

PREFACE FROM THE FOUNDATION & FEDERATION

Our Community's Path and Progress

In 2008, Cincinnati launched a community study which provided insights that propelled Cincinnati 2020, the vision and plan that has steered our community initiatives over the past decade. Now, The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati and the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati are pleased to present the 2019 Cincinnati Jewish Community Study, which will inform our Cincinnati 2030 vision and plan. This preface describes our community's unique culture and strengths that can power our way into the next decade.

2019 Cincinnati Jewish Community Study

On the eve of two hundred years of Jewish life in Cincinnati, this study provides a richly textured portrait of the Cincinnati Jewish community today. This study comes at a time of accelerating change in Americans' understanding of personal identity, family, and career—all of which alter American Jews' understanding of their own Jewishness. These changes are complex, and this study will give us important insight into some tough questions, including:

- How is our community changing demographically and geographically?
- How are peoples' definitions and expressions of Jewishness evolving?
- Are older adults, low-income individuals, and those struggling with physical and emotional challenges finding adequate support in our community?



Strengthening Jewish Cincinnati

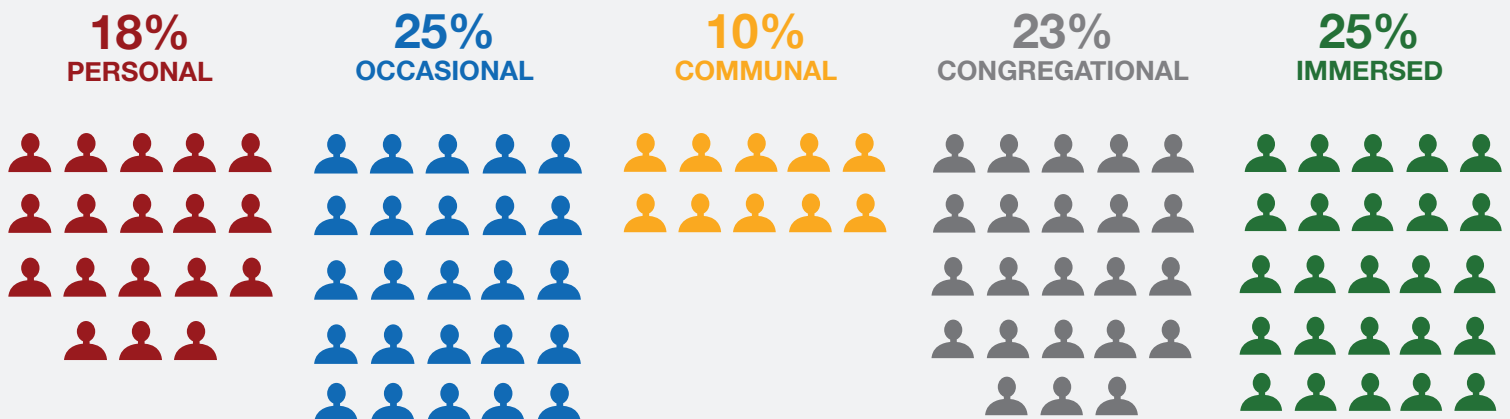


The Key Findings

The key findings illuminate Cincinnati-specific storylines, challenges, and opportunities and offer new paradigms which may defy our past assumptions and categories. For example, there is strong evidence that the size of Cincinnati's Jewish population is stable. However, there also has been significant change. After a century of assimilation across America, 55% of Jews who are married or partnered in Cincinnati have a non-Jewish spouse. This reality poses challenges, including a smaller percentage of children being raised Jewish, as well as opportunities, including an increase in the number and diversity of Cincinnati's Jewish households.

After our last Jewish community study in 2008, many were concerned about the sustainability of our young adult population. Today, 27% of our population is between the ages of 18 and 34, and 26% is between the ages of 35 and 49. Almost half of young adults live in the Urban region and just less than half of children live in the Central and East region.

Cincinnati's Jews engage in a wide variety of Jewish activities. For this report, CMJS/SSRI developed an "Index of Jewish Engagement" that grouped Jewish adults into five categories* that they created specifically for Cincinnati. This index (see below) is designed to portray "how people are Jewish" rather than to measure "how Jewish" people are. This useful new lens offers Jewish organizations and congregations a richer understanding of what potential constituents are looking for in Jewish connections, which can help all of us design more effective programs and messages.



*For a more detailed description of the five Index of Jewish Engagement categories, see chapter 3



The Past Decade—A Community Transformed

In 2008, when we released our last community study, this community looked radically different. After suffering for years without a fully-functional Jewish community center, the Federation, the Foundation, and the Jewish Community Center (JCC) had partnered on a successful \$42 million capital campaign that enabled construction of the new Mayerson JCC that same year.

The Mayerson JCC opened its doors, inspiring a bold and optimistic vision for our future, Cincinnati 2020, which was born out of shared community commitment. Our optimism was immediately challenged by the Great Recession, which was already destabilizing many of our organizations and congregations, even as many individuals in our community were losing their jobs and their savings.

Fortunately, the Jewish Foundation had just completed the sale of Jewish Hospital, resulting in the tripling of the Foundation's assets. The Foundation defined its role as a trusted, high-impact investor and quickly leveraged these newly available funds to stabilize our organizations, schools, and agencies and enable them to provide needed services.

In many Jewish communities, the emergence of an independent private foundation that is legally separate from the Jewish Federation has created tension, role confusion, and duplication of services. Cincinnati is different. Our Foundation and Federation have defined independent roles but are aligned on goals, enabling us to partner effectively and with our local agencies and congregations.

