

**Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust  
Residing in the United States**

**Estimates & Projections: 2010 - 2030**

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# Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust Residing in the United States

## Introduction

In order to assist in planning for services for Holocaust survivors, this report presents estimates of the number of surviving Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust in the United States as of 2010, and then includes projections for the survivor population in the US through 2030.<sup>1</sup>

- In 2010, 127,300 Nazi victims are estimated to be residing in the United States.
  - By mid-2010, all will be at least 65 years old; approximately 75% will be at least age 75.
- In just one decade, by 2020, just under half of the total estimated 2010 number of U.S. Nazi victims are projected to still be living — 67,100. By 2020, all will be at least age 75; over half (57%) will be at least age 85.

In order to highlight the needs of Holocaust survivors now, and the increased needs of Nazi victims in the future, estimates and projections from 2010–2030 of the number of Nazi victims below poverty levels as well as the number disabled and in need of additional special assistance, are also included.<sup>2</sup>

## Definitions

For this analysis of Jewish victims of the Nazi regime, a Nazi victim is a Jew, born before mid-1945, who lived in a country at a time when it was under a Nazi regime, under Nazi occupation, or under the regime of Nazi collaborators — or a Jew, born before mid-1945, who fled from potential Nazi rule or Nazi occupation to a country or region not under Nazi rule or occupation. “Flight” cases include those who fled shortly before their country was invaded, those who fled during the Nazi invasion of their country, and those who fled shortly after their country was occupied.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The authors wish to thank The Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany [the Claims Conference] for underwriting a significant part of this project, and for their support and advice during the analysis. All estimates and projections are the responsibility of the authors, however, and reflect their analysis of the data — the estimates and projections do not necessarily reflect official Claims Conference positions.

<sup>2</sup>The estimates and projections for United States survivors of the Holocaust are part of the authors’ in-progress analysis of Nazi victims in the United States, Canada, Central & Eastern Europe and Western Europe for the Claims Conference.

<sup>3</sup> Definition based on Jacob B. Ukeles (consultant) June 28, 2000 report for the Planning Committee of The Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, “A Plan for Allocating Successor Organization, p. 14. Report is available online at the Claims Conference website: <http://www.claimscon.org/index.asp?url=allocations/plan> The Nazi victim definition used by Ukeles and the authors of this paper derives from the original estimates of the number of Nazi survivors worldwide for the Israeli government developed by the Spanic Committee in Israel in 1997, and reflects the current Claims Conference definition.

## Methodological Caution

A methodological note of caution is required.

Estimates of the number of Nazi survivors are estimates, and must be interpreted as such. The data summarized are highly logical, statistically calculated estimates and projections of the numbers of Holocaust survivors residing in the United States, but despite painstaking efforts to make the estimates/projections as accurate as possible, they remain estimates with potential flaws and assumptions, not only in the data sources, but also (potentially) in data interpretations and data extrapolations.

**It is critical to note that a national census of Jewish Nazi victims does not exist, nor is there a comprehensive, accurate database which includes all US-resident Holocaust survivors.**

## Data Sources

Data on Holocaust survivors living in the United States are primarily based on two random sample surveys of Jewish respondents — the National Jewish Population Survey of 2000-2001 (NJPS) and the New York Jewish Community Survey of 2002. As a result, the base data used for the estimates/projections in this paper are subject to all the qualifications about the precision and accuracy of random-sample-based survey research — especially given the somewhat limited samples of interviewed Holocaust survivors.

On a much more positive note, both surveys asked Jewish respondents who were born and living in Europe during the Nazi period a specific series of questions which directly reflected the Claims Conference definition of a Nazi victim, specifically trying to determine whether the European-born respondent had lived in an area under Nazi control, or had fled from Nazi occupied areas during the Nazi era.

The NJPS 2000-2001 survey asked:

“Between 1933 and 1945 did you live in a country that was under Nazi rule, or under the direct influence of the Nazis?” [IF NO:] “Between 1933 and 1945 did you leave a country or region under Nazi rule or direct influence because of Nazi occupation of the area you were living in at the time?”

The New York survey in 2002 asked a similar, briefer question of survey respondents about themselves:

“...Between 1933 and 1945, did you live in or flee from a country that was under Nazi rule, Nazi occupation, or under the direct influence or control of the Nazis?”

