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## **Evaluation of the Birthright Israel NEXT Community Initiatives**

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# Executive Summary

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Birthright Israel NEXT (NEXT) is a program that builds on the social connections Taglit-Birthright Israel trip alumni (BRI trip alumni) make during their trips to Israel and connects them to other young Jewish adults who share their social, cultural, and educational interests. In particular, NEXT was developed to engage young Jewish adults, ages 21-30, in the Jewish community. The Jewish Community for the NEXT Generation Initiative (the Community Initiatives) is a major effort of NEXT. The Community Initiatives combine locally developed activities with national programs to develop peer communities for young Jewish adults to become more involved in Jewish life and more connected to Israel. In July 2009, SRI International was hired by the Jim Joseph Foundation to conduct an independent program evaluation, both to provide formative feedback to inform decisionmaking about the Community Initiatives and to measure program impact. The evaluation focuses on the first five metropolitan areas in which the NEXT Community Initiatives program was fully operational—Denver, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area, Miami-South Florida, and Philadelphia—during the period of January 2009 through March 2010. The evaluation does not describe the many NEXT activities that occurred outside of these five cities. The evaluation was designed to assess program implementation; identify the factors that support and hinder program implementation, participation, and outcomes; and provide evidence about program effectiveness.

This report provides findings about program participants, program implementation, factors that support and hinder program implementation, and early outcomes. It is based on surveys of NEXT participants, including alumni of the Summer 2009 BRI trips, interviews with national and local staff and participants, observations of national conferences, and analyses of event participation data.

## NEXT Participants

NEXT is reaching a broad population of young Jewish adults. Surveyed NEXT participants (n=574) have the following characteristics:

- 87% were born in the United States.
- 59% are female, 40% male, and <1% transgender.
- 75% are ages 24 to 30 and 25% are 21 to 23.
- 85% are Taglit-Birthright Israel trip alumni and 15% are not alumni.
- 61% have a bachelor's degree and 26% also have a higher degree.
- 35% are students, with 24% of them in a professional or graduate degree program, 10% in an undergraduate program, and 1% in another educational program.
- 61% work full-time, 15% work part-time, 8% are unemployed, and 17% are not in the work force (e.g., students) or other.
- 94% are unmarried, but nearly half (49%) reported having a significant other.

- 78% received some formal Jewish education as a child and 77% had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.
- 51% affiliate with mainstream Jewish denominations (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist). Others identify as secular/culturally Jewish, just Jewish, having no religion, or belonging to another religion.

## **Program Implementation**

NEXT provides an array of peer-led events that appeal to the varied interests of young Jewish adults. Categories of programming include national initiatives, interest-based programs, Shabbat-related events, Israel-related events, one-on-one meetings between NEXT staff and new or prospective participants (“one-on-ones”), holiday celebrations, and Taglit-Birthright Israel trip orientations and reunions. Programs are diverse within each category, varying greatly in topic, formality of Jewish education content, and group size.

More than 1,700 NEXT events were held between January 1, 2009, and March 31, 2010, across the five Community Initiatives areas, and the number of events conducted per quarter has increased over time since January 1, 2009. A total of 28,843 attendees (duplicated counts) participated in those events.

Interest-based events (e.g., events focused on arts and culture, the environment or outdoors, and sports or games) were the most common type of NEXT event (69%), followed by NEXT Shabbat meals (50%). Jewish holiday celebrations (23%) and BRI trip reunions (21%) were also common.

Many (43%) of the NEXT participants had attended their first NEXT activity less than 6 months before completing the survey, while the others had engaged earlier. Two-thirds (67%) of NEXT participants had attended only one or two NEXT events in the 12 months prior to completing the survey; about one-third had attended three or more NEXT events in that time frame.

Nearly all (90%) of NEXT participants are satisfied with NEXT events. Participants’ attendance and satisfaction with NEXT events did not differ significantly by age, gender, or level of Jewish education, nor did satisfaction differ by Community Initiatives area.

Survey responses suggest that NEXT events reflect certain attributes and values important to NEXT’s vision. In particular, nearly all NEXT participants who completed the survey strongly or somewhat agreed that NEXT events provide a safe space to be Jewish (97%); are warm, friendly, and welcoming (97%); are peer led (97%); reflect the interests of young adults (96%); incorporate Jewish values and experiences (90%); and are meaningful and enriching (90%).

## **Factors That Support Implementation**

To promote the involvement of young Jewish adults, NEXT uses a staffing model that builds local teams of informal educators—called Local Directors—working together with Fellows whose job is to reach out to their peers.

Local Directors are responsible for hiring and supervising Fellows and other administrative staff; making sure that all administrative tasks, including long-term planning and budgeting, are

completed; setting the vision for overall programming and ensuring that the events reflect the values defined by NEXT; overseeing marketing and outreach activities to potential participants; and establishing connections with other Jewish organizations in their cities.

During interviews, all Local Directors commented on the importance of building a team of Fellows who, as a group, have the knowledge and skills to reach NEXT's goals and who come from diverse cultural, religious, and professional backgrounds.

In general, there are five Fellows per city, but Directors have implemented different models to make their local teams as effective as possible. Fellows have two main responsibilities: (1) to plan and implement engaging programs and events that are infused with Jewish content and (2) to reach out to and build community among young Jewish adults.

Fellows receive professional development through individual and team meetings, other local organizations, Directors who model certain skills, attendance at national conferences, and funds for self-identified professional development opportunities. Directors are supported in their work through regular communication with the National NEXT office and each other, regular face-to-face meetings of the Directors at the National office, and a "train the trainer" model—the Directors are trained on leadership and management skills by the Center for Leadership Initiatives (CLI), and then they are able to train the Fellows. This web of professional development is provided to build staff members' skills, model the active learning and engagement expected in NEXT events, impart knowledge about Israel and Jewish identity, develop a common understanding of NEXT's mission and strategies, showcase best practices, and motivate and inspire them in their jobs.

In addition to building a leadership team among Directors and Fellows, NEXT is trying to inspire leadership among participants. NEXT staff have taken numerous and diverse steps to empower new leaders, including establishing local leadership development programs, having one-on-ones in which they encourage participants to host a NEXT Shabbat dinner or another event, and having participants lead a task or activity occurring at already planned events. Directors reported that they were just starting to involve participants actively in leadership roles. Nonetheless, 30% of NEXT participants reported that they have been involved in planning and implementing NEXT events.

## **The Local Jewish Landscape**

Directors in all cities are beginning to make strategic partnerships with other local Jewish organizations that serve young Jewish adults, and many have already planned and implemented cross-organizational events. NEXT Directors partner with other Jewish organizations that share the same values, including openness to diverse backgrounds and beliefs, no pressure to become more religious, no political agendas, no pressure to join an organization or donate money, focus on meaningful Jewish content or experiences, and commitment to high-quality programming.

NEXT complements other Jewish organizations in each of the five communities by providing a unique type of programming that aims to build community among young Jewish adults. In interviews, participants said they appreciate that NEXT events tend to be more diverse, open, and meaningful than events organized by some of the other local Jewish organizations. Still, the majority (75%) of NEXT participants also attend the events of at least one other Jewish

organization. Thus, while NEXT provides a certain niche for young Jewish adults, particularly for the 25% of participants who attend only NEXT events, careful coordination can ensure that the network of Jewish organizations remains complementary rather than competitive.

## Early Outcomes

NEXT aims to increase participants' knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and social networks in ways that support their engagement in Jewish life and their connections to Israel. In order to be able to track how the desired outcomes of NEXT change for participants over time, initial measures of outcomes (i.e., baseline measures) were collected and are described in the full report.

Participants also were asked about changes in certain outcomes. Participants who were interviewed described how participation in NEXT affected their attitudes about and connection to Jewish life and Israel, including:

- Increased learning about Jewish history and ritual and Hebrew
- Increased pride in being Jewish
- Increased reflection about what it means to be Jewish
- Increased understanding of how Judaism fits into their lives
- Increased comfort discussing Judaism and sharing their Jewish identity with others
- Increased frequency with which they celebrate Jewish holidays, host or attend Shabbat dinners, and attend synagogue
- Increased connection to a social and meaningful Jewish community
- Increased connection to other young Jewish adults
- Increased communication and public speaking skills and leadership skills, including event planning, hosting, and budgeting for those participants who have taken on leadership roles within NEXT.

In addition to reporting changes similar to those described by participants, Fellows also reported experiencing the following outcomes:

- Increased knowledge about Jewish religion, culture, and politics
- Increased openness to different ways to think about Judaism and Jewish culture
- Stronger connection to Israel and Israeli politics.

Nearly half of surveyed NEXT participants reported increases during the past year in their confidence in sharing Jewish knowledge with others (45%), frequency of participation in events sponsored by Jewish organizations (43%), confidence in Jewish knowledge and skills (42%), and amount of time they spend socializing with other Jewish adults (41%). About a third of participants reported increases over the course of the past year in the number of close Jewish friends they have (35%), connections to Jewish leaders and educators (33%), confidence in establishing ongoing Jewish communities with other young Jewish adults (30%), and confidence in planning and hosting events for young Jewish adults (30%).

Participants who had attended three or more NEXT events in the past 12 months, compared with participants who had attended just one or two NEXT events in the same time period, more often reported increases in the following knowledge, skills, and connections to Jewish life:

- Confidence in planning and hosting fun or meaningful events for young Jewish adults (41% v. 24%,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Confidence in establishing ongoing Jewish communities with other young Jewish adults (40% v. 24%,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Connections to Jewish leaders and educators (44% v. 27%,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Number of close friends who are Jewish (46% v. 29%,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Amount of time spent socializing with other young Jewish adults (58% v. 33%,  $p \leq .001$ ).

### **BRI Trip Alumni and NEXT**

To understand the factors associated with BRI trip alumni participation in NEXT, the evaluation examined the small subset of BRI trip alumni who recently returned from their Summer 2009 BRI trips. The majority (79%) of the BRI trip alumni living in the five Community Initiatives areas had heard of NEXT. NEXT reaches out to more trip alumni than other local Jewish organizations do, with 70% of trip alumni having received invitations in the past 3 months from NEXT but only 14% to 44% having received invitations from other Jewish organizations. Similarly, a higher proportion of trip alumni engage in NEXT than engage in most other Jewish organizations. One-fifth (20%) of all alumni participated in at least one NEXT activity in the past 12 months. Of those alumni who had heard of NEXT, 26% participated.

There are a few factors that differentiate alumni who participate in NEXT from those who do not participate. These include:

- Age—Older trip alumni (ages 24-27) participate in NEXT in higher proportions than younger trip alumni (ages 21-23) (25% v. 12%,  $p \leq .001$ ).
- Having had a NEXT representative on their bus—Trip alumni who had a NEXT representative on their bus participate in NEXT at more than twice the rate of their peers whose buses did not have a NEXT representative (39% v. 16%,  $p \leq .001$ ).

Participation rates of trip alumni did not differ by gender, whether they were affiliated with a mainstream Jewish denomination, whether they had received formal Jewish education as a child, how satisfied they were with their past Jewish educational experiences, the number of Jewish friends they currently had, or their marital or relationship status.

In summary, NEXT, in its first 18 months, successfully provided a safe place for trip alumni and their non-alumni peers to explore their Jewish identities and connect to a Jewish community and lifestyle. By tracking the outcomes of NEXT participants and nonparticipants over several years, the evaluation could document whether involvement in NEXT predicts greater engagement of young Jewish adults in a vibrant Jewish life over time.



# 1. Introduction

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Birthright Israel NEXT (NEXT) is a new endeavor to build peer-based communities for young Jewish adults. NEXT was designed to capture the momentum of the Taglit-Birthright Israel (BRI) trip and provide the means for trip participants and their peers to become more involved in Jewish life and more connected to Israel.

BRI has been described as the “largest experiment in Jewish education ever” (Saxe et al., p. 3). Founded by philanthropists Charles Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt, in conjunction with the Israeli government, BRI now has a broad range of support from philanthropists, the government of Israel, and Jewish Federations throughout the Diaspora. In the 11 years since BRI’s launch in 1999, more than 230,000 young Jewish adults ages 18 to 26 from around the world have participated in free, peer-based educational trips to Israel, with an ever-increasing number of trip applicants (Taglit-Birthright Israel, 2010).

The National Jewish Population Survey, conducted close to the time the first BRI group visited Israel in 2000, documented what many in the Jewish community already had been aware of and concerned about—an increasing rate of intermarriage concurrent with a declining rate of Jewish connections, including close Jewish friendships, Jewish philanthropy contributions, institutional memberships, and an emotional attachment to Israel for Jewish young adults (United Jewish Communities, 2004). Concern about weakening connections to the Jewish community among young Jews, particularly among those not affiliated or engaged with any Jewish institutions, is reflected in BRI’s mission, “to diminish the growing division between Israel and Jewish communities around the world; to strengthen the sense of solidarity among world Jewry; and to strengthen participants’ personal Jewish identity and connection to the Jewish people” (Taglit-Birthright Israel, 2008). BRI has targeted specifically those who were previously uninvolved and unconnected; to be eligible for the program’s 10-day trips, young adults may not previously have visited Israel as part of a peer educational program.

BRI has been evaluated since its inception by the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University. This research was designed to support causal analyses, comparing participants with nonparticipants who had applied for a trip but had been placed on a waiting list (Saxe et al., 2000). Results of these evaluations have documented BRI’s success in connecting young Jews to Jewish heritage and to Israel: participants were more likely than nonparticipants to report feeling connected to Israel, to the worldwide Jewish community, to their local Jewish community, and to Jewish history; are more likely to view Israel as a lively democracy, a multicultural society, and a potential future home; and were more likely to report wanting to establish a Jewish family (Saxe et al., 2007; Saxe et al., 2009). In contrast to these successes, findings indicate that BRI has had a much weaker impact on engagement in Jewish behavior and Jewish involvement after the trip (Saxe et al., 2007).

With the rapidly growing number of BRI trip alumni returning to American communities, BRI is “moving towards achieving a critical mass” (Saxe, 2008, p. 2). One-third of North American Jews born after 1985 are projected to have participated in the BRI program by the time they are

27 years old (Saxe, 2008). The challenge facing the Jewish community is “what to do with all those alumni” (Fax, 2008, p. 1)—that is, how to sustain and increase their connection to Israel and Jewish life. Alumni are returning to communities with little infrastructure designed to support and keep them connected (Herring, 2008). Many young adults who have traveled to Israel with a BRI group found that when they returned to their communities, they did not continue their connections with local BRI friends or staff. Although there were local BRI events, these unconnected youth tended not to attend them because they did not want to attend alone. Thus, the lack of a local network of BRI friends affected their decision to participate in Jewish events (Sasson et al., 2007). A follow-up study of BRI attendees found that many alumni, especially those no longer in college, felt that their local communities did not offer the types of Jewish events or involvement that they were seeking (Sasson et al., 2007).

To respond to the unmet need for post-trip engagement, the Birthright Israel Foundation developed an alumni outreach program: Birthright Israel NEXT (NEXT). This innovative program builds on the social connections alumni have made during their trips and connects them to other young Jewish adults who share their social, cultural, and educational interests. Started under the auspices of Taglit-Birthright Israel, NEXT has since been established as its own organization. The Jewish Community for the NEXT Generation Initiative (the Community Initiatives) is a major effort of NEXT. The Community Initiatives combine locally developed activities with national programs to develop peer communities for young Jewish adults (described further below).

## The Evaluation

In July 2009, the Jim Joseph Foundation hired SRI International to conduct an independent evaluation of the Community Initiatives. The evaluation was designed to provide formative feedback to inform decisionmaking about the Community Initiatives and to measure summative findings to document its merits. The evaluation focuses on the first five metropolitan areas in which the NEXT Community Initiatives program was fully operational—Denver, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area, Miami-South Florida, and Philadelphia—during the period of January 2009 through March 2010. This evaluation does not describe NEXT activities that occurred outside of the initial five cities to fully implement the Community Initiatives.

The evaluation was designed to assess program implementation; identify the factors that support and hinder program implementation, participation, and outcomes; and provide evidence about program effectiveness. The key questions addressed by the evaluation include the following:

1. *NEXT participants*: What are the characteristics of young Jewish adults who participate in NEXT events?
2. *NEXT events and programs*: What methods are used to reach out and invite young Jewish adults to participate in NEXT events and programs? What types of NEXT events do Local Directors, Fellows, and participants plan and implement?
3. *Involvement and satisfaction with NEXT events*: To what extent do young Jewish adults participate in NEXT events? What is their level of satisfaction with the events?
4. *Values reflected in NEXT events*: To what extent do NEXT events reflect NEXT values?

5. *NEXT's leadership team*: How are the Local Directors, Fellows, and participant leaders involved in outreach and planning and in implementing events? What factors (e.g., characteristics of staff, training, supervision, and other resources) support or hinder implementation of the Community Initiatives model? How are participants supported and empowered to take on leadership roles?
6. *The local Jewish landscape*: How does NEXT coordinate with and complement existing programming for young Jewish adults?
7. *Baseline and short-term outcomes for NEXT participants*: After involvement in NEXT events, do participants experience changes in attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and social connections that support engagement in Jewish values and life, connections to Israel, and leadership within the Jewish community? What are the characteristics of participants or their involvement in NEXT events that are associated with larger improvements in short-term outcomes? (Only baseline data are available at this time and presented in the report.)
8. *BRI trip alumni and NEXT*: What differences exist between recent (Summer 2009) BRI trip alumni who participate in NEXT and those who do not participate in NEXT?
9. *NEXT-staffed bus trips*: How many BRI trips are staffed with NEXT Local Directors and Fellows? Do young Jewish adults who participate in NEXT-staffed trips more often participate in NEXT events after returning from their trip than those trip alumni who attend other BRI trips?

In the remainder of this introduction, we provide a more comprehensive description of NEXT and the Community Initiatives model. We then detail the methodology for the evaluation. Finally, we describe the rest of this report.

## Overview of Birthright Israel NEXT

Birthright Israel NEXT began as a project of the Birthright Israel Foundation aimed at promoting activities for alumni of Taglit-Birthright Israel trips. As the project grew, staff developed a strategic plan for its continued development, and the program gained major philanthropic support. NEXT became an independent nonprofit organization in March 2009, dedicated to the resurgence of young adult engagement in Jewish life. By working with both the young Jewish adults who have participated in BRI trips as well as their friends, NEXT seeks to help young adults “find or form” a Jewish community that resonates with their needs.

Today, in order to reach a large group of alumni and their peers who are spread out geographically, NEXT functions with a multitiered approach:

- **NEXT communicates to young adults via web, email, social networking, and mobile technologies.** NEXT sends monthly email newsletters to all alumni of Taglit-Birthright Israel trips via a customer relationship management (CRM) system, offering them educational content and information regarding opportunities in the Jewish world. As part of this effort, NEXT partners with other national organizations to highlight opportunities to return to Israel, participate in conferences, and apply for leadership programs. NEXT supplements these efforts with social networking campaigns and a Hebrew-learning tool that is distributed on mobile platforms.

- **NEXT offers peer-led program opportunities that can be created in any location and be registered for online.** These programs include NEXT Shabbat in which BRI trip alumni host Shabbat meals for their peers. Hosts are given a financial incentive for the meals they plan and prepare, as well as a “Shabbat box” or “Shabbox” that includes the essentials for a traditional Shabbat meal, such as Shabbat candles and matches, a Shabbat tunes CD, a challah cover and Kiddush cup, and Shabbat reflections. Other peer-led program initiatives focus on alumni grants (“NEXT/Natan Grants”) and volunteering (“Harvest to Harvest”).
- **NEXT has local leaders in 12 key cities who hold public events and identify volunteer leaders.** In seven cities—Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia, and San Francisco—full-time Local Directors and groups of Fellows implement NEXT activities. These cities comprise the Community Initiatives, five of which are the focus of this evaluation. In five cities—Boston, New York, San Diego, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.—NEXT works through partner organizations.

