

The Workforce Supporting Flourishing Jewish Communities

A Snapshot of Professional Talent and Trends in the
Federation System



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Introduction

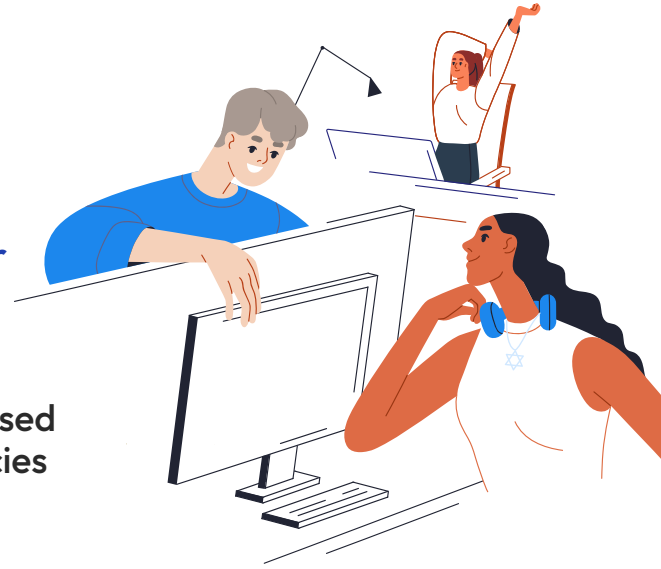
People are at the core of creating flourishing Jewish communities. Together, professional and lay leadership develop the foundations of success needed to build and sustain communities that are engaged, educated, inclusive, safe, active, healthy, caring, and connected to Israel and the global Jewish people. Jewish Federations of North America's Mandel Center for Leadership Excellence is dedicated to growing professional talent throughout the Federation system and beyond. Our work ensures that there is a pipeline of talent, robust professional development programs and networks, and Federations have the data and tools they need to foster a productive organizational culture and be great places to work.

We are excited to share this snapshot of the Jewish professional workforce and are grateful to our many partners who have provided data and resources to support this report, including Leading Edge and local Jewish Federations throughout North America. We also thank the Jack Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation for their generous investment in professional talent initiatives at Jewish Federations of North America.

Talent Snapshot

There are more than **8,000 employees** working for **Jewish Federations**, which includes an estimated

4,000 in **full-time** Federation-focused roles and many more working for integrated agencies of local Federations.

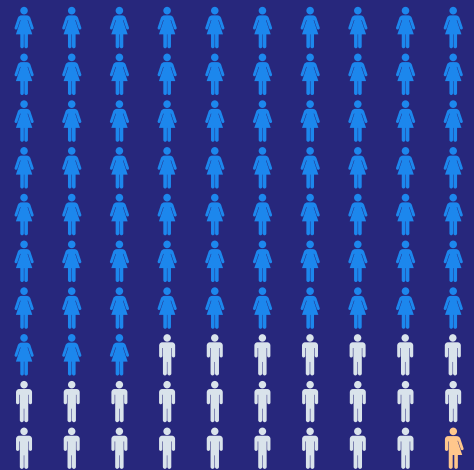


Jewish Federations have a workforce that is **made up significantly by women.**

73% of the workforce identify as women

26% identify as men

< 1% identify as genderfluid, genderqueer, or nonbinary



67%
of executive leaders
identify as women.



43%
of Federations have a female CEO.

Within **the largest Federations**, including Large and Large-Intermediates, female leadership in the top professional role has **increased 8%** over the past several years.

Similar to the populations served by Jewish Federations, the

Federation workforce is diverse.