In addition, in New York, similar questions were asked about spouses, or other household members of an appropriate age and country of birth. For spouses, the question was:

“...Between 1933 and 1945, did he/she [SPOUSE] live in or flee from a country that was under Nazi rule, Nazi occupation, or under the direct influence or control of the Nazis?”

Finally, even if the respondent was not born in Europe or was younger than age 56-57, if there were other household members (grandparents, etc.) who were that age and were born in Europe, a similar question was used:

“Between 1933 and 1945, other than you and your (spouse/ partner), did any of the other adults in the household live in or flee from a country that was under Nazi rule, Nazi occupation, or under the direct influence or control of the Nazis?”

In both the national study and the local New York study, specific survey answers permitted unambiguous assignment of survey respondents to the Nazi survivor (or non-survivor) category. In contrast, many international migration-based estimates of Holocaust survivors must rely upon broad estimates of survivors based upon Jewish populations by year of birth, country of birth, year of migration, etc. to inform their estimates of Holocaust survivors.

### Interview Numbers: NJPS and New York

In the National Jewish Population Survey of 2000-01 (NJPS), 146 randomly-generated interviews with survivors age 55 or older (out of over 4,500 extensive completed Jewish household interviews) provided the base data to scientifically estimate the number and characteristics of Nazi survivors in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Since the NJPS survey only asked about the randomly-selected adult Jewish respondent, and not about other household members who might have been Nazi victims; the NJPS data does not contain information about multiple victim households.

In the New York Jewish Community Study of 2002, the U.S. area with the largest concentration of survivors in the United States, survey data was collected on 412 Jewish Nazi victims from 319 randomly selected Jewish households.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>See the data summary in *Nazi Victims Residing in the United States*, Report 2, April 2004, United Jewish Communities Report Series on the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-2001, Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz, Lorraine Blass, Danyelle Neuman, one of a series of Special Reports on the NJPS data: <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/details.cfm?StudyID=307>. In the 2000-01 NJPS study, data on Nazi victims was collected from 146 survivors, who indicated that they had either lived in a European/former Soviet Union nation that was under Nazi control from 1933-1945, or that they had fled from a nation in Europe/FSU because it was under Nazi control.

<sup>5</sup> The eight-county area included the five boroughs of New York City, as well as the continuous New York state counties of Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester. Details on Nazi victim data from the 2002 New York study are available at the North American Jewish Data Bank in a report by Ukeles Associates, Inc. [Jacob B. Ukeles and Ron Miller] to UJA-Federation of New York, *The Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002, Special Report: Nazi Victims Living in the New York Area: Selected Topics*, November 2003. <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Studies/details.cfm?StudyID=358>

The New York study collected data from 319 Jewish households about 412 Nazi victims. In 161 households, the respondent was the only Nazi survivor; in 85 households, the respondent and another victim (usually the spouse) were both survivors; in 73 households, the respondent was not a victim, but another household adult had been a Holocaust survivor, having lived in the area or fled from the area because of Nazi occupation.

## **US Nazi Survivor Estimates 2010-2030 Total Number of Survivors, and Gender**

Table 1 summarizes estimates and projections of the number of Nazi victims residing in the US in 2001, and then from 2010 through 2030. Survivor estimates in this report are based upon a re-analysis of both the NJPS 2000-2001 and the New York 2002 reports and data files.

- **In 2010, the estimated number of Nazi survivors of the Holocaust living in the United States will be approximately 127,300**, having declined from the authors' adjusted estimate of 161,500 Jewish Nazi victims residing in the United States in 2001.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The estimated number of survivors living in the United States as of mid-2001, when NJPS was completed, has been recalculated by the authors of this paper to 161,500. All estimates and projections from 2010-2030 are based on this revised number for 2001, which the authors believe better reflects reality than the published NJPS number. A number of factors led to the revised 2001 estimate.

