

An Overview Of Socioeconomic Characteristics Of The Iranian-American Community Based On The 2000 Census
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Iranian Studies Group at MIT

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Introduction

The need to have accurate community statistics to assess the potentials of the Iranian-American community has long been realized. Pursuant to our previous publications on this issue, the Iranian Studies Group at MIT has compiled socioeconomic statistics from the recently published U.S. 2000 Census data that are of importance to the Iranian-American community. As in our previous reports, the statistics again suggest that Iranian-Americans are among the most educated and successful communities in the U.S.

Population

According to the U.S. 2000 Census, 338,000 individuals reported their first or second ancestry as Iranian. With upper and lower bounds of this estimate within a 10% error margin, this places the estimated range between 319,000 and 371,000 individuals (rounded off). Many community members have indicated that these numbers do not represent the entire Iranian-American community, since many community members have been reluctant in identifying themselves as such because of the political problems between Iran and the United States in the past two decades. In late March 2004, the Iranian Studies Group will publish initial results of its efforts to assess the number of Iranian-Americans through alternative statistical methods.

Educational Attainment

The 2000 census data suggests that the Iranian ancestral group have educational attainments that greatly surpass the national average. In general, the percent of the Iranians over 25 years old who have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher was at 57.2% in comparison to 24.4% for the rest of the U.S. population. With more than 27% of Iranian-Americans over the age of 25 having a graduate degree or above, Iranian-Americans are the most highly educated ethnic group in the United States. With respect to the gender differences Iranian males and females are both more educated than the U.S. average values. Percentage-wise, Iranian-Americans hold five times the number of doctorates than the national average. However, the proportion of Iranian males with at least a Bachelor's degree is higher than the females (65% to 46%). This discrepancy increases for more advanced degrees. For example, the ratio of males to females with Masters and Ph.D. are 1.8:1 and 2.7:1 respectively, which are higher than the national averages of 1: 1 and 2.3:1 for Master's and Ph.D.'s respectively.

Income Characteristics

The per capita average income for Iranian-Americans is 50% higher than that of the nation, while family average income is 38% higher. Compared to the 12% of Americans with per capita incomes of \$100,000 or more, there are 26.2% of Iranian-Americans making the same amount. The average value of an Iranian-American home is 2.5 times that of the average home nationally. The percentage of Iranian-Americans living in homes valued more than \$1 million is nearly 10 times that of the national average.

Housing characteristics

The housing characteristic of Iranian ancestral group living in the U.S. reveals that 34.9% of this group lives in houses with 5 or more units (i.e. apartments), which are significantly higher than the 17% in the U.S. average. In addition, the median value of the residences for those with Iranian ancestry is \$268,000 in comparison to \$119,600 for U.S. average. This is further reflected in the fact that 20.8% of Iranian-Americans live in houses valued at >\$500000 in comparison to only 3% for the U.S. population.

Family structure

Iranian-Americans are still more conservative in terms of family structures when it comes to living with unmarried partners. Only 3% of Iranian-Americans live in unmarried households, compared to 7% nationally. Surprisingly however, while only 12% of grandparents who live in an Iranian-American household are responsible for taking care of the children, on the national level, 42% of grandparents who live with their children's families take care of the children.

Language Spoken at Home

More than 73% of Iranian-American households communicate in both English and Persian. Around 20% communicate only in English. 7% of Iranian-American households are considered linguistically isolated, meaning that English is not spoken at home at all.

Supporting Tables

Tables 1-5 show the actual U.S. 2000 Census data excerpted for the above categories. For more information on the 2000 Census, and to access other data points please visit <http://www.census.gov>

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Table 1- Highest Educational Attainment

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (highest level)	Iranian-Americans			Nation		
	Total(%)	Males	Female	Total(%)	Males	Female
Percent of population 25 years and over	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Less than 5th grade	1.8	0.9	2.8	2.2	2.3	2.1
5th to 8th grade	2.8	1.6	4.2	5.3	5.4	5.3
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5	3.5	7	12.1	12.2	11.9
High school graduate (incl. equivalency)	13.7	9.9	18.3	28.6	27.6	29.6
Some college credit, less than 1 year	3.2	2.7	3.9	7.1	6.5	7.6
1 or more years of college, no degree	9.9	10	9.7	14.0	14.1	13.9
Associate degree	6.5	5.6	7.5	6.3	5.8	6.8
Bachelor's degree	29.7	31.4	27.5	15.5	16.1	15.0
Master's degree	15.5	19.2	10.9	5.9	6.0	5.8
Professional degree	6.9	8.1	5.5	2.0	2.6	1.4
Doctorate degree	5.1	7.1	2.6	1.0	1.4	0.6
Percent high school graduate or higher	90.4	94	86	80.4	80.1	80.7
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	57.2	65.7	46.5	24.4	26.1	22.8
PERCENT OF AGE GROUP						
High school graduate or higher						
25 to 34 years	96.4	95.8	97	83.9	81.9	85.9
35 to 44 years	97.2	97.5	96.8	85.0	83.4	86.6
45 to 64 years	91.6	96	85.4	83.2	82.9	83.4
65 years and over	60.8	74.7	46.4	65.5	66.4	64.9
Bachelor's degree or higher						
25 to 34 years	60.1	60.4	59.8	27.5	25.7	29.4
35 to 44 years	63.5	68.4	56.8	25.9	25.8	26.0
45 to 64 years	60.4	72.9	42.6	26.4	29.3	23.7
65 years and over	28.1	44	11.7	15.4	20.5	11.8

