

# Arab Households in the United States: 2006–2010

## *American Community Survey Briefs*

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Issued May 2013

ACSB/10-20

### INTRODUCTION

This brief provides a portrait of households in the United States with a particular focus on Arab households; people of Arab ancestry are also discussed.<sup>1</sup> Characteristics of households can provide important insights into population groups' composition and well-being. For this brief, Arab households are defined as households where the householder's ancestry included an Arab response.<sup>2</sup>

Data shown in this brief are based on the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates from the 2006–2010 Selected Population Tables. This product uses data aggregated over a 5-year period to provide detailed estimates of social, economic, and housing characteristics for many race, tribal, Hispanic origin, and ancestry population groups at multiple levels of geography.<sup>3</sup>

The Arab population in the United States is a relatively small, yet growing ancestry group, increasing from 850,000 people with Arab ancestry (0.35 percent of the total population) in 1990 to 1.2 million (0.42 percent of the total population) in 2000.<sup>4</sup> The 2006–2010 ACS 5-year estimates show that an estimated 1.5 million people (0.5 percent of the total population) with Arab

<sup>1</sup> For more information on households in the United States, visit [www.census.gov/hhes/families](http://www.census.gov/hhes/families).

<sup>2</sup> Arab ancestry is determined if one or two Arab ancestries were reported. Two ancestries were collected from each individual and the order does not matter. For example, a householder reporting "Lebanese and Syrian" is included in the Lebanese as well as in the Syrian estimates, and a householder reporting "Lebanese and French" is included in the Lebanese and French estimates, but note only Arab ancestries are discussed in this brief. In addition, the U.S. Census Bureau tabulates responses of "Arab," "Arabic," "Kurd," and "Berber" as Arab.

<sup>3</sup> This brief features selected Arab ancestry groups with at least 5,000 Arab households in 2006–2010.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census, 1990 and 2000.

### How Is Arab Ancestry Determined?

The American Community Survey includes an ancestry question that asks each individual his or her "ancestry or ethnic origin." From the responses collected, the U.S. Census Bureau considers anyone who reported being Algerian, Bahraini, Egyptian, Emirati, Iraqi, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Moroccan, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tunisian, and Yemeni to be of Arab ancestry.

The Census Bureau defines ancestry as the ethnic origin, descent, roots, heritage, or place of birth of the person or of the person's ancestors. Ancestry is a broad concept. The ancestry question was not intended to measure the degree of attachment to a particular group, but simply to establish the ethnic group(s) with which the respondent self-identifies.

ancestry were living in the United States, representing a 76.0 percent increase since 1990.

The number of Arab households has also grown over time, increasing from 268,000 in 1990 to 427,000 in 2000. Data from the 2006–2010 ACS 5-year estimates reveal that there were 511,000 Arab households in the United States, representing a 91.0 percent increase since 1990.

While the Arab population is a distinct ancestry group, it is also a heterogeneous one, composed of many groups with different ethnic origins originally from the Middle East and North Africa. This brief focuses on a

## How Are Households Defined?

Everyone living in a housing unit makes up a *household*; a household may include one or more people. One of the people who owns or rents the residence is designated as the *householder*. For the purposes of examining family and household composition, two types of households are defined: *family* and *nonfamily*.

A *family household* has at least two members related by birth, marriage, or adoption, one of whom is the householder. Family households are maintained by married couples or by a man or woman living with other relatives—children may or may not be present. A *married-couple household* includes a householder with a spouse present. An *other family household* can have either a male or female householder, with no spouse present.

A *nonfamily household* can be either a person living alone or a householder who shares the housing unit only with nonrelatives; for example, boarders or roommates. The nonrelatives of the householder may be related to each other.

number of selected Arab ancestry groups—Lebanese, Egyptian, Syrian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Iraqi, Jordanian, and Yemeni.

The following sections highlight some of the different types of characteristics available in the Selected Population Tables for total households and households with an Arab householder, such as average household size, household type and composition, homeownership, and median household income.

## POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

Out of 304 million people in the United States in 2006–2010, 1.5 million were of Arab ancestry. Within the Arab population, the selected ancestry groups shown in Table 1 varied in population size. Population size ranged from Yemeni, with a population size of 29,000, to Lebanese, the largest group within the Arab population in the United States, with a population of nearly one-half million.

