

Building Resilient Jewish Communities

Impact of the Coronavirus Crisis on the American Jewish Community

Project Update and Cross-Community Findings

September 3, 2020

Brandeis

COHEN CENTER FOR
MODERN JEWISH STUDIES
STEINHARDT SOCIAL
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Introduction

- **Goals:**
 - To share set of “snapshots” of the 10-community findings
 - Identify findings that can inform communal policy
- **Background:**
 - “Social Epidemiological” study of COVID-19’s impact on American Jews
 - Sample represents diversity of Jews known to communal organizations
- **“Action Research”**
 - Today’s discussion is intended to promote understanding/use of the data
 - On September 8th, we will formally launch public discussion of the findings

Sample

Data from 14,607 respondents in 10 communities collected between May 19 and July 30, 2020

What is your age?

Response	Weighted %	n
18-34	9	1,603
35-49	15	2,532
50-64	22	3,813
65-74	27	3,683
75+	28	2,975
Total	100	14,606

Prior to the coronavirus crisis, how would you have described you/your [and your partner's/spouse's] financial situation?

Response	Weighted %	n
Could not make ends meet	<1	131
Just managed to make ends meet	11	1,308
Had enough money	30	3,701
Had some extra money	25	3,800
Well off	33	5,198
Total	100	14,138

- 4% got sick with COVID-19 or another 14% reported that someone close to them got sick or passed away.

Financial situation worsened most for those struggling before pandemic

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Financial situation worsened	Worried about basic living expenses	Lost job, furloughed, business closed
Struggling	44	61	23
Enough money	31	24	20
A little extra money	27	9	9
Well-off	24	2	5

of employed before

Financial needs

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Needed financial help for everyday needs	Not at all confident will keep job or get new job
Struggling	32	17
Enough money	6	12
A little extra money	2	7
Well-off	0	2

of employed or unemployed before

Greater emotional difficulties for those in worse financial shape

Pre-pandemic financial situation	Not coping well	Lonely	Emotional difficulties	Needed help accessing mental health services
Struggling	25	60	55	6
Enough money	11	50	39	3
A little extra	8	38	29	1
Well-off	6	31	16	< 1

Not coping well: Coping not at all or not too well

Lonely: Felt lonely in past week sometimes, often, or all the time

Emotional difficulties: Emotional or mental difficulties hurt ability to live day-to-day life in past week sometimes, often, or all the time

Younger adults report more emotional difficulties

Younger adults not coping as well compared to others who are struggling financially

Age	Not coping well	Lonely	Emotional difficulties	Needed help accessing mental health services
18-34	20	60	63	9
35-49	15	48	51	5
50-64	10	47	41	2
65-74	10	50	36	2
75+	7	49	33	1

(predicted probabilities)

Not coping well: Coping not at all or not too well

Lonely: Felt lonely in past week sometimes, often, or all the time

Emotional difficulties: Emotional or mental difficulties hurt ability to live day-to-day life in past week sometimes, often, or all the time

Younger adults have strong support networks

Lack of support does not explain emotional difficulties for those who are struggling financially

Age	Adequate support network	In contact with others
18-34	54	93
35-49	45	94
50-64	40	95
65-74	31	95
75+	24	95