Source: Summary File 4, U.S. 2000 Census

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Table 2. Employment and Income Characteristics

Employed civilian population 16 years and over	Iranian-Americans		Nation	
OCCUPATION	161,641	100.0%	129,721,512	100.0%
Management, professional, and related occupations	85,324	52.8	43,646,731	33.6
Service occupations	15,277	9.5	19,276,947	14.9
Sales and office occupations	45,223	28.0	34,621,390	26.7
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	146	0.1	951,810	0.7
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	6,333	3.9	12,256,138	9.4
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	9,338	5.8	18,968,496	14.6
INDUSTRY				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	362	0.2	2,426,053	1.9
Construction	6,039	3.7	8,801,507	6.8
Manufacturing	16,364	10.1	18,286,005	14.1
Wholesale trade	7,067	4.4	4,666,757	3.6
Retail trade	27,954	17.3	15,221,716	11.7
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5,480	3.4	6,740,102	5.2
Information	5,766	3.6	3,996,564	3.1
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	12,751	7.9	8,934,972	6.9
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	20,888	12.9	12,061,865	9.3
Educational, health and social services	33,277	20.6	25,843,029	19.9
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	13,469	8.3	10,210,295	7.9
Other services (except public administration)	8,217	5.1	6,320,632	4.9
Public administration	4,007	2.5	6,212,015	4.8
INCOME IN 1999				
Households	123,955	100.0	105,539,122	100.0
Less than \$10,000	11,928	9.6	10,067,027	9.5
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5,920	4.8	6,657,228	6.3
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9,959	8.0	13,536,965	12.8
\$25,000 to \$34,999	10,317	8.3	13,519,242	12.8
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15,224	12.3	17,446,272	16.5
\$50,000 to \$74,999	22,111	17.8	20,540,604	19.5
\$75,000 to \$99,999	15,684	12.7	10,799,245	10.2
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16,990	13.7	8,147,826	7.7
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6,985	5.6	2,322,038	2.2
\$200,000 or more	8,837	7.1	2,502,675	2.4
Median household income (dollars)	58,912	(X)	41,994	(X)
Families	90,696	100.0	72,261,780	100.0
Less than \$10,000	4,864	5.4	4,155,386	5.8
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3,526	3.9	3,115,586	4.3
\$15,000 to \$24,999	6,211	6.8	7,757,397	10.7
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6,745	7.4	8,684,429	12.0
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10,306	11.4	12,377,108	17.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16,948	18.7	16,130,100	22.3
\$75,000 to \$99,999	13,331	14.7	9,009,327	12.5
\$100,000 to \$149,999	14,649	16.2	6,936,210	9.6
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6,138	6.8	1,983,673	2.7
\$200,000 or more	7,978	8.8	2,112,564	2.9
Median family income (dollars)	69,590	(X)	50,046	(X)
Per capita income (dollars)	30,143	(X)	21,587	(X)

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Table 3. Selected Housing Characteristics

	Iranian-Americans		Nation	
Occupied Housing Units	123,759	100.0	105,480,101	100.0
UNITS IN STRUCTURE		%		
1-unit, detached	61,877	50.0	64,787,510	61.4
1-unit, attached	9,958	8.0	5,907,804	5.6
2 units	2,737	2.2	4,466,529	4.2
3 or 4 units	5,243	4.2	4,905,354	4.7
5 to 9 units	8,083	6.5	4,820,542	4.6
10 to 19 units	8,836	7.1	4,116,925	3.9
20 or more units	26,377	21.3	8,980,722	8.5
Mobile home	626	0.5	7,384,276	7.0
Boat, RV, van, etc.	22	0.0	110,439	0.1
VEHICLES AVAILABLE				
None	10,103	8.2	10,861,067	10.3
1	38,496	31.1	36,123,613	34.2
2	51,971	42.0	40,461,920	38.4
3 or more	23,189	18.7	18,033,501	17.1
Specified owner-occupied units	60,433	100.0		
VALUE		%		
Less than \$50,000	627	1.0	5,457,817	9.9
\$50,000 to \$99,999	4,019	6.7	16,778,971	30.4
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7,721	12.8	13,110,384	23.7
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8,440	14.0	8,075,904	14.6
\$200,000 to \$299,999	13,271	22.0	6,583,049	11.9
\$300,000 to \$499,999	13,805	22.8	3,584,108	6.5
\$500,000 to \$999,999	9,249	15.3	1,308,116	2.4
\$1,000,000 or more	3,301	5.5	313,759	0.6
Median (dollars)	268,100	(X)	119,600	(X)

