



*Advocating for attitudes, policies and programs that engage interfaith families in Jewish life and community*

## **Review and Analysis of the Interfaith Marriage Data in the 2025 Greater Boston Jewish Community Study**

February 27, 2026

Combined Jewish Philanthropies released the [2025 Greater Boston Jewish Community Study](#) on February 12, 2026. The study consists of thirteen individual reports, many of which include interfaith marriage data. The individual reports are referred to this review as, for example, “By the Numbers,” “Diversity,” etc. Some comparisons are made to the [2015 Greater Boston Jewish Community Study](#) (with reference to pages in the main report).

As of this writing CJP is planning to release a tool that will enable inquiries to be made to the study data. As noted below, some key information has not yet been reported.

### **Amount and Rate of Interfaith Marriage**

As measured in a variety of ways, the Boston Jewish community is heavily and increasingly intermarried. Growth in the number of Jewish households is due largely to more interfaith households: “In 2005, there were an estimated 105,500 Jewish households. That number increased to 123,400 in 2015 and then to 138,200 Jewish households in 2025. The estimate reflects more Jewish people forming households with spouses and partners who are not Jewish, resulting in a growing number of what this survey defines as Jewish households. In 2005, 20% of Jewish household members were not Jewish, and today, 31% are not Jewish.” (By the Numbers, p 6)

In 2025, 40% of all Jewish households are interfaith (include married or partnered adults, one of whom is Jewish and one who is not Jewish) (Families, p16); 50% of Jewish adults who are married or partnered, are married/partnered to someone who is not Jewish (BTN, p 14). For Jews of color, 63% are married/partnered to someone who is not Jewish (Diversity, p 11); for LGBTQIA+ Jews, 69% are married/partnered to someone who is not Jewish (Diversity, p 7; in 2015 it was also 69% (p 17).

The individual rate of interfaith marriage is rising: 54% of marriages between 2010-2019 were interfaith, 58% of marriages in and after 2020 (By the Numbers, p 14).

## **How Children Are Raised**

Among children in interfaith households, 69% are being raised Jewish in some way (Families, p 20). Data on children being raised Jewish and something else, or another religion, or no religion, is mostly not currently available.

“Children are defined as Jewish if they are being raised in one of the following ways: Jewish and no other religion, Jewish and another religion, or ethnically or culturally Jewish.” 80% of children in Jewish households are Jewish by this definition. Of the 20% who are not, for more than a third (38%), the parents report they have not yet decided. (Jewish Education, p 6 and n 1)

One of the key findings is that fewer children of interfaith families have Jewish education: 16% of those children participate in part-time K-8 Jewish education, compared to 61% of children of inmarrieds; 11% participate in overnight or day camps compared to 52% of children of inmarrieds (Key Findings, p 27). (In 2015, 19% of children of intermarrieds participated in part-time K-12 Jewish education (p 36).) The study notes that providing Jewish education is intergenerational – if parents had Jewish education, their children are more likely to (Key Findings, p 26).

Data broken down as between intermarrieds and inmarrieds include participating in PJ Library (44% vs 80%); participating in synagogue programs (27% vs 79%); having a bar/bat mitzvah (23% vs 82%); and participating in a youth group (8% vs. 34%) (Families, p 21).

## **Connection to Jewish Community**

The study includes statements to the effect that “interfaith households... are an integral part of the Greater Boston Jewish Community” (Families, p 24), but data on how interfaith families feel about their connection to Jewish community is not currently available.

The study did not ask about feeling connected to or part of the Jewish people or the worldwide Jewish community.

The study asked questions about how the importance of feeling being part of the local Jewish community, feeling connected to the local Jewish community, and feeling the local Jewish community is welcoming to you (Key Findings, p 13). The responses to those questions are broken down for LGBTQIA+ Jews, Jews of color or people of color, Jews with disabilities, Russian-speaking Jews, Israeli Jews, and Jews of Sephardic or Mizrahi heritage (see Diversity report), but not for interfaith and inmarried Jews.

There are indications that interfaith families do not feel as connected to the local Jewish community as inmarried families do. 54% of Jewish adults said that being part of a Jewish community is important to them; of them, 34% feel like they are part of a Jewish community and 20% do not (Barriers, p 5). 22% of those who feel part of the local Jewish community are interfaith, while 78% are inmarried; 51% of those who do not feel part of the local Jewish community are interfaith, compared to 49% who are inmarried (Barriers, p 6).

42% of intermarrieds said that “about half” of their friends were Jewish; 9% said “most” (Families, p 20). This compares to 12% who said “most” in 2015 (Technical Appendices, p 52). Data on inmarrieds is not currently reported.

