

Most Significant Unreached People Group Communities in Metro NY

Revised January 2021 by Chris Clayman

Below is a prioritized list of church planting needs in Metro New York among unreached people groups—those groups who have little or no indigenous community of Christians to spread the gospel to their people and others. We assume that, at least in the first generation of Christians, peoples-specific churches should be started that will most effectively spread the gospel to the rest of their people and near-culture people groups. We also assume that the gospel will spread most rapidly among a people if the churches started primarily consist of converts and not merely Christian-background people with a similar culture or language. As a result, we have not counted churches as started among a people group, even if a church has started that primarily consists of people from the same country and speak the same language, if the church primarily has Christian-background members who are removed from the dominant religious and social structure of a given people group (e.g., there are around a dozen Pakistani churches in Metro New York but only a handful of Muslim-background Christians in these churches because they are so far removed from the dominant Pakistani Muslim culture).

The [Global Gates UPG Matrix](#) was used to sort the list below in prioritized order of where, as of October 2018, cross-cultural missionaries are most needed in Metro New York. [The UPG Matrix](#) assigns an overall significance score based on a matrix of weighted factors including a people group's global status of evangelical Christianity and the global significance of a people group's presence in a city, along with typical categories of population size, amount of Christians, amount of ministry being done, and amount of churches started. In effect, the matrix prioritizes frontier people groups with the smallest Christian presence globally (e.g., small Hasidic Jewish groups with few believers score higher than large Bangladeshi people groups who have movements to Christ in their homeland). Furthermore, the matrix prioritizes unreached people group communities who have the least amount of missionaries and same-culture believers, even if those communities are smaller than others (e.g., Punjabi Sikhs in NYC score higher than Punjabi Sikhs in Vancouver because of the more developed missionary work in Vancouver). To be included in the list, an unreached people group community must number at least 5,000 in a metropolitan area. If you have information you would like to add about an unreached people group, please fill out [this questionnaire](#).

1. [**Satmar Jewish, Pop: 156,744, Williamsburg \(Brooklyn\), Kiryas Joel \(Palm Tree, NY\), no church, little engagement.**](#) Satmars are the largest Hasidic Jewish community in Metro New York and their worldwide headquarters are in Metro New York. Fifty-five percent of the world's Satmars live in Williamsburg or Kiryas Joel, and they are not supporters of the nation of Israel.



2. **Syrian Jewish, Pop: 75,000, Ocean Parkway (Brooklyn), Deal (NJ), no church, little engagement.**

Most of the approximately 75,000 Syrian Jewish people in Metro New York (community estimate) live in the Ocean Parkway area of Brooklyn. This is the largest Syrian Jewish community in the world. They mainly intermarry with other Syrian Jews, and their contact with non-Jews is minimal. When Syrian Jewish people from Brooklyn started prospering economically, the wealthy built summer homes in Bradley Beach, NJ, and later in nearby Deal. The Syrian Jewish population in Deal swells exponentially each summer with seasonal residents from Brooklyn, and several thousand Syrian Jewish people live in the Deal area year-round.



3. **Chabad-Lubavitch Jewish, Pop: 27,103, Crown Heights (Brooklyn), no church, little engagement.**

There are around 30,000 Lubavitch Jews in Metro NY (community estimate), and the headquarters of the Chabad-Lubavitch Empire is on Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights. The Chabad-Lubavitch are missionary Jews spreading Orthodox Judaism worldwide with a budget of over \$1.5 billion a year. Their headquarters in Brooklyn, lack of Christian presence, and network throughout the world make them a high priority for focused church planting.

4. **Skver Jewish, Pop: 15,000, New Square (Ramapo, Rockland County, NY), no church, little engagement.**

There are around 20,000 adherents worldwide in the Skver Hasidic dynasty whose headquarters are in New Square. Around 5,500 Jews (Jewish Population in the US Study, 2011), mainly Skver, live in New Square.