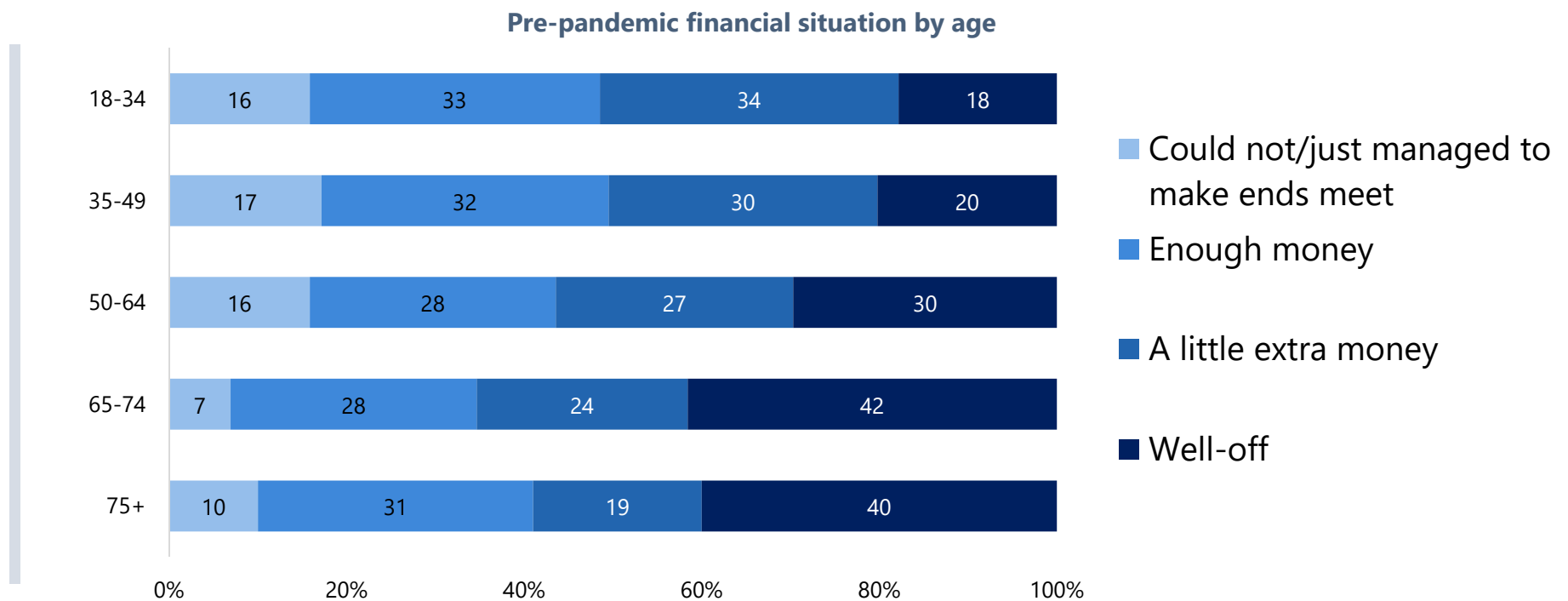
(predicted probabilities)

Adequate support network: Fair number or a lot of people you can rely on

In contact with others: In contact with family and friends not living with you sometimes or often in past week

Older adults have more financial stability

Financial starting point is lower for young adults



Parents and children

Most parents are coping well but are concerned about their children's well-being

How well are you and your child are coping

	Parent	K-12 child
Not coping well at all	2	4
Not coping too well	14	12
Coping pretty well	68	70
Coping very well	16	14

Concerned about child's emotional and social well-being

	Pre-K	K-12	College student
Not at all	3	7	7
Not too	32	25	18
Somewhat	43	50	55
Very concerned	22	19	20

