

## **After Pittsburgh: A Survey of Action, Plans and Attitudes Towards Synagogue Security and Safety**

Following the October 2018 tragedy in Pittsburgh, a cross-denominational survey of plans, preparedness and aspirations was conducted by the Conservative, Reform and Reconstructing Judaism Movements. Garnering responses from over 360 congregations from across these movements, the survey presents a portrait of synagogues taking action. They are seeking counsel, reviewing policies and improving overall preparedness.

The pages that follow summarize the survey data received from the 154 respondents from United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ)-affiliated congregations. Pertinent observations suggested by the data, are extracted from the full data-set of the survey.

We thank all of the participating congregations for their input, Ms. Amy Asin, VP of the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ), for serving as the survey project coordinator, and Barry Mael, USCJ Senior Director of Kehilla Affiliations and Operations for coordinating the follow-up. We thank Elyssa Diamond for assisting in producing the report, and those who reviewed the data and posited their observations including Howard Goldberg, Joshua Hanft, Martin Kunoff, Helene Santo, and Mitchell Weiss, FSA.

**November 2018**

## ABOUT THE SURVEY METHODOLOGY

On Wednesday, October 31, the North American Association of Synagogue Executives (NAASE), the National Association for Temple Administration (NATA), the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) and Reconstructing Judaism (RJ) jointly sponsored a timely and actionable webinar that featured experts from Secure Community Network (SCN) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The survey being addressed here is associated with this webinar, which reached some 1300 attendees from the leaderships of Conservative, Reform and Reconstruction synagogues across North America.

All webinar participants, as well as other congregational representatives across the three Movements, were invited electronically to participate in this survey. Garnering responses from over 360 congregations from across these movements, the survey presents a portrait of synagogues seeking counsel, taking action, reviewing plans and improving readiness. The pages that follow summarize the survey data received from the 154 respondents from USCJ-affiliated congregations. Respondents were Executive Directors, Rabbis, Presidents and Board members.

Respondents were given the option to identify themselves and their congregations at the end of the survey. The data presented on the following pages reflect the responses to many of the key questions, but may not individually total to 154 in all cases, owing to incomplete responses. Where a response field was left blank, wherever reasonable, the reviewers presumed the response to be in the negative or “Don’t Know.” Similarly, percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding. With approximately 25% of the Movement-affiliated congregations represented by the data, the results are presented as found, as likely to be representative of the full group.

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## SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS OF NOTE

### What Are We Seeing, Overall?

Being proactive, we are more motivated by concern and preparedness than by the experience of past incident. Less than 5% of respondents have experienced threats or incidents in the past year, though this varied by location, and almost two-thirds report that such incidents have occurred in neighboring Jewish organizations in the past year.

- ▶ Most respondents currently have security staff during large events and High Holiday services.
- ▶ Many respondents utilize security guard services (private companies or off-duty police officers) for High Holidays and special events, and many indicate plans to increase and to supplement with a variety of hardware systems and awareness initiatives. 34% report currently using security guards during the week or on Shabbat.
- ▶ Security measures are diverse and have increased in the past year (see Appendix A).
- ▶ 58% of respondents have early childhood programs and 91% have religious schools on premises.
- ▶ 69% of respondents have some type of current threat-response plans in place.
- ▶ Respondents with dynamic plans seem to balance event prevention with security/safety responses.

### How Do We Feel About the Cost of Security Initiatives?

- ▶ The low-cost or no-cost security elements, which include planning and review, communications with stake-holders and constituents and thoughtful awareness by staff and attendees, appear to be the most popular among our *kehillot*.
- ▶ More than one-third of respondents spend under \$5000 annually, and another one-third spend over \$20,000 annually (see Appendix B).
- ▶ More than half of respondents absorb the cost of security in their operating budget.
- ▶ Revenue sources include operating allocations, mandatory assessments and donations. No information is available about the application for and granting of government or agency security grants.
- ▶ There seems to be a positive correlation between congregation size and overall security budget, both in urban and suburban areas (see Appendix B).