First, please note that the special report on US Nazi victims issued by NJPS (see footnote 4 for complete reference to the volume authored by Kotler-Berkowitz, et al.) published an estimate of 122,000 Nazi victims, which has become the number associated with NJPS Nazi victims since the report's release in 2004. However, NJPS analysts have noted in their "methodology series" that the best estimate of the number of Nazi victims from NJPS based upon their data is probably **142,000**, when individuals of Jewish background who were born in Europe during the Nazi era, but were not asked the Nazi victim questions are included in an analysis (see "NJPS Methodology Series: Comparing Estimates of Holocaust Survivors: NJPS and the Claims Conference," [www.ujc.org/page.aspx?id=46751](http://www.ujc.org/page.aspx?id=46751) ). While the 122,000 estimate has become the commonly cited NJPS estimate, the 142,000 better reflects the final NJPS definition of who is counted as a Jew.

Second, NJPS had serious (and well publicized) methodological, data collection and estimation problems, which most analysts of NJPS have concluded have resulted in an undercount of the US Jewish population, although the relationships between variables (such as age patterns, age relationships to Jewish behaviors, etc.) have generally been assessed as accurate. In fact, NJPS analysts recognized the potential undercount issue when they first issued the basic summary of results from NJPS 2000-2001 in 2003-2004 (*Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population*, updated report, January 2004, p.2): <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/studyNJPS2000.asp?sid=17980&tp=1>

Third, related to the undercount issue, the NJPS data file has been re-analyzed for this project, using FIPS (county) code data from the NJPS study for the eight-county New York area. This analysis indicated that the NJPS estimate of the number of Jewish households and Jewish persons living in the New York area was significantly lower than the New York 2002 study estimate for the same eight counties — while the estimate of 1,412,000 Jewish persons in the 2002 study was almost identical to a 1991 study of the same 8-county New York area which estimated 1,420,000 Jews.

The NJPS data file indicated that approximately one-third of all Nazi victims in the U.S. resided in the New York area. Since the New York 2002 data estimated 55,000 survivors in the eight-counties (including questions on dual survivor households), and the eight-county area represented approximately one-third of Holocaust survivors in the NJPS data file, the approximate number of United States survivors in 2000-01 should have been at least 160,000 based on the ratio of New York and the USA survivors. The estimate used in this paper for United States Nazi victims in 2001 is 161,500, as noted in Table 1. Please note that the real increase in the NJPS 2001 estimate by the authors of this paper is from 142,000 in the NJPS methodology discussion, and not the much more publicized 122,000 number.

Table 1<sup>7</sup>  
**Estimates of Holocaust Survivors, United States, 2001-2030**  
**Total Number of Survivors, by Gender**

Year	ALL Survivors United States	Male Survivors United States	Female Survivors, United States	% Females of All Survivors
2001	161,500	61,900	99,600	61.7%
2010	127,300	48,500	78,800	61.9%
2015	98,400	36,200	62,200	63.2%
2020	67,100	23,300	43,800	65.3%
2025	36,800	11,600	25,200	68.5%
2030	15,800	4,500	11,300	71.5%

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Finally, this report's mid-2001 estimate of 161,500 Nazi victim survivors living in the United States is much closer to the estimates calculated and published separately by Sergio DellaPergola and Ira Sheskin, although lower than those estimates. DellaPergola estimated 174,000 Shoah survivors were living in the United States in 2003 ("Review of Relevant Demographic Data on World Jewry," Final Report Presented to the Hon. Secretary Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Chairman, The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, November 2003); [www.claimscon.org/index.asp?url=demographics](http://www.claimscon.org/index.asp?url=demographics).) DellaPergola used an "intermediate extensive definition" of survivors (see page 13 of his report for the definition used and relevant discussion) which slightly expanded the definition of survivor for the United States. In a 2004 report, Sheskin presented an estimate of the U. S. Jewish Nazi victim population as 175,000 (Ira M. Sheskin, originally titled "Estimates of the Number of Nazi Victims and Their Economic Status," but later renamed "Estimating the Number of Nazi Victims in the U.S. Using NJPS 2000-01"), Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies, University of Miami, May 2004.

<sup>7</sup> In all tables, estimated numbers have been rounded for presentation. All percentage calculations are based, however, on the original, non-rounded data. The percentage calculations have been presented in decimal format and not rounded to the appropriate whole number percentage (as is typically done with non-census-based data) in order to allow others to utilize the data more effectively.