As Table 1 also shows, there were about 114.2 million total households in the United States, of which over 500,000 were Arab households. Among Arab households, about 1 in 3 were Lebanese households.

Average household size is determined by dividing the total household population by the total number of households.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Note that Table 1 shows the total U.S. population, which includes the group quarters population. The total household population is not shown but can be obtained from the 2006–2010 ACS 5-year estimates, Selected Population Tables, visit <factfinder2.census.gov/> then click on "Topics," then "Dataset," then "2010 ACS 5-year Selected Population Tables."

Table 1.

### Total and Arab Population and Households by Selected Arab Ancestry Group: 2006–2010

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

Ancestry group	Total population		Total households		Average household size	
	Number	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Number	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Number	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>303,965,272</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>114,235,996</b>	<b>248,114</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>0.01</b>
<b>Total Arab<sup>2</sup>. . . . .</b>	<b>1,517,664</b>	<b>17,397</b>	<b>511,102</b>	<b>5,035</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>0.02</b>
Lebanese. . . . .	485,917	6,375	181,127	2,437	2.66	0.03
Egyptian. . . . .	179,853	4,999	60,137	1,731	2.95	0.05
Syrian . . . . .	147,426	3,950	56,040	1,432	2.67	0.04
Palestinian. . . . .	83,241	4,035	25,679	1,163	3.50	0.10
Moroccan. . . . .	74,908	3,183	23,365	1,170	2.75	0.07
Iraqi . . . . .	73,896	4,162	22,979	1,189	3.27	0.10
Jordanian. . . . .	60,056	3,797	18,134	1,088	3.42	0.11
Yemeni. . . . .	29,358	2,618	6,812	550	4.34	0.21

(X) Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

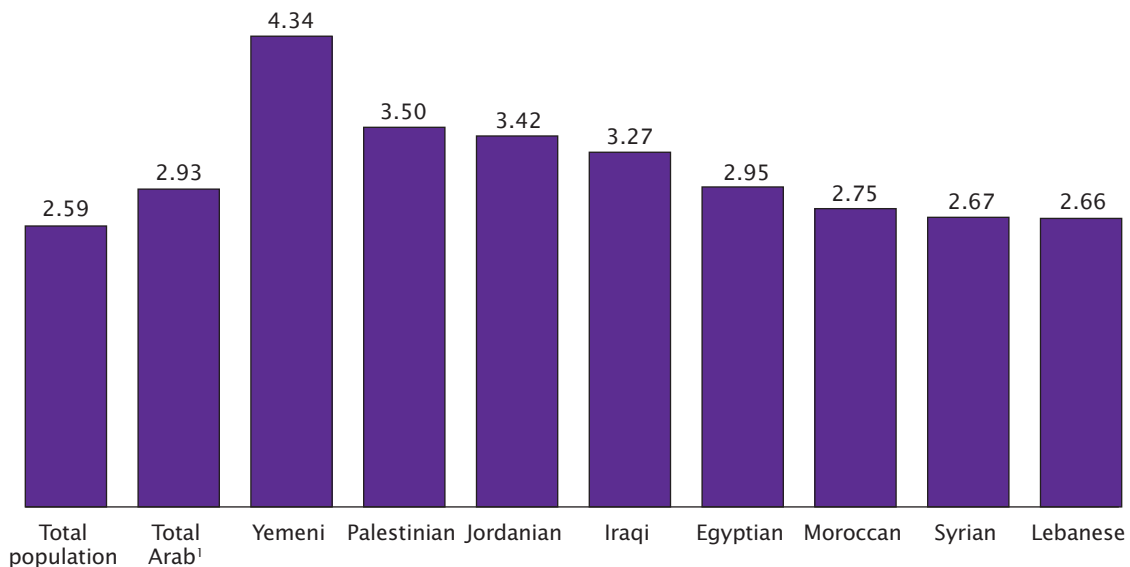
<sup>2</sup> The total Arab estimate includes selected ancestry groups (Lebanese, Egyptian, Syrian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Iraqi, Jordanian, and Yemeni), as well as general "Arab/Arabic" responses and other Arab groups not shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Selected Population Tables 2006–2010, DP02 and B01003.

Figure 1.