The Community Initiatives model combines locally developed activities with national programs to develop peer communities for young Jewish adults to become more involved in Jewish life and more connected to Israel. In each Community Initiatives area, Local Directors recruit and hire up to five Fellows who are responsible for planning and implementing the interest-based peer events and gatherings. The idea is to connect young Jewish adults by creating niche communities of shared interests.

NEXT has identified four focal areas for Community Initiatives programming—social action, Israel, Hebrew, and Shabbat—and also develops interest-based programming in other areas. Events include holiday celebrations, sporting events, museum tours, cooking classes, Hebrew classes, hikes, and lectures, among others. Some events, such as Hanukkah parties, may draw hundreds of participants; others, such as Israeli folk dancing, may draw 20 or 30 participants. NEXT also sponsors one-on-one meetings between a local staff person and individual participants.

Each NEXT event is designed to appeal to a broad range of young Jewish adults and fit with their lifestyles. As such, they are designed to be comfortable for everyone regardless of their backgrounds. Although they incorporate Jewish values and experiences, they do not require prior knowledge of Judaism or Israel for participation. They are set up to be warm, friendly, and welcoming and to provide a safe space to be Jewish.

## Research Methodology

The reported findings are based on data collected between January 2009 through March 2010 from the first five communities in which the NEXT Community Initiatives program was fully operational—Chicago, Denver, Miami-South Florida, Philadelphia, and San Francisco Bay Area. This evaluation does not describe the many NEXT activities that occurred outside of these five cities or their participants. We used a mixed-methods approach that included surveys, interviews and observations, document reviews, and analyses of participation databases.

## Surveys

SRI conducted two surveys. One, we surveyed NEXT participants to understand who participates in NEXT, the types of activities in which they participate, and outcomes of participating in NEXT activities. Two, we surveyed BRI trip alumni who had gone on a Summer 2009 trip to understand the extent to which trip alumni participate in NEXT, the factors associated with NEXT participation, and what other opportunities are available to them upon returning from Israel.

**NEXT participant survey.** SRI conducted a survey of NEXT participants who were living in the five NEXT Community Initiatives areas targeted by this evaluation but who were not Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni (in order not to overlap with the survey of Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni described below). NEXT participants living in the five communities were identified through a brief qualifying survey sent to randomly selected email addresses pulled from the NEXT participant data systems. Respondents eligible to take the full survey included participants who lived in one of the five original NEXT Community Initiatives areas, participated in NEXT in the 12 months prior to the survey, were ages 21 to 30, and had not gone on a Summer 2009 BRI trip. The qualifying survey identified 703 NEXT participants living in the five communities, of whom 479 (68%) were qualified respondents for the full participant survey (Exhibit 1). About one-third (32%) of respondents did not qualify to take the full participant survey for one or more of the following reasons: they had not participated in NEXT in the past 12 months, they were a Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni, or they were younger than age 21 or older than age 30.

**Exhibit 1. Participant Survey Respondents, by Community**

Community	Completed Surveys (n)
Chicago	140
Denver	39
Miami-South Florida	73
Philadelphia	115
San Francisco Bay Area	112
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>479</b>

**Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni survey.** To understand the experiences of recent trip alumni with NEXT, SRI collaborated with the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University to survey Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni. The survey population included all alumni who were ages 21-27 and who registered as living in one of the five NEXT Community Initiatives areas or one of eight comparison communities.<sup>1</sup> The survey was fielded by the Cohen Center between November 15 and December 31, 2009. Of the 1,853 alumni surveyed, 1,123 returned completed surveys, for a response rate of 61%. Of those alumni who responded, 465 lived in the five NEXT Community Initiatives areas, 95 of whom had participated in NEXT events (Exhibit 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Survey results from the eight comparison communities are not presented in this report.

**Exhibit 2. BRI Trip Alumni Survey Respondents, by Community**

Community	Completed Surveys (n)	Alumni who Participated in NEXT	Alumni who Did not participate in NEXT
Chicago	124	27	97
Denver	28	7	21
Miami-South Florida	87	15	72
Philadelphia	112	20	92
San Francisco Bay Area	114	26	88
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>370</b>

**Survey topics.** Both surveys measured the following:

- Background—Jewish education received as a child and perceptions of that education, Jewish experiences as a child (e.g., Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Jewish youth group), Jewish affiliation as a child
- Involvement with NEXT—Number and types of NEXT events attended, perceived characteristics of events, satisfaction with events, leadership roles taken, likelihood of continued participation
- Characteristics of Jewish identity—Attitudes toward Judaism, self-perceptions of Jewish identity, participation in Jewish activities, connections to other Jews, attitudes and behaviors toward learning and leadership related to Judaism
- Demographics—Gender, age, education, employment status, relationship status
- Target questions—Additional questions were asked of specific types of survey respondents. Specifically, BRI trip alumni were asked about their experience with their trip. Survey respondents who had not participated in any NEXT events were asked whether they had heard about NEXT and, if so, why they did not participate.

**Survey analysis.** To examine the experiences of NEXT participants, we combined the data gathered from the 479 NEXT participant survey respondents and the 95 respondents from the Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni survey who had participated in NEXT, for a total of 574 NEXT participants (Exhibit 3). Before combining the data of NEXT participants across the two surveys, we analyzed survey responses to selected items (e.g., participants’ satisfaction with NEXT events) to determine whether there were differences between NEXT participants completing the trip alumni survey and those completing the participant survey. We found no statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of experiences with NEXT. Therefore, to maximize the data and increase the precision of our estimates, we combined the data of NEXT participants across surveys when presenting descriptions of NEXT participants and their experiences. Exhibit 3 presents the distribution of NEXT participants with completed surveys across the five NEXT Community Initiatives areas.

**Exhibit 3. NEXT Participants With Completed Survey, by Community**

Community	Completed Surveys (n)	NEXT Participant Survey	BRI Trip Alumni Survey
Chicago	167	140	27
Denver	46	39	7
Miami-South Florida	88	73	15
Philadelphia	135	115	20
San Francisco Bay Area	138	112	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>95</b>

Survey analysis was completed in two steps. First, we focused on descriptive statistics, such as means, variances, and frequencies. Many of these descriptions are presented in this report to portray characteristics of NEXT participants and their involvement in NEXT. The next phase of the survey analysis examined the relationships between respondent characteristics and their involvement in NEXT to understand any group differences that may exist. Where we made comparisons across strata (e.g., comparing NEXT participants who participated in more and fewer NEXT activities or comparing trip alumni who were NEXT participants with nonparticipants), we employed appropriate tests of statistical significance to assess whether the observed results are indicative of actual variation rather than deviations due only to random sampling and measurement errors. Differences were considered significant only at the conservative level of  $p \leq .001$  to avoid false positives, given the number of differences that were tested.

Because there is no data system that identifies all the young Jewish adults who have ever participated in NEXT, we are unable to know the true size or make up of the total NEXT participant population (i.e., the universe of NEXT participants). Therefore, statistics presented in this report describe the sample on which we collected data; they do not estimate how well that sample predicts the NEXT population overall (in other words, we were unable to calculate a margin of error). However, the responses of NEXT participants were reasonably similar to responses of 2007-08 BRI trip alumni (Saxe, Phillips, Wright, Boxer, Hecht, & Sasson, 2008). Thus, we do not think we have an atypical sample of respondents.

### **Interviews and Observations at Meetings**

To complement the survey data and provide more examples of NEXT in practice, we conducted a series of interviews with staff and participants. Specifically, we interviewed key National staff, as well as the Local Director, three Fellows, and two participants in each of the five Community Initiatives areas.

Interviews covered the following topics:

- Personal history—Jewish background, role in NEXT
- Goals for NEXT
- Recruitment—Strategies used to recruit Fellows and participants, relative success of various strategies

- Relationships within NEXT—Training and supervision provided by the National staff, training and supervision provided by the Local Directors, communication and support between National staff and local communities
- Programming—Types of programming offered, characteristics of events, perceived quality of events
- Leadership—Roles assumed by the Local Directors, Fellows, and participants
- Relationships and coordination with other Jewish organizations
- Outcomes—Perceived changes in Jewish attitudes, behaviors, and connections for staff, Fellows, and participants.

Respondents were asked about these topics from the perspective of their particular roles.

## **Documents**

SRI collected and analyzed a variety of documents and artifacts to better understand the goals, activities, and outcomes of NEXT. Documents and artifacts collected include training materials, job descriptions, newsletters, progress reports, and website contents.

## **Participation Data**

SRI analyzed participation data collected by the National NEXT office to capture the number of individuals who attended NEXT events overall and by region. At the start of the evaluation, National staff were building a database to record all NEXT events, participant attendance, and event descriptions. Later, a new database replaced the original one. National staff provided data exports from both the original and the new databases containing the name of each NEXT event hosted, number of attendees, number of BRI trip alumni in attendance, and the location of the activity.

Using these various data sources, we were able to construct a picture of NEXT and its effects. We turn to these findings in the remaining sections of the report.

## **Overview of the Report**

In the next section of this report, we describe NEXT participants, NEXT events and their characteristics, numbers of attendees, and participants' satisfaction with NEXT events. Section 3 explores NEXT staff, including their roles and responsibilities and supervision and professional development. It also looks at participants who take on leadership roles. Section 4 describes the role of NEXT in the landscape of Jewish organizations operating in the Community Initiatives areas. Section 5 presents baseline and short-term outcomes for participants and staff as a result of their involvement with NEXT. Section 6 describes the awareness and participation of Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni in NEXT and the factors associated with NEXT participation. Section 7 concludes with a brief summary and a look forward.

## 2. NEXT Participants and Events

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This section describes the characteristics of surveyed NEXT participants, the types of events offered to them, and their level of participation in and satisfaction with NEXT events. This section of the report answers the following evaluation questions:

1. What are the characteristics of young Jewish adults who participate in NEXT events?
2. What methods are used to reach out and invite young Jewish adults to participate in NEXT events and programs?
3. What types of NEXT events do Local Directors, Fellows, and participants plan and implement?
4. To what extent do young Jewish adults participate in NEXT events and what is their level of satisfaction with the events?
5. To what extent do NEXT events reflect NEXT values?

### Characteristics of NEXT Participants

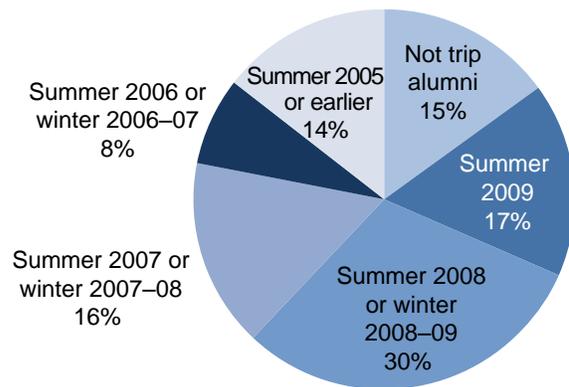
The Community Initiatives program was established to create inclusive and welcoming entry points into the Jewish community for diverse young Jewish adults. In the five Community Initiatives areas, NEXT is reaching a broad population of young Jewish adults.

**Demographics.** NEXT participants have the following characteristics:

- 87% were born in the United States, 7% were born in the former Soviet Union, 2% were born in Israel, and 4% were born in another country.
- 59% are female, 40% male, and <1% transgender.
- 75% are ages 24 to 30 and 25% are 21 to 23.
- 61% have a bachelor's degree and 26% also have a higher degree.
- 35% are students, with 24% of them in a professional or graduate degree program, 10% in an undergraduate program, and 1% in another educational program.
- 61% work full-time, 15% work part-time, 8% are unemployed, 17% are not in the work force (e.g., students) or other.
- 68% have lived in or near their current metropolitan area for 2 or more years.
- 94% are unmarried, but nearly half (49%) reported having a significant other.

**Alumni status.** Across NEXT participants, 85% are BRI trip alumni and 15% are not trip alumni (Exhibit 4). Nearly half (47%) of all participants went on a trip in summer 2008 or more recently; 38% went on a trip prior to summer 2008.

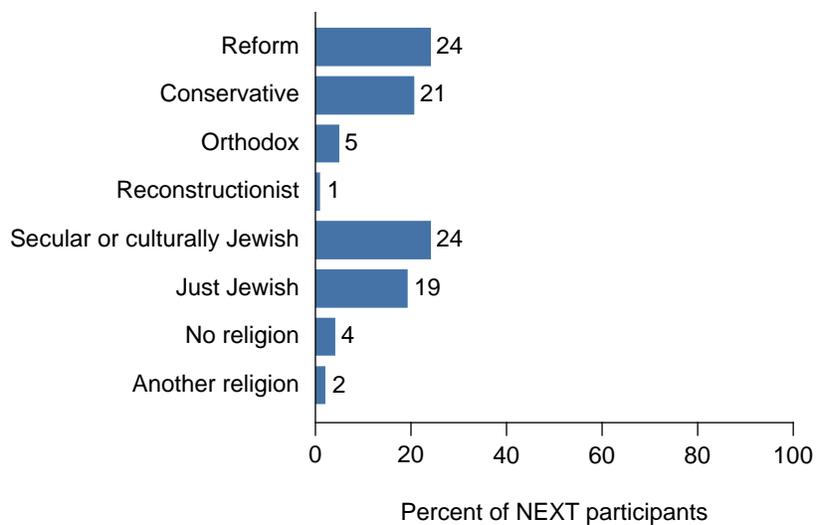
**Exhibit 4. Trip Alumni Status of NEXT Participants**  
(n=574)



**Jewish education.** More than three-quarters (78%) of NEXT participants received some formal Jewish education as a child, and 77% of participants had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Of those NEXT participants who had received formal Jewish education as a child, more than half (61%) reported that their experience had been “mostly positive,” more than a quarter (27%) reported that their experience had been “neutral,” while only a few (12%) reported that their experience had been “mostly negative.”

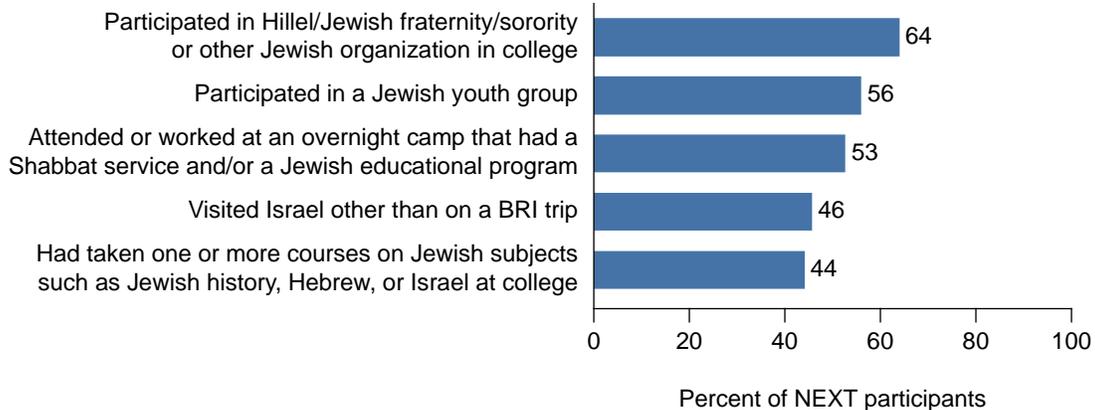
**Religious affiliation.** Approximately half (51%) of NEXT participants affiliate with mainstream Jewish denominations (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist). The most prevalent ways participants identify themselves are as Reform Jews (24%), secular/culturally Jewish (24%), Conservative Jews (21%), and just Jewish (19%) (Exhibit 5).

**Exhibit 5. Religious Affiliation of NEXT Participants**  
(n=560)



**Jewish cultural experiences.** NEXT participants have had varied Jewish educational and social experiences. In college, many (64%) participated in Hillel, a Jewish fraternity/sorority, or other Jewish organizations, and 44% took a Jewish- or Israel-related course (Exhibit 6). Also, just over half (56%) of NEXT participants participated in a Jewish youth group, and 53% attended a Jewish summer camp as a youth. Finally, almost half (46%) of participants visited Israel on a separate occasion from a trip organized through Taglit-Birthright Israel.

**Exhibit 6. Jewish Cultural and Educational Experiences of NEXT Participants**  
(n= 539)



## NEXT Events and Programs

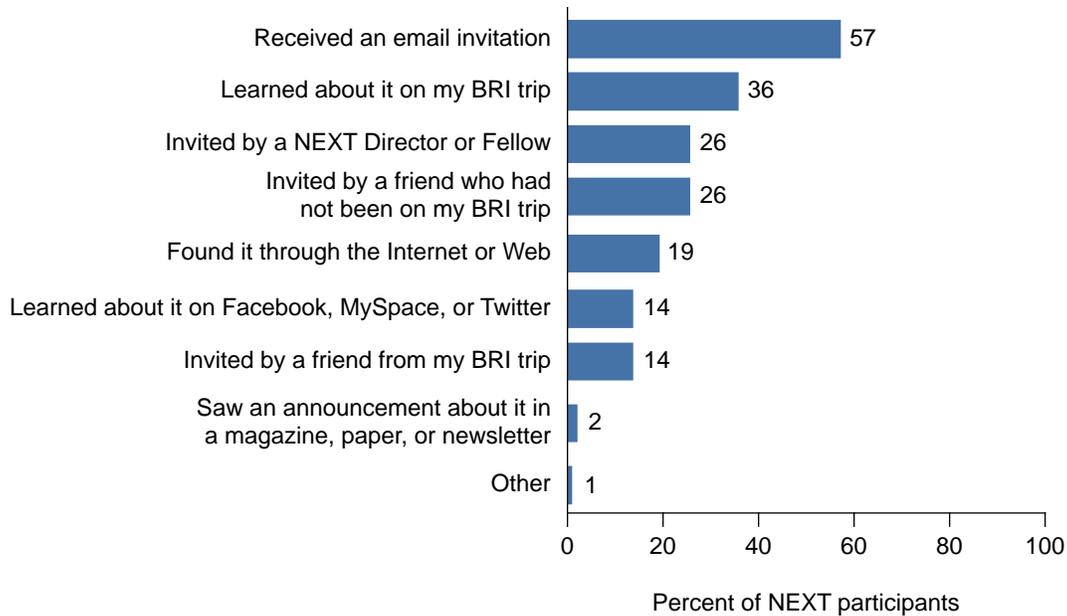
When interviewed, all of the NEXT Directors and Fellows said that the overall goal of NEXT is to inspire connections and build active communities among young Jewish adults. Key priorities mentioned included providing peer-driven fun and meaningful events and programs that engage diverse young Jewish adults and cause them to deepen their personal commitments to Jewish life. One Fellow said the overall goal of NEXT was “to be the go-to organization for young Jewish adults in [our area].”

## Outreach Methods

In interviews, NEXT staff shared examples of a variety of methods used to reach out and invite young Jewish adults to participate in events and programs. Examples of outreach methods shared ranged from inviting personal friends, connecting personally with individual young Jewish adults through one-on-ones, using social networking sites and the Internet, and employing other marketing strategies, such as sending a monthly email newsletter.

As shown in Exhibit 7, survey results suggest that the most prevalent initial outreach method was an email invitation, received by 57% of NEXT participants. Participants also commonly reported becoming involved with NEXT through their BRI trips (36%) or through a personal invitation to a one-on-one or other NEXT event from a Director or Fellow (26%). Less common methods of initial contact included learning about NEXT through the Internet or a social networking site, invitations from friends, and print announcements.

**Exhibit 7. Methods of Initial Contact With NEXT Participants**  
(n=555)



Directors and Fellows interviewed reported that outreach methods that involve a personal connection work well. Examples shared included connecting with young Jewish adults during one-on-ones, face-to-face recruitment for future events at current events, and sending personalized email and text messages. Other successful outreach methods noted by staff during interviews included getting participants to share awareness of NEXT events with other prospective participants by word of mouth, and meeting people at NEXT Shabbat dinners or asking people to sign up on a NEXT email list at NEXT Shabbat dinners.