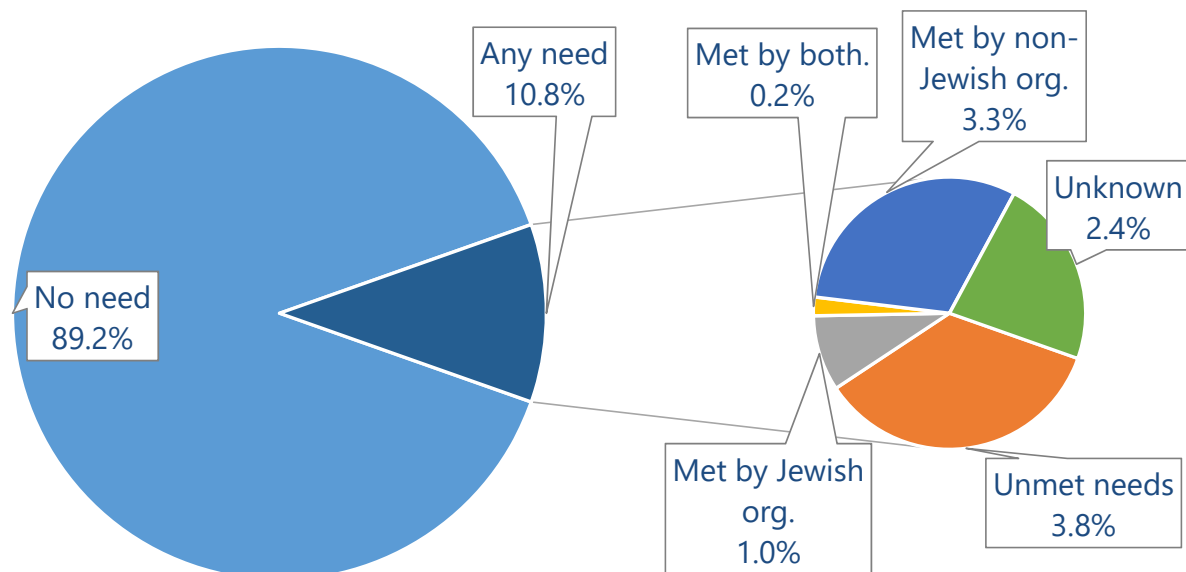
Jewish organizations

Jewish institutions did not play a major role in dealing with those in need, in part because service needs were low

11% of respondents needed one or more of the following services

- Obtaining food, medicine, necessities
- Meals on Wheels
- Home healthcare
- Accessing mental health services
- Career counseling or job search
- Accessing medical care
- Accessing public benefits
- Other

Social service needs



Jewish Life

About 2/3 were in contact with a Jewish organization.

Only 1/4 were offered assistance and 40% had someone ask how they were doing

% who were contacted by	Any type of contact	Offer of assistance	Ask how you were doing	Invite to program	Invite to volunteer	Ask for donation
Synagogue and other Jewish organization	25	4	8	13	5	9
Synagogue only	22	14	24	18	8	8
Jewish organization only	18	6	8	14	7	21
Not contacted in this way	36	75	60	55	80	62

Note: Synagogue contact asked only of synagogue members

Synagogues

1/4 of lower income families will need financial assistance to maintain membership

Pre-pandemic financial situation	No change to membership	Leave for nonfinancial reasons	Leave for financial reasons	Stay if get financial assistance
Struggling	54	3	11	26
Enough money	80	4	2	8
A little extra money	81	4	3	7
Well-off	88	5	1	1

Note: Synagogue contact asked only of synagogue members

Jewish education

Parents are mostly satisfied with part-time school and day school online education and feel somewhat confident it will be successful next year

Satisfaction with online education

	Part-time school	Day school	Public school
Not at all	7	7	15
Not very	19	12	23
Somewhat	44	40	47
Very satisfied	30	41	15

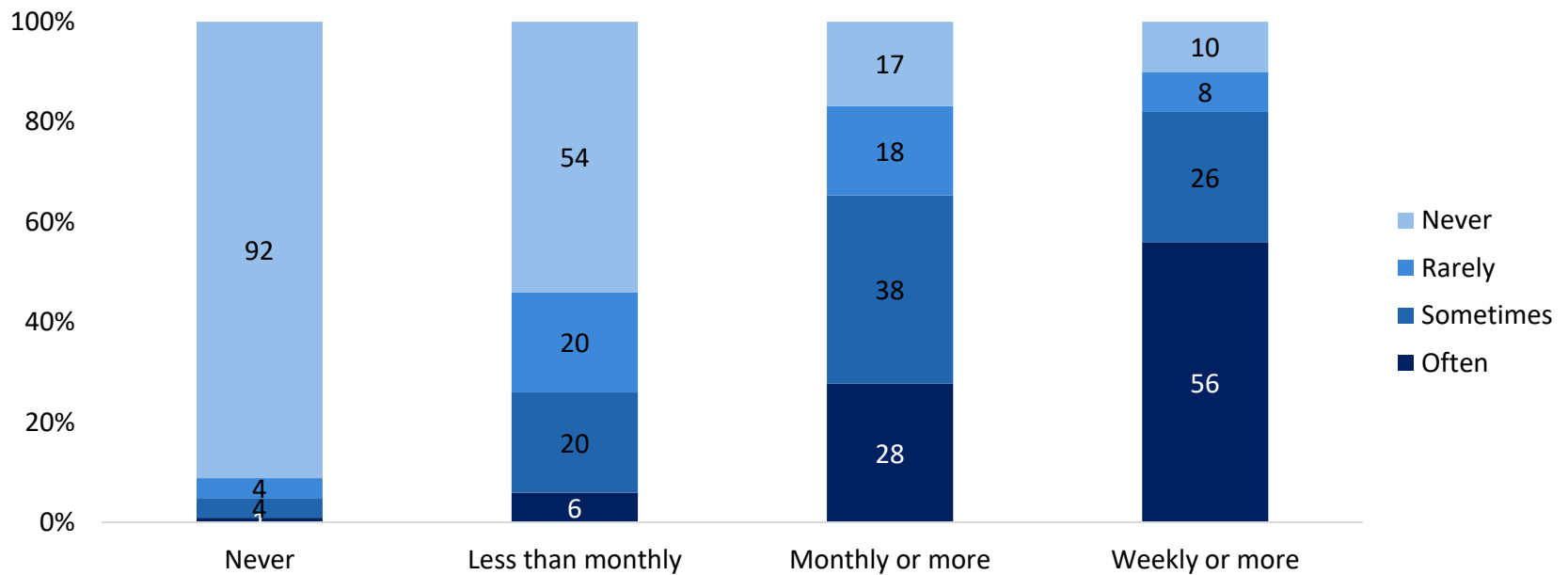
Confident in effective education next year

