Arab American Demographics

California

Major communities: Los Angeles-Orange County, San Francisco-Bay Area, Bakersfield

California has a large immigrant community and is diversified. In addition to significant percentages of Egyptians, Assyrians, and Palestinians, 8.1% listed themselves as "Other" -- mainly due to substantial numbers of Yemeni farm workers in the Bakersfield area. Like the Metropolitan New York-Northern New Jersey area, the Los Angeles-Southern California Arab community is not only growing rapidly but also is becoming a major political and cultural center.

TABLE 1: ARAB POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA

STATE	1980 CENSUS	1990 CENSUS	U.S. RANK ARAB POP.	GROWTH: 1980-1990	% + OR -	EST. POP.*
CA	100,972	160,660	1ST	59,689	59.1	560,000

Source: ZOGBY GROUP, 1995

TABLE 2: SAMPLE ANNUAL IMMIGRATION FROM ARAB COUNTRIES (1997)

Total	Gulf	Maghreb	Egypt	Iraq	Lebanon	Syria	Jordan
5244	1186	581	777	733	782	537	648

Source: CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH AND STATE OF RESIDENCE, INS 1997

TABLE 3: % OF POPULATION BY ARAB ANCESTRY/IDENTIFACTION

Arab	Egyptian	Iraqi	Jordanian	Lebanese	Palestinian	Syrian	Other
17%	12%	4%	4%	31%	7%	9%	16%

Source: 1990 CENSUS

ARAB IMMIGRATION (1987-1993)
ENTERING/RESIDING IN STATE

1st -	***California***	***36, 483***

*A Note on Methodology

The above profile of Arab American demographics was compiled by the Zogby Group in Utica, N.Y. (mail@zogby.com) and is based on data from the ancestry question in the U.S. Census (1990), the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and best on-the-ground estimates compiled after years of visiting, working in, interviewing leaders in, and observations of over 100 Arab American communities.

The significant discrepancy between community estimates and census figures relates to several factors. Census data on the Arab population are derived from a question on ancestry asked only of a sample of the total population, a methodology that negatively impacts smaller groups. The undercount is also higher in urban areas where many clusters of Arab Americans reside, and among immigrants who are more distrustful of government surveys and/or have a language barrier. Some persons of Arab descent are hesitant to identify their ethnicity due to perceived negative stereotypes and prejudice. Finally, the multiple ancestries common among 4th and 5th generation Arab Americans also contribute to the non-response to this question that only tabulates up to two ancestry groups per respondent.