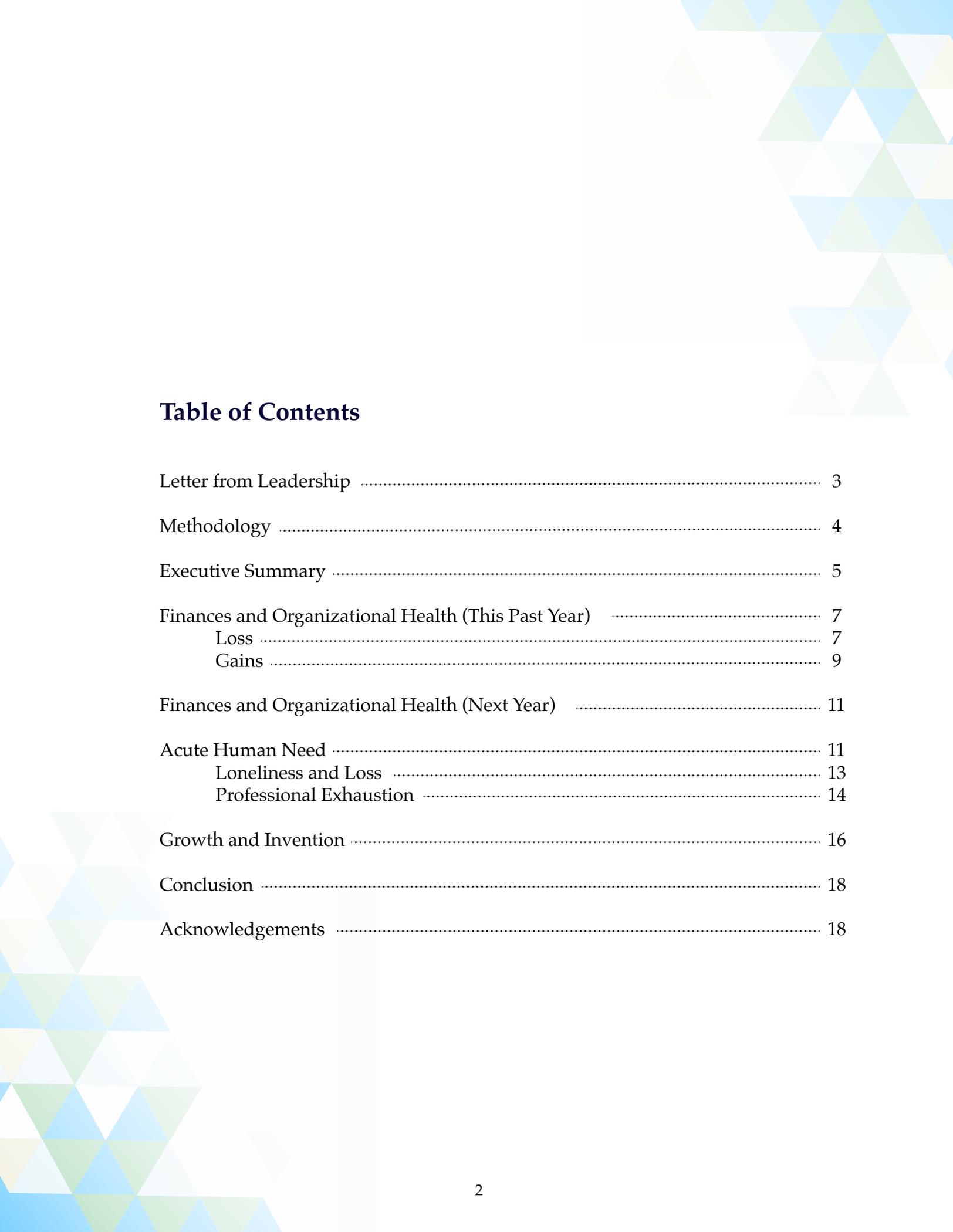




# COVID-19 NEED AND OPPORTUNITY

BAY AREA JEWISH LIFE

April 2021 | Iyar 5781



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Dear friends,

March 2020 feels like an instant and an eternity ago, all at once. At this time last year, we were closing schools, clearing off our desks, stocking our pantries, and creating home workspaces for our partners, for our children, and for ourselves.

