



# 2013 User Survey Report

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## METHODOLOGY

InterfaithFamily has conducted an online user survey every two years since 2007. As in the past, our goals with the 2013 survey were to determine:

- 1) The demographics of our users
- 2) Why people come to InterfaithFamily
- 3) What future resources and services our users are interested in
- 4) InterfaithFamily's impact on users' lives
- 5) How Jewish communal professionals use our resources

Between late October 2013 and November 22, 2013, visitors to the site saw a pop-up inviting them to take the survey and be entered into a drawing for a \$500 American Express gift card. We also directly marketed the survey to our users via our biweekly email newsletter and Twitter and Facebook. In all, 1,446 responded to the survey, with 1,107 completing it.

In this analysis, unless otherwise stated, when we say "users," we are referring to *users who've visited the site before and who responded to the survey*.<sup>1</sup>

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Gender

Seventy-five percent of our users are female and 24% are male. Less than 1% identify as transgender.

### Religion

Most of our users (79%) identify as Jewish vs. 21% who are not Jewish.

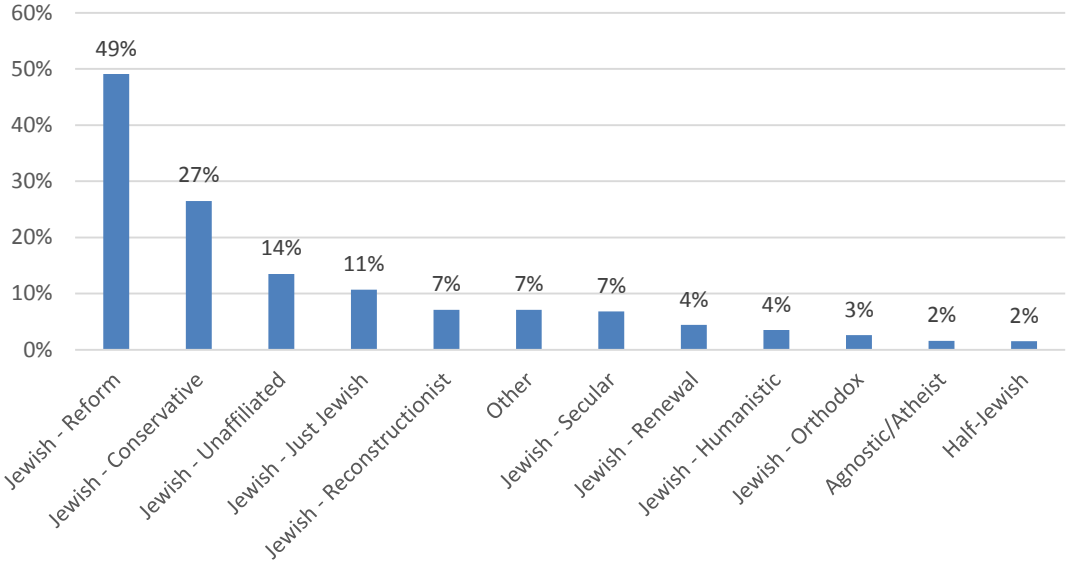
Just under half of our Jewish users classify themselves as Reform (49%), and just over a quarter classify themselves as Conservative (27%). Fourteen percent identify themselves as "unaffiliated." Eleven percent identify as "just Jewish," while 7 percent identify as secular. Small percentages identify as Reconstructionist (7%), Jewish Renewal (4%), Secular Humanist (4%) or Orthodox (3%).

Among our users who are not Jewish, 20% percent classify themselves as Mainline Protestant (includes Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church of Christ) and 32% as Catholic. Seventeen percent consider themselves non-Jewish agnostics or atheists, 8% as unaffiliated Christians, 7% as Unitarian Universalist. Five percent identified as Buddhist, while 3% identified as Hindu and 2% as Quaker.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Google Analytics, 81% of our visits come from first-time visitors, but only 24% of the survey respondents said they were first-time visitors. Since our survey data is so heavily weighted towards return visitors vs. first-time visitors, we omit the data about first-time visitors, with a few exceptions that are noted. We feel this approach presents the most accurate and illuminating portrait of our users.

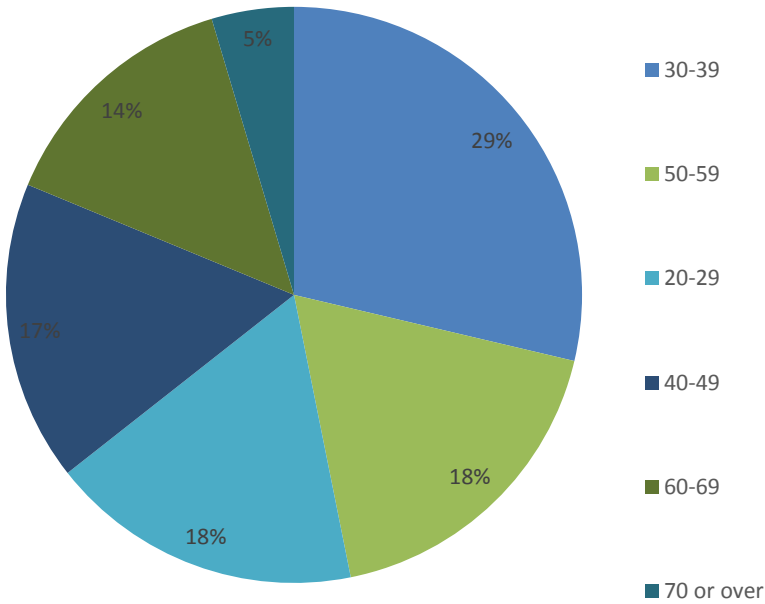
### Religious Affiliation of Jewish Users