### Average Household Size by Selected Arab Ancestry Group: 2006–2010

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))



<sup>1</sup> The total Arab estimate includes selected ancestry groups (Lebanese, Egyptian, Syrian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Iraqi, Jordanian, and Yemeni) as well as general "Arab/Arabic" responses and other Arab groups not shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Selected Population Tables 2006–2010.

According to Figure 1, the average household size in the United States was 2.59 people per household, lower than the average household size for Arab households (2.93 people per household). Yemeni households had the largest average household size among the selected Arab groups, 4.34 people per household.

## HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND COMPOSITION

Table 2 shows that the majority of all households in the United States were composed of family households (66.8 percent). Among the selected Arab households, Yemeni (79.8 percent), Jordanian (77.2 percent), and Palestinian (76.8 percent) households were the most likely to be composed of family households.<sup>6</sup> Married-couple family

<sup>6</sup> The percentages of Yemeni, Palestinian, and Jordanian family households were not statistically different from each other.

households represented nearly half (49.6 percent) of all households in the United States; for Arab households, it was over half (55.7 percent). Palestinian (63.7 percent), Jordanian (63.1 percent), Egyptian (61.8 percent), and Yemeni (61.7 percent) households were more likely to be married-couple households than other Arab households shown in this brief (Table 2).<sup>7</sup>

Other family households represented 17.2 percent of total households and 13.2 percent of Arab households. Among Arab households, the percentage of other family households ranged from about 9.9 percent for Egyptian households to about 18.1 percent for Yemeni households.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The percentages of Egyptian, Yemeni, Palestinian, and Jordanian married-couple households were not statistically different from each other.

<sup>8</sup> The percentages of total and Yemeni other family households were not statistically different from each other.

There were about 38 million non-family households in the United States and 0.16 million Arab non-family households, each representing about one-third of all households and one-third of all Arab households, 33.2 percent and 31.1 percent, respectively. Moroccan, Lebanese, and Syrian households were more likely to be composed of nonfamily households than the other selected Arab ancestry groups.

## HOMEOWNERSHIP

The homeownership rate is the percentage of all occupied housing units that are owner-occupied. The homeownership rate was 66.6 percent for the nation, compared with 59.6 percent for Arab owner-occupied housing units. The homeownership rate for Lebanese and Syrians was above the national level at 71.6 and 69.2 percent, respectively. At the other end of

Table 2.

**Household Characteristics by Selected Arab Ancestry Group: 2006–2010**(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

Ancestry group	Household type									Owner-occupied housing unit	
	Total households	Family households						Nonfamily households			
		Total		Married-couple family		Other family					
		Percent	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Percent	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Percent	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Percent	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Percent	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)
Total . . . . .	100.0	66.8	0.1	49.6	0.2	17.2	–	33.2	0.1	66.6	0.2
Total Arab <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	100.0	68.9	0.6	55.7	0.6	13.2	0.4	31.1	0.6	59.6	0.5
Lebanese . . . . .	100.0	66.0	0.8	53.2	1.0	12.9	0.5	34.0	0.8	71.6	0.8
Egyptian . . . . .	100.0	71.7	1.3	61.8	1.4	9.9	0.8	28.3	1.3	56.5	1.3
Syrian . . . . .	100.0	67.5	1.5	55.8	1.5	11.7	1.1	32.5	1.5	69.2	1.3
Palestinian . . . . .	100.0	76.8	2.0	63.7	2.0	13.1	1.5	23.2	2.0	59.6	2.5
Moroccan . . . . .	100.0	65.8	2.1	49.9	2.4	15.8	1.9	34.2	2.1	36.9	2.2
Iraqi . . . . .	100.0	71.5	2.1	55.1	2.5	16.4	1.9	28.5	2.1	45.3	2.4
Jordanian . . . . .	100.0	77.2	2.9	63.1	2.8	14.1	2.1	22.8	2.9	50.5	3.2
Yemeni . . . . .	100.0	79.8	3.4	61.7	3.5	18.1	3.0	20.2	3.4	36.7	4.3