	Part-time school	Day school	Public school
Not at all	5	7	6
Not too	16	8	27
Somewhat	39	49	51
Very confident	33	25	11
Not attending	6	11	5

Online Jewish Life

Online Jewish life primarily appealed to those who were most engaged before

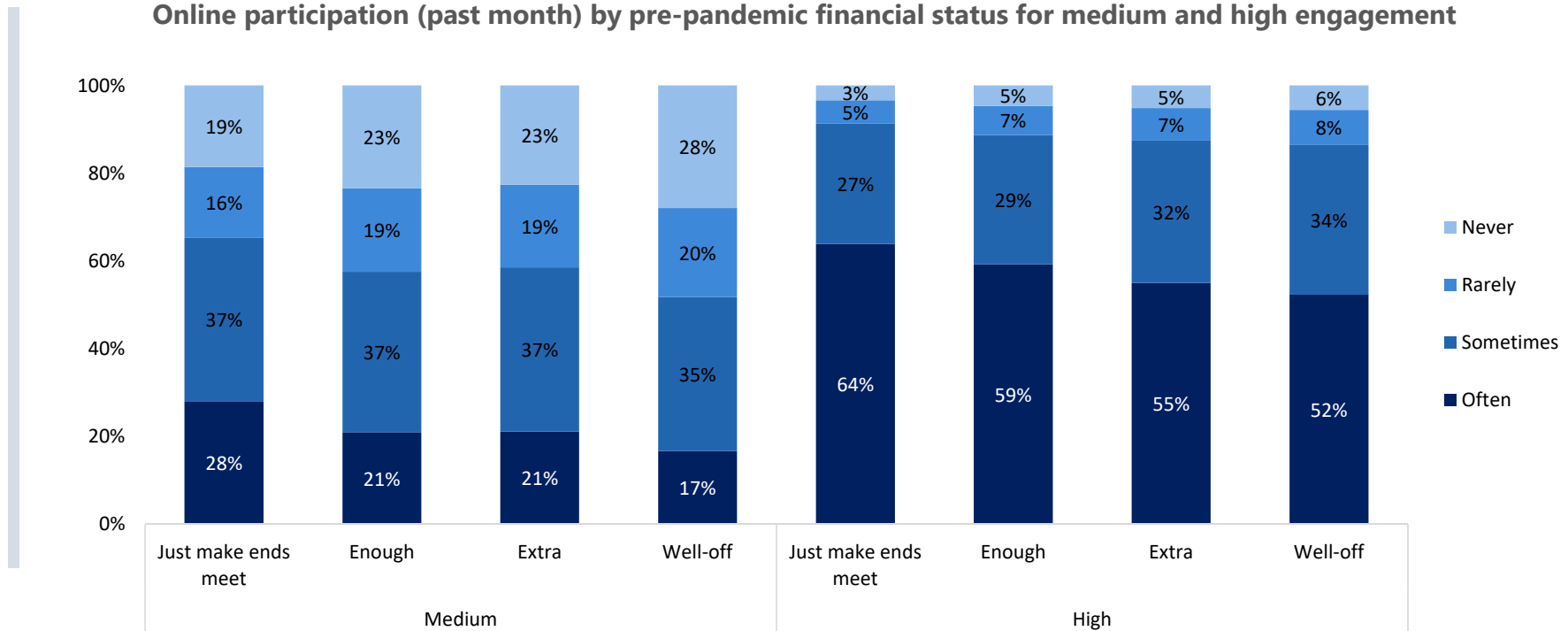
Online program participation (past month) by pre-pandemic participation