### Age

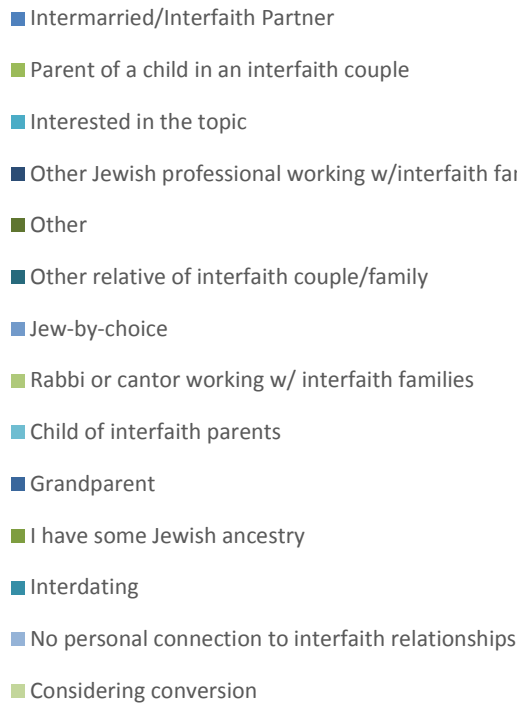
Close to half of our users (45%) are in the prime child-rearing ages of 30 to 49. Thirty-seven percent are 50 or above.

### Age Breakdown of Users

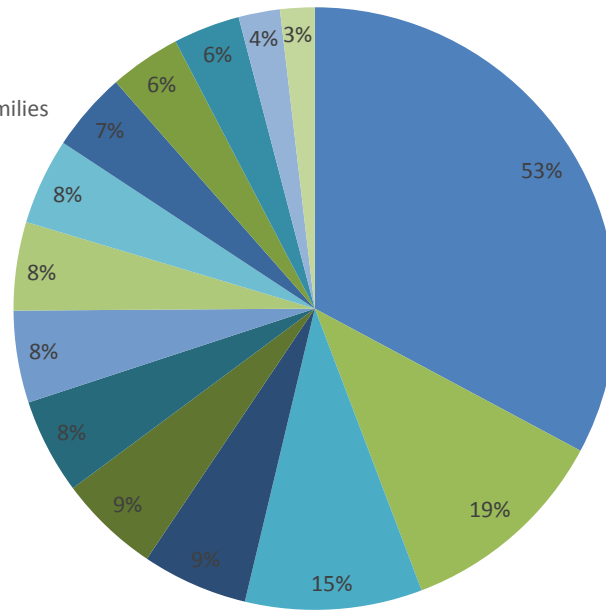


## Connection to Intermarriage

Fifty-three percent of our users are intermarried or have an interfaith partner, 19% are parents of children in an interfaith couple, and 17% are rabbis, cantors or other Jewish professionals working with interfaith families. Eleven percent are converts or considering conversion, 8% are children of interfaith couples, and 6% are interdating.



Users Connection to Intermarriage



## Other Notable Demographics

- 66% of our users are parents.
- 33% of our users are female and intermarried.
- 20% of our users are intermarried with children at home. Of those, 45% are synagogue members, and 88% say they are raising their children Jewish.
- Of our intermarried users with children at home, 40% have children 0-3; 14% have children 4-5; 21% have children 6-8; 20% have children 9-12 years old.

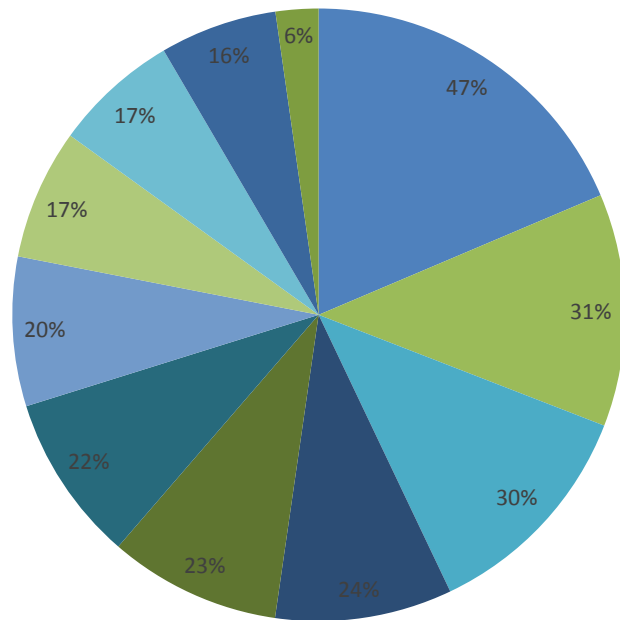
# WHY DO PEOPLE COME TO INTERFAITHFAMILY?