Last year, we still had things we didn't quite take for granted—but also took in stride. Not anymore. We are now at the end of our first year with the coronavirus, staring down our second—our second Spring, second Passover, and second birthdays—in lockdown, unable to do the things we love most as Jews: hugging, kissing, schmoozing, sharing food and community. And, we are living our pandemic lives in smaller numbers: far too many of our loved ones—our parents, grandparents, children, siblings, colleagues, and friends—who were here with us last year, are no longer here today.

After a challenging and seemingly endless 2020, we can finally see the pandemic's end emerging from the horizon, and the return to our old and dearly-missed routines feels within reach. But we still have a long way to go.

To take stock of how the past year has affected our community, the Federation collected data related to COVID-19 and Bay Area Jewish life, focused on two broad questions:

- What have been the implications of the pandemic for local Jewish organizations? To which future are their leaders looking?
- How do Jewish organizational leaders feel the pandemic has impacted the people they serve and support? What do *amcha*, the people, need?

While physical distancing has characterized our pandemic experience, we have been on this journey together: As organizational leaders, whatever the impact of the pandemic has been on our work and organization, we share some of that experience with others. We stand in parallel to face extraordinary human need, to pivot and adapt our programs. We have innovated, and we have interpreted and reinterpreted our missions. Our experience has not been uniform, but we are not alone.

From here, we continue to face the unknown. What will come after, and when will the “after” arrive? To what will we return, and how will we grow from our sorrows? And what will be our “COVID keepers”—the lessons we have learned and rituals we have developed—that will change our lives for the better? Based on this study, we anticipate that the year to come will bring new challenges and may continue to test and expand our abilities to thrive. And we are confident that our resilience and capacity to invent and reinvent will continue.

Many of us have sung the words of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav: “*Kol haolam kulo, gesher tzar meod, v'haikar lo lefached klal,*” or “The entire world is a narrow bridge, and the essential thing is that we are not afraid.” We are on a bridge between two worlds: the world we left behind in 2020 and the world we are slowly approaching in 2021. And by holding hands as we cross this bridge, we can conquer our fears, take another step forward, and carry on together.

In appreciation,

Beth Cousens, Ph.D.



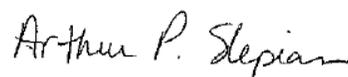
Chief Impact Officer

Danny Grossman



CEO

Arthur Slepian



Board Chair

## Methodology

To determine how our community has been affected by the pandemic, we sought to answer two questions:

- What have been the implications of the pandemic for local Jewish organizations? To which future are their leaders looking?
- How do Jewish organizational leaders feel the pandemic has impacted the people they serve and support? What do *amcha*, the people, need?

In order to answer these questions, we used the following data, collected in February and March 2021:

1. Data from a total of 87 Bay Area Jewish organizations
  - We conducted 60 interviews with professional leaders of a broad swath of Bay Area Jewish organizations; and
  - We collected 59 written reports from Jewish organizations (including some of the same organizations that were interviewed) providing detail about grants received as well as the impact of COVID-19 on their work.
2. Publicly available data on Bay Area economic need and social service trends

We analyzed the data to develop findings and implications, which you can read in the subsequent sections of this report.

## Executive Summary

### **Organizations will experience a fiscal crisis beyond what was originally imagined or planned for.**

- This past year has been difficult, with revenue losses from earned income and organizational closures and, for others, increased demand for service.
- Because they have worked actively and with ingenuity to secure revenue from additional sources, most (but not all) organizations anticipate a balanced close to FY21.
- Contraction and uncertainty will continue into FY22 and even beyond. It's unlikely that additional federal support, sustained support from new FY21 donations, and earned income from expansion of in-person programs will all occur at a maximal level significant enough to result in the same financial result as FY21.

### **Life has gone on, but the pandemic has created significant material for disruption.**

- Organizations have heroically maintained business as usual: some are fully open; others are operating entirely online.
- At the same time, most or all have redesigned the majority of what they do. Many have used this as an opportunity to begin to test new fundamental assumptions about their work: about audience, product, business model, the nature of community, and more. And, they have continued critical work on inclusivity due to greater urgency in need for such solutions.
- Organizational leaders seem to see this as a watershed moment—a time of deliberate experimentation toward abandoning old assumptions that limit their work, and a chance and desire for their organizations to transition from what was to what will be.