Although only 14% of NEXT participants surveyed reported that they first learned about NEXT on Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter (Exhibit 7, above), Directors and Fellows mentioned in interviews that social networking sites are a successful means to reach large numbers of young Jewish adults for events. Facebook was identified as a particularly popular method, with each city having its own NEXT Facebook page and Fellows having their own NEXT Facebook pages. A review of each city’s Facebook page in May 2010 found that the number of fans on city Facebook pages ranged from a high of 1,116 in one city to a low of 98 in another city. NEXT Fellows interviewed said that Facebook works because young Jewish adults are constantly monitoring the site for their own purposes and they can easily see upcoming events. Further, because people RSVP publicly on the site, prospective participants are able to see who plans to attend.

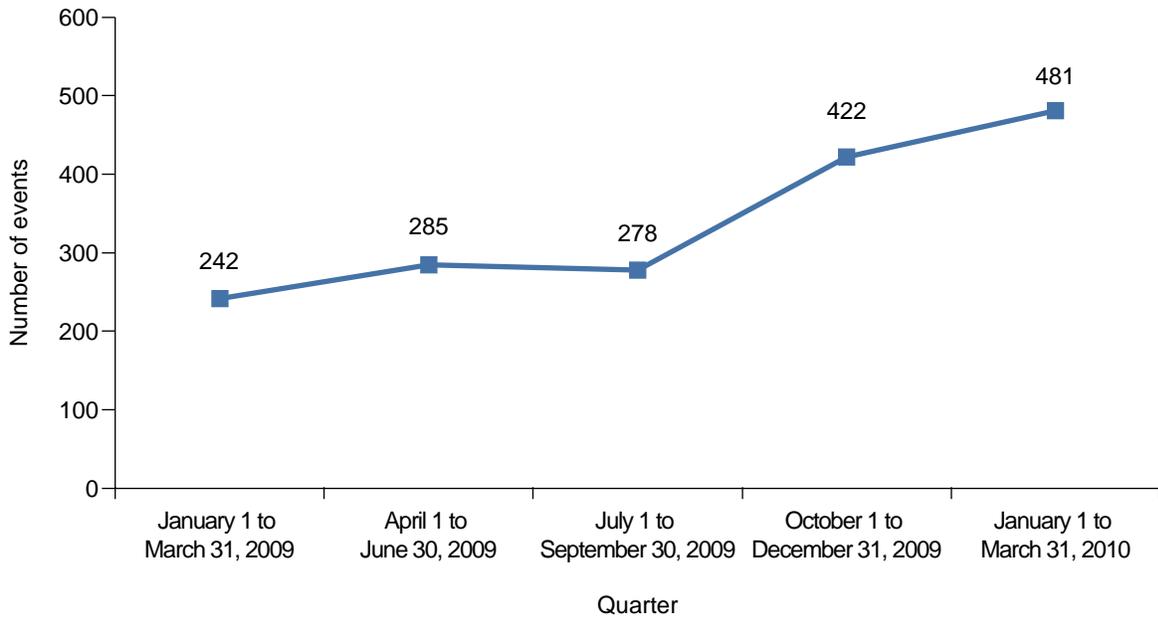
## NEXT Programming

NEXT provides an array of peer-led programs and events. Categories of programming include National initiatives, interest-based programs, Shabbat-related events, Israel-focused events, one-on-ones, holiday celebrations, and BRI trip orientations and reunions. Programs are diverse within each category, varying greatly in topic, formality of Jewish content, and group size. Each local NEXT team plans and implements programs that it believes reflect its local community as well as the specific interests of the Fellows and Director. An examination of each NEXT city's Facebook page reveals that ever-changing assortments of events are taking place in each city each week.

Examples of widespread initiatives offered locally include NEXT Shabbat meals, Hebrew Now, and Harvest to Harvest volunteer events. Interest-based programs include cooking classes and demonstrations, film series, outdoor series, environmental series, arts and crafts programs, yoga classes, wine tours, comedy nights, photo exhibits, lectures, sporting events, Jewish studies, and other programs with a central theme. Interest-based programs can also be much larger in size, such as music concerts. Examples of Shabbat-related events include Havdalah, barbecues, Shabbat bowling parties, and classes that teach cooking or religious skills related to Shabbat. Israel-focused events are diverse, their key attribute being a committed focus on an Israel-related topic. One-on-ones are get-togethers between a participant and either a Fellow or a Director over coffee or a meal during which they become acquainted and discuss the participant's interests, including events occurring through NEXT. Holiday celebrations are self-explanatory, as are BRI trip orientations and reunions.

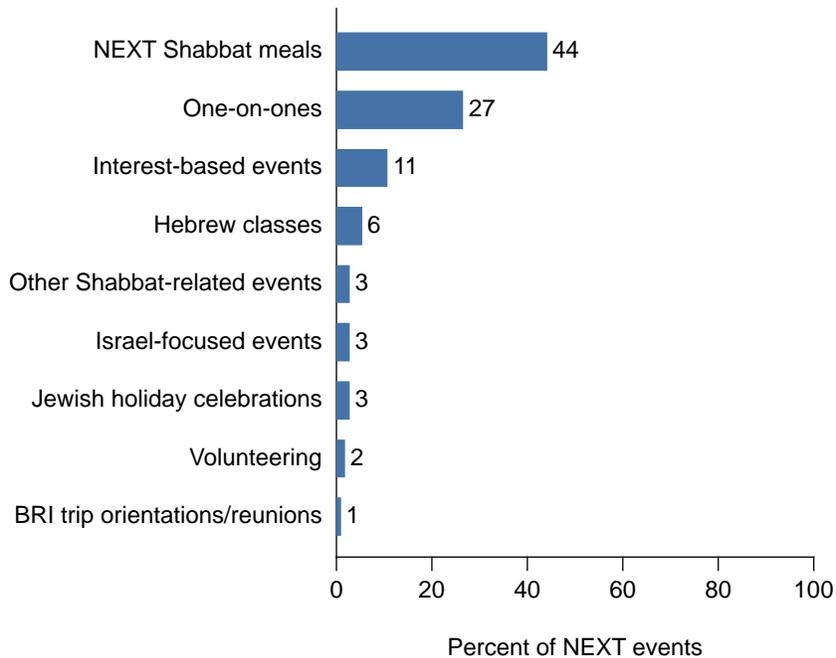
**NEXT events.** We analyzed three of NEXT's data systems—Convio, Event Management System, and the NEXT Shabbat data system—to determine the number and types of NEXT events conducted across the five Community Initiatives areas between January 1, 2009, and March 31, 2010, and the number of attendees. More than 1,700 NEXT events were held during this time period across the five Community Initiatives areas. As shown in Exhibit 8, the number of events conducted per quarter has increased over time. Over the full time period, the average number of events conducted per quarter was 342; the number ranged from a low of 242 in the first quarter to a high of 481 in the final quarter.

**Exhibit 8. NEXT Events Conducted, by Quarter, January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010**

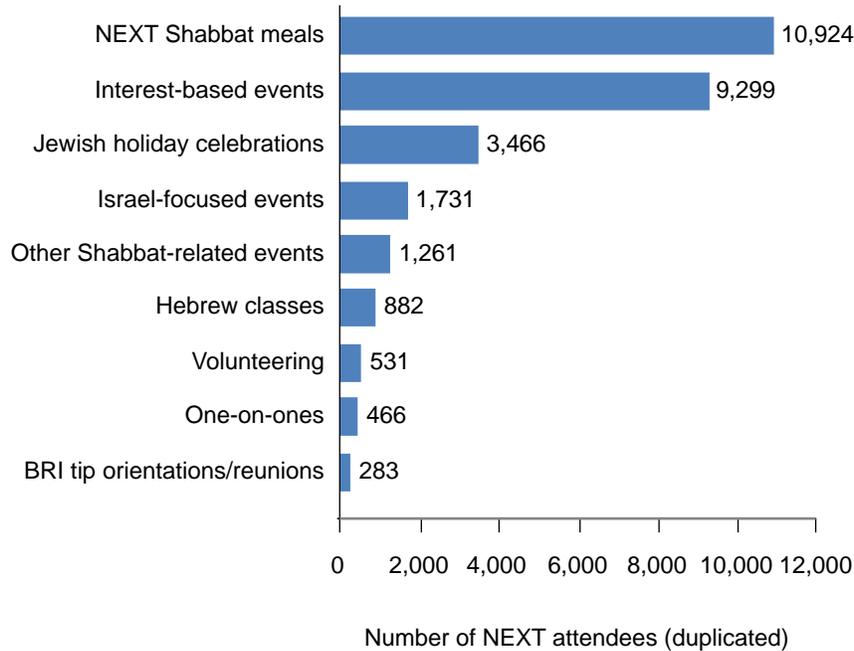


NEXT Shabbat meals were the most common type of event (44%), followed by one-on-ones (27%), interest-based events (11%), and Hebrew classes (6%) (Exhibit 9). Events related to Jewish holidays, Israel, Shabbat, Hebrew, and volunteering were conducted less often but, involved the participation of many attendees (Exhibit 10).

**Exhibit 9. Types of NEXT Events, January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010**  
(n=1,708 events)

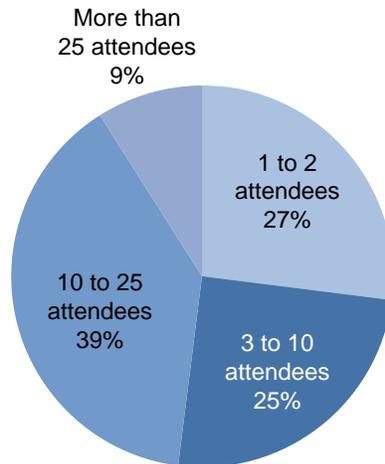


**Exhibit 10. Number of Attendees at NEXT Events, January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010**  
(n=28,843 attendees)



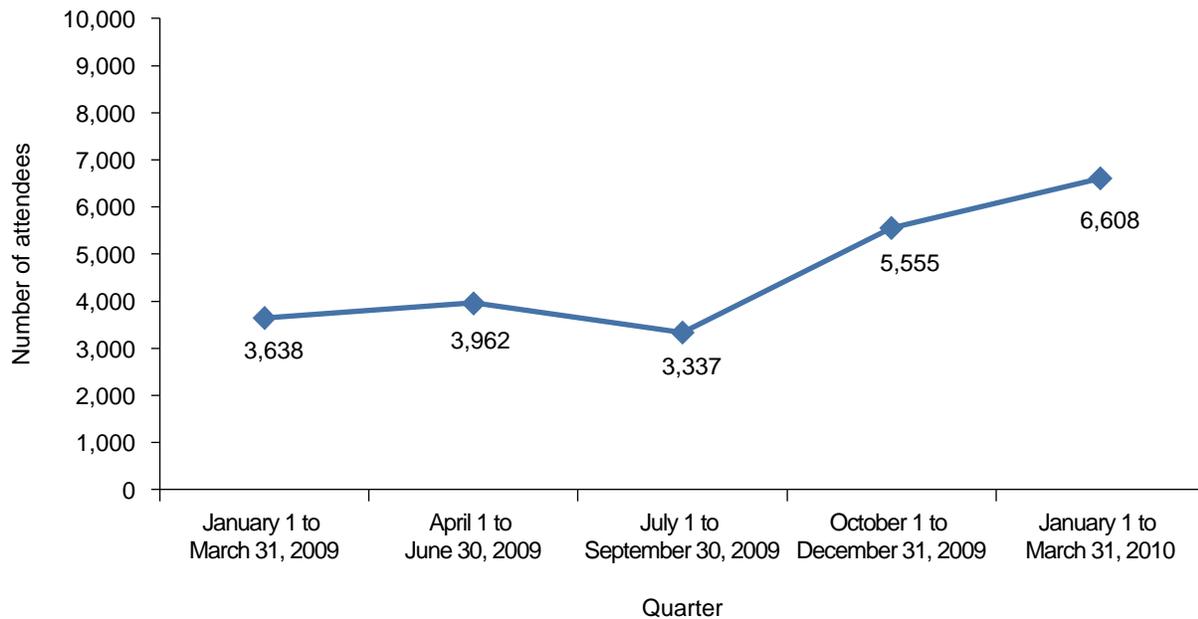
The size of NEXT events conducted between January 1, 2009, and March 31, 2010, varied from as small as 2 attendees (i.e., one-on-ones) to as large as 4,000 (a music festival), with the median number of attendees being 10. The majority of events, however, served fewer than 25 attendees. NEXT staff reported in interviews that this size was small enough for meaningful connections to be made among participants (Exhibit 11). Only three NEXT events served more than 350 attendees—one in the first quarter of 2009 with 4,000 attendees, one in the fourth quarter of 2009 with 1,100 attendees, and one in the first quarter of 2010 with 643 attendees.

**Exhibit 11. Size Distribution of NEXT Events, January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010**  
(n=1,708 events)



Our analysis of the three NEXT data systems shows that a total of 28,843 attendees (duplicated counts) were served at the 1,708 NEXT events conducted in the five Community Initiatives areas between January 1, 2009, and March 31, 2010. As is depicted in Exhibit 12, the number of attendees fluctuated over time, with fewer participants during the spring and summer months. Since the attendance numbers are skewed by the three large events described above, the exhibit shows the number of attendees excluding those events. Considering only the small and medium-size events—the vast majority of NEXT events—NEXT is serving an increasing number of attendees over time, from 3,638 attendees during the first quarter of 2009 to nearly double that, 6,608, during the first quarter of 2010.

**Exhibit 12. Number of Attendees at NEXT Events, January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010**



Note: The number of attendees depicted in this exhibit excludes the attendees at three large events.

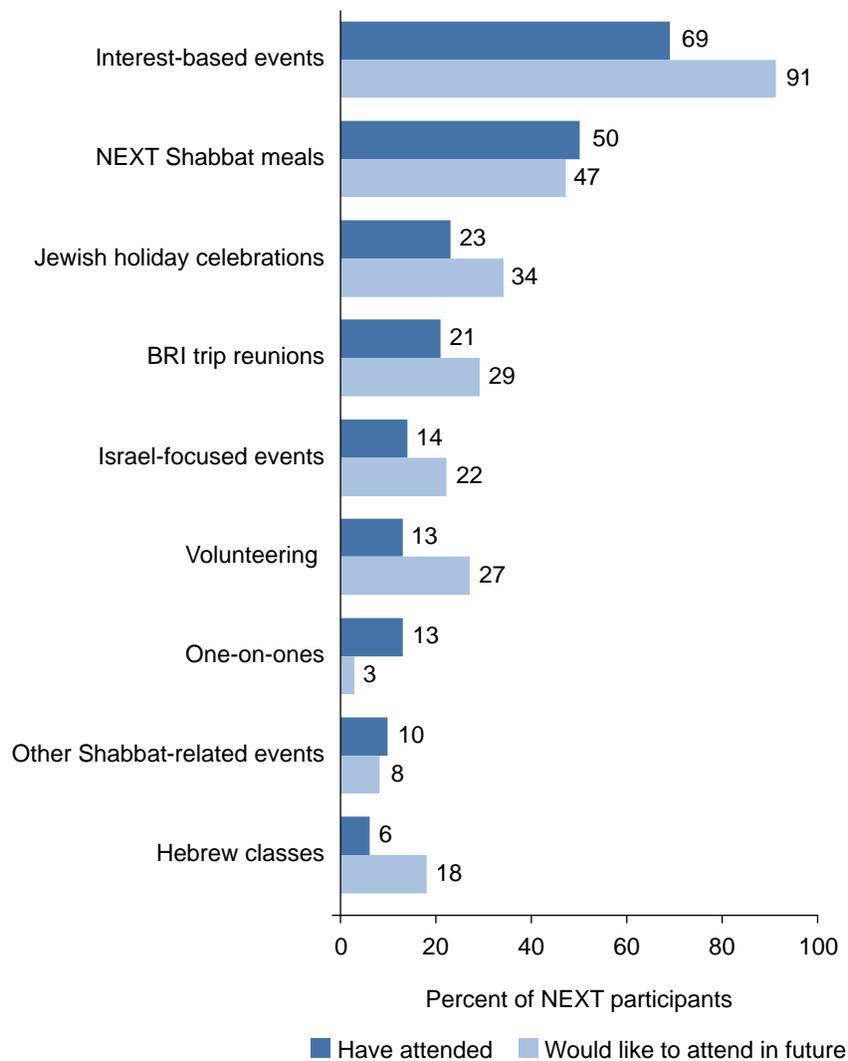
**Characteristics of successful events.** In interviews, Directors and Fellows reported that almost all the events they provide are well planned and tailored to the unique interests of the young Jewish adults in their communities. Directors, Fellows, and participants interviewed agreed that events that foster personal connections and create opportunities for meaningful interactions among young Jewish adults are most engaging. Interviewees shared that the types of events that fit these criteria included one-on-ones between participants and a Fellow or Director, and interactive series-based events like cooking classes and other “how-to” programs, hiking, and “Table for 10” dinners in restaurants.

Other successful events included major holiday celebrations and NEXT Shabbat. Staff in all cities feel that NEXT Shabbat is a highly successful way to engage young Jewish adults, teach about Jewish ritual, and build leadership among participants by asking some participants to host a NEXT Shabbat in their own homes. Other events with free food and free admission also were described in interviews as successful.

One measure of an event’s success is its popularity. As shown in Exhibit 13, in the past 12 months more than two-thirds of all survey respondents attended interest-based events. These included events focused on food, arts and culture, the environment or outdoors, sports or games, and crafts, among others. Half of all survey respondents attended a NEXT Shabbat dinner. More than one-fifth of participants attended Jewish holiday celebrations (23%) or BRI trip reunions (21%) in the past 12 months.

Events that many participants are interested in attending in the future include interest-based events (91%), NEXT Shabbat dinners (47%), Jewish holiday celebrations (34%), BRI trip reunions (29%), Israel-focused events (22%), and volunteering or fundraising (27%) (Exhibit 13).

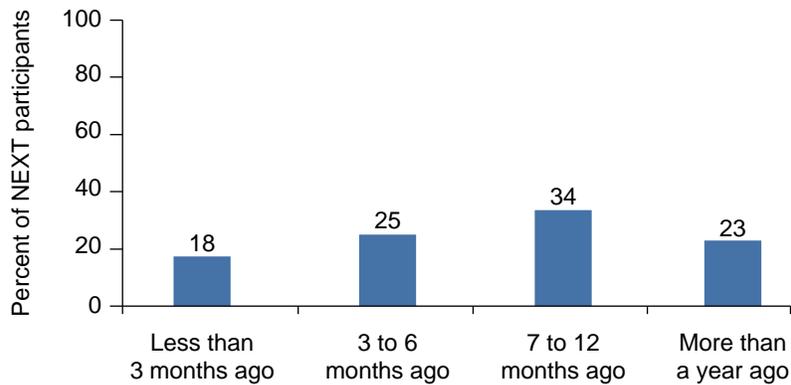
**Exhibit 13. Types of NEXT Events Participants Have Attended (n=559) and Would Like to Attend in the Future (n=547)**



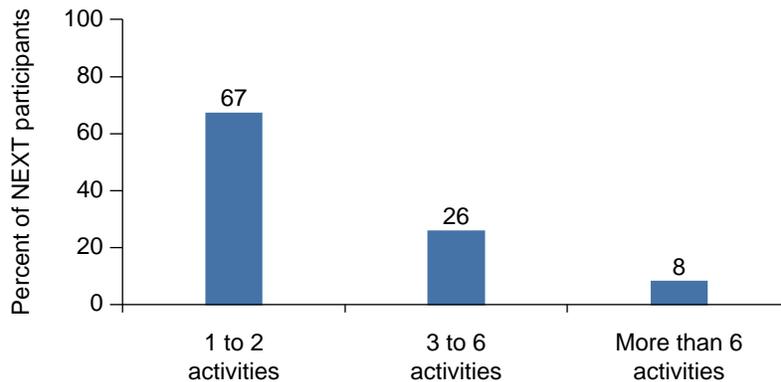
## Involvement and Satisfaction With NEXT Events

Many (43%) of the survey respondents attended their first NEXT activity or event within 6 months before completing the survey (Exhibit 14). Two-thirds (67%) of NEXT participants had attended only one or two NEXT events in the 12 months prior to completing the survey; about one-third had attended three or more NEXT events in that time frame (Exhibit 15). Given that many participants had been involved with NEXT for less than 6 months, the average annual participation rates may be higher than reported in the survey.