InterfaithFamily has always featured personal stories about life in an interfaith family; 47% of users continue to say that these stories are a reason they come to the site. One said, "I like to see what others are doing, as our children age."

About a third of our users say they come for information on Jewish holidays (31%), to learn how to incorporate Jewish traditions in their family's life (30%), or for information on Jewish life cycle events (24%). Twenty-three percent come to find out about Jewish organizations and events in their area. Twenty-two percent say they come, or have come, to find someone to officiate at a wedding. Twenty percent say they come for help with raising their children Jewish. Seventeen percent come to find information on Jewish classes and learning opportunities. Seventeen percent come to find information on Jewish classes and learning opportunities.

- To read people's personal stories about life in an interfaith family
- To find information on Jewish holidays
- To learn how to incorporate Jewish traditions in my family's life
- To find information on Jewish life cycle events
- To find out about Jewish organizations and events in my area
- To find someone to officiate at a wedding
- To find help with raising my children with Judaism
- To learn about the Jewish religion
- To find information on Jewish classes and learning opportunities
- To be part of an online community
- To talk with others (on the discussion boards)

Reasons People Come to the Site



Higher percentages of our users who are not Jewish come to our site for information on Jewish life: 46% come for information on Jewish holidays (compared to 31% overall), 38% come to learn how to incorporate Jewish traditions in their family's life (compared to 30%) and 35% come to learn about the Jewish religion (compared to 17% overall).

## Frequency of Visits

Forty-seven percent of users visit the site at least once a month; 24% visit once every two weeks or more.

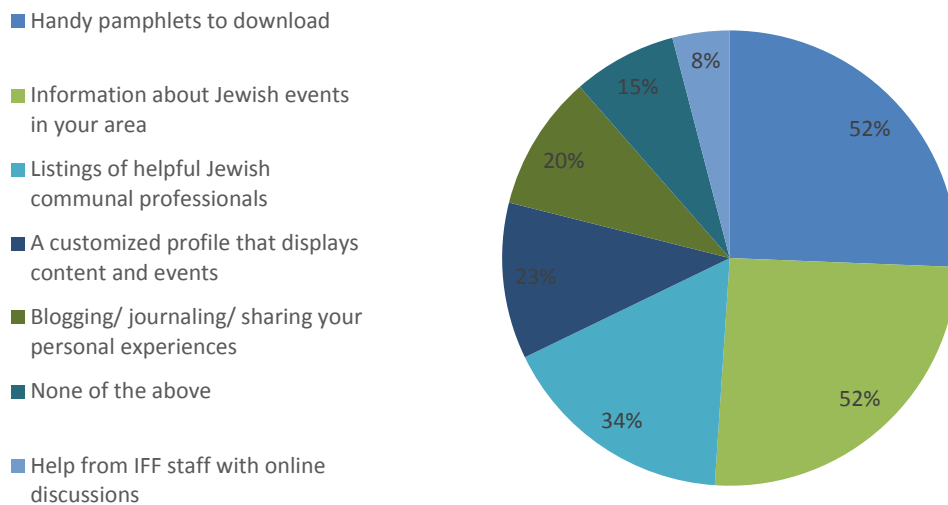
# INTEREST IN RESOURCES

We asked users about some current resources as a way to gauge demand for our existing offerings.

More than half of our users (52%) expressed interest in handy pamphlets on interfaith family issues, such as what to do on holidays, of the kind we started offering in 2010.

In late 2009, we launched the InterfaithFamily Network with social networking functionality and listings of Jewish organizations, professionals and programs. Many users express interest in information about Jewish events in their area (52%), listings of helpful Jewish communal professionals (34%), a customized home page (23%) and blogging on the Network (20%).

Users Interest in Resources



In 2011, we launched our InterfaithFamily/Your Community initiative with a pilot in Chicago. We added InterfaithFamily/San Francisco Bay Area and InterfaithFamily/Philadelphia in 2012. (We launched InterfaithFamily/Boston in October 2013, but did not include questions about it in the survey given its recent launch date.) A key feature of the IFF/Your Community model is to provide workshops and classes of the kinds in which our users express interest: 26% said they are interested in classes about adding value to their life in an interfaith family through Jewish practices, 27% in classes about raising children with Judaism and 26% in workshops for couples on how to have religion in their lives.