Online Jewish Life

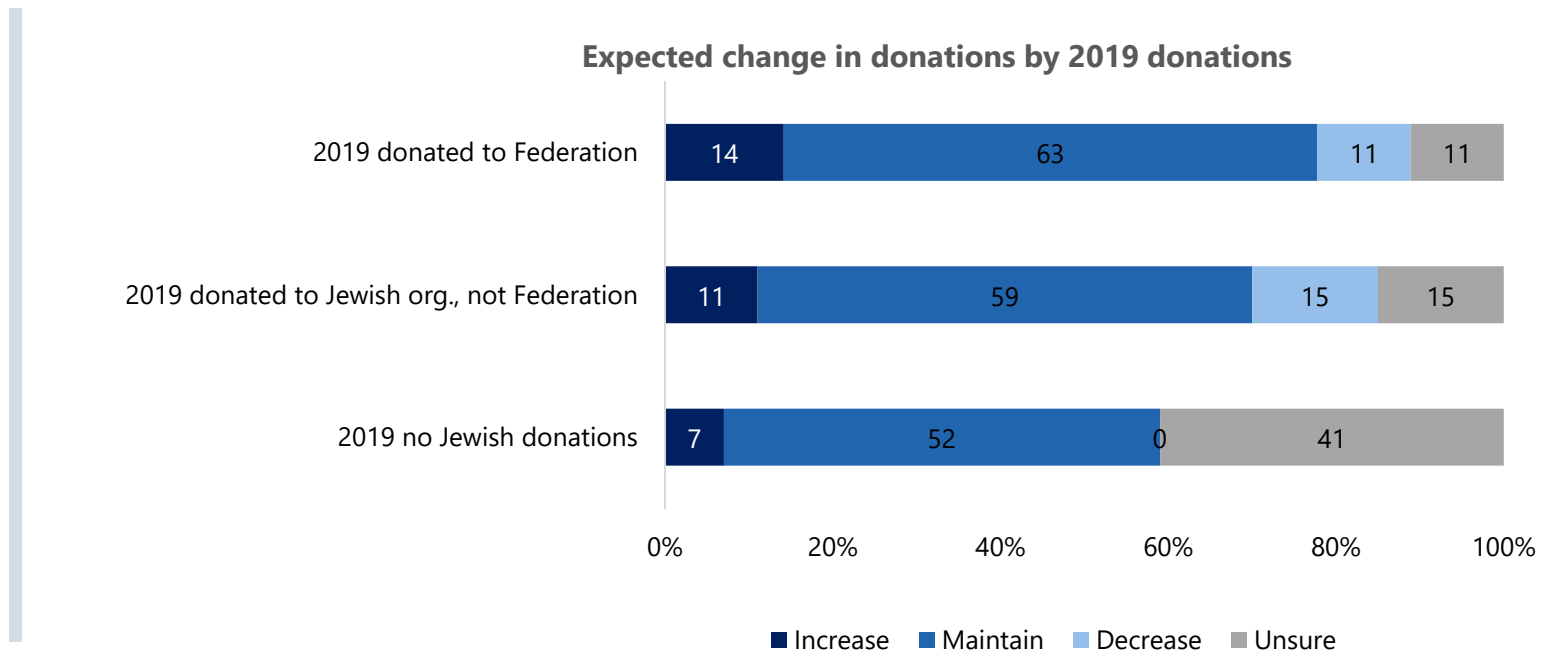
For those with medium and high engagement, online Jewish life more appealing to those with fewer financial resources

Online participation (past month) by pre-pandemic financial status for medium and high engagement