**Exhibit 14. First Attendance at NEXT Activities**  
(n=560)

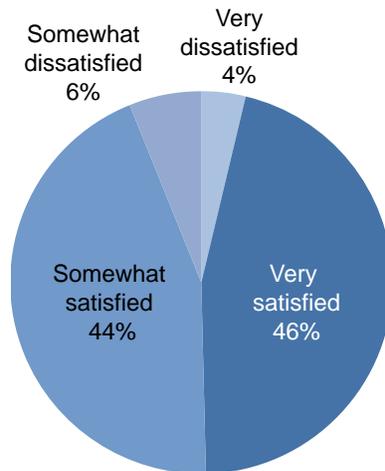


**Exhibit 15. Number of NEXT Activities Attended in the Past 12 Months**  
(n=563)



Nearly all (90%) of NEXT participant survey respondents are satisfied with NEXT events (Exhibit 16). Participants' attendance at and satisfaction with NEXT events did not differ significantly among those of different ages, genders, or level of Jewish education, nor did satisfaction differ by Community Initiatives area. However, NEXT participants who had participated in a NEXT Shabbat event were more likely to be "very satisfied" with NEXT events than those who had not (55% v. 36%,  $p \leq .001$ ). Finally, two-thirds of participants (66%) plan to continue going to NEXT events in the future, while 31% are unsure. Only 2% do not plan to attend NEXT events in the future.

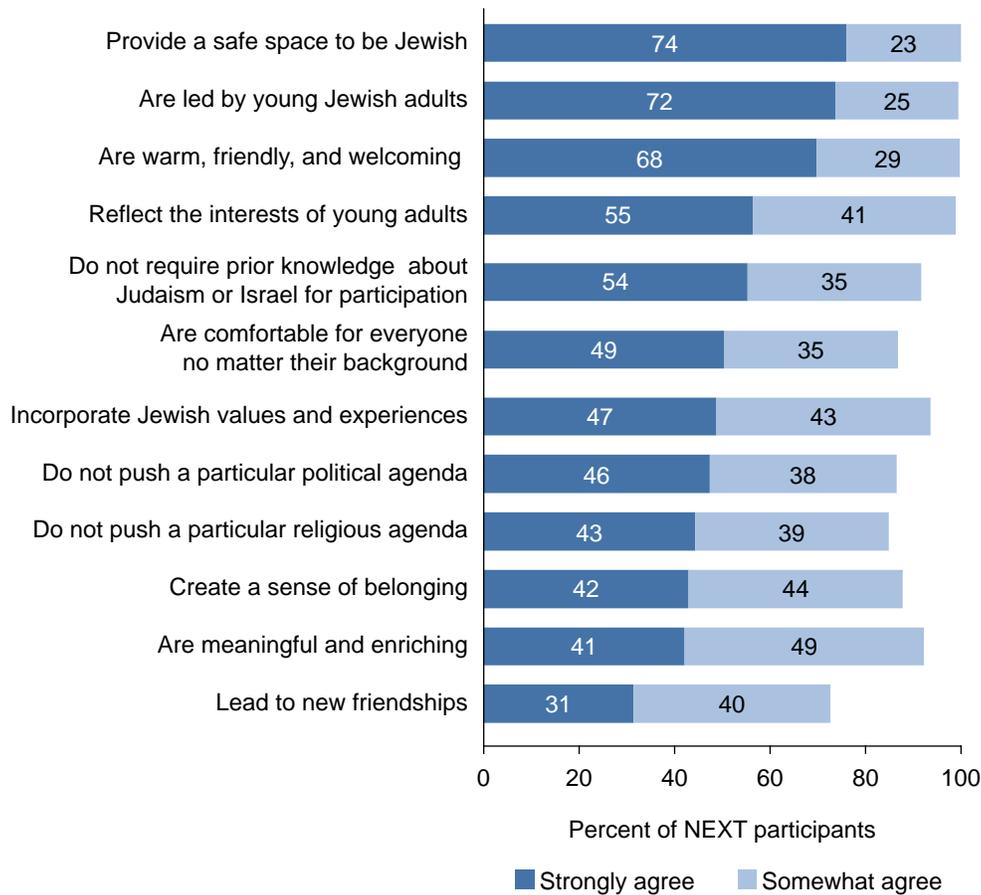
**Exhibit 16. NEXT Participants' Satisfaction With Programming**  
(n=540)



### Values Reflected in NEXT Events

In interviews, NEXT staff and leadership shared that they work hard to ensure that NEXT events reflect certain attributes and values important to NEXT's vision. These values and attributes include that NEXT events are peer driven; are seen as a safe space to be a Jew; have no prerequisites or assumed knowledge; are warm, friendly, and welcoming; incorporate Jewish values and experiences; are diverse in terms of interest areas, formats, size, and duration; and are meaningful and enriching. Survey responses suggest that NEXT events reflect these values and attributes. Nearly all NEXT participants who completed the survey strongly or somewhat agreed that NEXT events provide a safe space to be Jewish (97%); are warm, friendly, and welcoming (97%); are peer led (97%); reflect the interests of young adults (96%); incorporate Jewish values and experiences (90%); and are meaningful and enriching (90%) (Exhibit 17).

**Exhibit 17. NEXT Participants' Agreement With Statements That Reflect NEXT Values**  
(n=482-522)



Interviews with participants echo the finding that NEXT has implemented programming that reflects its fundamental values. Participants interviewed described events as being wide-ranging in focus, fun, meaningful, interesting, substantive, welcoming, friendly, affordable, social, and open to people with diverse Jewish backgrounds. Participants also said they enjoy the range of social, cultural, and educational events that are offered, that events are affordable and often free, and that events support the building of friendships and connections to their Jewish identity.

According to participants interviewed, NEXT has succeeded in creating safe and meaningful spaces for young Jewish adults to connect with others and explore being Jewish. One participant said,

*NEXT has given me the outlet to be involved with my Jewish community. I just wanted to surround myself with positive young Jews who were doing stuff, getting together, and having a good time—learning and experiencing religion at the same time. That is what NEXT gives me... I actually really like NEXT because I didn't have a strong Jewish upbringing. I didn't know a whole lot about it but would love to learn more. Every little bit [that I learn] is that much more that I know,*

*and that's really what I want. I would like to learn more about my religion and experience it—and have other people my age to experience it with. NEXT gives me that.*

Other participants interviewed shared similar sentiments. For example, when asked what he liked about NEXT events, one participant shared, “You can meet new Jewish people or share with those you already met. You make friends and learn about Judaism.” Another offered,

*I like the activities because the point is to build Jewish community. But there is more than one reason we go to events. It's a shared experience or passion that extends beyond being Jewish. If everyone in a group likes hiking, self-defense, or whatever, it is an additional connection that we are establishing.*

And another participant said,

*NEXT gives a place and an activity for unmarried, single Jews in their 20s and 30s to find a community since they're not yet married with children or have a shul or temple that they go to. There is that empty space out of high school or out of college and before marriage where a lot of people lose their identity and Judaism in those years. NEXT keeps the identity alive and brings people back to it and to help them have a larger interest in Judaism. People [who attend NEXT events] come from different walks of life, but [NEXT staff] find a commonality to allow you to put more of an emphasis on your Jewish identity.*

In summary, in the five Community Initiatives areas, NEXT is offering an increasing number of peer-led events that appeal to the varied interests of young Jewish adults. While participation is new for many NEXT participants, nearly all reported high levels of satisfaction with NEXT events, and most plan to continue attending NEXT events in the future.

## 3. NEXT Staff

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To promote the involvement of young Jewish adults in the NEXT communities, NEXT has created a staffing model that builds local teams of informal educators working together with Fellows whose job is to reach out to their peers. The goal of this model is to bring in the knowledge, skills, and expertise needed to successfully implement the programming envisioned. Additionally, NEXT has created a multifaceted system of supervision and professional development to build the knowledge and skills of its professional staff, and local staff are beginning to find ways to encourage participants to take on leadership roles.

This section of the report answers the following evaluation questions about the NEXT's leadership team:

1. How are the local directors, fellows, and participant leaders involved in outreach and planning and implementing events?
2. What factors (e.g., characteristics of staff, training, supervision, and other resources) support or hinder implementation of the NEXT Communities Initiative model?
3. How are participants supported and empowered to take on leadership roles?

### **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

According to a review of NEXT documents, Local Directors are full-time informal educators. As such, they are expected to know their own communities and the social context of the young Jewish adults who are the target participants for NEXT. Local Directors also are expected to be Jewishly literate so that they can bring to life Jewish values and traditions in the programming NEXT provides. With this dual set of knowledge, Local Directors are responsible for ensuring that NEXT offers a set of programs and events that are infused with Jewish content and that reflect the interests of both their specific community and the National office, and meaningfully engage a broad range of young Jewish adults.

Interviews with Local Directors suggest that their responsibilities are broad. For example, their responsibilities were described as including setting up local offices; hiring and supervising Fellows and other administrative staff; making sure that all administrative tasks, including long-term planning and budgeting, are completed; setting the vision for overall programming and ensuring that the events reflect the values defined by NEXT; overseeing marketing and outreach activities to potential participants; and establishing connections with other Jewish organizations in their cities. Directors also maintain communication between the National and local offices, participate on National initiative committees, and attend Directors' meetings in New York and national conferences.

According to Directors and Fellows interviewed, Fellows, who normally serve for 1 year, have two main responsibilities: (1) to plan and implement engaging programs and events that are

infused with Jewish content and (2) to reach out to and build community among young Jewish adults. As summarized by a Fellow:

*On a practical level, my responsibility is to organize events and programming that are interesting to my age group. On a different level, my responsibility is to be a leader in my community, to do outreach, and to get people involved.*

In most cities, Fellows are responsible for planning and implementing all aspects of their events, including choosing the idea, managing logistics (e.g., identifying the venue, negotiating prices, setting up, and cleaning up), marketing to and inviting participants, and running the event while making sure participants feel welcome and enjoy the event. In addition to planning and implementing events, Fellows are responsible for defining the Jewish content and finding ways to incorporate it in a way that is comfortable for participants. Fellows provided a number of examples of how they were able to make Judaism more accessible to participants. One Fellow, for example, relied on his personal relationships, noting that his greatest success was “building trusting relationships with participants so that even though a subject is out of their comfort zone, they trust me to participate.” Another said that her greatest success was helping participants find their own comfort level with Judaism. As she described:

*Getting people to think about Jewish identity and how it can be meaningful without being very strict—being able to get participants to find their own way to have meaningful connections and incorporate some form of Jewishness into their life.*

In addition to program planning, Fellows are responsible for community building. As one Fellow said, Fellows are “supposed to create communities where they didn’t exist before and get people together based on shared interests and passions.” A Fellow in a different city said, “We are trying to reach out to different types of Jewish people and trying to do a variety of events so we are not reaching the same people every time—we are building community.”

In general, Fellows are expected to meet specific and quantifiable goals related to programming that were set by the National office but that are sometimes amended by Local Directors. Requirements include hosting a set number of series-based programs, interest-based programs, large-scale events, one-on-ones, and NEXT Shabbat dinners. Fellows are expected to post regularly on Facebook, Twitter, and the National webzine, Alef. They also are expected to participate in team meetings with other Fellows and the Director and individual meetings with the Director, and to take advantage of professional development opportunities.

## **The Leadership Team**

NEXT’s success at the local level depends not only on the strength of the individuals who serve as Local Directors and Fellows, but on the Directors’ ability to build effective local teams. In interviews, all Local Directors commented on the importance of making sure that the staff, as a group, has the diverse set of skills necessary to reach NEXT’s goals. Fellows from each of the five cities noted that they respect, learn from, and appreciate the support they receive from Local Directors. Similarly, Directors reported that they appreciate the hard work of Fellows and noted that Fellows are the backbone of the program.

To create an effective team, many Local Directors hire Fellows with diverse cultural, religious, and professional backgrounds. In interviews, Directors described multiple qualities they were looking for when hiring individual Fellows, such as outgoing personalities, large circles of friends, and experience with programming and event planning. However, equally if not more important, they reported, were the qualities they were looking for in developing an effective team. As one Director said, “I looked at what each individual could bring to the team, rather than who they were individually. I wanted to create a well-rounded team and program.” Another Director said that assembling her team of Fellows was “like putting a puzzle together.”

Qualities that Directors were looking for in developing teams of Fellows included different levels of Jewish involvement, a variety of Jewish backgrounds, diverse personal interests, diverse cultural backgrounds, different ages and genders, and living in different communities within their NEXT catchment area. Also, they looked for Fellows who fulfilled diverse roles. As one Director said about her team of Fellows, “Some have academic interests, some are social, some are cool, and one is from the Russian community.” As another Director shared in an interview, having diverse teams, comprised of Fellows with varying backgrounds and interests, allows NEXT to reach out to and build community among an equally diverse group of young Jewish adults. This Director said, “Each Fellow offers different types of activities, so each draws different types of Jews to participate.”

In general, there are five Fellows per city, but Local Directors have implemented different models to make their local teams as effective as possible. However the local staffing was structured, it was done intentionally to maximize the strengths of the local team. For example, one Director decreased the number of Fellows on her team and added a full-time administrative assistant so that she could provide better supervision and professional development. Another Local Director kept Fellows from the first year for a second year, and yet another Director increased the time and pay of a successful first-year Fellow and rehired him in the second year as a Senior Fellow. In these cases, the Directors reported that they wanted to benefit from all the Fellows had learned in their first year. Directors and Fellows said that this longer-term perspective also gave participants a chance to know and learn from the Fellows over a longer period of time.

## **Supervision and Professional Development**

To support and develop its staff, create a common language and systems across the local communities, and enable staff to learn from one another, NEXT has established a system of supervision and professional development.

### **Local Support for Fellows**

The Local Directors are responsible for supervising the work of Fellows. Fellows participate in team and individual meetings with their Directors during which they plan future programming, reflect on past programming, and discuss specific skills related to budgeting, public speaking, and informal Jewish education. Directors also assist with logistics and the development of appropriate Jewish content, as needed. They may provide staff development to Fellows directly, connect Fellows with appropriate resources, or model, as one Director put it, “how to be an effective Jewish professional.” Fellows, in general, said they feel empowered by this type of supervision since they are given both structure and support, as well as room to do things on their own.

In addition to individual and team meetings with Directors, Fellows also have access to training and professional development resources locally. One Fellow reported learning from his peers, each of whom has unique strengths. Another Fellow described the Fellowship itself as training: “The position is about personal growth and professional development.”

Local Directors also provide training, directly or through other organizations, to their teams of Fellows. For example, one Director had had Toastmasters come to a meeting to provide training on public speaking. As role models for informal Jewish education, Local Directors reported that they have fostered the capacity of their Fellows, enabling their teams to offer diverse and engaging programming.

Fellows also can request support for self-selected professional development opportunities and, upon approval by their Local Director, receive funds from the professional development budget to attend. One Fellow reported using funds to receive coaching to help with time management and organizational and planning skills. Other Fellows reported using funds to attend conferences and trainings. Although all Fellows are aware of this opportunity, not all have the time to take advantage of it. Interviewed Fellows who had accessed the professional development budget were appreciative of the opportunity.

Altogether, Fellows interviewed reported that they are satisfied with the training and professional development opportunities available to them and that they feel adequately supported to do their work.

### **Support for Local Directors**

Local Directors, like Fellows, receive ongoing support and professional development from a number of sources. In addition to regular support from their direct supervisors, Directors receive support from ongoing communication with the National office. All of the Local Directors reported having regular communication with the National office, with some communicating daily via Google Chat, email, or telephone. Generally, Directors reported that communication with—and the support and training provided by—the National office is good. As one Director said, “I think the support [from the National office] is good, whether it is for professional development or something I need locally.” Another said, “I’ve never received this kind of support from an organization. It allows me to be successful because they trust us.”

Local Directors also shared in interviews that they benefit from regular communication with other Local Directors. As peers and colleagues, they share ideas, challenges, successes, and best practices. Some of this communication is informal, with Directors calling or emailing each other for advice and support. Some of the communication is more formal and occurs during weekly conference calls and via the internal NEXT blog.

The National office also hosts Directors’ meetings in New York approximately every 8 weeks, providing the Local Directors with time to communicate in person. According to interviews, Local Directors value these meetings. As one said, “It really helps. I get the materials and explanations I need. If I need further clarification, I can get it.” Another Local Director said, “New York meetings are successful and valuable uses of time for face-to-face and to work out challenges.”

Finally, NEXT relies on a “train the trainer” model—the Local Directors are trained by the Center for Leadership Initiatives (CLI), and then they are able to train the Fellows. The Local Directors reported the CLI training to be some of the best professional development they received. One Director said, “CLI is awesome. They started training us, and they also taught us to train others and ourselves.” Another Local Director described what she gained from the CLI training:

*They trained us to plan our own retreats and trainings to do with our Fellows. It's been incredibly helpful, and I couldn't have done it as well without that training. The training on time management and giving feedback were particularly helpful.*

Based on interviews with staff in each of the five cities, it seems that all of these sources—ongoing communication, meetings, conferences, and professional development—work together to provide the Local Directors with the support and development they need as professionals.

### **National Conference**

All NEXT staff, including those from the National office, Local Directors, and Fellows, also participate in national conferences. The purposes of the national conferences are to build staff members' skills, provide opportunities to connect local staff from different cities, model the active learning and engagement expected in NEXT events, impart knowledge about Israel and Jewish identity, develop a common understanding of NEXT's mission and strategies, showcase best practices, and motivate and inspire staff.

In general, staff were positive about their experiences at the national conferences, reporting many benefits from attending. As summarized by one Director:

*I get something extremely powerful out of staff trainings...in addition to walking away with new skills, deeper knowledge, and fresh ideas, I always emerge recharged, reconnected, and feeling what we have come to call our “soft Jewy center.” For me, some of the most powerful instances of personal Judaism come at staff trainings.*

A second-year Fellow, too, reported that the first year's conferences, in particular, helped him understand the larger mission of NEXT. As he said, the national conferences “brought the big picture into focus and I understood what I was part of. This wasn't just something we were doing in [my city] but rather was about building the Jewish community of the future.”

### **Participant Leaders**

While NEXT attends to building its professional leadership team, it also is trying to inspire leadership among participants. The vision is that as participants become more and more involved with NEXT, they will have ideas for interest-based events and take on leadership roles in planning and implementing them.

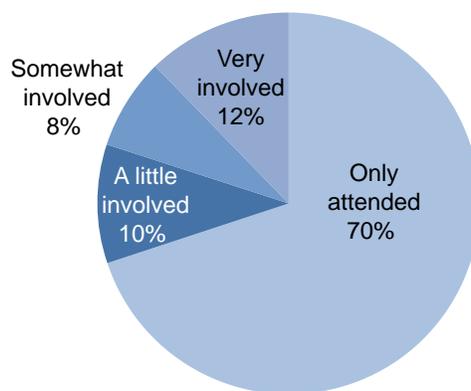
In interviews, NEXT staff shared numerous and diverse steps they have taken to empower new leaders. One city, for example, established a leadership development program that participants can join if they have an interest in leadership, Jewish responsibility, or Jewish life, or if they want to plan a program or event. Participants in the leadership development program receive

support from the Director and Fellows to reach their goals. Another city implemented “Table for 10” as a leadership training program and noted that 6 of the 10 attendees are now running their own events.