21%

identify as non-white

This includes about **1 in 10** Jewish staff members that identify as a race other than white

40%

are not Jewish

22% Christian or Catholic, 1% Hindu, 1% multireligious, 7% agnostic or atheist, 8% none of the above

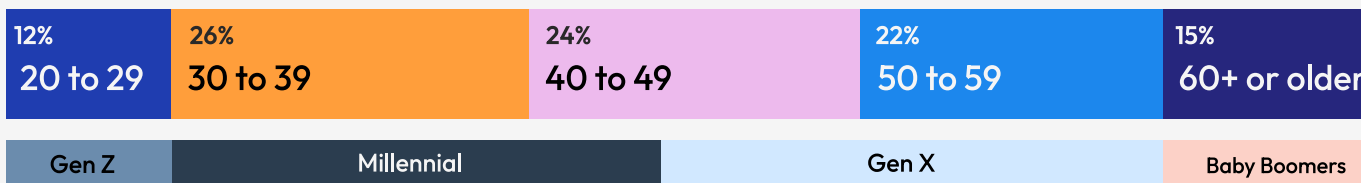
9.5%

of the workforce identifies as a member of the LGBTQ+ community



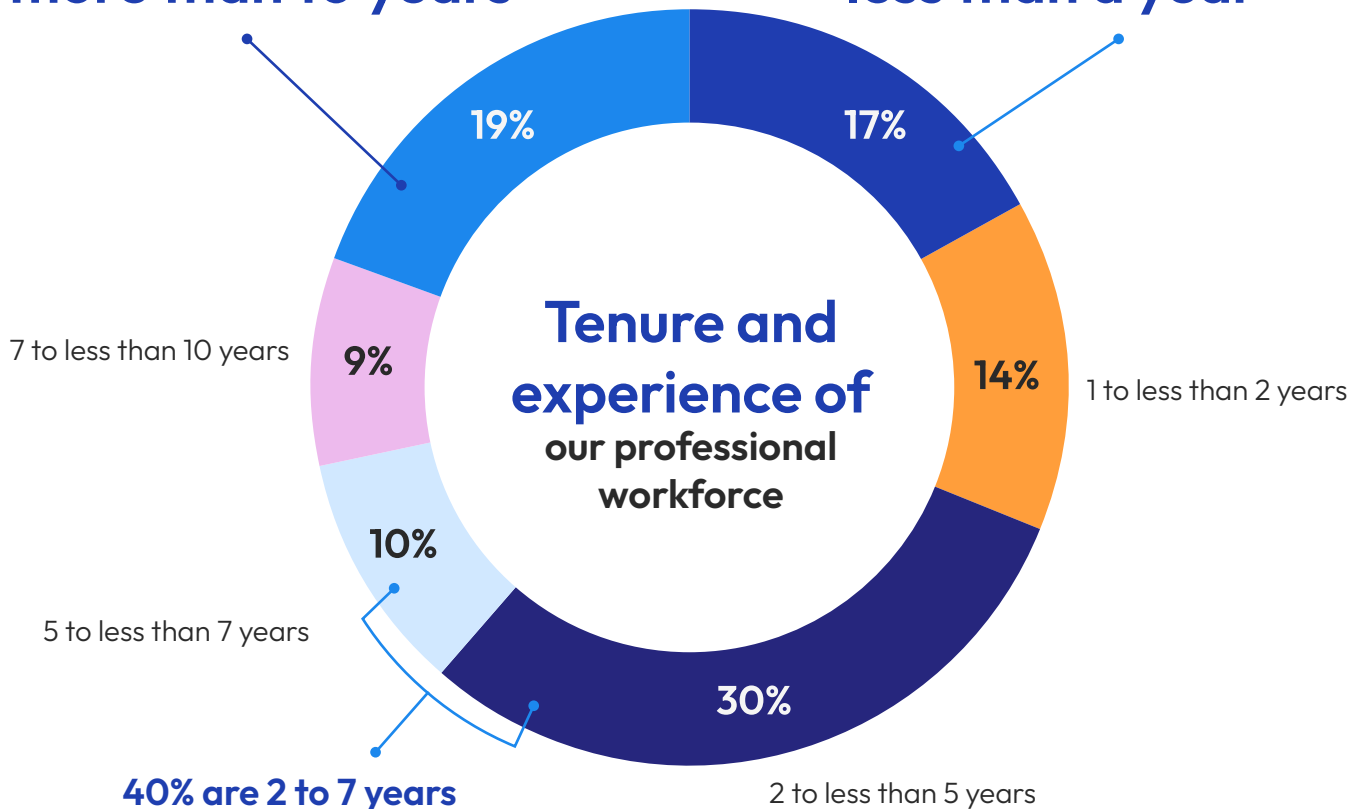
Federations have a multigenerational workforce. The majority of employees are

Gen X or Millennial.