- By 2020, the number of survivors in the United States is projected to have declined to 67,100, a number almost half (47%) the 2010 estimate as mortality increases among an inexorably aging cohort.<sup>8,9</sup>
- By 2030, only 15,800 Nazi victims are projected to still be alive in the United States - a total decline from 2020 of 51,300 survivors (a 76% projected decline in one decade).
- Male-Female patterns: approximately three-of-five Holocaust survivors in the United States are females — reflecting national and international gender-related mortality differences between men and women:
  - In 2010, just under 62% of all Nazi survivors in the United States are females;
  - The proportion of females increases to almost 72% by 2030.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>In all tables/estimates, an assumption of zero net mobility among nations has been made to simplify calculations. While zero net migration may be an unlikely scenario, the magnitude of in-and-out migration by survivors among the world's nations has slowed considerably recently, and the direction of migration is nowhere as predictable as it was a decade or two ago, especially in the current period of severe economic uncertainty.

<sup>9</sup> Please note that mortality rates used for the projections in all tables in this report are based upon published mortality rates from 2003-2005 for Jews living in Israel who emigrated from Europe, or indirectly through America, by appropriate age categories (55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80-84, and 85+), subdivided into differing male and female mortality. These rates (*Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2007*, Table 3.26) have changed minimally, if at all, from earlier publications, and from later updates. Since the Israel data provides the largest and most accurate base for calculating mortality of the Nazi victim cohort, these rates have been used for all projections in this report.

The projections in all tables applied the Israel mortality data to the age-and-gender specific data on U.S. survivors in the NJPS data file, after the total number of survivors was upwardly adjusted as described previously. For purposes of calculating mortality within the age and gender groups noted above, the distribution of survivors within each five year cohort was assumed to be equal within each year.

<sup>10</sup>The percentage of female survivors in the NJPS 2002 data file was 61.7% and has been used for the projections in this paper; by 2010, the projected percentage was 61.9% females. As a comparative estimate, and corroboration of the utility of the NJPS data for relationships of variables, the authors analyzed (unpublished) Israeli data provided to us by Jenny Brodsky (Myers – JDC – Brookdale Institute, Israel). Those data indicate that 60.9% of survivors in Israel in 2010 are projected to be females, almost identical to the US 61.9% estimate; as such, the decision to use the excellent Israel age-gender mortality data for the US projections seems validated.



## **US Nazi Survivor Estimates 2010-2030 Total Number of Survivors, and Age Patterns**

**Table 2** provides projections by **age** for the US Nazi survivor cohort from 2001 to 2030.

- In 2001, of the estimated 161,500 U.S. survivors:
  - 60% were under age 75,
  - 35% were between 75 and 84, and
  - Only 5% were at least age 85 (number of survivors age 85+ estimated 7,900).
- By 2010, the impact of survivor aging will be remarkable;
  - The total number of Jewish survivors 85 and over is projected to increase to an estimated 29,300.
  - By 2010, the most elderly survivors (85+) represented 23% of the total Nazi victim cohort in the United States, as compared to 5% in 2001.
- By 2020, 57% of all survivors will be at least 85 years of age:
  - 38,200 Nazi victims at least 85 years of age are projected to be living in 2020, slightly more than the estimated 36,300 in 2015.
- By 2025, 85% of all survivors will be at least 85 years old:
  - However, the absolute number of Jewish victims at least age 85 is projected to have declined to 31,200 by then.
- By 2030, all remaining survivors (projected number: 15,800) will be 85 or older.

Table 2  
**Estimates of Holocaust Survivors, United States, 2001-2030**  
**Total Number of Survivors, by Age**

<b>Year</b>	<b>ALL Survivors United States</b>	<b>Under Age 75 United States</b>	<b>Ages 75-84 United States</b>	<b>Ages 85+ United States</b>
<b>2001</b>	161,500	97,200	56,400	7,900
<b>2010</b>	127,300	31,100	66,900	29,300
<b>2015</b>	98,400	6,100	56,100	36,300
<b>2020</b>	67,100	*	29,000	38,200
<b>2025</b>	36,800	*	5,600	31,200
<b>2030</b>	15,800	*	*	15,800

## Poverty: US Nazi Survivors: 2010-2030

**Table 3** summarizes estimated numbers of United States survivors who are projected to be below U.S. poverty thresholds from 2001 through 2030.

