

# Virginia

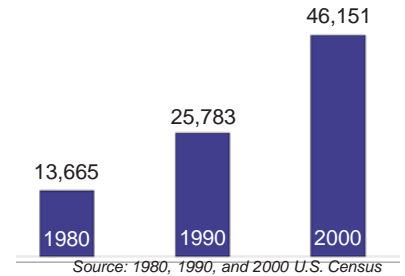


State's Rank by Arab American Population: **11**  
 Estimated Arab American Population: **135,000\***

Virginia is home to a growing number of Arab Americans, with the vast majority residing in the northern suburbs. Descendants of the first wave of Lebanese immigrants also live in the Tidewater and Richmond areas. North Africans are settling in Virginia and have doubled in ancestry identification since the last census.

## Growth Trends

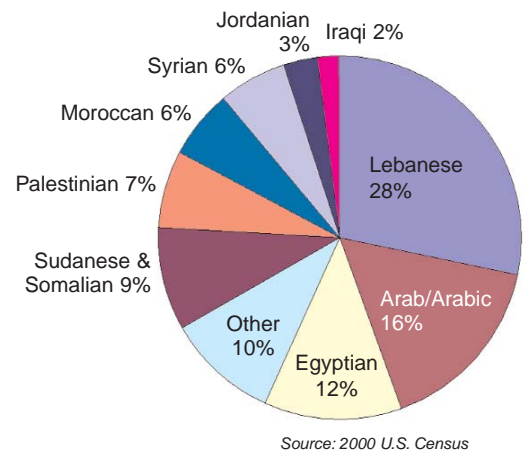
The population who identified an Arabic-speaking ancestry in the Census **grew by more than 80% between 1990 and 2000**, one of the largest in the country. The number of Virginians who claim Arab ancestry has increased four fold since the census of 1980. It is estimated that the statewide population, adjusting for underreporting,\* is close to 135,000.



## 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.

We also include Arabic-speaking persons who identify as Assyrian/Chaldean, Somali or Sudanese, identities which are not aggregated as Arab in Census reports. In Virginia, nearly one in three Arabs identify with Lebanese heritage, while a significant number come from Palestine, Egypt and Morocco.



## Immigration

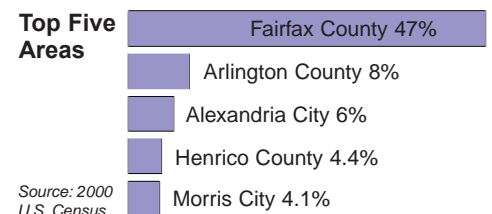
Based on a sample year of 1997, the **largest number of new Arab immigrants to Virginia** came from Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan. A growing number of Moroccan immigrants are settling in the state. Immigrants from the Gulf region originate from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The Maghreb region includes Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Immigrants by country:	By region:
Egypt 234	Maghreb 450
Lebanon 140	Gulf 171
Jordan 138	
Iraq 74	
Syria 73	

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

## Where Do Virginia's Arab Americans Live?

Arab Americans reside in **114 out of all 135 counties** in the state of Virginia. Approximately three out of four live in the northern suburbs near Washington D.C.



\*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.