### **The Importance of Jewish Connection**

“Interfaith households are similar to those with two Jewish partners in family traditions and holiday celebrations. While most Jews in interfaith homes say they feel welcome, they are significantly less likely to participate in Jewish communal life or identify with a Jewish denomination.” (Families, p 5; also Key Findings, p 16).

The study draws a connection between feeling part of the local Jewish community and various measures of engagement. For example, 53% of respondents who feel part of send children to part-time K-8 Jewish education, compared to 23% of those who do not feel part of (Barriers, p 11; Key Findings, p 31). 31% of all respondents are synagogue members or participants; 71% of those who feel part of, compared to 20% of those who don’t feel part of (Barriers, p 9).

The study creates an index of Jewish connections with five categories, including “Tenuously Tethered” (minimally involved in Jewish life); 40% of interfaith families are in that category, compared to 10% of inmarried families (By the Numbers, p 15).

The study notes that interfaith families differ in regard to Jewish connections (Families, p 24). 49% of intermarrieds, compared to 83% of inmarrieds, attended a Jewish event/activity/program in the past year, and of those who did, 36% said they created new connections with friends and peers in the Jewish community (Families, p 20).

### **Barriers to Participation**

The study asked questions about barriers to participation, including not knowing many people, not prioritizing participation, and not finding interesting programs (Barriers, p 7-8), but the data is not broken out yet for intermarried and inmarried respondents.

For all respondents, the greatest barrier to participation is not knowing many people with whom to participate; that is true of 57% of those who don’t feel part of the local community, compared to 21% of those who do feel part of the community (Key Findings, p 30).

The study notes in connection with synagogue participants generally that “concrete signs of inclusion of diverse families, as well as explanations of terms or rituals, help people feel comfortable” (Families, p 18).

### **Questions and Comments About Welcoming**

Those Jewish adults in interfaith families who answered questions about feeling welcomed feel that the Greater Boston Jewish community is very (58%), somewhat (31%), a little (9%), or not at all (3%) welcoming; “between one quarter and one half” said they were not sure. (Families, p 25 and n 4). Only 5% of Jews in interfaith relationships indicated the community does not feel

welcoming to people like them (Families, p 18), compared to 8% of all Jewish adults (Key Findings, p 30).

The study says that for interfaith families whose children were not enrolled in Jewish education, concerns about inclusion were negligible and did not play a role in decision making. (Families, p 18).

The study included follow-up interviews and focus groups with community members that gave “more insight on their feelings of inclusion and belonging.” It is important to note that “most” of these community members “are avid synagogue participants who generally feel welcome in the spaces they choose to be in” (Families, p 18).

The Families report (p 22-23) includes comments of partners who are not Jewish to the effect that they generally feel welcome and comfortable; they appreciate warm interactions and not being asked their identity. One referred to having had a “mental barrier,” a “negative preconception” about synagogues, which was overcome by their positive experience. Some comments indicate the partner was the driving force in the couple’s Jewish engagement. There was discomfort around discussing Israel.

One participant said, “If I’m ever participating in a Jewish community event, [my non-Jewish spouse] will come as well and participate and I don’t think he feels unwelcome. ... In most Jewish spaces that I’ve been in, they’re not discriminating between are you Jewish or are you not. They don’t even ask, they just are like, anyone’s invited, anyone’s welcome to experience the culture, and learn about Jewish culture and religion. That aspect is really nice, it doesn’t feel exclusive at all.” (Families, p 18)

Another said, “At different synagogue spaces, it’s the really subtle things where people will, like, use a Hebrew or Yiddish term and just expect everyone to know what’s going on. My [non-Jewish] spouse has learned a lot at this point, but there are still certain things that I need to explain to him or he doesn’t feel comfortable asking.” (Families, p 19)

## **Jewish Engagement**

12% of intermarrieds are synagogue members (Key Findings, p 16); by comparison, in 2015, 23% of Jewish households where someone belongs to a synagogue were intermarried households (p 39).

73% of interfaith families celebrate Hanukkah, 61% attend a Seder, 44% - 47% celebrate Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur; 4% mark Shabbat every week (Families, p 19). In 2015, 70% of intermarrieds said they attended a Seder (p 43).

## **Terminology**

The study includes a discussion (Families, p 17) “is ‘interfaith’ the right word?” The study reports use the term, but note that “In interviews and focus groups, most participants shared that

the term 'interfaith'; does not, in fact, resonate strongly with them. Feelings about the term range from mild acceptance to indifference to aversion. Reasons for this vary.”