Another common method of empowering participants to take leadership roles is through one-on-ones. Fellows identify active participants who stand out as potential leaders and invite them to one-on-ones (conversations over a cup of coffee or a meal) during which they discuss participants’ interests and ideas for future events and personally encourage them to get more involved in planning or implementing some events. Directors and Fellows shared that this strategy has led to participants’ hosting NEXT Shabbat dinners, organizing volunteer events, running a book club series, and applying for a Natan grant. Another strategy to empower participants is for Fellows to identify potential participant leaders and invite them to volunteer at large NEXT events or to take responsibility for pieces of already planned events. Through this strategy, participants have led prayers and discussions with Jewish content, attended other Jewish organizations’ events as NEXT representatives, created skits for a Purim Party, served as a DJ at an event, and served as the “Quiz master” at a Jewish trivia quiz night. Other formal ways that NEXT staff are fostering leadership among participants include inviting them to attend the national NEXT conference in New Orleans, sponsoring their attendance at the Hazon Food Conference, and encouraging them to apply for the NEXT Fellowship.

In interviews, Local Directors reported that they were in the early stages of this work and were just starting to involve participants actively in leadership roles. As stated by one Director, “What NEXT is looking for in getting participant leaders is finally taking shape right now; it’s really awesome.” Nonetheless, 30% of the NEXT participants who completed a survey reported having been involved in planning and implementing NEXT events (see Exhibit 18).

**Exhibit 18. NEXT Participants’ Involvement in Planning and Implementing Activities**  
(n=544)



Although interview data suggest that Directors and Fellows are successfully empowering participants to take on leadership roles, staff also noted some challenges in doing so. For example, planning and implementing an activity can take more time than volunteer participants have available. Further, there is no budget readily accessible to participant leaders, and time lags

for reimbursement can be problematic. As one Fellow shared, “Participants are often busy and they are not being reimbursed like Fellows are, so it’s difficult ask them to take these extra tasks on when they could just show up and have fun.” When asked how he was personally involved in planning and implementing events, one participant interviewed shared, “They have a great staff, so they don’t need my help planning.” Other participants interviewed described how they give their ideas to the Fellows, who then implement them.

## 4. The Local Jewish Landscape

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NEXT is not being implemented in a vacuum; it is joining a landscape in which other Jewish organizations are also trying to engage young Jewish adults. Interviewed Directors, Fellows, and participants identified numerous existing local Jewish organizations in each host city: Jewish Federations, Jewish Community Centers, Chabad, Hillel, B'nai B'rith, and synagogues, among many others. NEXT aims to work in a coordinated manner with these organizations, while providing programming it considers uniquely tailored to young Jewish adults.

This section of the report answers the following evaluation question: How does NEXT coordinate with and complement existing programming for young Jewish adults?

### Coordination With Jewish Organizations

NEXT aspires to be a well-known member of the landscape of Jewish organizations in each host city and to partner actively with local organizations to offer programs and events for young Jewish adults. To this end, Local Directors are reaching out to other Jewish organizations to make connections, explain NEXT, and discuss potential ways to partner around mutual goals.

Through these efforts, Local Directors in all cities are beginning to make strategic partnerships, and many have planned and implemented cross-organizational events. In interviews, Directors shared examples of such events, including a Hanukkah party co-hosted by 11 local organizations, a volunteer event with B'nai B'rith, Simchat Torah with Chabad, a hike with the Israel consulate, a Purim masquerade party with a youth group at the Jewish Community Center, tree planting with the Jewish National Fund, and an artist event with Open Tent.

NEXT Local Directors recognize the importance of building connections with other Jewish organizations. As one Director said, "I know I can't work in a vacuum." However, Directors also want to be strategic in the relationships they cultivate. As described earlier, NEXT has a particular set of values that staff try to maintain in all of their events, including openness to diverse backgrounds and beliefs, no pressure to become more religious, no political agendas, no pressure to join an organization or donate money, focus on meaningful Jewish content or experiences, and commitment to high-quality programming. Interviews suggested that if another organization delivers programming that is in conflict with NEXT's values, Local Directors are much less interested in creating a partnership with that organization. For example, one Local Director explained that an organization that offers only drinking and social network events does not meet NEXT's criteria for infusing meaningful Jewish content. Thus, the extent to which NEXT Directors partner with a particular organization depends, in part, on the synchronicity between the organizations.

Interviews with Local Directors also suggested that the level of collaboration and coordination between NEXT and other Jewish institutions depends on personal relationships. Some Local Directors already had close ties with other organizations, either having had prior employment relationships with them, having been introduced to key stakeholders in the community by the previous Director, or sharing office space with an established Jewish organization. These Directors shared that developing organizational partnerships was a natural extension of their

work. Other Directors had to learn about the organizational landscape from scratch since they were new to the city or had little previous Jewish professional experience. In these cases, Directors shared that it was taking more time to determine which organizations would make good partners and what types of events would benefit from a partnership.

## **NEXT's Niche**

Across cities, regardless of the level of collaboration occurring, the consensus among Directors, Fellows, and participants interviewed is that NEXT complements the other organizations and provides a unique type of programming. As one Local Director said,

*There aren't other Jewish organizations that are doing what we are doing. There are not a lot of organizations that do community building. Their programming is different from our own.*

Another Local Director echoed this sentiment, saying that NEXT's greatest achievement thus far was "filling a niche in the Jewish community in [this city]. We offer something different."

Fellows, too, shared examples of how NEXT's programming is different from that of the other Jewish organizations. One Fellow said, "Other organizations are more social networking, whereas NEXT is about community building." Another Fellow said,

*Some events hosted by other organizations are mostly networking events, like a happy hour where they say meet at this venue at 7:00 and your first drink is free. They are not really connected to Judaism like NEXT is.*

Participants also agreed that NEXT fills a gap in the existing network of Jewish organizations in their cities. Specifically, they reported that NEXT provides opportunities for them to connect with their Jewish identity in ways that are different from those offered by other Jewish organizations they know. For example, one participant shared,

*NEXT has a very different feel. It's diverse, more open. It offers more pleasant interactions. It's not cliquey like at my college Hillel.*

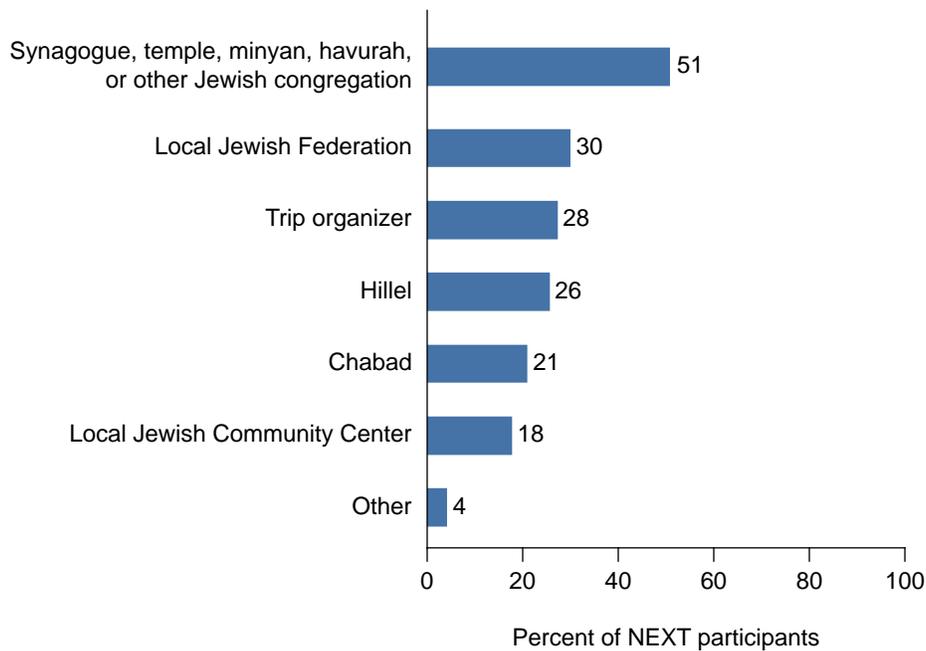
Another offered,

*NEXT is a great tool to experience Judaism and youth in [this city], where there really aren't that many tools to do so. In [this city], people are either super religious or super secular, and I don't want to be either. NEXT is the middle ground that I find helps me out.*

## NEXT Participants Engage With Multiple Organizations

The majority (75%) of NEXT participants surveyed reported attending events hosted by at least one other Jewish organization. About half (51%) of surveyed NEXT participants reported that they had attended a synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation in the 3 months before the survey; however, this time period included the High Holidays (Exhibit 19). Still, between one-quarter and one-third of NEXT participants were involved with the Jewish Federation (30%), a trip organizer (28%), and Hillel (26%). Thus, while NEXT provides a certain niche for young Jewish adults, particularly for the 25% of participants who attend only NEXT events, careful coordination may ensure that the network of Jewish organizations remains complementary rather than competitive.

**Exhibit 19. Engagement With Other Jewish Organizations in the Past 3 Months**  
(n=500-558)



## 5. Baseline and Short-Term Outcomes

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NEXT aims to increase the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and social networks of participants in ways that support their engagement in Jewish life and their connections to Israel. This section of the report begins to answer the following evaluation questions:

1. After involvement in NEXT events, do participants experience changes in attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and social connections that support engagement in Jewish values and life, connections to Israel, and leadership within the Jewish community?
2. What are the characteristics of participants or their involvement in NEXT events that are associated with larger improvements in short-term outcomes?

In this section, we describe baseline measures and short-term outcomes for NEXT participants in four desired outcome areas:

- Attitudes about and connections to Jewish life and Israel
- Jewish behaviors
- Jewish social connections
- Leadership skills.

### **Attitudes About and Connections to Jewish Life and Israel**

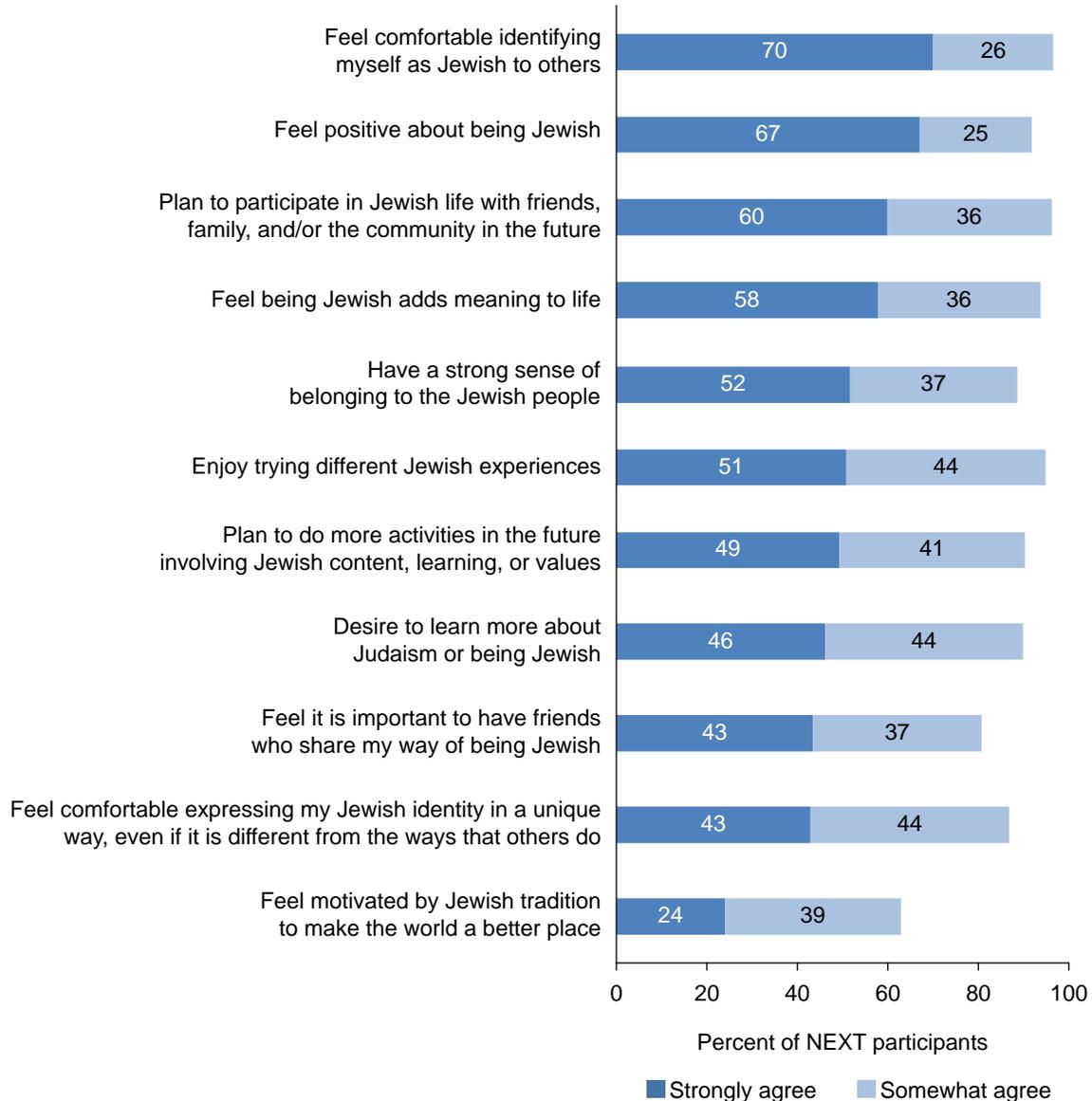
Through the provision of meaningful events, NEXT strives to strengthen young Jewish adults' attitudes about and connections to Jewish life and Israel. In this section, we describe participants' current attitudes and connections.

### **Baseline Attitudes and Connections to Jewish Life and Israel**

Exhibit 20 presents information on the extent to which NEXT participants surveyed strongly or somewhat agreed with a variety of attitudinal statements related to being Jewish. A vast majority of participants agreed or somewhat agreed that they feel comfortable identifying themselves as Jewish (96%), plan to participate in Jewish life in the future (96%), enjoy trying different Jewish experiences (95%), believe that being Jewish adds meaning to their lives (94%), feel positive about being Jewish (92%), plan to do more Jewish-related activities in the future (90%), and have a desire to learn more about Judaism or being Jewish (90%).

The statements that participants most often strongly disagreed with included that they feel motivated by Jewish tradition to make the world a better place (12%) and that they feel it is important to have friends who share their way of being Jewish (6%). Less than 2% of participants strongly disagreed with all other statements shown in Exhibit 20.

**Exhibit 20. NEXT Participants' Attitudes About Being Jewish**  
(n=510-539)



Attitudes about being Jewish were related to the number of NEXT events that participants attended during the past 12 months. Those participants who had attended three or more NEXT events in the past 12 months (as compared with only one or two) were more likely to agree with some statements indicating positive attitudes about being Jewish. Using a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 equals “Strongly Disagree” and 4 equals “Strongly Agree,” the mean rating for participants

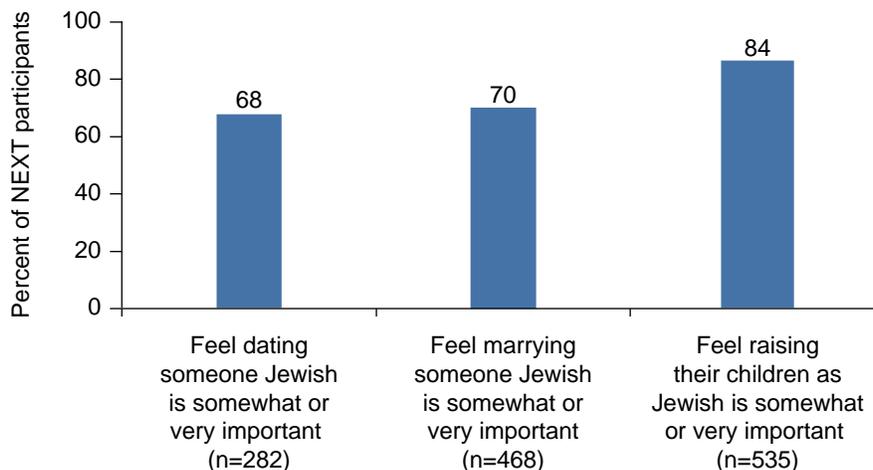
who attended three or more events in the past 12 months was higher than the rating for those who participated in fewer events. Participants who attended three or more events in the past 12 months were more likely than those who attended fewer events to:

- Feel motivated by Jewish tradition to make the world a better place (2.95 v. 2.65,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Feel it is important to have friends who share their way of being Jewish (3.39 v. 3.07,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people (3.57 v. 3.29,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Plan to do more activities in the future involving Jewish content, learning, and values (3.58 v. 3.28,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Believe that being Jewish adds meaning to their life (3.68 v. 3.40,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Enjoy trying different Jewish experiences (3.61 v. 3.37,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Plan to participate in Jewish life with family, friends, and community in the future (3.69 v. 3.48,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Feel positive about being Jewish (4.77 v. 4.54 on a 5-point scale,  $p \leq .001$ ).

Most NEXT participants also think it is important for them to establish a Jewish family. More than two-thirds of NEXT participants feel that dating (68%) and marrying (70%) someone Jewish is somewhat or very important to them. An even higher percentage of participants (84%) feel that raising their children as Jewish is somewhat or very important (Exhibit 21).

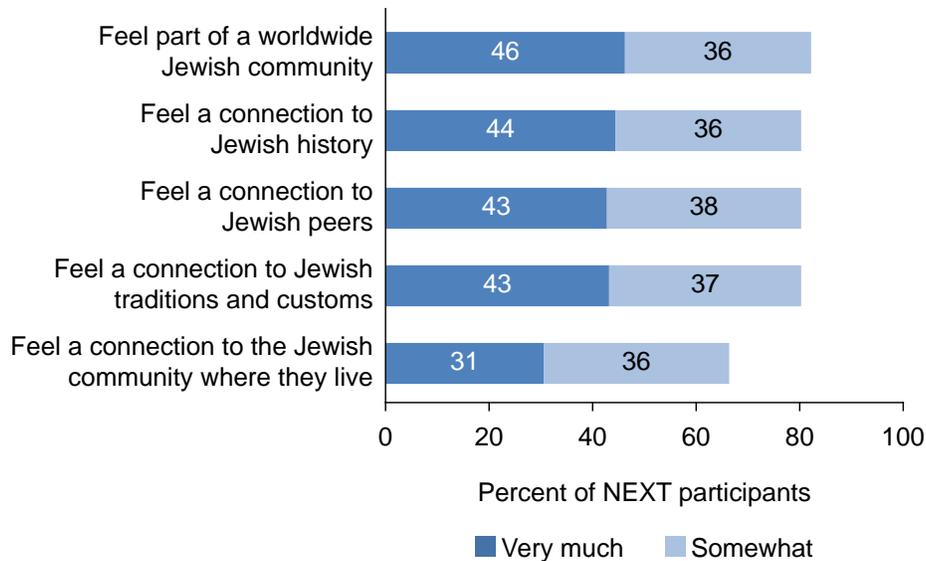
Attitudes about the importance of marrying someone Jewish was related to the frequency of attendance at NEXT events in the past 12 months. Using a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 equals “Not Important” and 4 equals “Very Important,” the mean rating for participants’ attitudes about marrying someone Jewish was higher for participants who attended three or more events in the past 12 months than for participants who attended only one or two events (3.32 v. 2.89,  $p \leq .001$ ).

**Exhibit 21. NEXT Participants’ Attitudes About Dating, Marriage, and Children**



Overall, NEXT participants feel connected to Jewish traditions, history, and peers. About 80% of participants very much or somewhat feel a connection to Jewish traditions and customs, Jewish history, and Jewish peers (Exhibit 22). NEXT participants reported a lower sense of connection to their local Jewish community than to the broader Jewish community; 67% of participants very much or somewhat feel a connection to the Jewish community where they live, whereas 82% very much or somewhat feel a part of a worldwide Jewish community.