Have been with their Federation for
more than 10 years

Have been with their Federation for
less than a year



If they worked in the Jewish communal sector before, there is a good chance they worked at:

Camp
16%



Hillel
11%



Synagogue
24%



JCC
22%



Many Federation professionals also **participated in Jewish Life as youth and young adults:**



34%

of Jewish employees were involved with Hillel when in college



65%

of Jewish employees attended Jewish summer camp, Jewish day school, or youth group



47%

of Jewish employees had an immersive experience in Israel, including 28% who had an experience through Birthright Israel



For **64%** of staff, their current Federation is **the first Jewish nonprofit** they have worked for.



57% of our workforce who came from outside the sector indicated they **made a functional shift** in their career when joining the Jewish nonprofit sector, suggesting that those who worked in another industry before very likely made a career change to do so.

The Professional Surge

Post 10/7 Motivations to join the Jewish nonprofit workforce

For employees who started in their job in

the last two years, **37%** of them were motivated to take the job because they wanted to be **connected to the Jewish community**. This is 10% higher than the responses for those who started in their job more than two years ago.



Key Findings and Major Themes

1

Jewish Federation Employee Engagement is Trending Upward

89%

feel proud to work for their organizations

two percentage points higher than the average for all Jewish organizations

76%

would recommend their organization as a great place to work

five percentage points higher than 2023

73%

feel their organization helps them stay motivated to do their best work

five percentage points higher than 2023

72%

still see themselves working at their organization in two years

five percentage points higher than 2023

“

Even though we have a relatively small professional team, we work together to make sure our community has what they need. Especially during these challenging times, making sure our staff is equipped to do their jobs while feeling invested in by me as their CEO is more important than ever. Being connected to the greater Federation network throughout North America allows us to access additional resources, all for the greater good of maximizing every dollar and effort to ensure our community in Dayton has what we need.

- Cathy Gardner, CEO, Jewish Federation of Greater Dayton

2

Jewish Federation Employees are Committed to Jewish Communal Careers

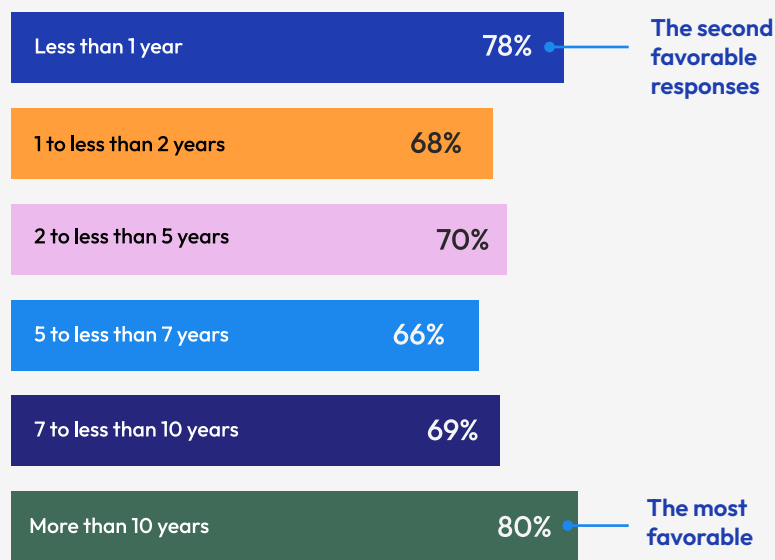
63%

of Jewish Federation employees intend to stay in their organization or in the sector for 5+ years or until they retire

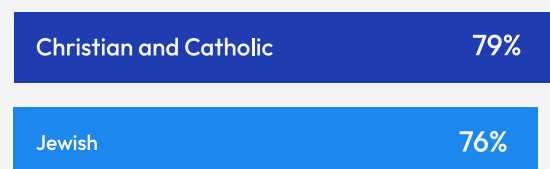


However, retention indicators can vary by a number of factors and demographics.