5. **Bobover Jewish, Pop: 50,000, Borough Park (Brooklyn), no church, little engagement.**

Numbering around 50,000 in Metro New York (community estimate), the Bobov Jews are one of the largest Hasidic dynasties based in New York City. Borough Park is home to the largest number of Orthodox Jews in Metro New York.

1. **Vizhnitz Jews, Pop: 15,000, Kaser (Ramapo, Rockland County, NY), no church, little engagement.**

Around 6,100 Jews (Jewish Population in the US Study, 2011) live in the village of Kaser, with almost all of them being of the Vizhnitz Hasidic Dynasty. Vizhnitz is the 2nd largest Hasidic dynasty in Israel where its headquarters are located. There are at least three villages/towns in Metro New York that are almost 100% Jewish.



Kaser is one of them, alongside Kyrias Joel and New Square. Others are being developed.

2. **Gorsky-Kavkazi Jews, Pop: 10,000, Flatbush (Brooklyn), no church, little engagement.** Around 10,000 Gorsky-Kavkazi Jews live in the Ocean Parkway area of Brooklyn (community estimate), which makes up about 10% of their worldwide population. Around 50,000 Gorsky-Kavkazi Jews live in Israel.

3. **Mashadi Persian Jews, Pop: 5,000, Great Neck (Long Island, NY), no church, little engagement.** Around 4,000 Mashadi Jews live in Great Neck alone (community estimate). They are very insular and have little interaction with other Jews, much less non-Jews. The Metro New York Mashadi community makes up around 25% of the Mashadi Jews in the world. Around 10,000 Mashadi Jews live in Israel, but the Great Neck community is more connected with one another and intent on preserving Mashadi Jewish heritage and culture.

4. **Breslov Jews, Pop: 5,000, Borough Park and Williamsburg (Brooklyn), Lakewood Township (NJ), no church, little engagement.** Although Breslov are considered Hasidic Jews, they are often looked down upon by other Hasidim due to their permissive nature. Although they only number around 5,000 in Metro New York, they produce material that is distributed regularly throughout the Hasidic communities from their publishing center in Williamsburg.

5. **Afghan Hindu/Sikhs, Pop: 6,000, Hicksville (Long Island, NY), Flushing (Queens), no church, little engagement.** There are around 6,000 Afghan Hindu/Sikhs in Metro New York (community estimate) with the largest concentration in Hicksville. The Afghan/Hindi population in Metro New York is about the same size as the population left in Afghanistan, since most of them fled from Taliban rule to Pakistan or India.

6. **Soninke/Serecole, Pop: 15,000, Highbridge (Bronx), Harlem (Manhattan), no church, some engagement.** Although one effort has begun recently in Mali, there is no solid Soninke church anywhere in the world. Around 15,000 Soninke from Mali, the Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, and France live in New York City (community estimate). There are around 3 million Soninke in the world and an estimated 100 scattered Christians.

7. **Tehrani Persian Jews, Pop: 10,000, Great Neck (Long Island, NY), no church, little engagement.** Numbering around 10,000 in Metro New York (community estimate) and mainly concentrated in Great Neck, the Tehrani Jews are more open than the Mashadis to interacting with other Jews—and possibly non-Jews. Los



Angeles/Beverly Hills, California has the largest Tehrani Jewish population in the United States.

8. **Gerer Jews, Pop: 5,000, Borough Park (Brooklyn), Monsey (Rockland, NY), no church, little engagement.** The Ger are the largest Hasidic Jewish community in Israel, but they also have communities in Borough Park and Monsey.

9. **Mandinka, Pop: 5,000, Highbridge (Bronx), no church, little engagement.** This is the largest community of Mandinka in North America. Most Mandinka have never heard of a Mandinka Christian, and there are no Mandinka churches in North America. Many Mandinka already speak English which makes them the most accessible West African Muslim immigrant group to North American Christians.

