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News Release

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To: **All Media**

JEWISH FEDERATION TO CONDUCT COMMUNITY NEEDS RESEARCH STUDY TO INFORM FUTURE PROGRAM AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh announced a major community-wide study of Jewish life and needs in the greater Pittsburgh area Jewish community. Planning for the study will start immediately.

The purpose of the study, the first such effort since 2002, will be to estimate the current number and geographic distribution of individuals and households in the greater Pittsburgh community who identify as Jewish and to collect data on community members' behaviors and attitudes about Jewish practice and about the Jewish community.

The study will reveal where Jews are living within Pittsburgh as well as what are the behaviors and attitudes of community members throughout the greater Pittsburgh area. Questions addressed will include, "How do Jewish Pittsburghers understand their Jewish identities? How do they connect (if at all) with organized Jewish institutions? What do they expect, need and want from our Jewish community?"

The answers to these questions and others will enhance the community's ability to plan for the future by focusing on the most pressing communal needs. The community study will offer an exhaustive roadmap that will help guide the strategic planning efforts of service providers throughout Jewish Pittsburgh.

Evan Indianer, chair of the Jewish Federation's committee that helps to direct the Pittsburgh Jewish Community Scorecard, commented, "The Community Study is a perfect complement to the research of the Scorecard. It will give us a new perspective on community needs and will equip us with the knowledge to identify any gaps in service and new areas of opportunity."

The Jewish Federation has selected the Marilyn and Maurice Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University's Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) to lead the study. The Community Scorecard committee selected CMJS/SSRI from among seven nationally renowned firms invited to apply as part of a formal request for proposals.

The Jewish Federation's Jewish Community Foundation funded the study to provide relevant data and analytic frameworks that can support informed decision making by the

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Federation and service providers. This data and analysis will improve planning, service delivery and fundraising and marketing as well as help Jewish agencies to connect people to Jewish community life.

Deborah Baron, Chief Operating Officer of the Jewish Federation, said, “The community study will illuminate our path to becoming a community of excellence, showing us areas of strength and sources of opportunity. Today, we don’t know what we don’t know.”

The study will focus both on the Jewish needs—religious, educational and social—and on the health and human service needs of the community, enabling service providers to adjust to new realities and to plan for the long term.

The Jewish Federation also plans to incorporate the study’s data and analysis into the Pittsburgh Jewish Community Scorecard, an online tool for people and organizations to review data about Jewish community performance. Using the Scorecard, programs and institutions can assess progress toward becoming a more vibrant, thriving, and engaged Jewish community. The data collected will add directly to the Pittsburgh Jewish Community Scorecard as it defines, spurs and measures the definition of a community of excellence.

The Pittsburgh Jewish Community Scorecard committee plans follow-up research studies that will continue to measure community members’ behaviors and attitudes every two years. The first, primary study will serve as a baseline. Subsequent studies will track the fluctuation of those measures.

The Cohen Center is a nationally renowned research firm directed by Dr. Leonard Saxe, Ph.D. In addition to conducting Jewish community studies throughout the United States, the center’s research areas include Jewish education, Israel travel (e.g., Birthright Israel) and national demography (e.g., the American Jewish Population Project). The center recently concluded Jewish community studies for Jewish Federations in Seattle and Boston.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, one of 151 independent Federations associated with The Jewish Federations of North America, raises and allocates funds to build community locally, in Israel and around the world. With the vision of a thriving, vibrant and engaged Jewish community, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh aims to carry out its work in the context of cooperation and inclusiveness. For more information, visit www.jfedpgh.org.

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