**Exhibit 22. NEXT Participants’ Connection to Jewish People and the Jewish Community**  
(n=544-548)

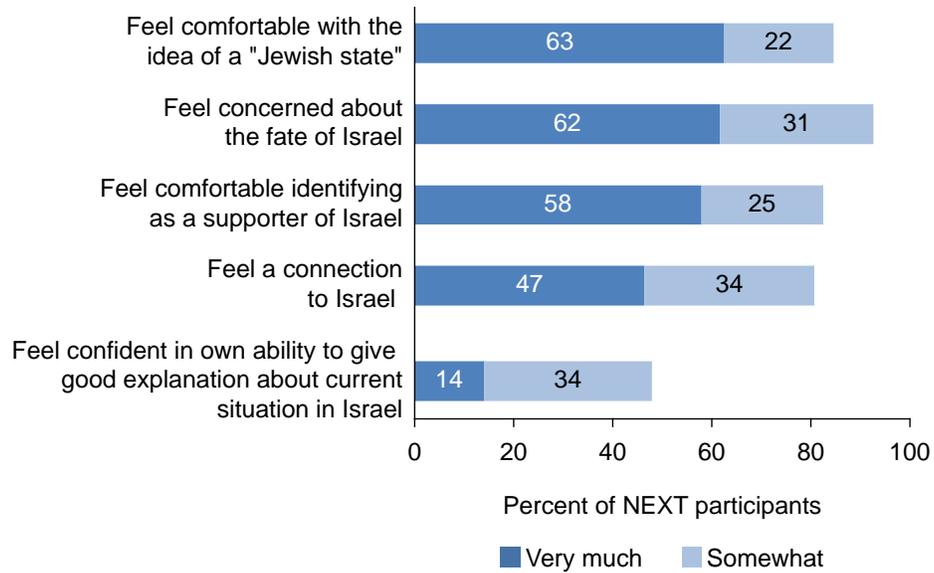


Participants’ sense of connection to the Jewish people and especially the local Jewish community where they live also was associated with frequency of attendance at NEXT events. Using a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 equals “Not at All” and 4 equals “Very Much,” mean ratings of connection were higher among participants who had attended three or more NEXT events in the past year than among participants who had attended only one or two events. Participants who attended more NEXT events in the past year were more likely to:

- Feel part of a worldwide Jewish community (3.47 v. 3.13,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Feel a connection to Jewish traditions and customs (3.43 v. 3.09,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Feel a connection to Jewish peers (3.41 v. 3.07,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Feel a connection to the Jewish community where they live (3.16 v. 2.71,  $p \leq .001$ ).

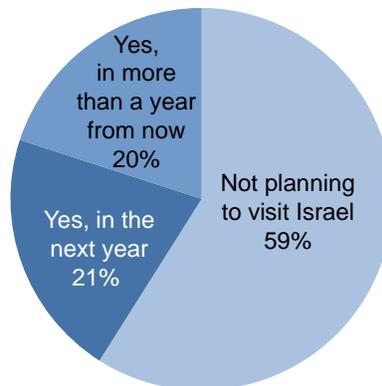
Most NEXT participants (81%) very much or somewhat feel a connection to Israel, and the vast majority of participants (93%) very much or somewhat feel concerned about the fate of Israel. Although most participants feel very much or somewhat comfortable with the idea of a “Jewish state” (85%) and identify as a supporter of Israel (83%), many fewer (48%) feel very much or somewhat confident that they could give a good explanation of the current situation in Israel (Exhibit 23). Participants’ connections to Israel were not associated with the number of NEXT events attended in the past 12 months.

**Exhibit 23. NEXT Participants’ Connections to Israel**  
(n=522-552)



Also, 41% of NEXT participants have plans to visit Israel in the future, 21% plan to visit within the next year and 20% plan to visit sometime farther in the future (Exhibit 24).

**Exhibit 24. NEXT Participants’ Plans to Visit Israel in the Future**  
(n=538)



## Short-Term Changes in Attitudes and Connection to Jewish Life and Israel

When asked to reflect back on how their confidence in Jewish knowledge and skills had changed in the past 12 months, nearly half of NEXT participants who completed surveys reported increases in their confidence in Jewish knowledge and skills (42%) and in sharing them with others (45%).

Interviews corroborated the survey findings. When asked whether participation in NEXT had changed their attitudes in any way, some interviewed participants said that they have always felt a strong connection to Judaism and been proud of being Jewish, so NEXT made little impact on that part of their lives. Other interviewed participants directly attribute changes in their attitudes about being Jewish to participation in NEXT. Participants provided many examples of how participation in NEXT affected their attitudes about and connection to Jewish life and Israel, including:

- Increased learning about Jewish history, Jewish ritual, and Hebrew
- Increased pride in being Jewish
- Increased reflection about what it means to be Jewish
- Increased understanding of how Judaism fits into their lives
- Increased comfort discussing Judaism and sharing Jewish identity with others.

In interviews, Directors and Fellows also reported having experienced changes in their attitudes about being Jewish as a result of their involvement with NEXT. Although Directors and Fellows came to NEXT with varying levels of connection to Jewish identity, most staff said that being part of NEXT makes being Jewish a more salient and prominent part of their identity. Staff who were less connected to Jewish life when they joined the staff team expressed that NEXT has greatly affected their lives, while those who were more connected when they joined the staff team shared that NEXT provides them with the outlet to continue exploring and building their Jewish identity.

Examples shared by staff about the ways in which NEXT affected their attitudes and connections to Israel and Jewish life included:

- Increased knowledge about Jewish religion, culture, and politics
- Increased pride about being Jewish
- Stronger connection to Jewish identity
- Stronger connection to Israel and Israeli politics
- Increased comfort sharing their own Jewish identity with others
- Increased openness to new ways of thinking about Judaism and Jewish culture.

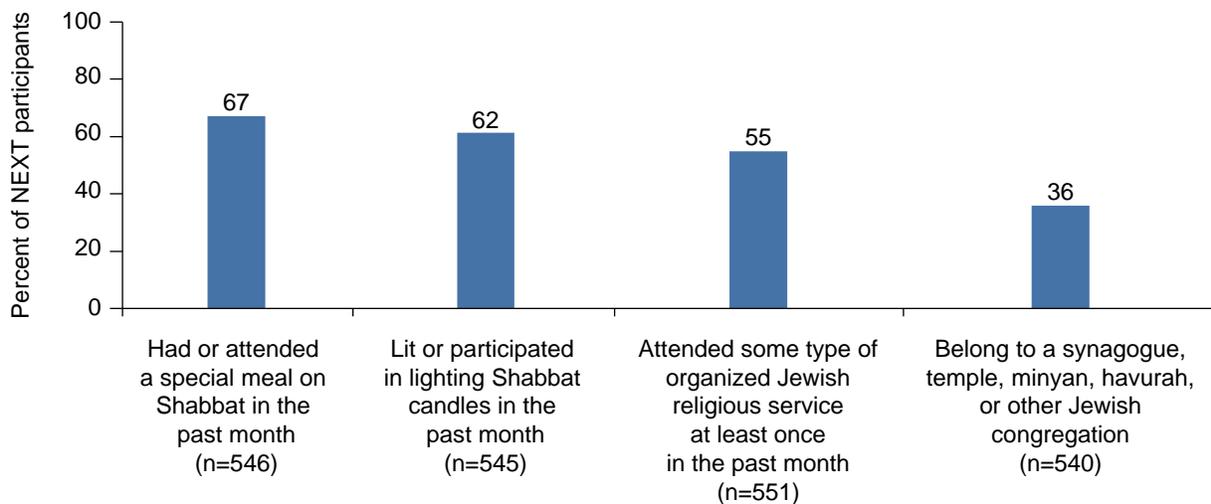
## Jewish Practices and Behaviors

NEXT also is interested in increasing participants' practice of both formal and informal Jewish behaviors. Thus, the NEXT Community Initiatives strives to provide young Jewish adults with an opportunity to learn about and practice Jewish behaviors in safe spaces and with peers.

## Baseline Measures of Jewish Practices and Behaviors

In terms of formal Jewish practices, two-thirds of NEXT participants had hosted or attended a Shabbat meal (67%) or lit or participated in lighting Shabbat candles (62%) in the past month, and more than half of participants had attended some type of Jewish religious service in the past month (55%) (Exhibit 25). Only about a third (36%) of participants belong to a Jewish congregation, which suggests that NEXT is reaching young Jewish adults who may be otherwise unaffiliated.

**Exhibit 25. NEXT Participants' Participation in Shabbat and Jewish Religious Services**



How often participants celebrated Shabbat during the past month was associated with attendance at NEXT events. Using a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 equals “Never” and 4 equals “Always,” the mean rating for participants’ attendance at a special meal on Shabbat was higher among those who attended three or more NEXT events in the past year than those who attended only one or two events (2.30 v. 1.92,  $p \leq .001$ ). Similarly, the mean rating for lighting Shabbat candles was higher for participants who attended more compared with fewer events (2.15 v. 1.80,  $p \leq .001$ ).

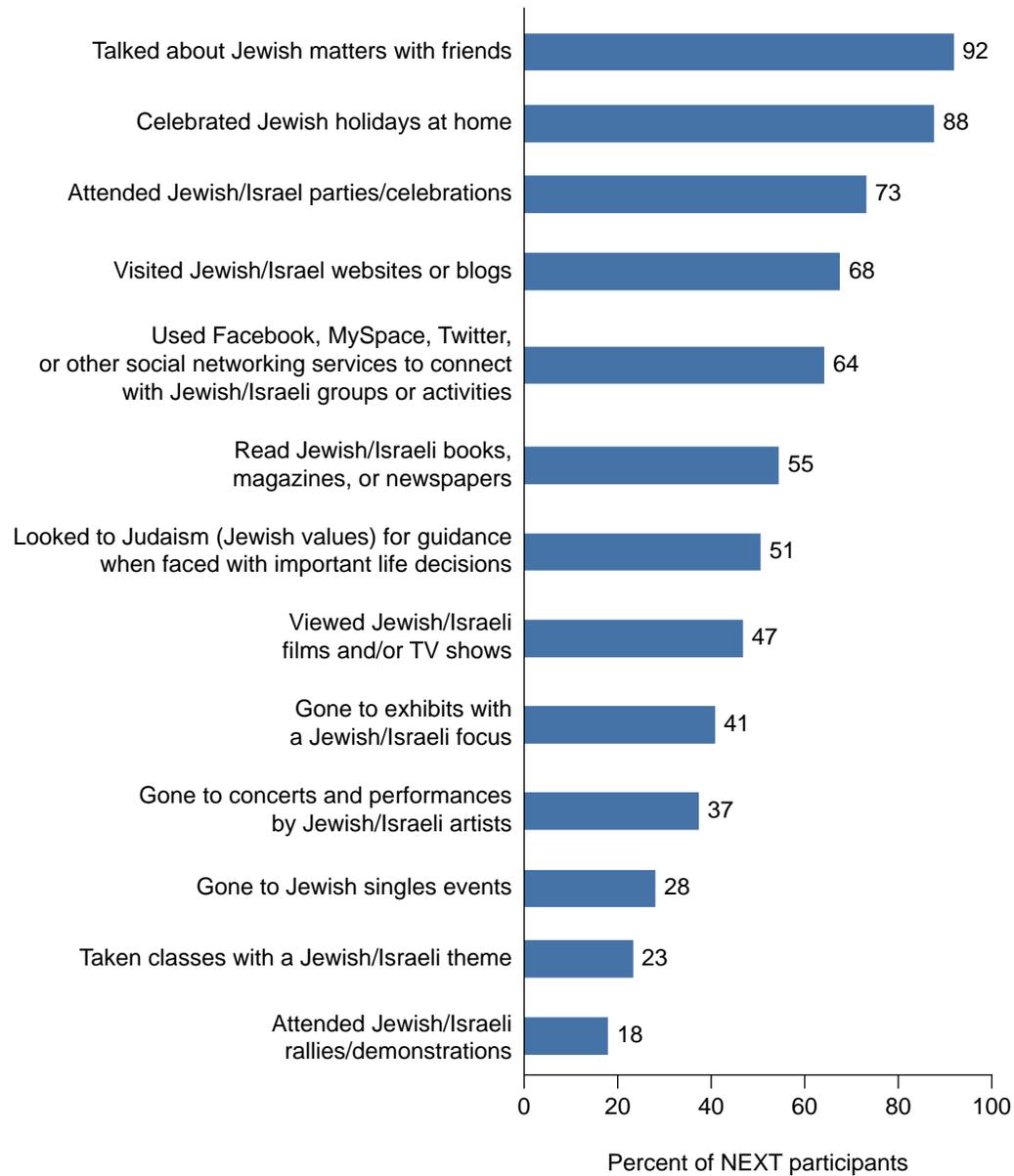
In addition to these more formal Jewish behaviors, NEXT also is interested in increasing participants’ practice of informal Jewish behaviors. Survey responses indicate that NEXT participants already are engaged in many informal Jewish practices. For example, almost all NEXT participants had talked about Jewish matters with friends (92%) and celebrated Jewish holidays at home (88%) in the past 3 months. More than half of NEXT participants had attended Jewish/Israeli parties or celebrations (73%); visited Jewish/Israeli websites or blogs (68%); used Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, or other social networking services to connect with Jewish/Israeli groups (64%); read Jewish/Israeli books, magazines, or newspapers (55%); and looked to Judaism for guidance when faced with an important life decision in the past 3 months (51%) (Exhibit 26).

Reading Jewish books and talking about Jewish matters were associated with the number of NEXT events attended. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 equals “Never” and 5 equals “6 times or more,” participants who had attended three or more NEXT events were more likely than

participants who attended only one or two to have read Jewish or Israeli books, magazines, or newspapers in the past 3 months (2.78 v. 2.17,  $p \leq .001$ ) and to have talked about Jewish matters with friends in the past 3 months (4.02 v. 3.46,  $p \leq .001$ ).

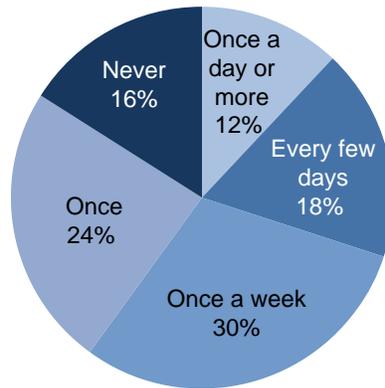
**Exhibit 26. NEXT Participants' Jewish Practices and Behaviors**  
(n=523-551)

**In the past 3 months had at least once:**



Most NEXT participants (84%) sought news about Israel in the month prior to completing the survey (Exhibit 27). About a third (30%) sought news about Israel every few days or more often.

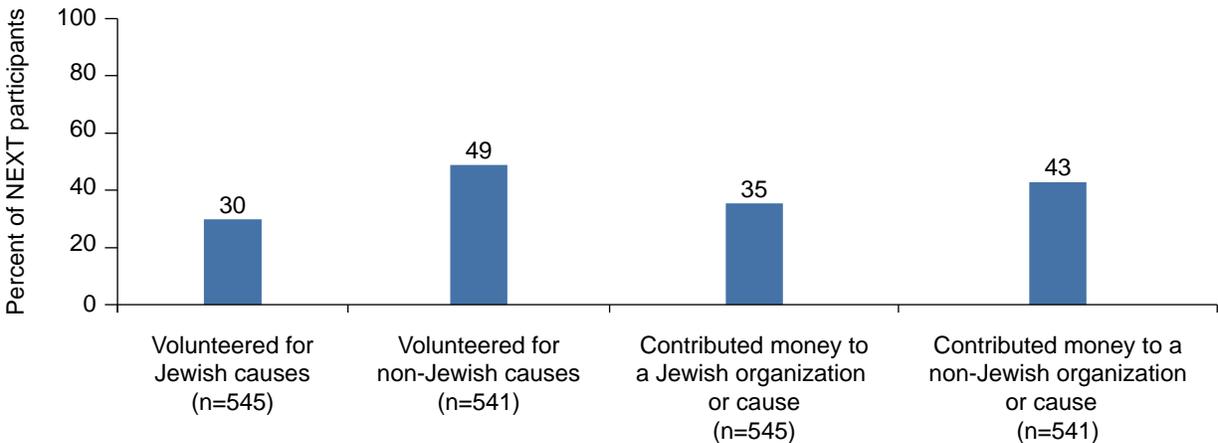
**Exhibit 27. NEXT Participants' Frequency Seeking News About Israel in the Past Month (n=544)**



Many NEXT participants have been involved in social action through volunteering and making contributions. About a third or more of surveyed participants reported having volunteered or contributed money to at least one cause in the past 3 months. More participants volunteered for non-Jewish causes (49%) than for Jewish causes (30%). Likewise, more participants contributed money to non-Jewish causes (43%) than to Jewish causes (35%) (Exhibit 28).

Those participants who had attended three or more NEXT events in the past 12 months were more likely than those who had attended fewer events to have volunteered for a Jewish organization (41% v. 24%,  $p \leq .001$ ) or contributed money to a Jewish cause or organization (46% v. 30%,  $p \leq .001$ ).

**Exhibit 28. NEXT Participants' Volunteering and Contributions in the Past 3 Months**



## Short-Term Changes in Jewish Practices and Behaviors

When asked to reflect back on how their Jewish practices and behaviors had changed in the past 12 months, 43% of surveyed participants reported increases in the frequency of their participation in events sponsored by Jewish organizations. Participants who attended three or more NEXT events in the past 12 months, compared with participants who attended only one or two NEXT events in the same period, were even more likely to report increases in the frequency of participation in such events (63% v. 34%,  $p \leq .001$ ).

In interviews, participants provided examples of how participation in NEXT had affected both their formal and informal Jewish behaviors. Participants reported more often celebrating Jewish holidays and hosting or attending Shabbat dinners, as well as attending synagogue more regularly, since participating in NEXT. Participants shared that they made these changes because NEXT has given them more people to celebrate with and has provided them with resources (e.g., Shabbat in a Box) that support these new behaviors.

Most Directors and Fellows, too, said in interviews that being part of NEXT has resulted in tangible changes in their personal behavior. For example, one Fellow said,

*I used to live alone with an Irish-Catholic girlfriend. Now I have three Jewish roommates I met through NEXT, and we have a Jewish lifestyle. We have Shabbat weekly, no pork and no shellfish. We celebrate holidays, and we're involved in other Jewish networks.*

Additional examples staff shared about how their personal behaviors have changed since their participation in NEXT included:

- More often lighting candles on Shabbat
- Increased participation in Torah studies
- Increased participation in Jewish holiday celebrations
- More often leading holiday celebrations and blessings
- More often displaying visible signs of Judaism (like jewelry)
- A stronger focus on hospitality when hosting others.

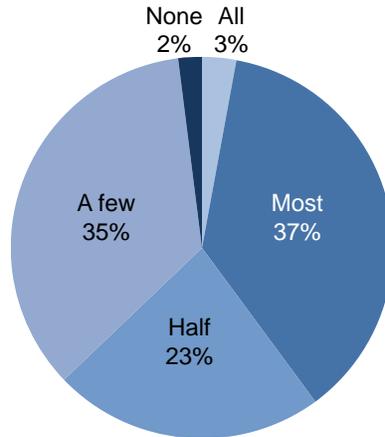
## Jewish Social Connections

A key objective of NEXT is to increase young Jewish adults' connections to each other and to the Jewish community. The idea is that bringing diverse young Jewish adults together to participate in meaningful events infused with Jewish content will support them in building friendships and communities in which they can explore their Jewish identity and practice Jewish traditions and customs.

## Baseline Measures of Jewish Social Connections

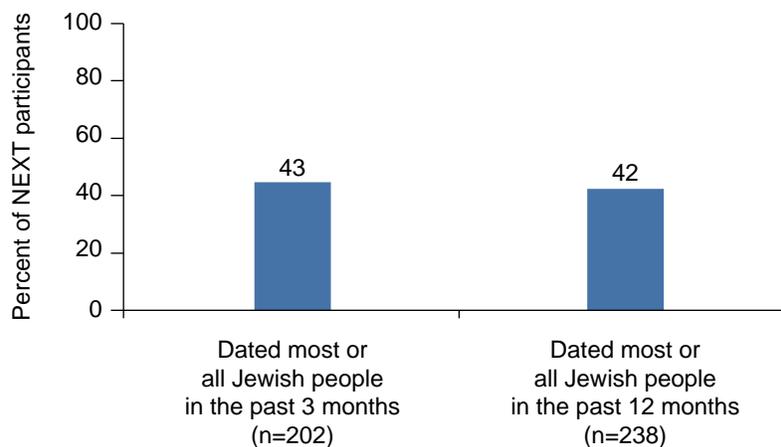
One measure of Jewish social connections is the number of close friends that participants have who are Jewish. Although the majority (63%) of surveyed participants reported that half or more of their close friends are Jewish, 37% reported having few or no Jewish friends (Exhibit 29).