10. **Wolof, Pop: 20,000, Harlem (Manhattan), no church, some engagement.** There are around 20,000 Wolof from Senegal and the Gambia in Metro New York (community estimate), a majority of whom adhere to the Mouride Sufi Islamic sect. The Mouride parade in NYC attracts more people than any other African parade in the city. 116th Street in Harlem is often dubbed “Little Senegal.” Out of the 4.5 million Wolof in the world, there are less than 300 Christians.

11. **Fouta Tooro, Pop: 8,000, Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn), no church, some engagement.** The Fouta Tooro come from Senegal and Mauritania and have around 8,000 representatives in Metro New York. The area around Fulton and Franklin in Bedford-Stuyvesant has one of the two largest concentrations of African Muslims in the city. Out of the nearly 3 million Fouta Tooro in the world, there are less than 100 Christians.

12. **Tibetan, Pop: 10,000, Jackson Heights (Queens), no church, little engagement.** Over 10,000 Tibetans live in Metro New York (community estimate), with the largest concentration in Jackson Heights. New York is host to the largest population of Tibetans outside China, India, and Nepal, and one-third of Tibetans in the US live in Metro New York. The activism on behalf of Tibet and influence of Tibetans based out of NYC also makes engagement with Tibetans in NYC increasingly significant.

13. **Fulbe Futa, Pop: 5,000, Morrisania (Bronx), no church, some engagement.** There are an estimated 5,000 Fulbe Futa Muslims in Metro New York (community estimate) with this area of the Bronx hosting their community association and largest mosque in the city. The Fulbe Futa are from Guinea and are part of the ethnic group that helped spread Islam to other parts of West Africa. Staunchly Muslim, there are over 3 million Fulbe Futa in the world with only around 50 known Christians.



14. **Maninka, Pop: 5,000, Concourse (Bronx), no church, little engagement.** There are over 3 million Maninka in the world, who mainly come from Guinea but also Mali and Sierra Leone. There is little focused work on Maninka in New York City, and the Maninka are proud of their Islamic heritage.
15. **Bukharan Jews, Pop: 60,000, Rego Park (Queens), one church, some engagement.** The largest concentration of Bukharan Jews in the world is in the Forest Hills and Rego Park neighborhoods of Queens and no church has been started among them. There are workers among them and some Christians. Around 60,000 Bukharans live in Metro New York (community estimate) with a majority living in this area of Queens.
16. **Shaikh, Pop: 60,000, Jackson Heights (Queens), no church, little engagement.** There are 580,000 Indians in Metro New York (ACS 2010), and 10-15% of these are Muslim. There are over 60,000 Indian Muslims in the Metro New York (community estimate) based on these figures, and Jackson Heights serves as their main commercial node.
17. **Yemeni Arabs, Pop: 20,000, Bay Ridge (Brooklyn), no church, some engagement.** The percentage of Muslims (99%) that make up the population of Yemen is one of the highest in the world, and the country of Yemen has been particularly resistant to Christian missionaries. Around 20,000 Yemenis live in Metro New York (community estimate), with the Bay Ridge area hosting approximately 4,000 of those. Yemenis own a lot of delis and businesses where it is easy for outsiders to engage with them.
18. **Gujarati, Pop: 150,000, Edison (New Jersey), some churches, some engagement.** The Iselin/Metuchen/Edison area is home to one of the largest Indian concentrations in Metro New York. A great majority of these in Iselin are Gujarati Hindus. Around 150,000 Gujaratis live in Metro NY (community estimate), based off of ACS 2010 info on Indians. The largest concentration of Gujaratis in North America is in the Edison/Iselin/Metuchen area.
19. **Jula, Pop: 5,000, Harlem (Manhattan), no churches, some engagement.** The Jula are proud Muslims who mainly come from Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. There are only a few known believers among this people group in the city.
20. **Punjabi Sikhs, Pop: 80,000, Richmond Hill (Queens), one church, some engagement.** Sikhism is the world's fifth largest religion. Around 80,000 Sikhs live in Metro New York (community estimate) and a large concentration of these live in Richmond Hill. Sikhs are often open to talking about spiritual



matters.