### **The mental health crisis has surpassed other needs.**

- Organizational leaders report that the pandemic's mental impact—isolation and disruption in school and childcare, and the lack of community and support systems—is an extensive and significant challenge for families and also some individuals living alone.
- Vaccinations will make a difference for some, but real changes in living will come too slowly and too minimally to make a large-scale and quick difference, particularly since those in the most pain (young adults and youth) will be last to be vaccinated.
- Society will return to normal only slowly, and these challenges may remain even in the aftermath, as we adapt to regular life and discover new challenges that come with reemergence.

### **Though it is not enough, the safety net has expanded.**

- Organizations have been able to step in and respond to those in need. Direct service organizations have expanded. Synagogues, Hillels, JCCs, schools, and more are providing direct assistance when asked, while also providing mental health services, breaking down the traditional boundary between service and engagement.
- After the pandemic, these organizations may need to revert to their core competencies as quickly as possible—or this expanded safety net reveals itself to be productive, serving as vital infrastructure on which we can build if critical human needs again increase more than is typical over the next years.

### **Organizational leaders are exhausted.**

- Our communal agencies are a holy system, a network of essential services. Thousands of Jewish communal professionals are working face-to-face as essential employees, and even others—clergy and educators—are online but still essential, now more than ever.
- Many Jewish professionals are holding the community's collective anxiety, offering the only available moments of prayer and connection, continually generating new ideas to support their constituents, and wading into work they never imagined and for which they were not trained.
- Some predict a post-pandemic exodus, a brain drain, where leaders see their organizations through this crisis and then leave. (The same is being predicted in the non-profit field generally.)
- Broadly, there will likely be long-term wellness issues at all levels of organizational life that have repercussions related to available talent present and ready to work.

## Reflecting on This Past Year: Finances and Organizational Health

### Loss

*Most organizations experienced some kind of financial or organizational loss in income past year.* Some JCCs experienced this extremely, with a decrease in earned income as percentage of budget (from membership and other revenue) in the tens of percentage points. When preschools reopened, most did so with about 25% fewer students due to issues of capacity (lower due to department health guidelines) and to families leaving the area. (Again, the JCCs are the exception, experiencing 50% average shrinkage in their preschools.) Whole programs disappeared, primarily in the afterschool, childcare, or child activity space (and, of course, related to fitness). Finally, while most synagogues' income was stable, about 8% had a significant decrease in earned income (at least 20% decrease), and another 8% had a decrease of 5-10%.

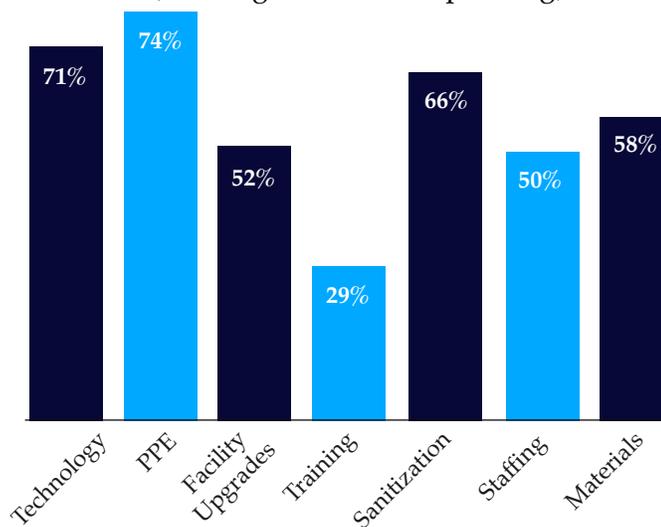
*There was \$6.8 million in additional loss across organizations due to expenses related to COVID-19 response.*

In the most extreme cases, JCCs spent (on average) \$524,000 and Jewish day schools, \$283,000.

They made structural changes to their facilities, expanded their staff teams so as to create stable and small pods, bought PPE and sanitization equipment, upgraded their technology and purchased new equipment, and participated in trainings. Synagogues, Hillels, and engagement

organizations across the community also reported spending, usually between \$10,000 and \$75,000, on training, video equipment, production company contracts, and on sanitization for essential employees. Through all of this work, the organizations reinvented their programs—and did so repeatedly, each time the public health guidelines changed.

**Major Expenses Due to COVID**  
(% of organizations responding)



*About a quarter (26%) of the organizations interviewed shared a likely budget shortfall in FY21, usually around \$100,000.*

Again, the JCCs were the exception; a few are facing shortfalls in the millions—making the total shortfall expected by organizations interviewed about \$6.8M.