Source: Summary File 4, U.S. 2000 Census

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Table 4. Family Characteristics

	Iranian-Americans		Nation	
		%		%
MARITAL STATUS				
Males 15 years and over	145,529	100.0	107,027,405	100.0
Never married	44,722	30.7	32,381,377	30.3
Now married, except separated	85,811	59.0	60,720,716	56.7
15 to 19 years	428	0.3	385,262	0.4
20 to 24 years	601	0.4	1,837,449	1.7
25 to 34 years	8,053	5.5	10,387,908	9.7
35 to 44 years	29,001	19.9	15,290,864	14.3
45 to 54 years	23,971	16.5	13,299,537	12.4
55 to 64 years	11,748	8.1	8,909,498	8.3
65 years and over	12,009	8.3	10,610,198	9.9
Separated	1,930	1.3	1,971,123	1.8
Widowed	1,402	1.0	2,699,175	2.5
Divorced	11,664	8.0	9,255,014	8.6
Females 15 years and over	121,323	100.0	114,121,266	100.0
Never married	32,473	26.8	27,531,993	24.1
Now married, except separated	68,117	56.1	59,510,557	52.1
15 to 19 years	420	0.3	506,203	0.4
20 to 24 years	1,809	1.5	2,485,590	2.2
25 to 34 years	13,848	11.4	11,425,473	10.0
35 to 44 years	22,859	18.8	15,488,662	13.6
45 to 54 years	15,517	12.8	12,849,433	11.3
55 to 64 years	7,891	6.5	8,128,938	7.1
65 years and over	5,773	4.8	8,626,258	7.6
Separated	2,198	1.8	2,798,097	2.5
Widowed	9,180	7.6	11,975,325	10.5
Divorced	9,355	7.7	12,305,294	10.8
UNMARRIED-PARTNER HOUSEHOLDS				
Total	3,386	100.0	5,230,703	100.0
Male and female	2,709	80.0	4,571,992	87.4
Both male	373	11.0	332,645	6.4
Both female	304	9.0	326,066	6.2
GRANDPARENTS AS CAREGIVERS				
Grandparents living in households with one or more grandchildren under 18 years	7,918	100.0	5,771,671	100.0
Grandparent responsible for grandchild	983	12.4	2,426,730	42.0
Less than 1 year	230	2.9	555,668	9.6
1 to 2 years	332	4.2	563,403	9.8
3 to 4 years	89	1.1	374,251	6.5
5 years or more	332	4.2	933,408	16.2
Grandparent not responsible for grandchild	6,935	87.6	3,344,941	58.0

Source: Summary File 4, U.S. 2000 Census

Table 5- Languages Spoken at Home

	Iranian-Americans		Nation	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER BY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME AND ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH				
Population 5 years and over	316,678	100	262,375,152	100
Speak only English	61,994	19.6	215,423,557	82.1
Speak a language other than English	254,684	80.4	46,951,595	17.9
ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH				
Population 5 years and over	316,678	100	262,375,152	100.0
Speak a language other than English	254,684	80.4	46,951,595	17.9
5 to 17 years	39,771	12.6	9,779,766	3.7
18 to 64 years	188,740	59.6	32,756,989	12.5
65 years and over	26,173	8.3	4,414,840	1.7
Speak English less than "very well"	91,383	28.9	21,320,407	8.1
5 to 17 years	8,007	2.5	3,493,118	1.3
18 to 64 years	61,910	19.5	15,486,421	5.9
65 years and over	21,466	6.8	2,340,868	0.9
ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH IN HOUSEHOLD				
Linguistically isolated households	20,612	(X)	4,361,638	(X)
Population 5 years and over in households	313,053	100	254,620,291	100.0
In linguistically isolated households	41,540	13.3	11,893,572	4.7
5 to 17 years	5,512	1.8	2,687,603	1.1
18 to 64 years	26,161	8.4	7,926,537	3.1
65 years and over	9,867	3.2	1,279,432	0.5

Source: Summary File 4, U.S. 2000 Census

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact

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