21. **Bambara, Pop: 5,000, Harlem (Manhattan), no churches, some engagement.** The Bambara come from Mali, West Africa. Although they were only 1% Muslim at the start of the 20th century, they are over 90% Muslim today. Most of the non-Muslim Bambara are animists.

22. **[Afghan Muslims, Pop: 18,000, Flushing \(Queens\), no church, little engagement.](#)** There are around 18,000 Afghan Muslims in Metro New York (community estimate), with Flushing having the largest concentration. Several Afghan mosques are in Flushing. Only a couple of known Muslim-background Afghan Christians exist in Metro New York.

23. **[Israeli Sabra Jews, Pop: 40,000, Kew Gardens Hills \(Queens\), no church, little engagement.](#)** Up to 200,000 Israelis live in Metro New York (community estimate). However, only those who were born in Israel are called Sabras, who typically have a stronger national identity than other Jews who arrived in Israel later in life. Sabras are spread throughout Metro New York, and Kew Gardens Hills is just one of many places with a small concentration.

24. **[Kosovar Albanians, Pop: 40,000, Pelham Parkway \(Bronx\), no church, little engagement.](#)** The largest concentration of Albanians in Metro New York is in this area of the Bronx. A majority of them are Kosovar Muslim Albanians, numbering in the tens of thousands (community estimate). Many of them own or work in Italian restaurants throughout New York City. There are only a few known evangelical Christians among Kosovar population in Metro New York.

25. **[Palestinian Arabs, Pop: 40,000, South Paterson \(New Jersey\), Bay Ridge \(Brooklyn\), no church, some engagement.](#)** With little opportunity in the West Bank and Gaza, many Palestinians seek education and better lives in Metro New York. In what were once Arab Christian enclaves, Arab Muslims have now become the most visible Arab presence. There are currently no churches consisting of Muslim-background Palestinians in Metro New York.

26. **[Bosniaks, Pop: 10,000, Astoria \(Queens\), no church, little engagement.](#)** An estimated 10,000 Bosniaks live in Metro New York (community estimate) with Astoria having one of the two largest concentrations (Ridgewood being the other).

27. **[Turks, Pop: 75,000, South Patterson and Cliffside Park \(New Jersey\), Sunnyside \(Queens\), West Haven \(CT\), one church, little engagement.](#)** The largest



concentration of the estimated 75,000 Turks in Metro New York is in South Paterson (community estimate, ACS 2010 reports roughly 37,000 people in Metro NY with Turkish ancestry). The second largest concentration is in nearby Cliffside Park, with Sunnyside, Queens and West Haven, Connecticut also having sizable populations.

28. **Burmese, Pop: 10,000, Prospect Heights (Brooklyn), no church, little engagement.** There are up to 10,000 Burmese Buddhists in Metro New York (community estimate) with this area of Brooklyn hosting their largest temple. Less than 1% of the Burman, or Burmese people, from Myanmar are evangelical Christian.



29. **Moroccan Arab, Pop: 20,000, Astoria (Queens), no church, little engagement.** The growth of Moroccans in Metro New York is largely attributed to new immigration restrictions in France. Many speak multiple languages, welcome cross-cultural relationships, and are open to spiritual conversations. There are few Muslim background Moroccan believers in Metro New York and no established churches.

30. **Pakistani, Pop: 125,000, Midwood (Brooklyn), no church, little engagement.** Up to 30,000 of the estimated 125,000 Pakistani Muslims in Metro New York (community estimate) live in “Little Pakistan” around this area of Coney Island Avenue.

31. **Kazakh, Pop: 5,000, Brighton Beach (Brooklyn), no church, little engagement.** The Central Asian Muslim population is increasing in Brooklyn. Around 5,000 Kazakhs now live in Metro New York, and there are only a couple of known Christians among them.

