

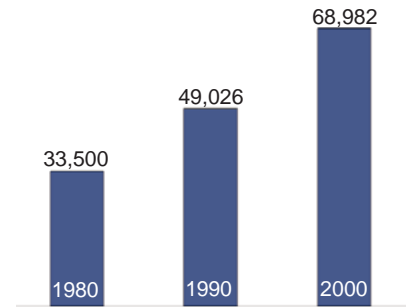


State's Rank by Arab American Population: **6**  
 Estimated Arab American Population: **220,000\***

Illinois is home to the sixth largest Arab American community in the U.S. It is one of the most diversified by ancestry sub-group; it is one of the few states where persons of Lebanese and Syrian descent are outnumbered by those whose ancestry originates in Iraq, Palestine and Jordan. Metropolitan Chicago hails a growing number of businesses and organizations serving the social and cultural needs of the community.

## Growth Trends

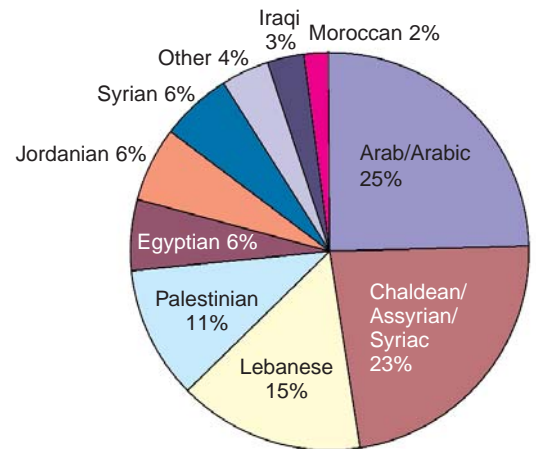
The population who identified an Arabic-speaking ancestry in the U.S. Census grew by more than 40% between 1990 and 2000. Since ancestry was first tabulated by the Census in 1980, the number of Illinois residents who claim an Arab or Chaldean/Assyrian background has more than doubled. It is estimated that the statewide population, adjusting for underreporting,\* is close to 220,000.



Source: 1980, 1990, and 2000 U.S. Census

## How Do Arab Americans Identify Themselves?

**Primary ethnic identification** is derived from responses to the ancestry question on the long (sample) form of the 2000 U.S. Census. 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.



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

We also include Arabic-speaking persons who identify as Assyrian/Chaldean, Somali or Sudanese, identities which are not aggregated as Arab in Census reports. Surprisingly the smallest percentages in the state are Lebanese (15%) and Syrian (6%). In Illinois, the older Lebanese and Syrian population has been surpassed by the large and growing second wave Chicago-based community which features significant percentages of Assyrians, Palestinians and Jordanians. The Chicago area is home to one of the largest Palestinian communities in the country, with many choosing to identify as Arab or Arabian.

## Immigration

Based on a sample year of 1997, the **largest number of Arab immigrants to Illinois** come from Jordan (including Palestinians with Jordanian passports), Iraq and Syria. Immigrants from the Gulf region originate from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The Maghreb region includes Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia.

### Immigrants by country:

Jordan	584
Iraq	320
Syria	183
Egypt	115
Lebanon	83

### By region:

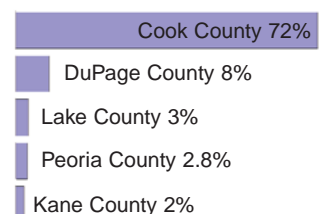
Gulf	177
Maghreb	121

Source: Illinois Immigrants Admitted by Country of Birth and State of Residence, INS 1997

## Where Do Illinois Arab Americans Live?

Arab Americans can be found in **71 out of a total 92 counties** in Illinois, but eight out of ten of those who claim an Arab or Assyrian ancestry reside in the metropolitan counties of Cook and DuPage.

### Top Five Counties



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

\*AAI reports estimates by Zogby International whose research projects population figures at least three times that of census data. The decennial Census identifies only a portion of the Arab population through a question on "ancestry" on the census long form. Reasons for the undercount include the placement of and limits 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 more recent immigrants.