In 2001, an estimated 59,300 Nazi victims were estimated to be at or below the U.S. official poverty line — approximately 37% of all survivors.<sup>11</sup>

- In 2010, 46,700 survivors (of a total of 127,300) are estimated to be at or below the U.S. official poverty threshold line.

As the number of survivors declines due to mortality, the absolute number of survivors below the poverty line also declines:

- By 2020, approximately 25,000 United States survivors are projected to live below the poverty line.
- By 2030, 5,900 Nazi victims who survive (of 15,800) are projected to be in serious financial difficulty.

However, the U.S. Census Department has issued a report in September, 2009 which may foreshadow an official change in poverty threshold/guideline definitions, revising the 1955-based concepts currently in use, which essentially have focused only on the annual cost of groceries. The proposed new standards (based on a National Academy

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<sup>11</sup>Data on poverty among U. S. Nazi victims is based on NJPS 2000-01, which included a series of questions designed to assess poverty using federal poverty threshold guidelines combining age of respondent, annual household income and household size. For example, during the period that NJPS interviewing was being conducted, the federal poverty line for an elderly person (65 years of age or older) living alone was income of \$8,000/year compared to \$9,000 a year for a non-elderly person living alone; The federal poverty threshold for two-person households was an income of \$10,000 or \$11,000/year, for elderly and non-elderly persons respectively. For three-person households, the federal poverty line was an income of \$13,000/year, regardless of the age of household members. All households/persons with incomes below the threshold were officially defined as poor.

The official NJPS report on *Nazi Victims Residing in the United States* reported an overall poverty rate of 25%. However, while more than 30% of survivors refused to (or could not) provide sufficient income information to be classified as above or below the 100% poverty threshold, these “insufficient information” households were **not** excluded from the analysis; implicitly, the 25% reported poverty rate assumed that all of these victims were above poverty.

The NJPS data file has been reanalyzed for this report. Excluding the more than 30% of NJPS victim respondents who did not provide sufficient income data during the voluntary interview and whose “poverty” status is therefore unknown, NJPS poverty rates have been recalculated by the authors of this paper: 33% of male survivors and 39% of female survivors were below the 100% poverty thresholds defined above in mid- 2001. The gender-specific percentages (33% males, 39% females) have been used for Table 3 calculations. This percentage has been assumed to remain at approximately 37% for all projected years, since insufficient interviews exist for simultaneous age-and-gender analysis of poverty. The overall effective poverty rate for all survivors is 37% compared to the 25% reported in the NJPS Nazi victim report.

of Sciences publication originally issued in 1995)<sup>12</sup> would include the cost of health care, transportation, and geographic variations in the cost of living within the United States. For seniors, the effective poverty rate would almost double<sup>13</sup> under the proposed new methodology for all Americans. It is hazardous to estimate the impact of the proposed new regulations on the percentage of Nazi victims in the United States deemed to be poor, since the specific questions/thresholds (especially health care costs) would impact different victim groups differently, but the proposed changes in poverty threshold guidelines would increase the projected numbers of impoverished survivors summarized in Table 3 significantly — perhaps by at least 50%, if not considerably more.

Table 3  
**Estimates of Holocaust Survivors, United States, 2001-2030**  
**Number of Survivors Below Poverty Thresholds**

<b>Year</b>	<b>ALL Survivors United States</b>	<b>Survivors Below Poverty Threshold Standards</b>
<b>2001</b>	161,500	59,300
<b>2010</b>	127,300	46,700
<b>2015</b>	98,400	36,200
<b>2020</b>	67,100	24,800
<b>2025</b>	36,800	13,700
<b>2030</b>	15,800	5,900

<sup>12</sup> See the NAS website for details and follow-up analysis: [www.nationalacademies.org](http://www.nationalacademies.org). The original monograph was a 1995 report on “Measuring Poverty: a New Approach.”