**Exhibit 29. NEXT Participants' Number of Close Friends Who Are Jewish**  
(n=549)



Nearly half (49%) of NEXT participants are in committed relationships, and of those, 63% reported that their spouse or significant other is Jewish. Of those who are not in committed relationships and are dating, less than half dated most or all Jewish people in the past 3 months (43%) and in the past year (42%) (Exhibit 30). In contrast, 49% of participants reported that none or few of the people they dated in the past 12 months were Jewish.

**Exhibit 30. Dating of NEXT Participants Without Significant Others**



## Short-Term Changes in Jewish Social Connections

When asked to reflect back on how their social connections with other young Jewish adults had changed in the past 12 months, 41% of surveyed participants reported increases in the amount of time they spend socializing with other Jewish adults, and 35% of participants reported an increase in the number of close Jewish friends they have. Participants who attended three or more NEXT events in the past 12 months, compared with participants who attended only one or two NEXT events in the same period, were more likely to report increases in the amount of time they spend socializing with other young Jewish adults (58% v. 33%,  $p \leq .001$ ) and the number of close friends who are Jewish (46% v. 29%,  $p \leq .001$ ).

In interviews, participants commonly reported that participation in NEXT had increased their connection to other young Jewish adults and had increased their connection to a social and meaningful Jewish community. As one participant said,

*I just wanted to surround myself with positive young Jews who were doing stuff, getting together, having a good time learning, and experiencing religion at the same time. NEXT gives me that.*

Other interviewed participants agreed, saying that they now had more friends and more meaningful events to attend. One participant said that he met his current roommates through NEXT. Another shared that he now has more Jewish friends and is “more interested in getting involved with Israel activism and Jewish life.” One Fellow shared that participants and staff alike build Jewish connections through NEXT participation, commenting that NEXT participants “have a clear sense of belonging that would not have been there had it not been for NEXT programming.” All staff interviewed shared that participation in NEXT had increased their connections to other young Jewish adults and allowed them to become important members of the Jewish community. Others were proud to be Jewish professionals. Staff noted that they had made new and lasting friendships and had increased the proportion of their friends who are Jewish.

## Leadership Skills

A fourth outcome that NEXT aims to affect is the leadership skills of NEXT participants. Participants who have taken on leadership roles within NEXT reported in interviews that they had increased their communication and public speaking skills, as well as their leadership skills, including event planning, hosting, and budgeting.

## Short-Term Changes in Leadership Skills

When asked to reflect back on changes in their leadership skills in the past 12 months, about a third of surveyed participants reported increases in their connections to Jewish leaders and educators (33%), their confidence in planning and hosting events for young Jewish adults (30%), and their confidence in establishing ongoing Jewish communities with other young Jewish adults (30%).

Participants who attended three or more NEXT events in the past 12 months, compared with participants who attended only one or two NEXT events in the same period, were even more likely to report increases in the following:

- Connections to Jewish leaders and educators (44% v. 27%,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Confidence in planning and hosting fun or meaningful events for young Jewish adults (41% v. 24%,  $p \leq .001$ )
- Confidence in establishing ongoing Jewish communities with other young Jewish adults (40% v. 24%,  $p \leq .001$ ).

Interviewed NEXT staff also reported increasing specific leadership skill areas as a result of participation in NEXT, including:

- Management skills
- Communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Event planning skills
- Public speaking skills
- Networking skills
- Ability to perceive how personal behavior affects others
- Confidence as a professional
- Ability to be outgoing.

In summary, NEXT, in its first 18 months, provided a safe place for trip alumni and their non-alumni peers to explore their Jewish identities, connect to a Jewish community and lifestyle, and develop leadership skills that help them host activities with Jewish content and practices for other young Jewish adults.

## 6. BRI Trip Alumni and NEXT

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The previous sections described NEXT's participants overall, activities, staff, and outcomes. This section answers the following evaluation questions:

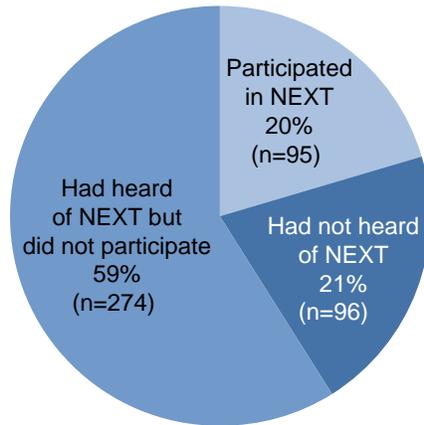
1. What differences exist between recent (Summer 2009) BRI trip alumni who participate in NEXT and those who do not participate in NEXT?
2. How many BRI trips are staffed with NEXT Local Directors and Fellows?
3. Do young Jewish adults who participate in NEXT-staffed trips more often participate in NEXT events after returning from their trip than those trip alumni who attend other BRI trips?

To understand what is associated with BRI trip alumni's awareness and involvement with NEXT, we focused a separate analysis on the narrow population of recent trip alumni. Specifically, we analyzed the Summer 2009 trip alumni survey for respondents living in the five NEXT Community Initiatives areas to determine the extent to which these trip alumni know about and participate in NEXT and the characteristics and experiences of trip alumni that are associated with participation in NEXT. It should be noted that the Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni represent a small subset of all BRI trip alumni over the past 10 years and therefore may not fully represent the attitudes and behaviors of all BRI trip alumni in general.

### **Awareness of and Involvement in NEXT**

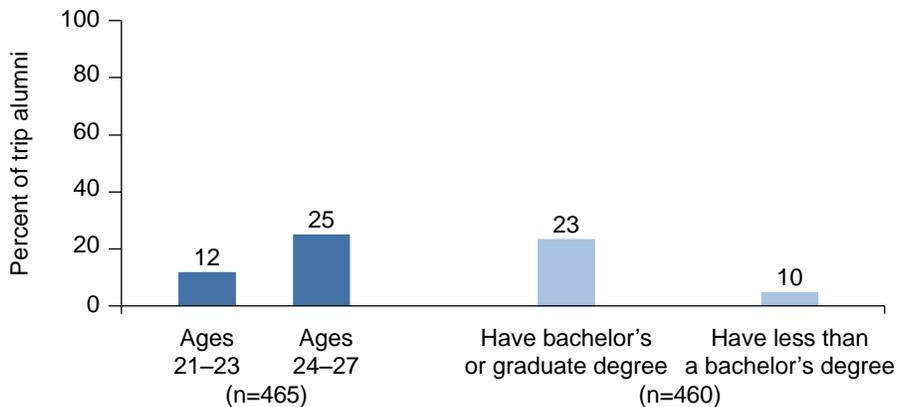
The majority (79%) of the Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni ages 21-27 living in the five Community Initiatives areas had heard of NEXT, but about one-fifth (21%) had not (Exhibit 31). There were no significant differences in the characteristics of alumni (e.g., gender, age, Jewish religious affiliation, type of Jewish education, and relationship status) that had and had not heard of NEXT at the time of the survey. Another one-fifth (20%) of alumni participated in at least one NEXT event in the 12 months before the survey (26% when excluding those who had not heard of NEXT). The majority of Summer 2009 trip alumni had heard of NEXT but had not yet participated in a NEXT activity.

**Exhibit 31. Trip Alumni Awareness of and Participation in NEXT**  
(n=465)



A few factors differentiate alumni who participate in NEXT from those who do not participate. Older trip alumni (ages 24-27) participate in NEXT in higher proportions than younger alumni (ages 21-23) (25% v. 12%,  $p \leq .001$ ). Similarly, trip alumni with a graduate or bachelor's degree participate in NEXT in higher proportions than trip alumni with associate degrees or less (23% v. 10%,  $p \leq .001$ ) (Exhibit 32). Other factors that differentiate which alumni tend to participate in NEXT include having a NEXT staff person on the bus and going on the trip without friends from before the trip (described below).

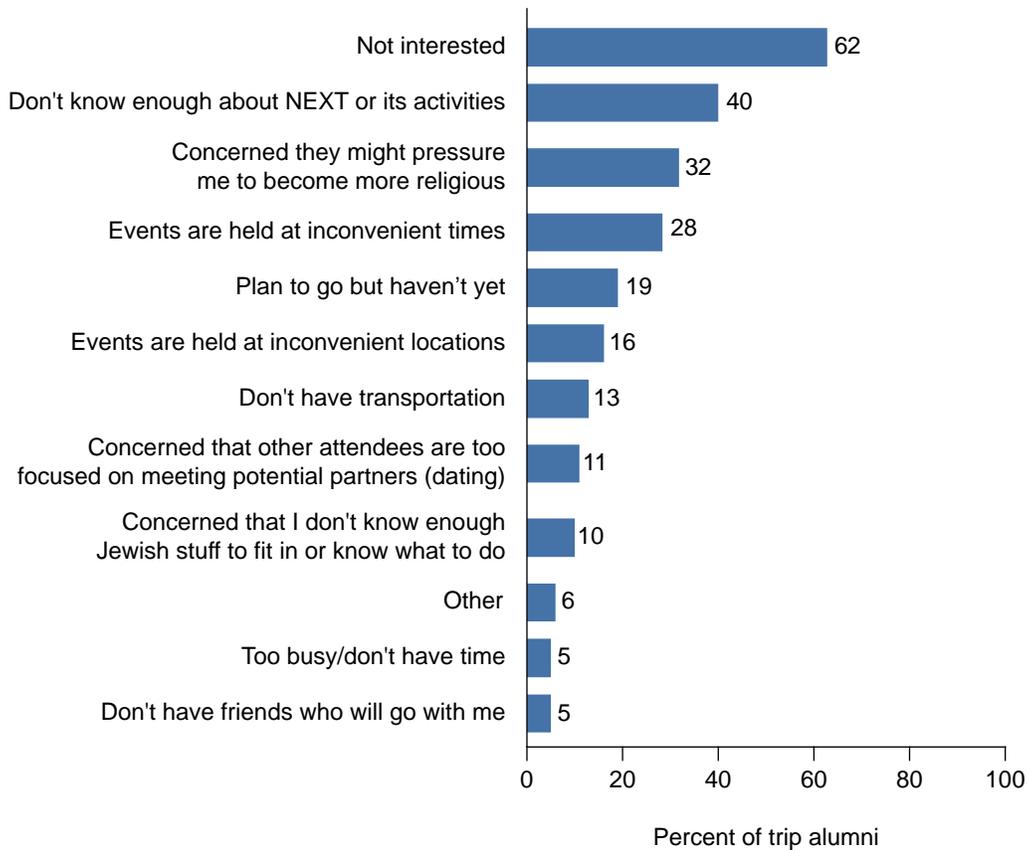
**Exhibit 32. Trip Alumni Participation in NEXT**



In contrast, we found no significant differences between alumni who did and did not participate in NEXT in terms of gender, whether they were born in the United States or abroad, how long they had lived in their current city, whether they were still a student, whether they were employed, whether they were affiliated with a mainstream Jewish denomination, whether they had received formal Jewish education as a child, how satisfied they were with their past Jewish educational experiences, the number of Jewish friends they currently had, or their marital or relationship status. Thus, alumni who vary along each of these dimensions are similarly likely to participate in NEXT.

As mentioned earlier, 21% of participants had not heard of NEXT and therefore did not participate in any NEXT activities. Trip alumni who had heard of NEXT but had not yet participated in NEXT reported multiple reasons for not having participated. First, about one-fifth (19%) reported that they plan to participate in NEXT but just had not done so yet. Other reasons for not participating in NEXT reported by the trip alumni who had heard of NEXT but who had not yet participated included lack of interest (62%), lack of information about NEXT or its activities (40%), concern that NEXT might pressure them to become more religious (32%), and the perception that events are held at inconvenient times (28%). Almost one-third (31%) of the alumni who reported “not interested” as a reason for not having attended a NEXT activity also reported not knowing enough about NEXT activities. These and other less frequently cited reasons are listed in Exhibit 33.

**Exhibit 33. Reasons Why Trip Alumni Who Had Heard of NEXT Have Not Participated**  
(n=205)



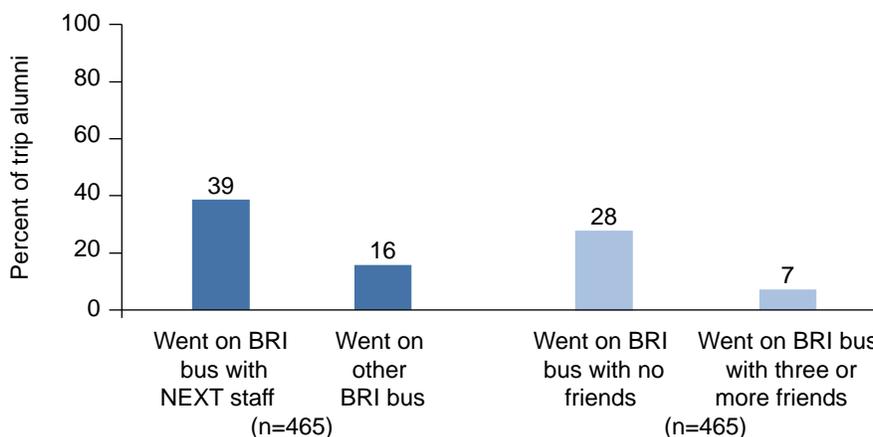
**Note:** This chart does not include trip alumni who had not heard of NEXT (n=96), alumni who had participated in NEXT (n=95), or alumni who did not answer the question (n=69).

## NEXT-Staffed and Community BRI Trips

According to NEXT records, NEXT Directors, Fellows, and National staff served as *madrachim* (counselors) on 20 Summer 2009 BRI buses. Interviewed staff who served as *madrachim* said that in this role they became friends with participants, made participants feel welcome, ensured that all participants had a good experience, answered questions during the trip, informed participants about how to continue their learning and involvement after returning from Israel, and got them excited about participating in NEXT.

Twenty percent of the Summer 2009 BRI trip alumni survey respondents living in the five NEXT Community Initiatives areas had NEXT staff on their buses. Those who had a NEXT staff member on their bus were more than twice as likely to have participated in NEXT as their peers who did not have a NEXT representative on their bus (39% v. 16%,  $p \leq .001$ ) (Exhibit 34).

**Exhibit 34. Participation in NEXT, by Presence of NEXT Staff and Friends on Bus**



The NEXT Directors and Fellows interviewed who had served as *madrachim* on buses also found from their experiences that their presence on Birthright Israel trips was a strong motivator and predictor of participation in NEXT by trip alumni. In particular, interviewees reported that they made lasting relationships with young Jewish adults on their buses and maintained communication with many of them, thus leading to greater participation of trip alumni in NEXT. For example, one Fellow said that many of the participants from his bus are now friends with him on Facebook and have hosted NEXT Shabbat dinners.

Interviews also suggested that trip alumni with NEXT staff on their buses may have been more apt to participate in NEXT not just because of their emerging friendships, but also because of the staff members' knowledge of and connections to Judaism. Those staffing the BRI buses reported "powerful" changes in their own leadership skills and self-confidence because they were able to serve as resources to others. For example, one Fellow who staffed a trip said it was a "phenomenal experience where I really connected with participants and they trusted me as a resource of Jewish knowledge and Jewish community."

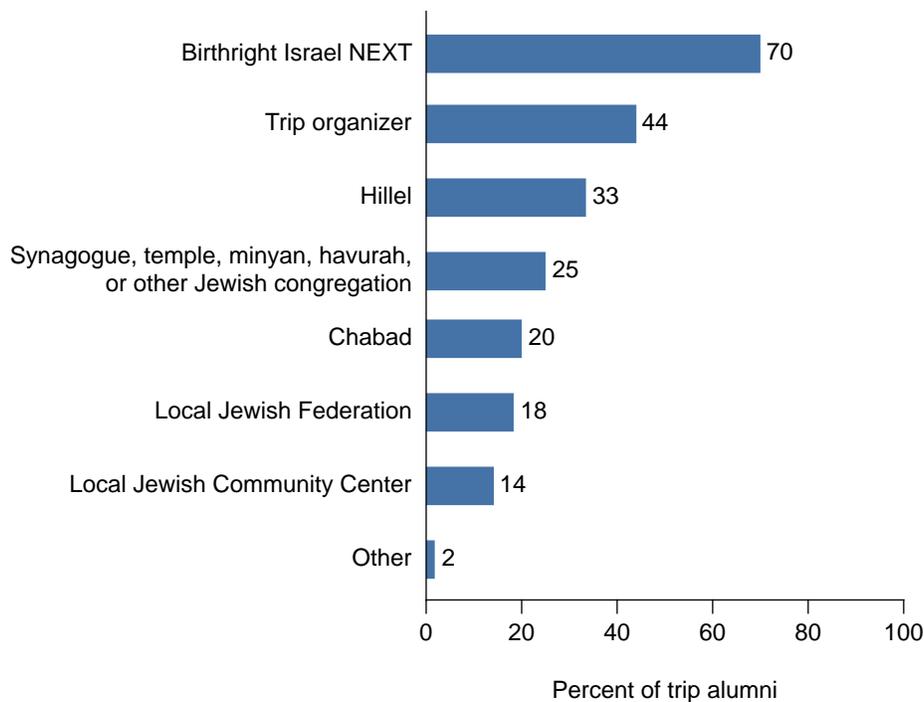
Some of the BRI trips offer the chance for young Jewish adults to go on the trip with peers from their local community (these are sometimes referred to as "community buses"). Some young

Jewish adults go on these trips with friends they had prior to their trip. Fifteen percent of the Summer 2009 trip alumni survey respondents living in the five NEXT Community Initiatives areas went on a trip with three or more friends that they had from before the trip, 42% went with one or two friends from before the trip, and 43% went on the trip alone. The young Jewish adults who went on trips alone were four times as likely to participate in NEXT as those who went on their trips with three or more friends (28% v. 7%,  $p \leq .001$ ) (Exhibit 34). One NEXT Director interviewed mentioned that when people go on community buses with their existing friends, they further strengthen those relationships on their trips and rely on those relationships outside of NEXT when they get home. She said that people who go on the trips without any friends “often don’t have local people to hang out with and share their experiences and often feel alone when they get home,” and they use NEXT to connect with others who have had the same experience.

### Outreach to Trip Alumni and Their Involvement in Jewish Organizations

More trip alumni received an invitation from NEXT than from any other Jewish organization (Exhibit 35). Nearly three-quarters (70%) of trip alumni received invitations from NEXT in the 3-month period prior to completing the survey. In contrast, less than half (44%) of trip alumni received invitations to events from their trip organizer,<sup>2</sup> and only a third (33%) received an invitation from Hillel. The organizations that reached the fewest trip alumni were Chabad, the local Federation, and the local Jewish Community Center, reaching 20%, 18%, and 14% of alumni, respectively.

