they affirmed 10 – 12 items, “high” if they affirmed 7 – 9, “moderate” 4 – 6, “low” 2 – 3, or very low if they affirmed none or just 1 of the 12 items. As the exhibit below indicates, the differences are not great at the high end of the scale, but a third of Jewish households with LGBT individuals have little to no Jewish engagement on these measures — significantly more than other non-Orthodox Jewish households.

**Exhibit 15: Jewish Engagement of Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With All Other (Non-Orthodox) Jewish Households**



<sup>6</sup>The 12 items are: attending a program or event at a YM-YWHA or Jewish community center, belonging to a synagogue, belonging to another Jewish organization, usually or always attending a Passover seder, usually or always lighting Shabbat candles, usually or always lighting Hanukkah candles, feeling it’s very important to be part of a Jewish community, regularly talking about Jewish-related topics with Jewish friends, feeling a lot a part of a Jewish community, volunteering for Jewish organizations or causes, having closest friends who are mostly or all Jewish, contributing to any Jewish charity.

Do some of these differences in household and respondent Jewish engagement relate to differences in how the respondents were raised and how they identify Jewishly? Below we see just slight variations in how respondents in both groups were raised. Those in households with LGBT individuals were a little more likely to have not been raised Jewish. Of those who did grow up with at least one Jewish parent, larger proportions were raised as Reform, nondenominational, or with no religion. The differences in the types of formal Jewish education received as a child are negligible, and there is also no significant difference in the proportion of those who went to summer camp with Jewish content as a youngster.

**Exhibit 16: How Respondents in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals Were Raised in Comparison With Respondents in All Other (Non-Orthodox) Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households — non-Orthodox
<b>How Respondent Was Raised*</b>		
Not Raised Jewish (no Jewish parents)	19%	12%
Raised in Intermarried Household (one Jewish parent)	10%	12%
Raised in In-Married Household (both parents Jewish)	71%	76%
Total	100%	100%
<b>Denomination Raised in When Growing Up**</b>		
Orthodox	9%	14%
Conservative	28%	37%
Reform	32%	27%
Other (no denomination, no religion, or another denomination,)	32%	22%
Total	100%	100%
<b>Primary Type of Formal Jewish Education Received as a Child***</b>		
Day School	12%	11%
Supplemental School	53%	54%
Tutor	10%	6%
No Formal Jewish Education	26%	29%
Total	100%	100%
Went to Jewish Overnight Summer Camp as a Youngster***	38%	35%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

\*Asked of all respondents.

\*\*Asked only of United States- and FSU-born respondents with at least one Jewish parent.

\*\*\*Asked only of United States-born respondents ages 18 – 69 with at least one Jewish parent.

While twice as many respondents in Jewish households with LGBT individuals do not consider themselves Jewish, there is *not* a greater proportion of individuals who identify as “partially Jewish.” Among Jewish respondents, those in households with LGBT individuals are more likely to be categorized as “ethnically Jewish” rather than Jewish by religion, reflecting the high proportion of “no-religion” Jews seen in the table on denomination.

**Exhibit 17: How Respondents in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals Identify as Jewish in Comparison With Respondents In All Other (Non-Orthodox) Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals	All Other Jewish Households — non-Orthodox
<b>Whether Respondent Currently Considers Self Jewish</b>		
Not Jewish*	13%	6%
“Partially Jewish”	12%	14%
Jewish	75%	80%
Total	100%	100%
<b>How Respondent Qualifies as Jewish, Jewish Respondents Only</b>		
Jewish by Religion (one or both parents Jewish)	62%	73%
Ethnically Jewish (religion none or not Judaism, one or both parents Jewish)	30%	19%
Jewish by Conversion (neither parent Jewish)	1%	2%
Jewish by Choice (neither parent Jewish)	7%	6%
Total	100%	100%

\*Included in survey because someone else in the household identifies as Jewish or partially Jewish.

Intermarriage is more common among respondents in Jewish households with LGBT individuals than among their non-Orthodox counterparts.

**Exhibit 18: In-Marriage Status Among Married and Partnered Couples in Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals in Comparison With Married Couples in All Other (Non-Orthodox) Jewish Households**

	Jewish Households With LGBT Individuals*	All Other Jewish Households — non-Orthodox
In-Marriage	56%	72%
Intermarriage	44%	28%
Total	100%	100%

Eight-County New York Area, 2011

\*Because of the small number of interviews with married or partnered respondents in households with LGBT individuals, caution is advised in interpreting these figures.

## Conclusion

Numbering at least 75,000 people in 33,000 households, people in Jewish households with LGBT individuals are a sizable presence in the New York Jewish community. A predominantly young adult and middle-aged population with relatively few children in their households, they look fairly similar to the rest of the Jewish population in terms of their socioeconomic and employment status. Although many live alone, they are heavily concentrated in Manhattan and a few neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Queens, and Nassau County. Jewishly, they identify primarily as Reform or secular/no religion. They belong to key institutions of Jewish life at similar rates to non-Orthodox Jewish households, but are much less socially connected to the Jewish community and express high rates of feeling uncomfortable at Jewish events and activities. Though their Jewish backgrounds are comparable to other non-Orthodox Jews and they have fairly similar levels of connecting Jewishly through holidays and cultural events, they have high rates of intermarriage and overall their levels of Jewish engagement are lower. Since they join but do not feel so comfortable in Jewish institutions, a challenge for the organized Jewish community is to make them feel more welcomed in a way that speaks to their more ethnically Jewish identity.

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