## What Are We Doing to Provide Enhanced Security and Safety?

- ▶ Some 78% of the congregations have increased their funding for security over the past year.
- ▶ About half of respondents with security guards report that the guards are armed with visible weapons and another 18% report that their guards are armed, but not visibly.
- ▶ Most respondents are considering increasing training and drills for staff and lay leadership, including, but not limited to, security committees, ushers and *Gabbaim*.
- ▶ 80% of respondents prohibit attendees (non-security guards) from carrying firearms, but most post no signs.
- ▶ While there was an increase in the presence of security at almost every level, only two congregations now have 24/7 security guards (up from none a year ago).

## What Are We Not Doing Yet?

- ▶ Less than half of respondents have security at all the times that children are on site (33.8%) or whenever the building is open (15%), but this is an increasing trend and is by far the largest cost factor.
- ▶ The majority of respondents have not reviewed security plans with a paid consultant. Less than 25% of respondents have reviewed security plans with local law enforcement.
- ▶ While most respondents have a current plan for responding to a threat, two-thirds of these respondents do not practice these drills, nor do they train their staff.
- ▶ Less than 43% of respondents have annual security training.
- ▶ Less than 34% of respondents conduct annual drills. The best plans can't be effective if they can't be implemented by the staff, volunteers and attendees.
- ▶ Respondents with existing security plans don't seem to be reviewing/updating them annually.
- ▶ Most respondents did not have communications with the congregation prior to the Pittsburgh shootings, though they seem to be doing so more often now.
- ▶ Jewish institutions don't seem to be in regular communication with each other with regard to security planning advancements or techniques.

## POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS AND CONSIDERATIONS

These notes summarize comments and suggestions from reviewers of the response data and are offered for your consideration. Needs and current preparedness vary, but these reminders are worthy of noting by all of us.

- ▶ If your *kehilla* leadership and staff haven't yet been in touch with local law enforcement agencies, please do so immediately.
- ▶ It is imperative that every *kehilla* has an emergency plan that includes annual training and drills for lockdown, active shooter, fire evacuation, etc. These plans should be developed, reviewed and updated annually with local law enforcement and/or other security consultants.
- ▶ Make sure you have designated primary and secondary contact people for emergencies and communication with law enforcement and that all phone numbers, cell numbers and email addresses are current and accurate.
- ▶ Establish and test the communication methods to contact your membership in case of emergency.
- ▶ If you don't yet have a security committee or task force in operation, do so now. If assistance is needed, obtain the information and guidance to set them up from USCJ or NAASE, or from some of the sources shown on pages 18-19.
- ▶ Be sure to stay connected to other *kehillot* and to Jewish communal organizations to become aware of possible grants and funding opportunities, such as Homeland Security grants or state/province and municipality funds. Be sure to also consider Federations and charitable foundations.
- ▶ Make sure your budget committee and financial officers are considering the best ways to include or increase security funds within the operating budget. Determine if supplementary security assessments are needed. Advance planning is the key!

## RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY QUESTIONS

### 1. Have you had threat or vandalism against your congregation in the past?

In the last 3 months	7
In the last 6 months	7

### 2. Has a nearby Jewish organization have a threat or vandalism in the past?

Never:	48	32.7%
Longer than a year ago:	41	27.9%
One year ago:	31	21.1%
Six months ago:	9	6.1%
Three months ago:	18	12.2%

### 3. What security measures did you have in place one year ago?

Security guard(s) whenever children are on-site?	45	29.2%
Security guard(s) during large events?	87	56.5%
Security guard(s) during High Holiday services?	137	89.0%
Security guard(s) whenever the building is open?	15	9.7%
Security guard(s) 24/7	0	0%
Cameras?	131	85.1%
Intercom for primary entrances?	125	81.2%
Key entry for primary entrances?	63	40.9%
Keycard entry for primary entrances?	61	39.6%
Fingerprint entry for primary entrances?	0	0%
Parking/car passes?	15	9.7%
Other?	(See Appendix A)	

### 4. What security measures do you have in place now?

Security guard(s) whenever children are on-site?	52	33.8%
Security guard(s) during large events?	105	68.2%
Security guard(s) during High Holiday services?	132	85.7%
Security guard(s) whenever the building is open?	22	14.3%
Security guard(s) 24/7	2	1.3%
Cameras?	133	86.4%
Intercom for primary entrances?	127	82.5%
Key entry for primary entrances?	63	40.9%
Keycard entry for primary entrances?	64	41.6%
Fingerprint entry for primary entrances?	4	2.6%
Parking/car passes?	14	9.1%
Other?	(See Appendix A)	