# IMPACT ON USERS' LIVES

We asked users about our impact on the elements of InterfaithFamily’s Theory of Change, which states that *if* couples:

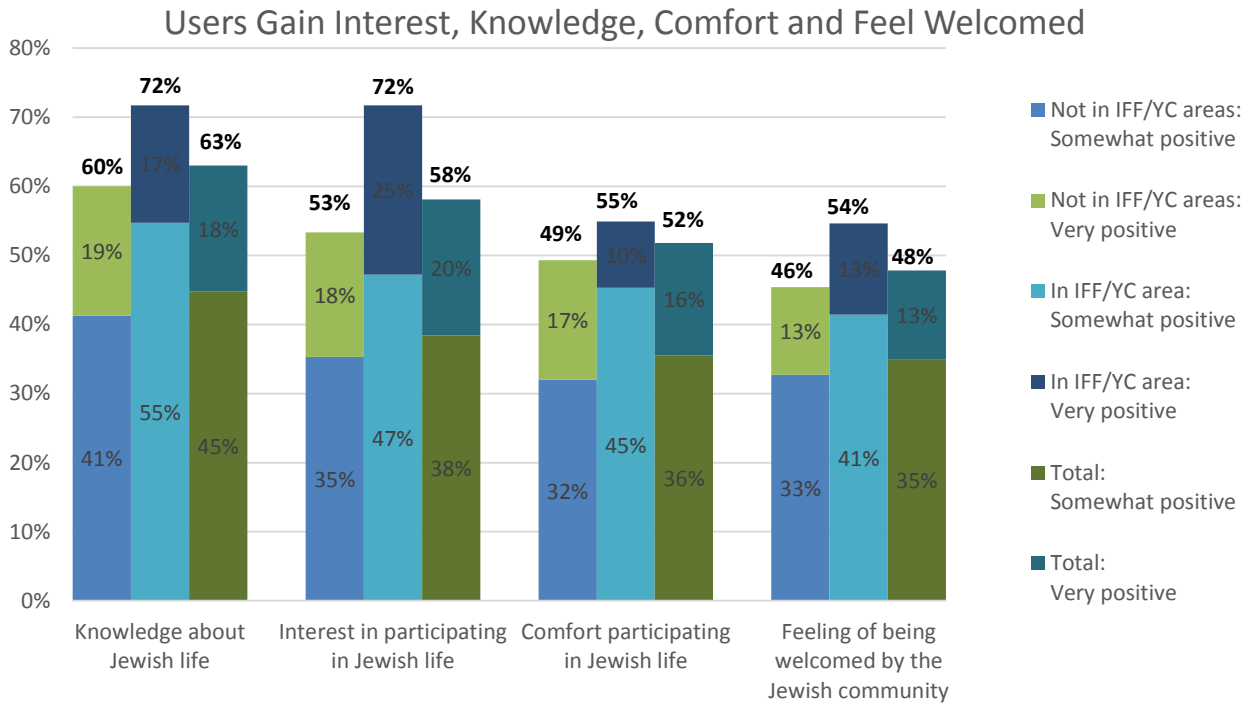
- become interested in participating in Jewish life as a source of value and meaning in their lives,
- become knowledgeable about Jewish life,
- become comfortable engaging in Jewish life, and
- feel welcomed by Jewish communities,

*InterfaithFamily inspired me to join a synagogue and to try to become an active member of that community.*

then they will engage in Jewish life and make Jewish choices. We focus in this part of the report on one of our most important audiences: intermarried couples with children at home.

## Did Users Gain Interest, Knowledge and Comfort, and Feel Welcomed?

Sizeable majorities of intermarried users with children at home reported that InterfaithFamily had a positive effect in the past two years on their becoming interested in, knowledgeable about, and comfortable participating in Jewish life, and feeling welcomed by the Jewish community. Respondents from Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco reported a significantly greater positive effect, indicating the enhanced impact of our InterfaithFamily/Your Community model. Respondents who were not Jewish also reported significantly greater positive effect on certain dimensions.



- Overall, 58% said IFF had a somewhat or very positive effect on their interest in participating in Jewish life. One user said, “*IFF provided great resources that helped me figure out how I wanted to have a Jewish home and raise Jewish children with a non-Jewish partner.*”
  - A much higher percentage – 72% – of respondents from Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco reported a somewhat or very positive effect on the interest dimension, compared to 53% for respondents from other areas.

- Overall, 63% said IFF had a somewhat or very positive effect on their knowledge of Judaism and/or Jewish life. One user said, *“I am not the Jewish partner. Your website has been great for understanding and learning.”*
  - 72% of respondents from the three Your Community cities, compared to 60% for residents of other areas, reported a somewhat or very positive effect on the knowledge dimension.
- Overall, 52% said IFF had a somewhat or very positive effect on their comfort participating in Jewish life. One user said, *“I feel more confident participating in holidays.”*
  - 55% of respondents from the three Your Community cities, compared to 49% from other areas, reported a somewhat or very positive effect on the comfort dimension.
- Overall, 48% said IFF had a somewhat or very positive effect on their feeling of being welcomed by the Jewish community. One user told us, *“We found the rabbi that married us through the site and a community we are considering joining.”*
  - 55% of respondents from the three Your Community cities, compared to 45% from other areas, reported a somewhat or very positive effect on the feeling welcomed dimension. One user said, *“Rabbi Moffic [Director of InterfaithFamily/Chicago] was able to give me advice and support that helped me join a synagogue this year.”*

Of respondents who were not Jewish, 72% said IFF had a somewhat or very positive effect on their knowledge about Jewish life (compared to 63% of all respondents), and 58% said IFF had a somewhat or very positive effect on their comfort participating in Jewish life (compared to 52% of all respondents).