32. **Russian Jew, Pop: 400,000, Brighton Beach (Brooklyn), Some churches, engaged.** New York is populated by more Russian Jews than anywhere else in the world. These Russian (actually from anywhere in the former Soviet Union) Jews number up to 400,000 in Metro New York (American Jewish Committee 2000), with Brighton Beach being their main enclave.

33. **Egyptian Arab, Pop: 35,000, Astoria (Queens), no church, little engagement.** Up to 60,000 Egyptian Muslims live in Metro New York (community estimate) with Astoria having one of the largest concentrations. A “Little Egypt” has developed around Steinway Street in Astoria. The largest concentration of Egyptians in the US is in Metro New York.



34. **Indian Hindi, Pop: 260,000, Jersey City (New Jersey), Jackson Heights (Queens), some churches, some engagement.** According to Pew Research, around 36% of Indians in the United States are Hindi speakers, which would total approximately 260,000 Indian Hindi in Metro New York. Although their population is large, there is little focused evangelism among Hindi speakers in Metro New York.
35. **Bangladeshi, Pop: 150,000, Jamaica (Queens), no church, some engagement.** Approximately 150,000 Bangladeshi Muslims live in Metro New York (community estimate) and this area of Jamaica has the 3rd largest Bangladeshi concentration in the city. Although many Muslims have reportedly come to faith in Bangladesh, we have not seen the same fruit in NYC as there is still no Bangladeshi church in the city primarily made up of Muslim-background Christians.
36. **Jordanian Arab, Pop: 11,000, Yonkers (Westchester), Van Nest (Bronx), Bay Ridge (Brooklyn), no church, little engagement.** A large Jordanian Catholic and Melkite presence exists in Metro New York while the number of Muslims rises. Settled in Yonkers, its nearby Bronx neighborhoods, and Brooklyn, many Jordanians have had positive experiences with Christian missionaries and locals back home. Few long-term workers focus on reaching Jordanians in Metro New York.
37. **Syrian Arab, Pop: 30,000, Bay Ridge (Brooklyn), no church, some engagement.** The country of Syria is decimated by civil war. Many Syrian Muslims within Metro New York lost family members and possessions. Syrians across the Middle East have encountered followers of Jesus who have given a helping hand and shared the gospel with them, but few workers are engaging Syrians in Metro New York.
38. **Persian, Pop: 35,000, Jamaica (Queens), no church, little engagement.** There are up to 35,000 Persian Muslims in Metro New York (community estimate), with their largest mosque being in this area of Jamaica.
39. **Uzbek, Pop: 15,000, Brighton Beach (Brooklyn), no church, little engagement.** There has been a recent influx of Central Asian Muslims (mainly from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) into this area of Brooklyn and into the Forest Hills area of Queens. Numbers are unknown, but at least several thousand are believed to be present (community estimate).
40. **Lebanese Arab, Pop: 35,000, Bay Ridge (Brooklyn), no church, some engagement.** The Lebanese Muslim population in Metro New York has grown as the Christian community assimilates and moves throughout the country. Lebanese take pride in their Mediterranean heritage and are typically willing to engage new friends. There are few believers from a Muslim background and currently no churches among them.



41. **Sri Lankan Sinhalese, Pop: 7,500, Tompkinsville (Staten Island), no church, little engagement.** Sri Lankans estimate their community numbers around 7,500 people in Staten Island while ACS 2010 counts 999 out of 6,573 Sri Lankans in Metro New York as living in Staten Island. Their presence is very visible in Tompkinsville along Victory Blvd.

42. **Thai, Elmhurst (Queens), several churches, some engagement.** Up to 30,000 Thai live in Metro NY (community estimate, ACS 2010 lists around 12,000). This area of Elmhurst/Jackson Heights is the location of their largest temple and most concentrated population.