Organizations anticipate making up the shortfalls through continued increased fundraising (about 80% of responding organizations), reserves or endowment funds (56%), a second PPP loan (50%), and cutting additional expenses (13%).

*“We look ok, because we’ve been working really hard to be ok. If the big institutional funders shift, we will be in real trouble.”*

*In addition to financial decline, organizations experienced other losses as well.*

On average, 25% of organizations reported that they reduced their staff, some significantly; Jewish engagement organizations were forced to cut 39% of their professional teams. The preschools shrank, which has both financial ramifications and loss of engagement with those families. Similarly, while day school enrollment stayed flat overall, some schools’ enrollment went down by 3-7%. Camps closed for the summer, eliminating employment and critical Jewish and wellness support for hundreds of summer staff. And while some synagogues are reporting increases in audience, smaller engagement organizations saw a decrease in participation by up to two-thirds.

Additional insights:

- The budget shortfalls organizational leaders describe are occurring only after reduction of expenses, often through the elimination of professional positions that will be needed when organizations reopen. Expenses will continue to be cut in order to address budget shortfalls.
- While each organization can speak of near-extraordinary successes in some areas of fundraising (see below), overall it is a complicated picture: 52% of organizations experienced a drop in number of donors, and 12% experienced a drop in foundation giving. This is not entirely due to the pandemic; a few organizations reported that donors were giving instead to political causes, particularly around the November election.

- Many organizations' finances have been a shifting reality and the subject of constant uncertainty and stress. One school leader described the school's situation as stable, but acknowledged that they had just received word of their second PPP loan and had a successful spring fundraiser; a mere six weeks before, they had drawn on their line of credit to make payroll, and he wasn't sure about the next payroll.
- Organizational audiences changed and often shrank. There isn't one single reason for this, and many hypothesized reasons are relevant. Almost half of organizational leaders suggested that people left their organizations because families and individuals left the Bay Area. But leaders cited other reasons for the absences as well: 36% of preschool directors suggested their organizations don't have space for all interested students/families, and a third of (all) organizational leaders estimated that individuals/families left their programs because they don't feel safe.

## **Gains**

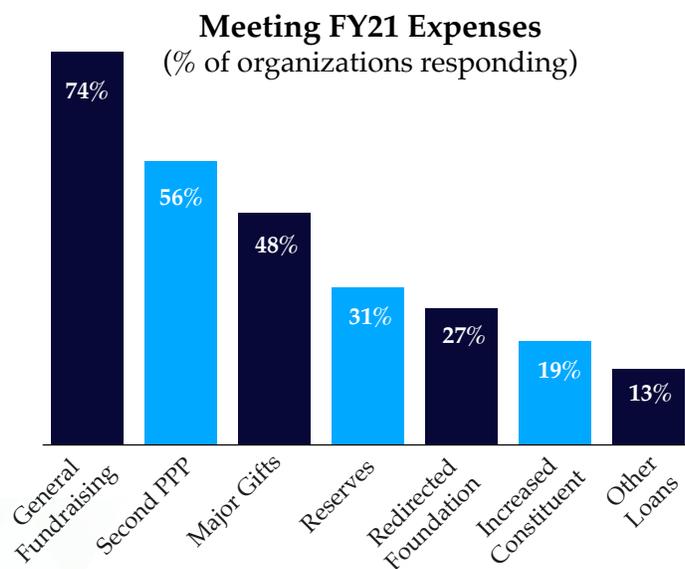
*Even in this year, there have been gains. Perhaps most significantly, agency fundraising has been productive, despite larger economic instability.* There is diversity in sources and scope of fundraising growth. Some organizations have relied on major gifts, some have conducted unique campaigns, and some have almost doubled their fundraising while some have achieved an increase of only 10-20%. Still, about 80% of organizations shared that various audiences (constituents, donors, major donors, or Board members) have been overwhelmingly generous. Almost all organizations' Boards of Directors have contributed fully to their organizations' needs (100% of Board members donating). While most Hillels and other engagement organizations do not solicit participants, a few of these organizations used this time to kick off alumni campaigns and saw some success. Moreover, in some places, constituents have volunteered time and energy, even during this stressful time.

*Organizational leaders mention additional, critical financial gains.* Government-funded PPP loans have been essential in helping organizations through their financial responsibilities without further reducing services or extending furloughs or layoffs. Redirected foundation grants and new grants from the Federation were also cited as being important to remaining relatively solvent. Some organizations began to prioritize reserves, with organizations reporting an average increase in reserves of 30%.