The following comment sums up the potential for powerful impact with on-the-ground staff, and in particular with partners who are not Jewish:

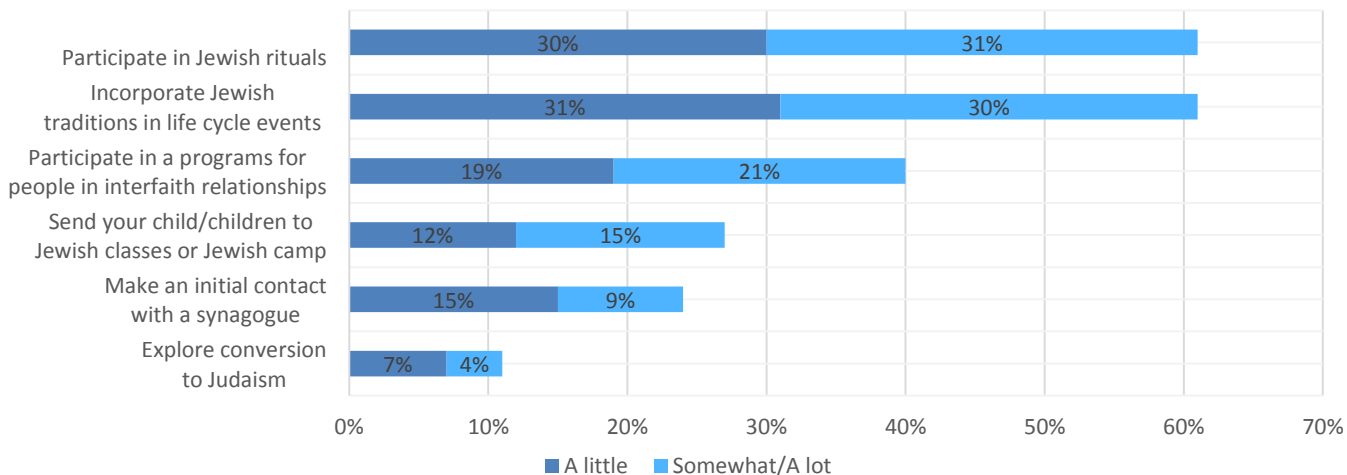
*I can't overstate how much Interfaith Family has helped me, a Christian with a Jewish partner, feel comfortable about trying to create a Jewish home for our three children. The website is very useful. And since I happen to live in a north shore suburb of Chicago, I've been able to benefit personally from advice and guidance from Rabbi Ari Moffic. I think what's so valuable about both the website and Rabbi Moffic's personal guidance is that they make me feel valued and appreciated as a Christian trying to raise Jewish children. In addition, coming to Judaism as an outsider, it has been helpful that Rabbi Moffic has been able to help me with practical ways to introduce some Jewish religious practice into the home.*



## Did Users Engage in Jewish Life?

Intermarried users with children at home also reported remarkable levels of engagement with Jewish life and Jewish choices in the past two years.

### IFF's Influence on Target Users' Jewish Choices



*Before the reading I have done on this website, I thought that the Jewish community didn't want our family. I assumed that any Jewish activities could only be in our home and not connected to a broader community. The information I have learned here has been a key piece of our decision to explore Judaism outside our walls - to join a synagogue and register our children for religious school. The stories I read here leave me feeling that we can find our place within the diversity of this community, not just be watching from the outside.*

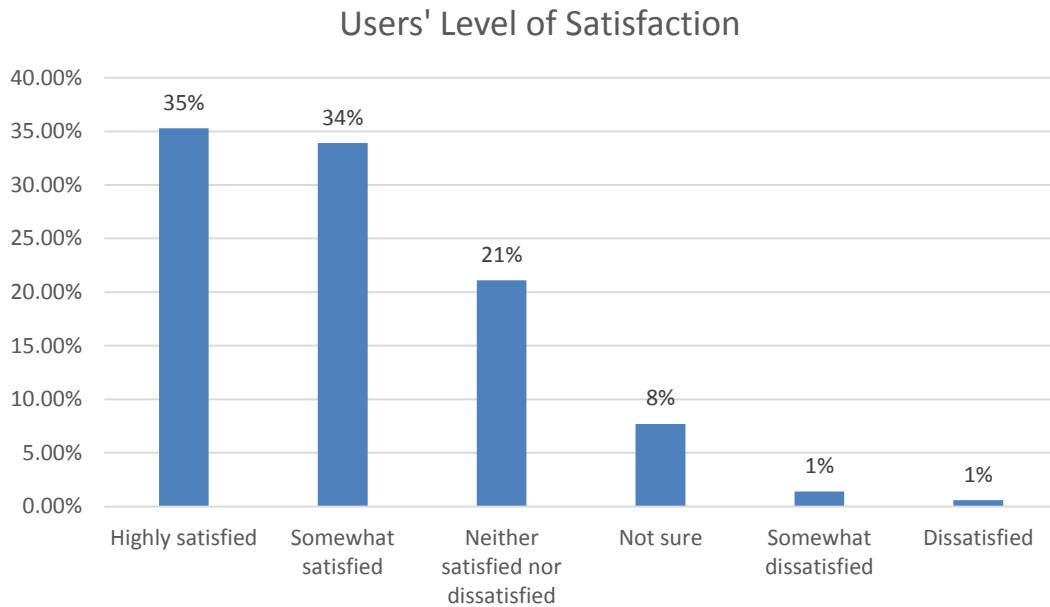
- 61% of users said IFF influenced their incorporation of Jewish traditions in life-cycle events and their participation in Jewish rituals. One user said, "IFF's resources provided useful information when I was looking to incorporate Jewish traditions or participate in Jewish rituals... I already was interested in them, I just needed some more ideas on how to do it in an interfaith-friendly way."
- 40% said IFF influenced them to participate in a program for people in interfaith relationships.
- 27% said IFF influenced them to send their children to Jewish education classes or Jewish camp.
- 16% said IFF influenced them to make an initial contact with a synagogue. One user said, "I took the Raising a Child with Judaism class and as a result felt that my family needed to join a synagogue."
- 11% said IFF influenced them to explore conversion to Judaism.