Philanthropy: Anticipated changes

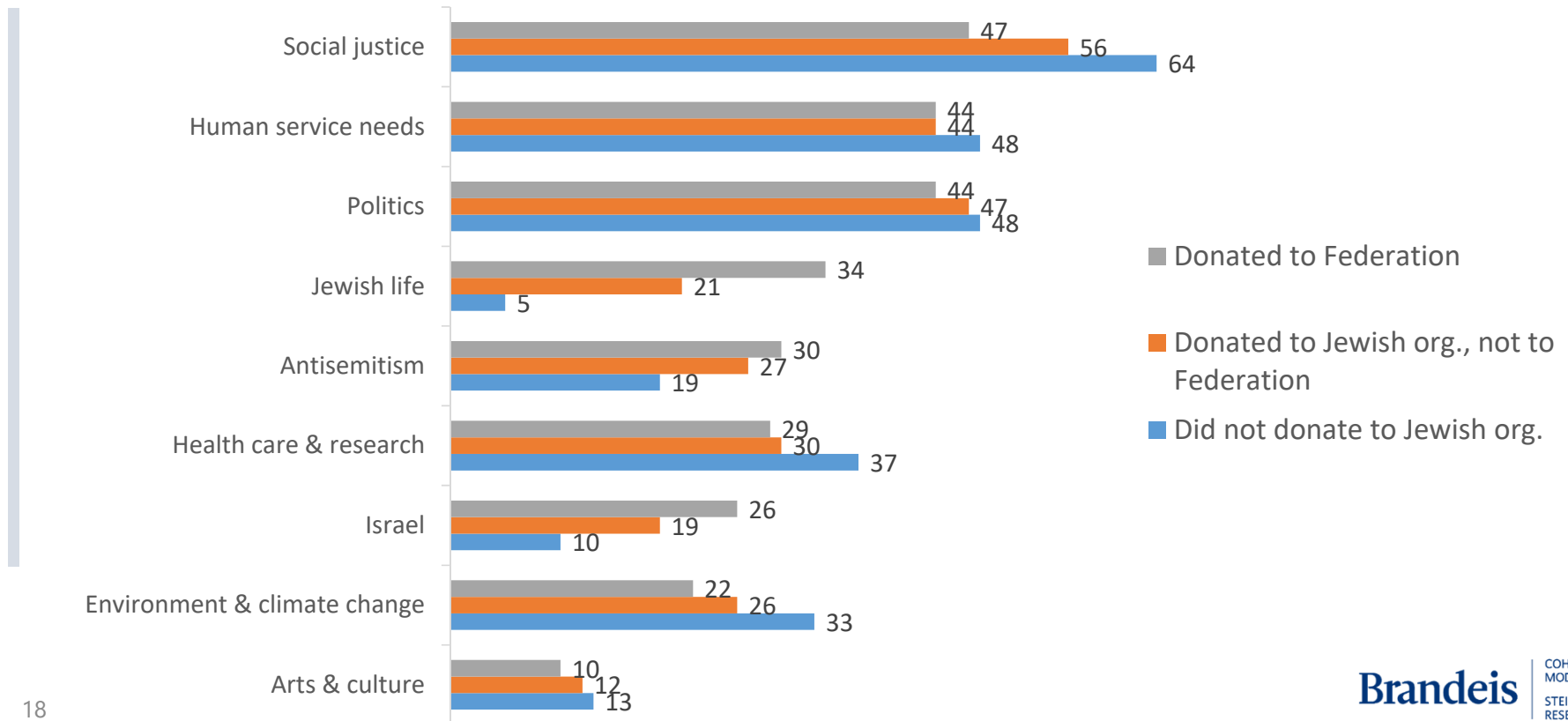
Of donors who were financially comfortable, most said their philanthropy would stay the same, and some said it would increase



Causes of concern

Social justice is top cause for past donors and non-donors

Top 3 causes among 2019 Federation donors, donors to other Jewish orgs, donors to no Jewish orgs



Participating Communities

The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore
Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston
Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles
Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest New Jersey
Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh
Jewish Federation of Greater Washington
Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County
Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County
Jewish Federation of St. Louis
Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago

Additional Funders

Berman Jewish DataBank @ The Jewish Federations of North America
Combined Jewish Philanthropies Donor Advised Fund
Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University (CMJS)
Initiative for Jewish Identity at Brandeis University

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