*While enrollment and participation in many schools and programs have decreased, most synagogues report consistent membership, or slight decreases due to typical attrition* (rabbinic turnover, political debates, leaving the Bay Area unrelated to the pandemic). Some synagogues gained members during the year, explaining that people were looking for meaning. Similarly, while part-time Jewish education

("religious school") was challenging to operate online, only two synagogues reported a significant loss of students (half). Finally, in the case of schools, most reported that attrition was due to typical moving away from the area and not to a pandemic exodus; one head of school explained that the families who left are now coming back.

*“When need arises, people step up. One parent installed a heater, and another installed all the plexiglass dividers. There’s a sense that the school is actually a more valuable commodity now. People don’t take it for granted as much.”*



*In discussing gains, several organizations’ significant growth during the pandemic must be mentioned.* A handful of organizations reported that the online nature of their work allowed them to expand audiences during the past year. They are niche organizations, highly focused but with an audience that grows considerably when access is possible. Moreover, in the context of the summer’s racial unrest, many found these particular organizations’ missions relevant in a new way.

The pandemic, or the entirety of the past year’s events, did offer opportunity to some organizations; therefore, the financial challenge is not uniform.

In total (and with some exceptions), organizations’ financial picture is neither a steady line of challenge nor a steady line of rescue. Organizational leaders have been effective and creative in identifying new sources of funding, which have essentially been a composite of public or philanthropic funding added to substantially by their own donor bases and audiences. Their success may be outweighed, though, by the uncertainty of what will (or won’t) come.

## Reflecting on Next Year: Finances and Organizational Health

*Organizational leaders have the most concern about the next fiscal year.* If the federal government chooses to make available another round of organizational loans, the picture will change dramatically, but no organizational leader is counting on this. 60% of organizations are expecting growth in earned income to rise toward pre-COVID levels, and, simultaneously, almost 20% will also cut expenses. This makes a hard combination: Organizations need to increase program supply at a time when revenue is low and costs are high, in order to re-engage participants who will bring in revenue. As a result, about two-thirds of organizations report needing to repeat their FY21 fundraising successes, despite expecting significant donor fatigue, the perception that the emergency is over, and a depressed employment landscape (A donor might make an exception in their finances to give once, but maybe not twice, and not when the end is in sight). Therefore, 21% of organizations are expecting a deficit next year, and most organizational leaders expressed extreme uncertainty and stress about what is coming.

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*“We are grateful for the stability of our organization, thanks in large part to the generosity of our long-standing supporters. It’s unclear how we will be able to generate new support and/or maintain strong relationships with our donor base.”*

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### Acute Human Need

*Service organizations—those designed to meet basic human needs, with revenue models containing third-party funding (government, insurance)—report soaring client need and steady or increased funding.* Although they are not facing organizational loss, they are trying to deliver expanded services in a challenging environment, and they need additional support to build infrastructure to meet demand.

Service organizations report:

- A ten-fold increase in demand for food from pantries and banks
- A 300% increase in requests for cash assistance
- A 50% increase in requests for mental health support to alleviate grief, trauma, anxiety, and loneliness (thus overwhelming current systems)
- A 25% increase in calls for domestic violence support
- A 30% increase in clients across service areas
- A 14% increase in staff and/or volunteers engaged to meet the needs

*As learned through data from A Portrait of Bay Area Jewish Life and Communities, Jewish income and vulnerability trends generally mirror Bay Area economic trends.*

In the Bay Area broadly, unemployment is approximately 6%, doubling from 3% in February 2020<sup>1</sup>. There has been a 27% increase in the number of Bay Area households receiving public assistance for food<sup>2</sup>. State court officials are bracing for a doubling of new eviction case filings later in 2021; renters are much more likely to be unemployed and thus at increased risk of eviction, especially in more rural counties without well-established tenants' rights<sup>3</sup>. These statistics very likely describe area Jewish households as well.

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*“Food is a message to so many people that they are not alone, and they are part of a connected community. One individual, who had a very difficult time in the beginning, had not eaten for a week before we brought him food.”*

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*This critical human need has also appeared in other Jewish organizations.* To attend our Jewish schools and preschools, 39% of enrolled families are receiving financial aid, a 9% increase on average across schools. Requests to Hillels, synagogues, and other Jewish life organizations for emergency assistance have increased, particularly for food and cash assistance. About half of synagogues have received only a few such requests over the past year, but one-quarter receive requests monthly, and about 15% receive them weekly or almost weekly. Hillels have created food assistance programs. Small synagogues have spent several thousand dollars on food for congregants; larger synagogues have spent in the tens of thousands.