<sup>13</sup> Among the many articles focusing on these recent developments, a useful summary can be found at: [www.pacdc.org/index.php/2009/09/new-formula-could-have-drastic-changes-in-national-poverty-rates/](http://www.pacdc.org/index.php/2009/09/new-formula-could-have-drastic-changes-in-national-poverty-rates/)

## Disability: US Nazi Survivors: 2010-2030

**Disability projections** for Jewish survivors of the Holocaust resident in the US are summarized in Table 4. Disability is an especially serious issue among Nazi victims. A vast literature on survivors — Canadian, United States and worldwide — convincingly argues that the traumas of the Nazi Holocaust period have resulted in significantly higher rates of health problems, emotional problems and disability rates among victims than among comparably-aged non-victim groups. The NJPS special report on Nazi victims noted that disability rates among victims of the Holocaust were at least 50% higher than among Jewish non-victims of similar ages.<sup>14</sup>

A Claims Conference review of disability-related issues, compiled by Madeleine Tress, summarizes and refers to many studies which support the high rates of disability in the survivor population.<sup>15</sup> Tress noted:

... Nazi victims [compared to] other elderly are more likely to suffer from lingering effects of infectious diseases acquired during World War II, have higher rates of osteoporosis and hip fractures, have more functional limitations, and more psychiatric disorders, including clinical depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The data in Table show an increase in the percentage of Nazi victims from 2001 through 2030 who are projected to be disabled. The rates used for disability projections are based on a re-analysis of NJPS data on surveyed Nazi victims:<sup>16</sup> 10.8% for victims under age 65, 35.6% for those 65-74, 45.1% among those 75-84 and 57.4% among those at least 85 years old. As Nazi victim population ages, increased disability is a certainty — with increasingly severe disability strongly likely to increase.

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<sup>14</sup> See *Nazi Victims Residing in the United States*, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Madeleine Tress, "Jewish Nazi Victims in the United States: a Review of the Literature," The Claims Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, "April 2007. The most recent comprehensive review of social welfare issues and Holocaust survivors from the Claims Conference is "A Review: Social Welfare for Jewish Nazi Victims," paper read at the Holocaust era Assets Conference, Prague, June 2009: <http://www.claimscon.org/forms/prague/social-welfare.pdf>

<sup>16</sup>The disability rates for the U.S. survivor population are based on Nazi victim responses to the 2001 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS). The NJPS questions broadly defined disability for anyone in the household: "Do you [or anyone in the household] currently have any kind of physical, mental, or other health condition that limits employment, education, or daily activities, and has lasted for at least six months? (INTERVIEWER: IF NECESSARY ADD: Daily activities include walking, climbing stairs, dressing, eating, and carrying)."

Unfortunately, a clinician-applied analysis of ADLs (activities of daily living) for Nazi victims does not exist in the United States. The NJPS question on "health condition" is the most useful proxy available; 54% of respondents in victim households with a disabled person reported that the person needed supervision on a daily basis, while another 30% reported supervision was needed "several times a week."

The NJPS-based rates are higher than those reported for other Jewish respondents of similar age, not surprising given the special problems faced by survivors of the Holocaust, including the former Soviet Union survivors who suffered "double" victimization under Nazism and Communism before they emigrated to the U.S.

Table 4  
**Estimates of Holocaust Survivors, United States, 2001-2030**  
**Number of Survivors with a Disabling Health Condition**

Year	ALL Survivors United States	Survivors With a Disability	Percentage of all Survivors Who Are Disabled
2001	161,500	54,300	33.6%
2010	127,300	58,100	45.6%
2015	98,400	48,300	49.0%
2020	67,100	35,000	52.1%
2025	36,800	20,400	55.5%
2030	15,800	9,100	57.4%

- In 2001, an estimated 54,300 U.S. Jewish survivors were deemed to have a disability.
- By 2010, as the victim population ages, the total number of disabled Nazi victims is projected to have increased to 46% of all the survivors, to an estimated 58,100 survivors.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Partial support for the disability rates used in Table 4 projections comes from The American Community Survey by the Census Department. The ACS reported relatively high “disability” rates for data collected from 2005-07 among American seniors [see U. S. Census, American Community Survey [www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www) for study descriptions]. Data from report *S 1801, Disability, Characteristics* indicated senior disability rates as follows: “Any Disability”: 40.9% overall. Senior females were only slightly more likely to be disabled than senior males: 42.8% vs. 38.3%. The component variables included: sensory disability, physical disability, mental disability, self-care disability, and “go-outside-home-disability. The American Community Survey, reflecting contemporary methods for surveying the U. S. population and contemporary questions for measuring disability, reinforced the authors’ decision to use data based on the NJPS broad “disability” question for this paper, especially given the enormity of the problems that have faced these survivors for over half-a-century. Indeed, the NJPS rates could even be underestimates of the prevalence of disabling conditions among Nazi victims.

