



# Arab American Demographics Virginia



*Major communities: Richmond-Tidewater, Northern Virginia*

Virginia has the highest percentage of Palestinians of the reviewed states. Their numbers are nearly the same as the numbers of Syrians. On the other hand, like many Southern states, Virginia has an old first wave community of Lebanese- 61.8% of which report multiple ancestry.

TABLE 1: ARAB POPULATION IN VIRGINIA

<u>STATE</u>	<u>1980 CENSUS</u>	<u>1990 CENSUS</u>	<u>U.S. RANK ARAB POP.</u>	<u>GROWTH: 1980-1990</u>	<u>% + OR -</u>	<u>EST. POP.*</u>
<b>VA</b>	<b>13,665</b>	<b>25,783</b>	<b>11<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>12,118</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>77,350</b>

Source: ZOGBY GROUP, 1995

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

<u>Total</u>	<u>Gulf</u>	<u>Maghreb</u>	<u>Egypt</u>	<u>Iraq</u>	<u>Lebanon</u>	<u>Syria</u>	<u>Jordan</u>
<b>1,280</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>138</b>

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

TABLE 3: % OF POPULATION BY ARAB ANCESTRY/IDENTIFICATION

<u>Arab</u>	<u>Egyptian</u>	<u>Iraqi</u>	<u>Jordanian</u>	<u>Lebanese</u>	<u>Palestinian</u>	<u>Syrian</u>	<u>Other</u>
<b>16%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>

Source: 1990 CENSUS

### A Note on Methodology\*

The above profile of Arab American demographics was compiled by the Zogby Group in Utica, N.Y. ([mail@zogby.com](mailto: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.