<sup>1</sup> Independent analysis of EDD data across nine Bay Area counties via EDD Dashboard: <https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/1fmonth/2102rcou.pdf> Accessed 4/5/21.

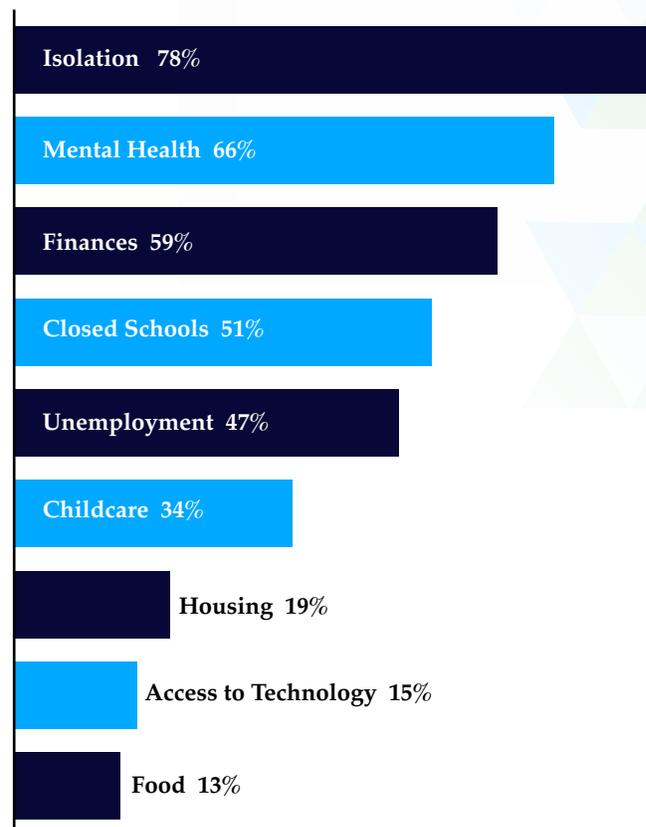
<sup>2</sup> Independent analysis of California Department of Social Services CalFresh data across nine Bay Area counties via CalFresh Data Dashboard: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/data-portal/research-and-data/calfresh-data-dashboard> Accessed 4/5/21.

<sup>3</sup> “Eviction Cases in California Projected to Double,” Los Angeles Times, 1/20/21. <https://www.latimes.com/homeless-housing/story/2021-01-20/california-eviction-cases-slated-to-double-covid-19> Accessed 3/9/21.

## Loneliness and Loss

*Organizations typically focused on Jewish life — including Hillels, synagogues, JCCs, schools, and engagement organizations— are receiving weekly or near-weekly requests for mental health support, and a few Hillels are offering direct clinical support to students.* Youth-serving organizations have had a relatively unique challenge, serving a population that has been profoundly impacted, with teens asking questions about their futures to youth professionals without clear answers (or extensive clinical training). Generally, when asked about the top challenges their constituents face, the top two responses are related to mental health; the next three— financial stress, closed schools, and unemployment— can create or exacerbate anxiety and other issues.

## Challenges Constituents Face (% of organizations responding)



Organizational leaders described what this looks like in real life:

- “Kids being home with parents actually increases feelings of parents’ isolation and need for community and support.”
- “Some are very resilient, adapting and embracing the online platforms and some are not. And fatigue is beginning to wear down that resiliency.”
- “We’re ... hearing a level of desperation from parents for their kids to have social opportunities like what camp provides, for the parents to have a place for kids to go outside of their house.”
- “We received a call from a parent whose child had been in the preschool who shared that the child had asked ‘Alexa’ if she could play with him. They had previously held back from enrolling, but then realized the need that the child had for play and social connection.”