- By 2020, while the absolute number of survivors with a disability decreases to 35,000, 52% of all survivors may need disability-related assistance, given the likelihood of continued normal health deterioration as survivors age —compounded by the health problems associated with living under the Nazi regime (and then Communism for many FSU survivors);
- By 2030, when all survivors are at least 85, 57% of all survivors are projected to have health conditions that are disabling, the absolute number is projected to have declined to 9,100.

### Severe Disability

The literature on Nazi victims indicates that a significant portion of victims who are disabled, are, in fact, severely disabled. Since social services demands are considerably higher for the severely disabled than for the somewhat disabled, Table 4 presents a hopefully useful and accurate estimate of the number of Nazi victims who are projected to be severely disabled in 2010 through 2030 — based on data on Holocaust survivors in Israel which seems to mesh with whatever limited US-based data is available.

First, unfortunately, quantitative assessments of disability and severe disability among Holocaust victims within the United States do not exist. Only one question was asked of Nazi victims — a specific question asking about the severity of these disabling conditions was not asked:

“Do you [or anyone in the household] currently have any kind of physical, mental, or other health condition that limits employment, education, or daily activities, and has lasted for at least six months? (INTERVIEWER: IF NECESSARY ADD: Daily activities include walking, climbing stairs, dressing, eating, and carrying).”

However, a follow-up question that asked about the frequency of care that the disabled person in the household required provides some insights as to the relative portion of the disabled who are severely disabled:

How often, if at all, does your condition [the health condition of person in household] require supervision or assistance? Is it...Daily, several times a week, about once a week, less than once a week?

**Nazi victim respondents to the NJPS survey reported that just above half of the disability-producing health conditions required daily assistance.** The overall percentage reporting daily assistance was required was 54%; moreover, it varied little by the age of the Nazi victim: 55% of respondents under age 75 reported that daily assistance was needed, compared to 53% of those age 75 and older.

In contrast to the limited US-based data are limited, detailed, quantitative data on the proportion of Nazi survivors with disabilities/severe disabilities is available from Israel, where national laws define levels of disability. Basic disability among Nazi victims (and other Israelis) is often called the 91% benefit level. Two much more serious disability benefit levels are defined as the 150% and 168% benefit level in Israel; these two higher-level disability categories will be interpreted as “severely disabled” in this report.

Israel-based data provided by the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute<sup>18</sup> indicate that the NJPS-based rough estimate that 50% of disabled Nazi victims are severely disabled is relatively accurate.

- The percentage of disabled Israel-residing survivors who are estimated to be severely disabled ranges from 45% in 2010 to a projected 54% by 2025.
- Male rates and female rates are projected to be similar, though not identical.
  - In 2010, 44.5% of disabled female Nazi survivors living in Israel are projected to be severely disabled, compared to 46.0% of comparable males;
  - In 2025, the proportion of the disabled who are severely disabled (and eligible to receive assistance at the higher levels) is projected to be 54.9% of the females and 51.3% of the males.

Table 5 summarizes estimates of the number and percentage of disabled US-resident survivors (as summarized in Table 4) who are estimated to be severely disabled and to require the highest level of home-based social services assistance in the future.<sup>19</sup>

- In 2010, just over 26,000 Nazi victims are estimated to be severely disabled (46% of a total of approximately 58,000 disabled survivors);
- Between 2010 and 2030, the absolute number of severely disabled Nazi survivors in the US declines — but the proportion of the disabled estimated to be severely disabled will increase slowly, but consistently, to 59% by 2030.

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<sup>18</sup> Data analyzed from Israel focus on Nazi victims “living in the community.” The analysis summarized above for gender patterns is based on a data file sent to the authors by Jenny Brodsky. A recent published report on the Israeli data is available at: the Claims Conference website: <http://www.claimscon.org/for-agencies/studies/>

The Israeli data is somewhat complicated by the exclusion from the analyses of a portion of the disabled whose incomes are too high to allow for national assistance with their disabilities; despite this exclusion, the Israeli data do allow for a rough estimate of the percentage of disabled US Nazi survivors who are severely disabled.