**5. What security measures are you considering adding next year?**

Training for staff?	133	86.4%
Drills for staff?	118	76.6%
Adding our first unarmed security guard?	5	3.2%
More hours for existing security guard(s) or more unarmed guards?	20	13%
Adding our first armed security guard?	19	12.3%
More hours for existing armed security guard(s)/more armed guards?	55	35.7%
Intercom system?	26	16.9%
Keys for entry?	2	1.3%
Key cards/key fobs?	40	26.0%
Fingerprint scanner?	5	3.2%
Parking/car passes?	10	6.5%
Cameras?	53	34.4%
Gates/fences?	26	16.9%
Panic buttons?	64	41.6%
Other?	(See Appendix A)	

**6. If you have a security guard, is the guard armed?**

Yes, and that it is visible	58	50.9%
Yes, and that it is hidden	21	18.4%
No	35	30.7%

**7. Do you allow people (other than security guards) to have firearms in your building?**

We prohibit, but there are no signs	85	63.9%
We prohibit, and there are signs	22	16.5%
We allow/encourage?	26	19.5%

**8. When was the last time you reviewed your security plan with local law enforcement?**

Not recently?	16	10.4%
Past month?	44	22.8%
Past three months?	12	7.8%
Past six months?	15	9.8%
Past year?	35	22.9%
Past two years?	16	10.5%
Longer than two years ago?	15	9.8%

**9. Have you had your security plans reviewed by a paid consultant in the past year?**

Yes	42	27.3%
No	102	66.2%
Don't Know	10	6.5%

**10. Do you have a current plan for responding to a threat on your property?**

Yes	106	69.3%
No	39	25.5%
Don't Know	8	5.2%

**11. Do you have practice drills for your staff and participate at least annually?**

Yes	52	34.0%
No	95	62.1%
Don't Know	6	3.9%

**12. Is your staff trained at least annually in security procedures?**

Yes	66	42.9%
No	81	52.6%
Don't Know	7	4.5%

**13. Have you paid for increased security?**

From operations?	82	53.2%
Endowment?	4	2.6%
Established a Security Fund or by a donor?	18	11.7%
Added Security Fee/Special Assessment?	38	24.7%
NOT increased funding?	34	22.1%

**14. Approximately how much are you spending annually on security?**

< \$5,000	51	36.2%
\$5,000 - \$10,000	27	19.1%
\$10,000 - \$20,000	21	14.9%
\$20,000 - \$50,000	18	12.8%
\$50,000 - \$100,000	12	8.5%
>\$100,000	12	8.5%

**15. Previous to the shooting in Pittsburgh, have you had special communications with your congregation in the past six months about security?**

Written communications?	50	32.5%
Congregation meeting?	12	7.8%
Meeting for parents in Early Childhood Center or Religious School?	14	9.1%
None?	79	51.3%

**16. How many households in your congregation?**

<= 75	7	4.9%
76-150	14	9.7%
151-250	22	15.3%
251-500	56	38.9%
501-750	26	18.1%
751-1000	9	6.3%
1001-1500	8	5.6%
>1500	2	1.4%

**17. Location of your congregation?**

Urban	48	33.1%
Suburban	96	66.2%
Rural	1	0.7%

**18. Do you have an Early Childhood Center on-site?**

Yes, we run it?	59	40.7%
Yes, run by another organization?	24	16.6%
No?	62	42.8%

**19. Do you have a Religious School?**

Yes?	132	91.0%
No?	13	9.0%

**APPENDIX A**

**Security Measures in Place: One Year Ago and Now**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>ONE YEAR AGO</b>	<b>CURRENTLY</b>
Security guard(s) whenever children are on-site?	45 (29.2%)	52 (33.8%)
Security guard(s) during large events?	87 (56.5%)	105 (68.2%)
Security guard(s) during High Holiday services?	137 (89.0%)	132 (85.7%)
Security guard(s) whenever the building is open?	15 (9.7%)	22 (14.3%)
Security guard(s) 24/7?	0 (0%)	2 (1.3%)
Cameras?	131 (85.1%)	133 (86.4%)
Intercom for primary entrances?	125 (81.2%)	127 (82.5%)
Key entry for primary entrances?	63 (40.9%)	63 (40.9%)
Keycard entry for primary entrances?	61 (39.6%)	64 (41.6%)
Fingerprint entry for primary entrances?	0 (0%)	4 (2.6%)
Parking/car passes?	15 (9.7%)	14 (9.1%)

Other?