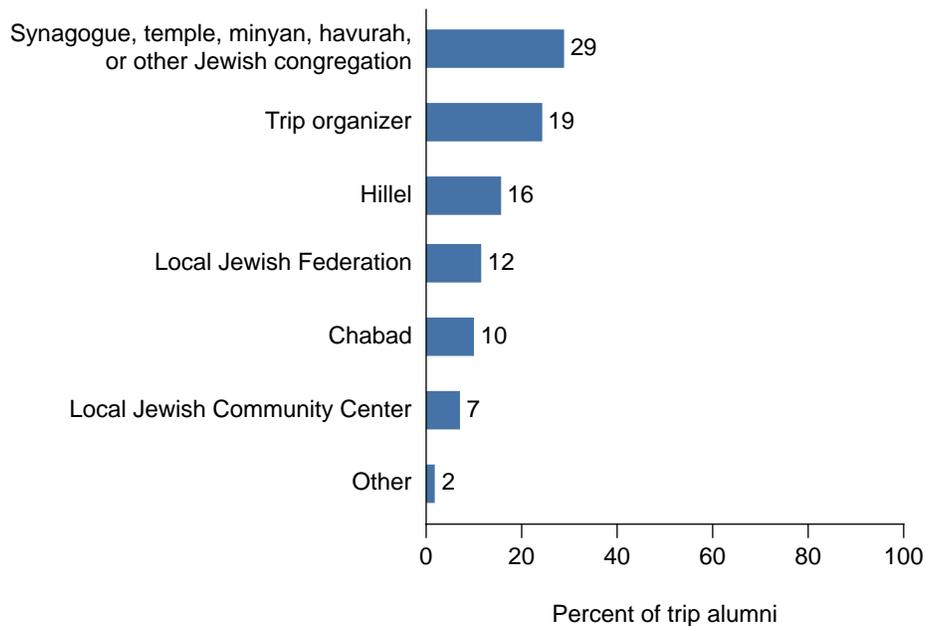
**Exhibit 35. Invitations from Jewish Organizations in the Past 3 Months**  
(n=452-461)



<sup>2</sup> “Trip organizer” may include Hillel, Chabad, or local Jewish federations since all three of these types of organizations served as trip organizers in Summer 2009.

The percentage of trip alumni who reported that they had participated in NEXT (20% of all alumni and 26% of alumni who had heard of NEXT) is relatively high when compared with participation in events sponsored by many other Jewish organizations. For example, within the 3 months before the survey, fewer trip alumni were involved in events with a trip organizer (19%), Hillel (16%), their local Jewish Federation (12%), and Chabad (10%). More (29%) of the trip alumni attended an event at a synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation (Exhibit 36); however, this period included the High Holidays.

**Exhibit 36. Engagement of Trip Alumni With Other Jewish Organizations in the Past 3 Months (n=425-448)**



### Synergy Between BRI Trip and NEXT Participation

NEXT staff and participants often commented in interviews on how NEXT provides a safe place for BRI trip alumni to explore their Jewish identity and become more connected to a Jewish community and lifestyle following their trip. For example, some staff shared how they had either not been comfortable with or not been drawn to the Jewish religion before their Birthright Israel trip, but found themselves wanting to further explore their Jewish identity and to be more involved in a Jewish community after going on their trip. NEXT staff and participants interviewed explained that NEXT provided them with the opportunity to act on their newly developed desires. That is, NEXT was not so much the inspiration for becoming more involved with or in touch with their Jewish lives, but was the outlet that allowed them to do so. One Fellow, for example, said the BRI trip was the “launch pad” for his further exploration of Judaism and that NEXT is where he is doing the exploration.

# 7. Looking Forward

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NEXT is reaching a diverse group of young Jewish adults and is helping them connect with Jewish peers and build and maintain a Jewish life and a relationship with Israel.

Data from the evaluation demonstrate that the NEXT Community Initiatives program is:

- Effectively reaching out to the vast majority of BRI trip alumni returning from their trips and to many non-alumni as well
- Successfully reaching a broad range of young Jewish adults who vary in age, Jewish backgrounds and experiences, and Jewish affiliations
- Offering an array of peer-led events that appeal to the varied interests of young Jewish adults and that aim to build community among young Jewish adults
- Holding numerous events for which there are high levels of participant satisfaction
- Implementing events that reflect NEXT's values: provide a safe space for participants to be Jewish; are warm, friendly and welcoming; are peer led; reflect the interests of young adults; incorporate Jewish values and experiences; and are meaningful and enriching
- Effectively using a staffing model that builds local teams of informal educators in which Local Directors work together with Fellows to reach out to young Jewish adults
- Empowering and supporting Directors and Fellows to accomplish their goals through professional development, networking, and mentoring
- Beginning to coordinate with other local Jewish organizations that serve young Jewish adults
- Affecting Fellows' and participants' knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and social networks in ways that support their engagement in Jewish life and their connections to Israel.

To reach even more young Jewish adults, NEXT recently expanded the Community Initiatives program from the five communities studied in this report to Los Angeles and Atlanta and has plans to expand it to 10 to 15 cities. This expansion will support Taglit-Birthright Israel trip alumni and their peers in finding or forming meaningful Jewish communities that deepen their personal commitments to Jewish life and strengthen their connections to Israel.

In this light, additional research on the NEXT Community Initiatives model is warranted. As NEXT continues to refine its model, the evaluation will continue to offer insights into its implementation and effectiveness. Specifically, the evaluation will continue to assess participation in NEXT and implementation of the NEXT model, looking for changes over time. Do young Jewish adults continue to participate in NEXT? Do more trip alumni become involved in NEXT over time? Do NEXT participants experience changes in Jewish attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and connections over time, and if so, how are those changes associated with participation in NEXT? Further, the evaluation will merge the implementation and outcomes analyses to identify the essential elements of NEXT participation that contribute significantly to changes in Jewish attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and connections. Thus, by tracking NEXT

participants and trip alumni (both those who have and those who have not participated in NEXT) over several years, the evaluation could document more fully whether involvement in NEXT predicts greater engagement of young Jewish adults in a vibrant Jewish life over time.

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# Appendix: Numbers of Respondents, by Survey Item

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Table A: NEXT Participants

Table B: Trip Alumni Total

Table C: Trip Alumni—Participated in NEXT

Table D: Trip Alumni—Did Not Participate in NEXT

**Table A: NEXT Participants (n=574)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
In the past 12 months, have you participated in a Birthright Israel NEXT activity, meeting, or event in your area?	574	0	0	0
Which of the following greater metropolitan areas do you live in or near now?	574	0	0	0
How long have you lived in or near this greater metropolitan area?	570	0	4	0
Are you male, female, or transgender?	556	0	18	0
In what region of the world were you born?	555	0	19	0
How old are you now?	574	0	0	0
Did you go on a BRI trip?	574	0	0	0
When did you go on your BRI trip?	488	0	86	0
What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?	548	0	26	0
Are you currently... (student status)	539	0	35	0
What is your current employment status?	544	0	30	0
What is your marital status?	552	0	22	0
Do you have a significant other (e.g., boyfriend or girlfriend)?	541	0	33	0
What is the main type of formal Jewish education you received as a child (grades 1-12)?	558	0	16	0
Overall, did you have a mostly positive or mostly negative experience with Jewish education as a child?	440	0	6	128
In which of the following Jewish denominations do you consider yourself to be now?	560	0	14	0
Have you ever... Had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony?	539	0	35	0
Attended or worked at an overnight camp that had a Shabbat service and/or a Jewish educational program?	539	0	35	0
Visited Israel other than on a BRI trip?	539	0	35	0
Participated in a Jewish youth group?	539	0	35	0
Participated in Hillel/Jewish fraternity/sorority or other Jewish organization in college?	539	0	35	0
Taken one or more courses on Jewish subjects such as Jewish history, Hebrew or Israel at college?	539	0	35	0

**Table A: NEXT Participants (n=574) (continued)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
How did you become involved with Birthright Israel NEXT?	555	0	19	0
What types of Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings, and events have you attended or been involved with in the past 12 months?	559	0	15	0
What types of Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings, and events would you be most interested in attending in the future?	547	0	27	0
When did you first attend a Birthright Israel NEXT activity?	560	0	14	0
In the past 12 months, about how many Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings or events have you attended in your area?	563	0	11	0
Overall, how satisfied have you been with Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings or events?	540	0	34	0
Do you plan to continue going to Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings or events?	562	0	12	0
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings or events? They provide a safe space to be Jewish	498	28	48	0
They are warm, friendly, and welcoming	522	18	34	0
They reflect the interests of young adults	515	18	41	0
I feel that I belong	513	21	40	0
I have become friends with the people I have met at them	482	26	66	0
They incorporate Jewish values and experiences	495	32	47	0
They are comfortable for everyone no matter their background	493	38	43	0
They do not require prior knowledge about Judaism or Israel for participation	517	22	35	0
They are meaningful and enriching	499	27	48	0
They do not push a particular political agenda	485	42	47	0

**Table A: NEXT Participants (n=574) (continued)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
They do not push a particular religious agenda	491	39	44	0
They are led by young Jewish adults	508	28	38	0
Have you been involved in the planning or leading of a Birthright Israel NEXT activity, meeting or event?	544	0	30	0
In the past 3 months, how often have you engaged in activities sponsored by... Hillel?	523	0	51	0
Chabad?	518	0	56	0
Local Jewish Federation?	509	0	65	0
Synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation?	521	0	53	0
Trip organizer?	500	0	74	0
Jewish Community Center (JCC)?	507	0	67	0
Other Jewish organization?	558	0	16	0
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I feel comfortable identifying myself as Jewish to others	530	26	18	0
I desire to learn more about Judaism or being Jewish	532	22	20	0
I feel comfortable expressing my Jewish identity in a unique way, even if it is different from the ways that others may express being Jewish	510	43	21	0
Being Jewish adds meaning to my life	530	24	20	0
My motivation to make the world a better place is driven by Jewish tradition	523	29	22	0
I enjoy trying different Jewish experiences	538	17	19	0

**Table A: NEXT Participants (n=574) (continued)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
I plan to do more activities in the future involving Jewish content, learning, or values	529	23	22	0
I plan to participate in Jewish life with friends, family and/or the community in the future	536	17	21	0
I feel it is important to have friends who share my way of being Jewish	525	30	19	0
I feel concerned about the fate of Israel	522	32	20	0
I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people	534	23	17	0
Overall how would you characterize your feelings about being Jewish?	539	0	21	14
How important is it to you to date other Jews?	282	0	27	265
How important is it to you to marry someone Jewish?	468	0	28	78
Thinking about the future, how important is it to you to raise your children Jewish?	535	0	34	5
To what extent do you... Feel a connection to Jewish history?	548	0	26	0
Feel a connection to Israel?	546	0	28	0
Feel part of a worldwide Jewish community?	545	0	29	0
Feel a connection to the Jewish community where you live?	544	0	30	0
Feel a connection to Jewish traditions and customs?	548	0	26	0
Feel a connection to your Jewish peers?	546	0	28	0
Feel comfortable identifying yourself as a supporter of Israel?	532	0	42	0
Feel comfortable with the idea of a "Jewish state"?	534	0	40	0
If someone asked you about the current situation in Israel, how confident do you feel in your ability to give a good explanation?	552	0	22	0
Have you made any plans to visit Israel?	538	0	36	0

**Table A: NEXT Participants (n=574) (continued)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
In the past 12 months, how have any of the following changed for you personally? My confidence in planning and hosting fun and/or meaningful activities for young Jewish adults	503	0	71	0
My confidence in establishing ongoing Jewish communities with other young Jewish adults	498	0	76	0
My confidence in my Jewish knowledge and skills	519	0	55	0
Connections I have to various Jewish leaders and educators - scholars, rabbis, leaders of Jewish organizations	508	0	66	0
My confidence in sharing Jewish knowledge with friends, colleagues, and others who seek this information	520	0	54	0
The number of close friends I have who are Jewish	521	0	53	0
The amount of time that I spend socializing with other young Jewish adults	519	0	55	0
The frequency with which I participate in activities sponsored by Jewish organizations	518	0	56	0
In the past month, have you... Had/attended a special meal on Shabbat?	546	0	28	0
Lit/participated in lighting Shabbat candles?	545	0	29	0
In the past month, how often, if at all, did you attend some type of organized Jewish religious service?	551	0	23	0
Do you belong to a synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation?	540	0	34	0
In the past 3 months have you... Read Jewish/Israeli books, magazines or newspapers?	551	0	23	0
Visited Jewish/Israeli websites or blogs?	551	0	23	0
Viewed Jewish/Israeli films and/or TV shows?	548	0	26	0

**Table A: NEXT Participants (n=574) (concluded)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
Attended Jewish/Israeli rallies/demonstrations?	544	0	30	0
Gone to concerts/performances by Jewish/Israeli artists?	548	0	26	0
Gone to exhibits with a Jewish/Israeli focus?	548	0	26	0
Attended Jewish/Israeli parties/celebrations?	548	0	26	0
Gone to Jewish singles events?	544	0	30	0
Taken classes with a Jewish/Israeli theme?	544	0	30	0
Used Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, or other social networking services to connect with Jewish/Israeli groups or activities?	546	0	28	0
Celebrated Jewish holidays at home?	551	0	23	0
Looked to Judaism (Jewish values) for guidance when faced with important life decisions?	523	0	51	0
Talked about Jewish matters with your friends?	550	0	24	0
In the past month, how often did you actively seek news about Israel?	544	0	30	0
In the past 3 months have you... Volunteered for Jewish causes?	545	0	29	0
Volunteered for non-Jewish causes?	541	0	33	0
Contributed money to a Jewish organization or cause?	545	0	29	0
Contributed money to a non-Jewish organization or cause?	541	0	33	0
How many of your close friends are Jewish?	549	0	25	0
What is the religion of your spouse, fiancé, significant other or life partner?	255	0	32	287
How many of the people you dated in the past 3 months were Jewish?	202	0	38	334
How many of the people you dated in the past 12 months were Jewish?	238	0	45	291

**Table B: Trip Alumni—Total (n=465)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
Which of the following greater metropolitan areas do you live in or near now?	465	0	0	0
How long have you lived in or near this greater metropolitan area?	456	0	9	0
How old are you now?	465	0	0	0
Are you male, female, or transgender?	465	0	0	0
In what region of the world were you born?	465	0	0	0
What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?	460	0	5	0
In which of the following Jewish denominations do you consider yourself to be now?	459	0	6	0
What is the main type of formal Jewish education you received as a child (grades 1-12)?	435	0	30	0
Overall, did you have a mostly positive or mostly negative experience with Jewish education as a child?	379	0	13	73
Are you currently... (student status)	453	0	12	0
What is your current employment status?	455	0	10	0
What is your marital status?	465	0	0	0
Do you have a significant other (e.g., boyfriend or girlfriend)?	432	0	33	0
In the past 3 months, were you invited by the following organizations to participate in Jewish or Israel related activities...	452	0	13	0
Hillel?				
Chabad?	452	0	13	0
Local Jewish Federation?	452	0	13	0
Synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation?	452	0	13	0
Trip organizer?	452	0	13	0
Jewish Community Center (JCC)?	452	0	13	0
Other Jewish organization?	452	0	13	0
In the past 3 months, were you invited by Birthright Israel NEXT to participate in Jewish or Israel related activities?	461	0	4	0

**Table B: Trip Alumni—Total (n=465) (concluded)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
In the past 3 months, how often have you engaged in activities sponsored by... Hillel?	436	0	29	0
Chabad?	432	0	33	0
Local Jewish Federation?	429	0	36	0
Synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation?	434	0	31	0
Trip organizer?	432	0	33	0
Jewish Community Center (JCC)?	425	0	40	0
Other Jewish organization?	448	0	17	0
Have you heard of Birthright Israel NEXT?	465	0	0	0
In the past 12 months, about how many Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings or events have you attended in your area?	369	0	96	0
Which of the following are the primary reasons for why you have not participated in any Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings, or events in the past 12 months?	205	0	69	191
How many of your close friends are Jewish?	457	0	8	0
How many of the people on your bus were you friends with before the trip?	465	0	0	0
Whether they were on a NEXT-staffed bus trip (administrative data)	465	0	0	0

**Table C: Trip Alumni—Participated in NEXT (n=95)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
Which of the following greater metropolitan areas do you live in or near now?	95	0	0	0
How long have you lived in or near this greater metropolitan area?	91	0	4	0
How old are you now?	95	0	0	0
Are you male, female, or transgender?	95	0	0	0
In what region of the world were you born?	95	0	0	0
What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?	94	0	1	0
In which of the following Jewish denominations do you consider yourself to be now?	95	0	0	0
What is the main type of formal Jewish education you received as a child (grades 1-12)?	89	0	6	0
Overall, did you have a mostly positive or mostly negative experience with Jewish education as a child?	78	0	2	15
Are you currently... (student status)	93	0	2	0
What is your current employment status?	91	0	4	0
What is your marital status?	95	0	0	0
Do you have a significant other (e.g., boyfriend or girlfriend)?	93	0	2	0
In the past 3 months, were you invited by the following organizations to participate in Jewish or Israel related activities...	92	0	3	0
Hillel?				
Chabad?	92	0	3	0
Local Jewish Federation?	92	0	3	0
Synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation?	92	0	3	0
Trip organizer?	92	0	3	0
Jewish Community Center (JCC)?	92	0	3	0
Other Jewish organization?	92	0	3	0
In the past 3 months, were you invited by Birthright Israel NEXT to participate in Jewish or Israel related activities?	92	0	3	0

**Table C: Trip Alumni—Participated in NEXT (n=95) (concluded)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
In the past 3 months, how often have you engaged in activities sponsored by... Hillel?	86	0	9	0
Chabad?	83	0	12	0
Local Jewish Federation?	84	0	11	0
Synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation?	84	0	11	0
Trip organizer?	87	0	8	0
Jewish Community Center (JCC)?	82	0	13	0
Other Jewish organization?	93	0	2	0
Have you heard of Birthright Israel NEXT?	95	0	0	0
In the past 12 months, about how many Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings or events have you attended in your area?	95	0	0	0
Which of the following are the primary reasons for why you have not participated in any Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings, or events in the past 12 months?	0	0	0	95
How many of your close friends are Jewish?	93	0	2	0
How many of the people on your bus were you friends with before the trip?	95	0	0	0
Whether they were on a NEXT-staffed bus trip (administrative data)	95	0	0	0

**Table D: Trip Alumni—Did Not Participate in NEXT (n=370)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
Which of the following greater metropolitan areas do you live in or near now?	370	0	0	0
How long have you lived in or near this greater metropolitan area?	365	0	5	0
How old are you now?	370	0	0	0
Are you male, female, or transgender?	370	0	0	0
In what region of the world were you born?	370	0	0	0
What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?	366	0	4	0
In which of the following Jewish denominations do you consider yourself to be now?	370	0	0	0
What is the main type of formal Jewish education you received as a child (grades 1-12)?	346	0	24	0
Overall, did you have a mostly positive or mostly negative experience with Jewish education as a child?	301	0	14	55
Are you currently... (student status)	360	0	10	0
What is your current employment status?	364	0	6	0
What is your marital status?	370	0	0	0
Do you have a significant other (e.g., boyfriend or girlfriend)?	339	0	31	0
In the past 3 months, were you invited by the following organizations to participate in Jewish or Israel related activities...	360	0	10	0
Hillel?				
Chabad?	360	0	10	0
Local Jewish Federation?	360	0	10	0
Synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation?	360	0	10	0
Trip organizer?	360	0	10	0
Jewish Community Center (JCC)?	360	0	10	0
Other Jewish organization?	360	0	10	0
In the past 3 months, were you invited by Birthright Israel NEXT to participate in Jewish or Israel related activities?	363	0	7	0

**Table D: Trip Alumni—Did Not Participate in NEXT (n=370) (concluded)**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Missing (i.e., Missing, Partial, and "No Answer")</b>	<b>Not Applicable (i.e., 0, Skip pattern)</b>
In the past 3 months, how often have you engaged in activities sponsored by... Hillel?	350	0	20	0
Chabad?	349	0	21	0
Local Jewish Federation?	345	0	25	0
Synagogue, temple, minyan, havurah, or other Jewish congregation?	350	0	20	0
Trip organizer?	345	0	25	0
Jewish Community Center (JCC)?	343	0	27	0
Other Jewish organization?	355	0	15	0
Have you heard of Birthright Israel NEXT?	370	0	0	0
In the past 12 months, about how many Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings or events have you attended in your area?	274	0	96	0
Which of the following are the primary reasons for why you have not participated in any Birthright Israel NEXT activities, meetings, or events in the past 12 months?	205	0	69	96
How many of your close friends are Jewish?	364	0	6	0
How many of the people on your bus were you friends with before the trip?	370	0	0	0
Whether they were on a NEXT-staffed bus trip (administrative data)	370	0	0	0