Responses to the question 'I see myself still working at my organization in two years' by length of tenure in the Jewish nonprofit sector



Responses to the question 'I see myself still working at my organization in two years' by religion



Interestingly, 82% of those 40 and older who have been in the Jewish nonprofit sector for less than one year and are thus very likely to be part of the professional surge described earlier in this report see themselves still working at their organization in two years, outpacing those with 10 years or more in the sector.

Retention is highly correlated with other factors of employee experience, which can help us create pathways to retain employees.



Employees who feel like **they belong at their organization** are almost **8x** more likely to see themselves still working at their organization in two years.



Employees who **have confidence in their leaders** to lead the organization effectively are **6.4x** more likely to see themselves still working at their organization in two years.



Employees who feel **employee well-being is a priority** at their organization are **5.3x** more likely to see themselves still working at their organization in two years.



Our senior team works hard to create an environment with high standards where leadership is approachable and responsibility is shared, which has helped build real trust across the organization. I make it a priority to be fully present with our staff and to share openly what I'm thinking and feeling. I talk often about how much I believe in our team, and that belief is reflected back in the passion and dedication I see from them every day. I support and encourage risks small and large, and when things go right we celebrate loudly and collectively and when they fail, we learn, together. It is enormously rewarding to know that so many of our staff see themselves staying here for the long term.

- Heidi Gantwerk, President & CEO, Jewish Federation of San Diego

3

Federation Investment in Employee Well-Being is Working

Over the past two very difficult years, Federations have focused on employee well-being, and it is paying off.

72%

of employees said that well-being is a priority at their organization

seven percentage points higher than 2023

Indeed, **Jewish Federations improved on almost every question related to well-being** from 2023 to 2025, including “My organization demonstrates care and concern for its employees”.

“

Our Federation’s professionals have shown remarkable dedication to our mission and to one another. Their feedback affirmed that time to rest and recharge has positively impacted their well-being and sustained their engagement. In recognition of the unique demands of our work—and in gratitude for their efforts—we chose to close for five Fridays each summer over the past two years.

– Anna Freiman, Chief Talent Officer,
The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington



Significance of Employee Well-Being

Well-being is important as it is also correlated highly with other aspects of employee experience. **When employees feel their organization values input from employees with a variety of perspectives and identities they are:**



10x more likely to **feel employee well-being is a priority** at their organization.



13x more likely to feel their **organization demonstrates care and concern** for employees.

However, these two indicators are lowest amongst the youngest Federation employees, and increase over the age of 40, suggesting a need for increased focus on our earliest career professionals.

Well-being isn't only about showing care and concern; it's also about the experience of getting the work done.

Employees who feel that most days they are **making progress at work** are almost **6x** more likely to feel **employee well-being is a priority** at their organization.



It's part of our culture, whether it is holding an all-day innovative wellness fair, and another day devoted to professional development where all staff participate and learn together. Our organizational culture statement articulates that we are mindful of work-life balance. The way that plays out is that managers at any level of the organization all the way to the top are supportive when someone hits a rough patch. They allow for needed flexibility and are supportive.

*- Tami Caplan, Senior Vice President/CHRO,
Jewish Federation of Cleveland*

Professional Leadership and Communication Matters

The importance of professional leadership and its impact on employee experience and employee engagement is undeniable and Federation employees have growing confidence in professional leadership.