- ▶ Panic buttons (18)
- ▶ Alarm system - various types (5)
- ▶ Key fob ID cards for all members (5)
- ▶ Entry code at primary entrance (3)
- ▶ 24/7 doors locked - admittance by screening process (2)
- ▶ Security film on windows (2)
- ▶ Bollards near front of building (2)
- ▶ Building-wide intercom (2)
- ▶ Door monitors who open doors electronically upon visual or verbal ID
- ▶ Garage buzz-in system
- ▶ Magnetic lock at entrance
- ▶ More outside lighting
- ▶ Motion detectors Outside doors locked
- ▶ Driver’s license scanning of visitors
- ▶ Shoot detectors Front door camera, non-recording 4-digit touchpad entry and intercom/camera for visitors
- ▶ Metal detectors for HHDs; wands for other major events
- ▶ Building locked with buzzer system when Hebrew School in session.
- ▶ Caretaker/volunteers act as door monitors/greeters when doors are unlocked
- ▶ DHS grant for security cameras, in building and outside
- ▶ “Secure” doors for street doors

**APPENDIX B**

**Annual Security Spending | 11/2018**

**ANNUAL SECURITY SPENDING BY DIFFERENT SIZE CONGREGATIONS: URBAN**

	<=75	76-150	151-250	251-500	501-750	751-1,000	1,001-1,500	>1,500	
<\$5,000	2	4	8	4				1	19
\$5-10,000		1		5					6
\$10-20,000			1	4		1	1		7
\$20-50,000				4	3	2			9
\$50-100,000					2	1			3
>\$100,000						1	2		3
	2	5	9	17	5	5	3	1	47

**ANNUAL SECURITY SPENDING BY DIFFERENT SIZE CONGREGATIONS: SUBURBAN**

	<=75	76-150	151-250	251-500	501-750	751-1,000	1,001-1,500	>1,500	
<\$5,000	4	3	8	14	3				32
\$5-10,000	1	4	2	13					20
\$10-20,000		1	2	4	6				13
\$20-50,000				4	4	1			9
\$50-100,000				2	5	2			9
>\$100,000					2	1	5	1	9
	5	8	12	37	20	4	5	1	92

**ANNUAL SECURITY SPENDING BY DIFFERENT SIZE CONGREGATIONS: RURAL**

	<=75	76-150	151-250	251-500	501-750	751-1,000	1,001-1,500	>1,500	
<\$5,000									0
\$5-10,000					1				1
\$10-20,000									0
\$20-50,000									0
\$50-100,000									0
>\$100,000									0
	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

NOTE: ONLY 140 OF THE 154 SURVEY RESPONDENTS SUPPLIED DATA ON ALL THREE ITEMS

**SECURITY SPENDING PER CONGREGANT**

Cong Size Low	0	76	151	251	501	751	1001	1500
Cong Size High	75	150	250	500	750	1000	1499	
<b>Midpoint of Cong Size</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>200.5</b>	<b>375.5</b>	<b>625.5</b>	<b>875.5</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>1750*</b>
Spending Low	0	5000	10000	20000	50000	100000		
Spending High	5000	10000	20000	50000	100000			
<b>Midpoint of Spending</b>	<b>2500</b>	<b>75000</b>	<b>15000</b>	<b>35000</b>	<b>75000</b>	<b>125000**</b>		

**NOMINAL CONGREGATION SIZE**

	<b>37.5</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>200.5</b>	<b>375.5</b>	<b>625.5</b>	<b>875.5</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>1750 *</b>
<b>\$2,500</b>	\$ 66.67	\$ 22.12	\$ 12.47	\$ 6.66	\$ 4.00			
<b>\$7,500</b>	\$ 200.00	\$ 66.37	\$ 37.41	\$ 19.97				
<b>\$15,000</b>		\$ 132.74	\$ 74.81	\$ 39.95	\$ 23.98			
<b>\$35,000</b>				\$ 93.21	\$ 55.96	\$ 39.98		
<b>\$75,000</b>				\$ 199.73	\$ 119.90	\$ 85.67		
<b>\$125,000</b>					\$ 199.84	\$ 142.78	\$ 100.00	\$ 71.43

NOTE: The report editors are attempting to obtain a reasonable "snapshot" of the population being sampled, despite the inability to determine the dispersion within each interval. Accordingly, in this display, each survey response interval is represented by its midpoint. For the maximum spending and the maximum congregation size intervals, editorial prerogatives suggest the representative values shown there.