Beyond intermarried users with children at home, IFF impacts many types of people involved in interfaith relationships, as these comments indicate:

- *We used IFF when our first son was born, 4 years ago. Since then, our connection with a synagogue and then Jewish pre-school have filled our family's needs.*
- *The material provided in the IFF email/newsletters is helpful and inspiring as I am from an interfaith background. I relate to this material and am so happy to see how far people have come in finding a range of what works for them and their families.*
- *I would credit InterfaithFamily in my exploring conversion to Judaism.*
- *InterfaithFamily offered support for incorporating Jewish traditions into a lifecycle event (our wedding).*

## High Level of Satisfaction

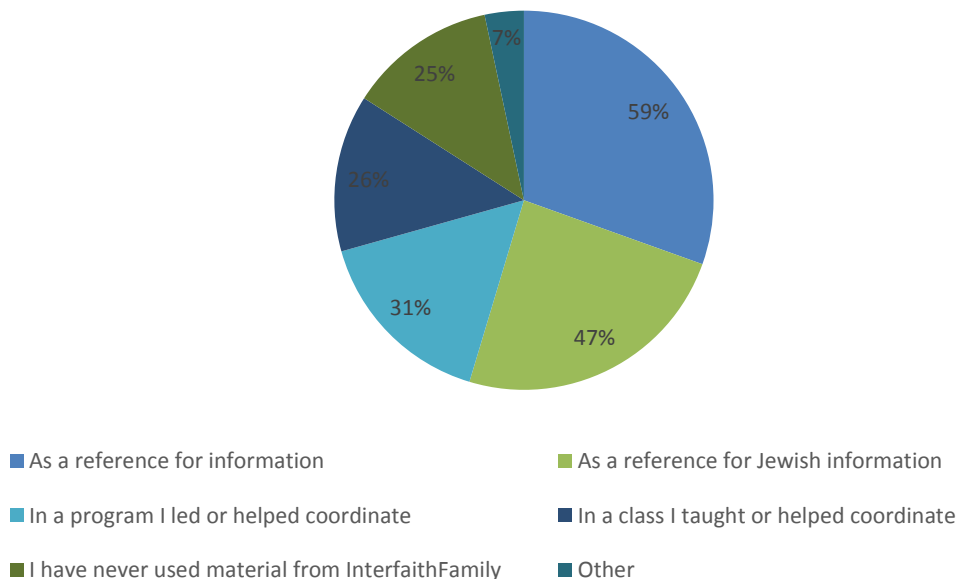
Sixty-nine percent of our users say they are satisfied with their experience of IFF vs. 2% who say they are dissatisfied.



## IMPACT ON JEWISH COMMUNAL PROFESSIONALS

Forty percent of the Jewish communal professionals who use the site are Reform; 26% are Conservative. Fifty-nine percent of professional users use InterfaithFamily as a reference for information on interfaith families, but 47% use it as a reference for Jewish information. Thirty one percent have used material from the site in a program and 26% in a class they taught or coordinated.