- “There is a lot of loneliness, feelings of disconnection, and there is social fatigue from being online and in bigger Zoom events. And we’re seeing people struggle with the loss of loved ones.”
- “[College] students are experiencing a lot of anger and grief that they may not even recognize. It will come out in strange ways when things return to normal. There is a real disruption in their trust in the university as an institution (and institutions in general) and in our ability to function and take care of people.”
- “Young adults are isolated. They are facing the reality that they will be the last vaccinated. They are searching for new ways to connect.”
- “We are experiencing ten times our typical number of mental health crises among student population ranging from eating disorder hospitalization, suicidal behavior, and self-harming behaviors. Parents are unraveling. We’ve increased mental health professional hours, and we’re still not meeting the need, offering the wrap-around services that are needed.”
- “There is an increase in mental illness in people of all ages, including the various ways that expresses itself. Each one is a unique circumstance... One congregant had a twelve-year-old grandchild take his life by suicide during this time.”

We know that not everyone in pain is reaching out due to stigma or lack of knowledge of where to turn. And our mental health infrastructure is not built for the levels of ongoing stress, anxiety, and depression people are living with and so cannot enroll or serve everyone who does ask. We are not experiencing this pandemic equally, but we are all suffering.

### **Professional Exhaustion**

*A clear theme of organizational leaders’ comments is that they are exhausted, as are their staff.* Their comments offer color to this concept:

- “This has been exceedingly difficult for teachers and for the school leadership: balancing academics and being watchful of students at home and in classrooms while monitoring social distancing. We’re feeling better about transmission risk based on emerging data (but it has been a stressor). Teachers are exhausted. They are constantly innovating, stressing over technology, with intensity and focus, and meeting with kids individually. Talking all day in a mask is hard and physically demanding. They have sore throats! And they’re going home to families who want their attention.”

- “Teachers are burned out. They have had to step up and be flexible. The salary freeze has impacted them financially and emotionally. They are working harder than ever. They worry about health and their own childcare and family needs. They are tired and stressed, and they can't travel and get the break and time to refresh. The demands of constantly changing are draining. They're worried about the impact on their students. It's impossible to maintain their standards of excellence in these conditions, and that's frustrating.”
- “Our employees are burnt out. It's been a lot of adaptive learning/leadership with very little opportunity to take any kind of break. Single staff members are lonely and very isolated. Staff with small kids barely holding it together, trying to work and parent and educate at the same time. We've been encouraging taking time off. We're trying to figure out if we can go dark and give everyone a break.”
- “There is insecurity and uncertainty about the future. ‘Am I going to have a job? Will the synagogue exist?’ Especially with less staff, how we are going to manage?”
- “We're fine now (after a second PPP loan), but it's been a horrible year. I haven't slept well. My body is feeling the impact of this. I've gained weight—I've been eating cookies through this whole interview.”

There were other comments: that professionals are grateful to be employed and that morale is up recently because educators in all settings have begun receiving vaccinations. However, these were the minority of responses.

***Senior professionals in organizations are feeling the strain deeply.*** There is concern about a mass exodus of leaders, both lay and professional, once their organizations are stable, and there are big questions about when a break will come. One organizational leader called this a “unique fatigue.” It is motivating, and more people have stepped up—yet it is all encompassing and draining.

***Some organizations have been able to respond to ease the strain on their employees.*** About one-quarter of organizations in the survey have offered financial bonuses, meal/food gift cards, or additional days off. Some have engaged with mental health organizations to make support available. Organizations have distributed staff “swag” and gift items. Leaders have been conscious of the ways they have led their organizations; one organizational leader commented, “We've had more intention in communication with staff, offering town hall meetings for staff, and put effort into hearing and responding to concerns where we could.” In cases of significant layoffs and furloughs, organizational leaders put systems into place to ensure that individuals and families had access to food and shelter. Organizational leaders are keeping their professionals top of mind, almost as a second audience.

## Growth and Invention

*In the midst of organizational contraction, and leaders' and professionals' stress and pressure, everyone has been engaged in adaptation, change, and innovation.* No Jewish organization closed entirely during the pandemic. Instead, each developed new systems that worked for delivering critical in-person services that effectively reached their constituents while in-person programs were closed, and that enabled Jewish organizations to advance their missions and even to shine during this time.

Key shifts that occurred:

- Wholesale moving of activity online, including Shabbat services, adult education, meetings, and events.
- Structural change: the development and spread of telehealth systems for counseling, the shift to include Shabbat meals alone as a meaningful Jewish practice or put an entire film festival on-line (with tech support for users/viewers).
- Reinterpretation of activity, including, for example, adaptation of prayer methods when people couldn't sing together (e.g., more visuals, reading, and discussion) and changes to teacher-guided curricula needed for completion at home (more self-paced and self-directed).
- Growth of new ritual: a unique graduation ceremony for Jewish college seniors leaving Stanford, a Torah sent home to every b'nai mitzvah celebrating through Congregation Beth Am.

