Growth Trends
The population in Massachusetts who identified as having Arabic-speaking ancestry on U.S. Census surveys grew by more than 36% between 2000 and 2013. The number of Massachusetts’s residents who claim an Arab ancestry has more than doubled since the Census first measured ethnic origins in 1980 and is among the fastest growing Arab populations in the country. The Census Bureau estimates that the statewide Arab American population is close to 75,147.*

Immigration
The largest number of new Arab immigrants to Massachusetts came from Morocco, Iraq, and Egypt.

How do Arab Americans Identify Themselves?
Primary Ethnic Identification is derived from responses to the ancestry question on the American Community Survey. Census data on “Arabs” include the responses Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Arab or Arabic, and the following countries collapsed as “Other Arab”: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

We also include Arabic-speaking persons who identify as Assyrian/Chaldean, Somali, or Sudanese, identities that are not aggregated as Arab in Census reports. In Massachusetts, according to the Census Bureau, the largest component of the Arab American community in the state has Lebanese or Egyptian roots. Since 2005, significant increases appear in the number of Massachusetts residents who are of Iraqi or Somali descent.

Where do Massachusetts Arab Americans Live?
Arab Americans in Massachusetts reside in all of the 14 counties in the state.

*Research by AAI and Zogby International suggest that the number above is likely significantly lower than the actual number of Arab Americans in the state. The American Community Survey identifies only a portion of the Arab population through a question on “ancestry.” Reasons for the undercount include the placement of and limit of the ancestry question (as distinct from race and ethnicity), the effect of the sample methodology on small, unevenly distributed ethnic groups; high levels of out-marriage among the third and fourth generations; and distrust/misunderstanding of government surveys among recent immigrants.


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