<sup>19</sup> While the percentage of the disabled who are likely to be severely disabled among Nazi victims residing in the US is clearly a rough approximation, the authors view it as sufficiently accurate to be useful for planning for social services assistance as increasing percentages of Nazi victims are at least age 80 or 85. Until a comprehensive study of US Nazi victims is conducted, with clinical health assessments as part of the study, Table 5 remains a proxy for a more scientific estimate.

The percentages “severely disabled” used in the right-most column of Table 5 reflect the Israeli data for men and women combined. These percentages result in estimates that are roughly similar to those that would have been obtained if the estimate of the percentage of disabled US survivors had been based on the 54% of disabled US survivors in NJPS who needed daily assistance — the Israeli-based calculations result in slightly lower estimates until the last two time periods. The estimated percentage for 2030 was extrapolated by the authors from the published data which ended with 2025.



Table 5

**Estimates of Holocaust Survivors, United States, 2010-2030**

**Number and Percentage of Disabled Survivors Who May Be Severely Disabled**

Year	Estimated Number of US Survivors With a Disability	Estimated Number of US Survivors With a Severe Disability	Percentage of all Disabled Survivors Estimated to Be Severely Disabled	Percentage of All US Survivors Estimated to be Severely Disabled
2010	58,100	26,100	45.0%	20.5%
2015	48,300	22,600	46.9%	23.0%
2020	35,000	17,200	49.2%	25.6%
2025	20,400	11,000	54.0%	30.0%
2030	9,100	5,400	59.0%	33.9%

The total number of survivors — disabled and not disabled — for each time period in Table 5 has already been presented in Table 4.

The far-right column of Table 5 summarizes the percentage of all US Nazi survivors who are estimated to be severely disabled (at each time period listed).

- In 2010, 20% of all US-resident survivors are projected to be severely disabled;
- By 2020, the percentage increase to 26%;
- By 2030, of the projected 15,800 survivors still remaining, approximately one-of-three (33% = 5,400) are likely to be severely disabled.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> As in all other tables, percentages are calculated from non-rounded numbers; all estimated numbers have been rounded for presentation. The column labeled "percentage of all disabled survivors estimated to be severely disabled" is based on Israeli data; all other numbers and percentages reflect US data.

## Disability and Poverty: US Nazi Survivors: 2010-2030

Finally, Table 6 summarizes projections of the number of the neediest US Nazi survivors — survivors below the poverty threshold line who are also severely disabled.<sup>21</sup>

- In 2010, of the projected total of 127,300 survivors, 10,100 are estimated to be dually challenged — severe disability combined with incomes that are below the federal poverty threshold levels. These poor and severely disabled survivors represented 8% of all US survivors.
- By 2030, 13% of all US survivors (2,100 of the remaining 15,800) are projected to be both poor and severely disabled.

Table 6

### Estimates of Holocaust Survivors, United States, 2010-2030 Number and Percentage of Disabled and Impoverished Survivors

Year	ALL Survivors United States	Estimated Number of Survivors With a Severe Disability	Estimated Number of Poor Survivors With a Severe Disability	Percentage of All Survivors Estimated to be Poor and Severely Disabled
<b>2010</b>	127,300	26,100	10,100	8%
<b>2015</b>	98,400	22,600	8,700	9%
<b>2020</b>	67,100	17,200	6,600	10%
<b>2025</b>	36,800	11,000	4,300	12%
<b>2030</b>	15,800	5,400	2,100	13%

<sup>21</sup> Calculations used for Table 6 reflect an assumption of a 38.6% poverty rate among severely disabled survivors, strongly supported by NJPS 2000-01 data. The overall NJPS-based poverty rate of 36.6% was remarkably consistent among disabled and non-disabled survivor households; **38.6% of disabled NJPS survivor households** were below the poverty threshold criteria compared to 35.7% of the non-disabled survivors. While there is no way to assume that poverty rates will remain constant, there is no way to predict the direction of the increase/decrease, nor as noted in the prior sections, whether the criteria for defining poverty among all US households will be changed, to reflect the US Census report which implemented an alternative poverty calculation model, albeit a decade and a half after the National Academy of Sciences report.