These changes happened not once but repeatedly as public health mandates put forth new rules and as COVID-19 cases rose and fell. Simultaneously, organizational leaders learned from their work and pushed themselves to do it better, to do it well, to be good at something they never wanted to be.

*In this survey, 84% of organizations suggested that they feel completely up to speed operating online, and almost half of the organizations are looking forward to expanding and being more creative with their online offerings.* For some organizations—teen organizations, for instance—moving online was made easier by the technological comfort of their constituents, and the online space became a creative workspace where constituents could shine and be inventive and lead in unique ways. For other organizations, being forced to move online was hard but an enhancement of their business model and program, something they likely needed to confront anyway, but that was otherwise easy to postpone.

*The pandemic pushed organizational leaders into new collaborations:* 82% of organizations surveyed indicated that they were engaging in new partnerships. They are meeting more frequently (even weekly) with heads of peer organizations, trading ideas, or developing new programmatic partnerships. They found synergies with similar or geographically close organizations and are sharing physical resources. And they are taking risks with organizations that can offer them something they need, when the programmatic possibilities never seemed worthwhile before.

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*“In the last 3 months, we’ve partnered with Camp Tawonga, Chochmat Halev, Dayenu, Resetting the Table, Shalom Bayit, Edah, Wilderness Torah, Sunrise Movement, PJ Library, and more.”*

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*Other priorities as a Jewish community didn’t stop during this time.* Organizational leaders described moving forward on work related to racial justice and equity, putting together clubs of constituents, and bringing trainings and information to their leadership. They worked on building respectful environments in their communities that could hold disagreement as related to the national political environment and the election.

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*“We don’t really know what membership will look like for the long term. We need to expect that revenue may continue to go down and operations will continue to be leaner...We’re reinventing the dues model.”*

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*Organizational leaders are shifting from a mindset of merely living with organizational challenges to one of wanting to move toward redesigned, more effective organizations.* At the highest level, the pandemic launched big questions for many organizational leaders. As has been said before, the pandemic made it impossible to ignore shortcomings or

unresolved tensions in our system (and society). These shortcomings are related to untenable business or revenue models, professionals who are trained for the wrong jobs, organizations putting too much emphasis on activities that aren’t mission-critical, and so on. Organizational leaders are now focused on these gaps in their work. These aren’t easy fixes, and so they have not yet made progress on these challenges.

*All organizational leaders generally reported that they would enter a hybrid world, maintaining some online presence after physical distancing ends.* Simply put: virtual engagement eliminated barriers to participation for some, and allowed organizations to expand their reach to new markets or enter into new partnerships. Few know exactly what it will look like: just as experimentation got us here, it will take experimentation to find new paradigms. This kind of inventiveness, openness, and doggedness about balancing creativity with resilience, experimentation, and risk with responsibility, will characterize post-pandemic life.

*“We’re thinking about more a heavy reliance on remote programming for the long term. We can’t assume that the facility will always be open, or everything needs to happen onsite (including committee meetings).”*

## Conclusion

As with this period of our lives more broadly, the experience of Jewish organizations during this time is not linear. It is a story of loss and of growth, of challenge and of unexpected opportunity. And, it is a story of interdependence, of community, within each organization and across the Bay Area.

The Jewish Federation will be developing responses to this portrait, leaning into what we do best: expanding on that interdependence to help each individual, each family be safe and thrive in the context of Jewish tradition. We know that each of us reading—organizational leaders, philanthropists—will be doing the same. As we build new mental health strategies, new ways to build community and belong, new ways to help families and individuals survive financial challenges—and new ways to help each other be present, despite and after physical distancing concludes—we will need each other as never before. For the inventiveness needed, to alleviate the pressures of leadership during unknown crisis, we will need each other.

We look forward to being in conversation together.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Federation’s Community Impact team, who conducted dozens of interviews with professional leaders, and to Amy Spade, Senior Program Officer, who analyzed the data.

Most of all, a heartfelt thanks to the professional leaders of Jewish organizations, who so openly shared their learnings, their challenges, their opportunities, and even their anxieties. The burden that volunteer leaders and professionals are carrying is heavy. We are inspired by their continued courage and commitment to Bay Area Jewish life.