\* Congregations size in excess of 1500 is approximated at 1750

\*\* Spending in excess of \$100,000 is approximated at \$125,000

Total Spending                    \$2,540,000  
 Total Congregants                41,403  
**Avg Spend/Cong                    \$61.35**

Avg Cong Spend                    \$27,609  
 Avg Membership                    450  
**Avg Spend/Cong                    \$61.35**

Median Cong Spend                \$7,500  
 Median Membership                375.5  
**Median Spend/Cong                \$19.98**

## **YOUR KEHILLA IS NOT ALONE: A SAMPLING OF AVAILABLE DIVERSE SAFETY AND SECURITY PLANNING RESOURCES**

Resources are available year-round and in preparation for special circumstances through USCJ and NAAE. Of special note are the agencies and resources shown below.

### **Local Law Enforcement Agencies**

Develop an on-going relationship with the police department, sheriff's office or other law enforcement agencies in your municipality, so that they get to know you and the congregation's needs, as you get to know them. They are superb resources in best practice development and in cutting-edge procedures.

### **The Secure Community Network**

USCJ is a member organization of the [Secure Community Network](#) (SCN), which makes all of its resources available to the leadership of our *kehillot*. The SCN, operating under the leadership of the Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, is the most comprehensive center for information, news and resources on security issues impacting synagogues and other Jewish organizations. It is also a co-moderator of the Synagogue Security Forum on The Commons (*see additional information about this forum below*).

### **Anti-Defamation League (ADL)**

The ADL is known for its monitoring of anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, advocating for remedy and education locally and nationally. You can find their resources on their [website](#) or at a local branch office.

### **The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

[FEMA](#) makes available checklists and other materials.

### **The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**

[DHS](#) offers materials dealing with school and synagogue security, and information about security grants at.

### **The Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness**

Canada's federal agency provides its [Crime Prevention Tools and Resources](#), with an assortment of additional materials shown there, as well as descriptions of its federal grant application process for its Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program (SIP).

### **National Community Security Program (Canada)**

[NCSP](#), in partnership with the Jewish Federations of Canada, provides dedicated, responsive and sustained security leadership and capacity, and serves as the national security representative of the organized Canadian Jewish Community.

### **The USCJ Synagogue Presidents Club on The Commons\***

All presidents, presidents-elect and immediate past presidents are encouraged to join [their space](#) on USCJ's digital community platform where they can discuss issues and share resources in confidence with their peers from across North America. Once you are a member of The Commons, presidents, presidents-elect, and immediate past presidents can request to join this club.

### **The USCJ Synagogue Security Forum on The Commons\***

One of over 30 forums on The Commons, [this is a space](#) where all congregational leadership from across North America can ask security related questions of one another, discuss security concerns, watch recordings of recent security webinars, and be alerted to new security resources. SCN is a co-moderator of, and monitors, this forum.

### **The USCJ Synagogue Security Resource Library on The Commons\***

[A curated library of security resources](#) for congregational leadership developed by the SCN, USCJ, and other partner organizations. New materials will be added to this section of our resource library on The Commons regularly.

\*To learn how to register for and become a member of The Commons, [download the guide](#) that will walk you through the process of registering for The Commons and setting up your user profile.

### **The USCJ and NAASE websites**

[The USCJ website](#) includes safety and security resources, such as study guides, links and more, that are open to all *kehilla*

All NAASE members have access to the [Administrative Resource Center \(ARC\)](#), which includes past webinars and shared resources:

### **The USCJ Bi-Weekly Newsletter, "Leadership Matters"**

Subscriptions to this electronic weekly newsletter can be arranged for through your [KRM](#).

***For additional information and guidance, please contact your KRM.***

