



Recommendations for Future Research with a Special Call to Action for Communal Leaders Who Count Jews

- one** Accept as objective reality that at an undercounted minimum about 1,000,000 of the United States' 7,200,000 Jews* are Jews of Color, by extension that the U.S. Jewish community is multiracial, and approach future communal studies with this fact in mind.
- two** Employ more racially inclusive, sensitive sampling strategies and frames that do not rely significantly on self-identified "Jews by Religion," "Distinctive Jewish Names," and/or community organization affiliations.
- three** Develop consistency across survey question language reflecting best practices and how Jews of Color identify rather than how researchers identify Jews of Color. Consider partnering with other regions or organizations to, as teams, develop language for racial identity questions for communal studies or network level surveys (especially those focused on young people, teens, and young adults). Best practices in the social sciences ask separate questions for self-identified race, perceived race, and known ancestry/geographic origins. This can help to reveal otherwise hidden population diversity.
- four** Consider adopting consistent weighting schemes among community and national studies (e.g., employ the same set of characteristics or reference populations across studies), and use weighting tools reflective of diverse expressions of people of color, including their educational backgrounds and income levels.
- five** Ensure that the questions and categories match those in reference studies or, at a minimum, follow federal guidelines for collecting data on race and ethnicity.
- six** At a minimum, follow federal guidelines to match post-stratification weighting.

*2016 American Jewish Population Project

For more information and to view full report:
info@jewsforcolorfieldbuilding.org
<https://jewsforcolorfieldbuilding.org>

This project is the result of a partnership between The Jews of Color Field Building Initiative, The Concentration in Education and Jewish Studies at the Stanford Graduate School of Education, and the Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice at the University of San Francisco. The Jews of Color Field Building Initiative is funded by the Leichtag Foundation, the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, the Jim Joseph Foundation, the One8 Foundation, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, and the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. The study was supported by the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation.

Jews of Color: Who Counts, What We Ask, and Why It Matters

How many Jews of Color live in the United States? To answer this question, the Jews of Color Field Building Initiative commissioned *Counting Inconsistencies*, authored by Dr. Ari Y. Kelman, Stanford University; Dr. Aaron Hahn Tapper, University of San Francisco; Ms. Izabel Fonseca, Stanford University; and Dr. Aliya Saperstein, Stanford University, to undertake a meta-analysis of national and community-level Jewish population studies. When researchers analyzed the data from these 25 population studies and the survey strategies deployed to collect it, they found grave inconsistencies that likely resulted in a systematic undercounting of Jews of Color.

Key Findings

- one** Based on the three most comprehensive data sets available—the 2013–2019 American Jewish Population Project, the 2011 New York Community Study, and the 2017 San Francisco Bay Area Community Study—they estimate that Jews of Color represent at least 12–15 percent of American Jews.
- two** More younger people identify as nonwhite than older people do. With cohort replacement, this means that the future of American Jewry is racially diverse.
- three** Even with data that undercounts Jews of Color, as younger, more racially and ethnically diverse cohorts replace older, more homogeneous ones, our understanding of the basic racial and ethnic makeup of the American Jewish community will change.

Given these inconsistencies, researchers can, at best, make only an educated guess about the population of Jews of Color in the United States.



Limitations of Past American Jewish Population Studies

American Jewish population surveys have largely neglected to systematically and consistently ask about the racial and ethnic identities of U.S. Jews.

The result has been that we know little about the composition and size of the population of Jews of Color, and by extension Jews of Color have been omitted from Jewish communal life. This omission has been due, in part, to the socially constructed notion that the vast majority of American Jews identify as “white.”

one Some surveys did not ask about race or ethnicity at all.

two Survey designs sampled respondents in ways that likely result in undercounting Jews of Color, including sampling “distinctive Jewish names,” relying heavily on Jewish community lists, and/or only including “Jews by religion.”

three Survey questions inconsistently inquired about race and ethnicity. Sometimes, both questions and responses confuse family origin, racial, ethnic, national, and even denominational identities.

four Inconsistencies between surveys make comparability nearly impossible, and the surveys do not share enough common approaches to questions about race and ethnicity to generate reliable comparisons between them.



Why the Jewish Community Needs an Accurate Count of Jews of Color

Because the American Jewish community is more diverse than past American Jewish population studies or demographic meta-studies of Jews of Color reflect, the communal perspective excludes Jews of Color; as a result, allocations of communal interest, energy, attention, and resources have not represented the range of experiences and identities of American Jews.

The U.S. Jewish community is multiracial. Because estimates here are indicative of current and future Jewish racial diversity trends, then researchers, community professionals, organizations, foundations, clergy, educators, and other leaders must begin to imagine, at a minimum, the following:

one Statistically speaking, every minyan in America includes at least one person of color.

two More than 20 percent of households include people who identify as nonwhite.

three American Jews who identify as nonwhite cluster in younger age cohorts.

four Continuing to inconsistently account for Jews of Color in population studies means ignoring a significant minority of the population—one that will likely grow in size and significance in the coming years. If the population trends along the same lines as the U.S. Census, then some decades from now Jews of Color will become the majority of U.S. Jews. American Jewry deserves better, more finely tuned approaches to accounting for the racial diversity of their communities. And Jews of Color deserve to be counted in their own community, a community that has been counting Jews since Exodus 30:11.