Ways Jewish Communal Professionals Have Used IFF

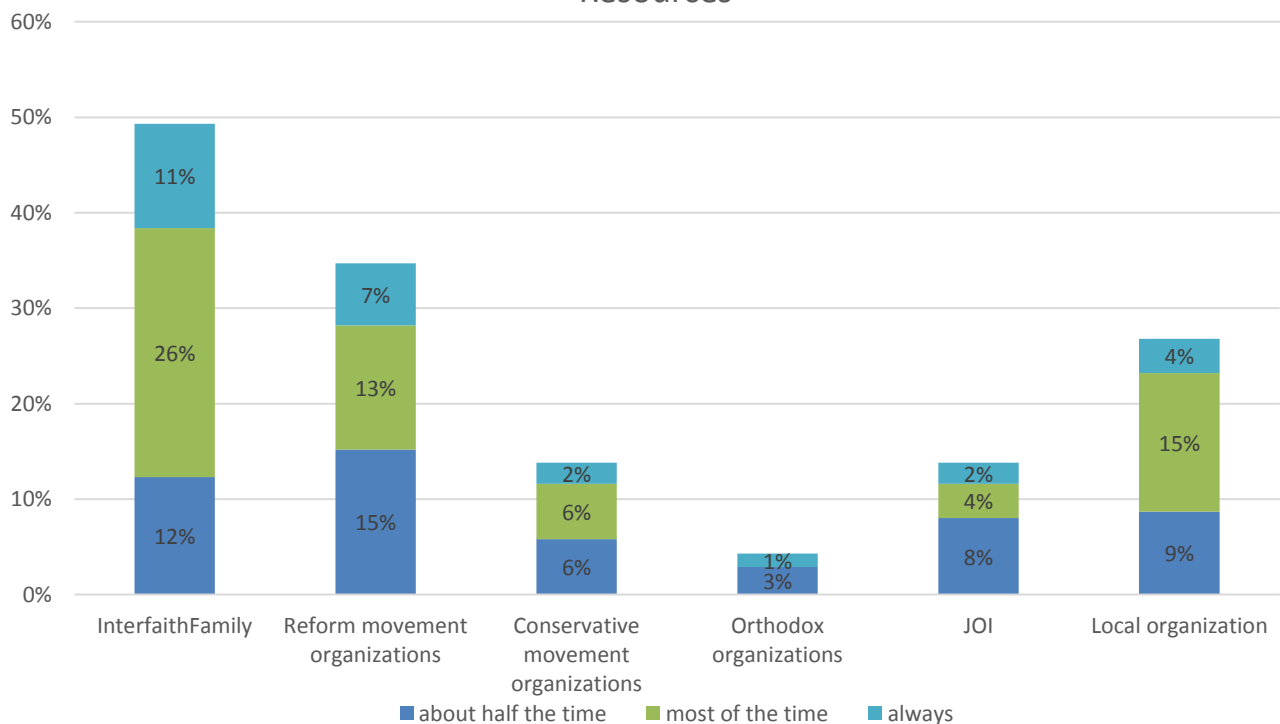


All kinds of professionals use IFF’s resources for various reasons, as these comments indicate:

- *“I am a Rabbi. I have been grateful to the staff of InterfaithFamily for their help and their willingness to offer resources to me and my congregation in dealing with issues that come up with interfaith families who join our very traditionally observant synagogue.”*
- *“As a member of the Jewish clergy, I use the InterfaithFamily website to refer many couples to. The more welcoming, the broader the subject matter, the more included they feel. Keep doing the great work you are doing.”*
- *“I am a member of the Jewish clergy who performs interfaith weddings. I use you as a valuable resource for my couples.”*
- *“I’m the part-time rabbi of a congregation of blended families, looking for ideas and resources to share with my congregants.”*
- *“I’m a Conservative rabbi - you’ve got great resources.”*
- *“I am a Jewish professional. I use you as a referral resource.”*
- *“To be able to help the interfaith families I work with by providing them information and a source they can turn to.”*
- *“[To] learn more about interfaith strategies.”*
- *“To provide resources to my students from interfaith families.”*
- *“As a Jewish educator and communal leader, to know what kind of resources are available to interfaith families.”*
- *“To help intermarried congregants with their personal spiritual issues in our synagogue.”*

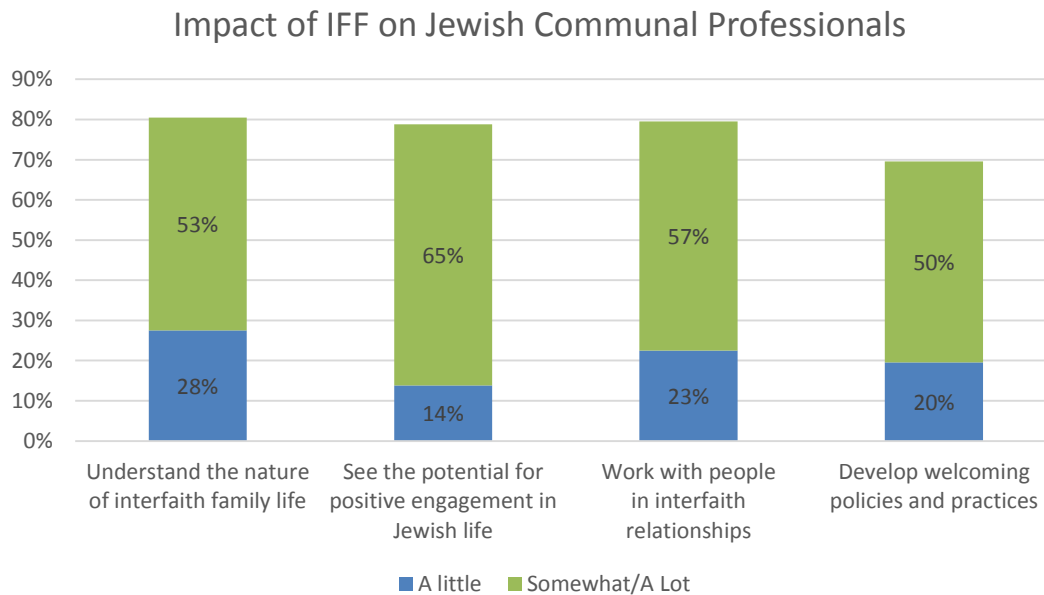
Jewish communal professionals who use the site refer the interfaith couples and families they work with to InterfaithFamily more often than they do to Reform movement organizations, Conservative organizations, Orthodox organizations, the Jewish Outreach Institute or a local organization. Thirty-seven percent refer interfaith families and couples to InterfaithFamily "most of the time" or "always."