79%

say “I have confidence in our leaders to lead the organization effectively”

five percentage points higher than 2023

In addition, indicators on leadership communication have improved:

66%

say “Our leaders communication honestly with employees”

three percentage points higher than 2023

59%

say “At my organization there is open and honest two-way communication”

four percentage points higher than 2023

We tend to think of leadership communications as what leaders communicate to their teams, and there is no doubt that is crucial. However, for employees, communication is also about whether they feel heard. A focus on this two-way communication will likely drive the indicators higher in the future.

Employees who feel that when they offer their opinion, it is heard and respected are **7x** more likely to feel that there is **open and honest two-way communication** at their organization.



“

Communication with our managers and staff is more important than ever, and CJP's CEO, Marc Baker, hosted informal drop-in sessions this summer to create space for reflection, questions, and open conversation during this challenging time. He and I also hosted a Managers' Forum to support our leaders in navigating staff concerns and CJP's response to current events. These sessions were designed to encourage two-way communication and help both managers and staff process and respond to concerns with clarity and compassion.

- Beth Greenwald, Vice President, Human Resources, Combined Jewish Philanthropies



When employees feel they are **recognized for good work** at their organization they are **6x** more likely to **feel their leaders communicate honestly** with employees.

“

[Our CEO] Jeff leads with openness and honesty, which makes it easy to feel seen and appreciated in our work. He takes the time to acknowledge individual contributions and celebrate team successes, creating an environment where recognition feels genuine. Because of this, many of us feel motivated and supported to do our best every day.

- Evelyn Orlovitz, Senior Development Strategy Manager,
Jewish Federation of Winnipeg

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A Consistent Culture of Giving and Receiving Feedback is Crucial

When employees feel their organization has a culture of giving and receiving feedback, they are:

Over 9.5x

more likely to feel that the leadership team's actions are consistent with their organization's values.

Almost 9x

more likely to have confidence in leaders to lead the organization effectively.

Cultures of giving and receiving feedback are an even higher driver of engagement for employees who have been with their organization for less than two years.



“

For the past several years, we've been intentionally building a culture of open and honest communication. Through staff committees, shared learning, and modeling direct feedback, we've made it clear that feedback isn't routed around people — it's given directly, with respect. Managers are coached to redirect secondhand feedback back to the right person, reinforcing trust and accountability. And we've expanded annual reviews with continuous feedback, so growth and dialogue happen in real time, even as we've navigated major changes. That's how feedback has become part of our culture, not just a process.

- Lindsey Wade, Chief Operating Officer,
Jewish Federation of Cincinnati.

The majority of Federations conduct performance reviews every or nearly every year.

Only 48% of employees feel that their performance review process helps them grow and improve.

While this number is six percentage points higher than 2023, there is still significant room for improvement and growth.



Interestingly, when employees feel their role **provides them with opportunities to do challenging and interesting work**, they are almost **6x** more likely to feel their **performance review process helps them grow and improve**, suggesting that performance review conversations that include career pathways and stretch assignments could move the needle on employee experience.

“

We've made performance reviews a consistent part of our culture, as an intentional tool for growth and learning. The process is designed to be educational, helping staff see how their work connects to our organizational goals while giving them clear feedback to improve. We intentionally schedule our reviews during naturally slower periods in our busy year. Our leadership team is aligned around this approach, ensuring that goals cascade across the organization so every staff member understands their role in our success.

- Matt Perez MBA SHRM-CP, Chief Experience Officer, ShalomAustin

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Managers Need Support and Training

Following the analysis of the 2022 data around managers, Jewish Federations of North America, with the support of the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation designed the “Essentials of Jewish Federation Management” curriculum, and have trained over 2,000 professionals throughout Jewish Federations in leadership, management, and supervision. In addition, many local Federations increased their focus on management, with training, support, and new leadership team meetings below the C-Suite level.

This investment is impacting employee experience

77%

of Federation employees now feel the feedback they receive from their manager is useful for their growth

five percentage points higher than 2023



In addition, managers see a future in Jewish Federations – they want to stay and grow in their roles.