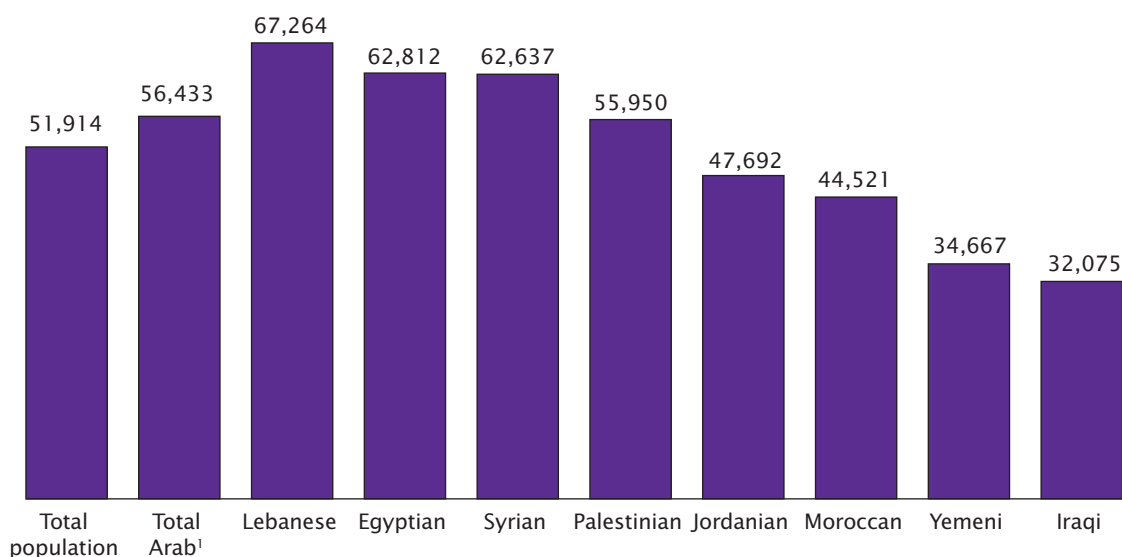
– Rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

<sup>2</sup> The total Arab estimate includes selected ancestry groups (Lebanese, Egyptian, Syrian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Iraqi, Jordanian, and Yemeni), as well as general "Arab/Arabic" responses and other Arab groups not shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Selected Population Tables 2006–2010, DP02, DP03, DP04, and B11001.

Figure 2.

**Median Household Income by Selected Arab Ancestry Group: 2006–2010**(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

<sup>1</sup> The total Arab estimate includes selected ancestry groups (Lebanese, Egyptian, Syrian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Iraqi, Jordanian, and Yemeni) as well as general "Arab/Arabic" responses and other Arab groups not shown.

Note: Data on median household income are based on 2010 inflation-adjusted dollars.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Selected Population Tables 2006–2010.

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## What Is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing facilities and prisons). The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the nation, and every municipio in Puerto Rico, where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. Beginning in 2006, ACS data for 2005 were released for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and greater. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit [www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www).

the spectrum, the Moroccan and Yemeni homeownership rates were about one-third each (36.9 and 36.7 percent, respectively).<sup>9</sup>

### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income for all households in the United States in 2010 dollars was \$51,914, about \$4,500 dollars lower than the median household income for Arab households (\$56,433—see Figure 2). Lebanese households had the highest median income (\$67,264), while Iraqi and Yemeni households had lower median incomes (\$32,075 and \$34,667,

<sup>9</sup> Homeownership rates for Moroccan and Yemeni households were not statistically different from each other.

respectively) than the other selected Arab ancestry groups.<sup>10</sup>

### SOURCE AND ACCURACY

Data presented in this brief are based on people and households that responded to the ACS from 2006–2010. The resulting estimates are representative of the entire population. All comparisons presented in this brief have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. Due to rounding, some details may not sum to totals. For information on sampling and estimation

<sup>10</sup> Median incomes for Iraqi and Yemeni households were not statistically different from each other.

methods, confidentiality protection, sampling error, and nonsampling errors, please see the “ACS Accuracy of the Data” document located at [www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data\\_documentation/Accuracy/MultiyearACSAccuracyofData2010.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/MultiyearACSAccuracyofData2010.pdf).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Arab population and other ancestry groups in the United States, visit the Census Bureau’s Internet site at [www.census.gov/population/ancestry/](http://www.census.gov/population/ancestry/). The most recent data on ancestry can be found on American FactFinder located at [factfinder2.census.gov/](http://factfinder2.census.gov/).