How Often Jewish Communal Professionals Refer People to Select Resources



We also asked our professional users about the remaining elements of InterfaithFamily’s original Theory of Change: *if* Jewish professionals see the potential for positive engagement by people in interfaith relationships, in response to welcoming attitudes, practices and policies, *then* more interfaith couples will make Jewish choices.

Our professional users report that InterfaithFamily has had a very positive impact: 65% said IFF has helped them "somewhat" or "a lot" to see the potential for positive engagement in Jewish life by people in interfaith relationships; 50% said it has helped them "somewhat" or "a lot" to develop welcoming policies and practices.



## CONCLUSIONS

InterfaithFamily serves a predominantly female, Jewish, intermarried population age 30-49, most of whom have children. This is consistent with the findings from our three previous user surveys, and we continue to focus much of our work on that demographic "sweet spot." We also reach parents of intermarried children and grandparents – 37% of our users are 50 and over – as well as young adults and children of intermarried parents – 18% of our users are under 30. Looking at areas of potential improvement, we could expand our reach to parents of intermarrieds/grandparents and young adults – as well as to men.

A significant percentage (22%) of visitors come to our site for help finding Jewish clergy for their interfaith weddings. This affirms our commitment over the last few years to expand our Jewish Clergy Officiation Referral Service, as well as to offer workshops and resource materials for clergy. We also serve converts (8% of our users) and those considering conversion (3%) and could enhance our offerings to that audience; one user expressed interest in classes or gatherings for couples and families where a partner had converted because “Once I converted I didn't fit into any of the ‘interfaith’ gatherings even though I don't necessarily feel 100% accepted into Jewish religion and community by others.”

Users continue to be interested in reading about their own experiences reflected in the lives of others— 47% come to read other people’s stories about life in an interfaith family. Significant percentages are interested in the information about Jewish holidays, life cycle events and traditions, and the help with

raising their children Jewish, that our site provides. We serve an important audience of partners who are not Jewish, where there is greater interest in our resources on Jewish holidays, traditions and religion.

Many users came to the site in 2013 looking for information connecting them to their local community. Twenty-three percent of users came to find out about Jewish organizations and events in their area, 52% say that they are interested in information about events, and 34% in information about professionals, all of which are provided on our Network.

Seventeen percent of our users are Jewish professionals, including rabbis, educators and others. Fifty-nine percent use InterfaithFamily as a reference for information on interfaith families, and 31% have used material from the site in a program they led or coordinated. They refer interfaith couples and families with whom they work to InterfaithFamily far more frequently than to movement or local organizations or JOI. Most importantly, 65% of professionals said IFF has helped them to see the potential for positive engagement in Jewish life by people in interfaith relationships, 57% to work with people in interfaith relationships, and 50% to develop welcoming policies and practices.

Finally, intermarried couples with children at home report that InterfaithFamily had a positive effect on the factors that we believe lead to Jewish choices: knowledge about Jewish life (63%), interest in Jewish life (53%), and comfort participating in Jewish life (49%), and feeling welcomed by Jewish communities (46%). They report that InterfaithFamily had positive influence on their Jewish choices, including incorporating Jewish traditions in life cycle events and participating in Jewish rituals (61%), participating in a program for interfaith families (40%), sending children to Jewish education classes or Jewish camp (27%), making an initial contact with a synagogue (24%), and exploring conversion (11%).

The responses to the 2013 user survey support our expansion into local communities. Our users expressed interest in classes about adding value to their lives through Jewish practices (26%) and about raising children with Judaism (27%) and in workshops for couples on how to have religion in their lives (26%), the kinds of programs that our InterfaithFamily/Your Community model offers. While early, the user survey data indicates that InterfaithFamily's positive effect on users was greater in Chicago, San Francisco and Philadelphia, where we had a full-year of activities in 2013; in those communities, among intermarried couples with children at home, 72% reported a positive effect on knowledge about Jewish life (compared to 63% overall), 72% on interest in Jewish life (compared to 58% overall), 55% on comfort participating in Jewish life (compared to 52% overall), and 54% on feeling welcomed by Jewish communities (compared to 48% overall).