73%

of frontline managers saw themselves still working at their organization in two years

seven percentage points higher than 2023

64%

of frontline managers felt they have opportunities to grow within their current role

four percentage points higher than 2023

However, frontline managers are the least likely to feel that there is open and honest two-way communication at their organizations, falling below individual contributors and managers of managers, indicating the importance of continuing to focus on Federation managers.

Looking Ahead

Flourishing Jewish communities require best-in-class professional teams, and the Federation system has long been a center of talent, both in the Jewish community and the broader non-profit sector. Since 2022, Jewish Federations of North America has utilized system-wide data and insight from the field to expand and enhance our offerings.

This report indicates several areas of importance to Jewish Federations in the years to come, including:

- Focusing on employee experience at all stages of the career span, including early career employees and frontline managers and creating mechanisms for employees to learn and grow.
- Building pathways for effective two-way communication at Jewish Federations.
- Creating tools, resources, and training in performance review processes and building cultures of feedback.

As we prepare to enter 2026, the information in this report will serve as a tool to guide the work of the Mandel Center for Leadership Excellence at Jewish Federations of North America. We are committed to increasing our support to Jewish Federations to better understand their own Leading Edge employee experience data and collaborating with Federations to build local action plans.

Together as one, Jewish Federations will build, recruit, retain, and grow talent, provide professional development for the careers of today and of tomorrow, and ensure that Jewish Federations embrace the highest standards of workplace excellence and culture.



Creating a culture of collaboration is essential to our organization's success. Through work with JFNA on the Leading Edge survey, our Federation's management team gains actionable insights that guide how and where to support our dedicated employees—ultimately driving stronger team performance and enabling us to fill our mission, assuring thing Jewish life in Palm Beach, and Israel, and around the world.

*- Michael Hoffman, President & CEO,
Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County*





Methodology

In addition to knowledge gleaned from our ongoing work with Jewish Federations, two large data pools served as the primary sources of data to establish a comprehensive understanding of the professional workforce in the Jewish Federation system: a survey of Federations and a survey for employees working in Federations.

The 2025 Federation Salary and Benefits Survey, conducted by the Jewish Federations of North America, was completed by 109 Federations. These responses were comprised of 17 Large Federations, all 17 Large-Intermediate Federations, 40 Intermediate Federations, and 35 Small Federations. The Salary Survey collected information on Federation employees and their compensation, benefits, and general HR and organizational level data. One representative from each participating Federation completed the survey on behalf of the organization between July and August 2025.

Leading Edge's Employee Experience Survey (EES) is offered to Jewish non-profit organizations that are based in North America and that employ at least six people. The survey is offered to help organizations understand and improve how their employees experience their jobs, as well as identify key factors that impact workplace culture. The survey is administered through CultureAmp, a platform used by more than 6,500 companies to capture insight on workplace. In 2025, 42 Federations participated, representing 10 Large Federations, nine Large-Intermediate Federations, 18 Intermediate Federations, and

five Small Federations. Employees of participating organizations were invited to anonymously participate in the spring of 2025. In addition to collecting information on employee experience, participants can self-report on a number of demographics. 78% of all employees invited to participate from the 42 Federations completed the survey, giving us access to data from over 2,000 professionals under the Jewish Federation umbrella.

Most of this report utilizes these data sources, with the assumption that at minimum these results are valuable to understanding our staff and their experiences, and at best are representative of the Federation workforce. In some instances where a change from previous years is expressed, this is done based on aggregate responses from year to year, but the Federations and individuals providing data may not be the same. Where necessary, additional outreach and research was done to supplement the responses to more accurately represent the workforce.

To develop an understanding of the totality of the Jewish Federation workforce, including those employed in integrated agencies, in addition to the above, we have utilized additional research including direct outreach to organizations as well as organizational charts and websites.

While not a complete account of the system, by utilizing averages from the data sources, we are able to share this report with a high level of confidence that it reflects our professional talent.



THE ESSENCE OF HARRY KRAFT

What we need more than anything else is not text books but text people. It is the personality of the teacher which is the text that the pupils read; the text they will never forget.

—RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