Although the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, founded in 1896, holds the distinction of being the longest continually operating Federation in North America, it has never changed more quickly than it has over the past decade. Our Federation is one of the few to share talent by providing fundraising counsel and marketing services for other agencies and organizations. This developed the trust required to build America's only Federation-based Shared Business Services, which has enabled 21 local Jewish nonprofits to outsource all of their business and financial services, so they can focus fully on their unique mission expertise. This has fostered a culture of sharing goals and talent across organizational lines and has enabled Cincinnati to "punch above its weight class" compared with other Jewish communities our size.

Strengthening Jewish Cincinnati

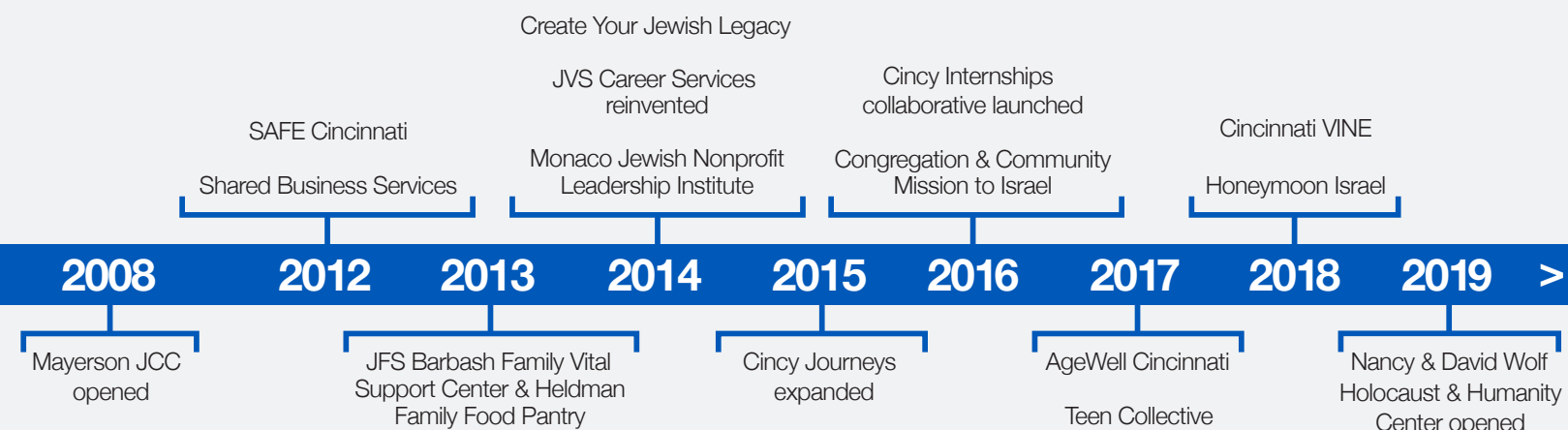


A Decade of Accomplishments

It is important to remember the accomplishments in just the past decade, born of **Cincinnati 2020**,* our creative and collaborative culture to build an engaged and empowered Jewish community by the year 2020. Below are some of our top highlights and a timeline of our journey so far:

- Out-of-town visitors who see the **Mayerson JCC** are impressed with this premiere, multifaceted campus with an accredited senior services center, a flourishing Early Childhood School, robust teen programming, and a state-of-the-art fitness center. It is the hub of the Cincinnati Jewish community.
- Our **Create Your Jewish Legacy** (CYJL) initiative exceeded its goals and is recognized as the nation's most successful community-wide legacy gift initiative. The Federation coached teams from 22 local Jewish congregations, schools, and agencies through the process of securing nearly 1,500 legacy commitments from their constituents. This effort has documented close to \$130 million in planned giving expectancies to provide sustainability and has inspired a culture of collaborative fundraising.
- The **Cincy Journeys** grant program, funded by the Foundation and administered by the Federation, sends more teens and young adults to Israel on a per capita basis than any other community in America and makes it possible for children to attend overnight Jewish camps, strengthening their Jewish identities and leadership skills.
- The 2016 **Congregational & Community Mission to Israel** enabled 508 community members from nine diverse congregations to experience Israel with their rabbis and the Federation.
- **The Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center**, which opened in January 2019 at its new location in Cincinnati's Union Terminal, is now an integral part of one of the most visited museum centers in America.

TIMELINE OF COLLABORATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



*For more information, visit: jewishcincinnati.org/impact-c2020

Strengthening Jewish Cincinnati



Creating Cincinnati 2030

This report is only the beginning. With the release of this study, the Federation and the Foundation will launch a Year of Learning together to help our congregations, agencies, organizations, and funders to better understand our community's evolving nature and needs.

In the coming year, we will convene “deep dives” into the 2019 Cincinnati Jewish Community Study and then apply those learnings to a new Cincinnati 2030 strategic planning process. We will convene leaders and community members to share ideas about how best to address our community's most pressing needs, invest in our professional and volunteer leaders, strengthen Jewish identity, support creative opportunities for Jewish education and engagement, embrace interfaith families, and become more inclusive of those with special needs.

In the next ten years, let us measure ourselves by the innovation and imagination of our Jewish community.

Together, we will continue to build an engaged and empowered Jewish community!

The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati

The Jewish Federation of Cincinnati



Strengthening **Jewish Cincinnati**

