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Census Report Details Lives of U.S. Arabs

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, March 8 (AP) - People of Arab descent living in the United States tend to be better educated and wealthier than other Americans, the Census Bureau says.

There are about 1.2 million United States residents whose ancestry is solely or partly Arab, less than one-half of 1 percent of all Americans. The details in Tuesday's report covered the 850,000 people who identified themselves in the 2000 census as having only Arab ancestries.

Arabs are nearly twice as likely as the typical United States resident to have a college degree, 41 percent to 24 percent.

Better education typically translates into higher income, and the report showed the median income for an Arab family was \$52,300, about \$2,300 more than the median income for all American families.

The proportion of Arabs in the United States working in management jobs was higher than the American average, 42 percent to 34 percent.

Helen Samhan, executive director of the Arab American Institute Foundation, lauded the bureau for a report that shows "how integrated Arabs are in American life."

"It is a community that is well-rooted and well-invested in the United States," Ms. Samhan said. "That is something that many Americans don't pay attention to when usually the Arab community is only covered in a negative sense."

The findings cover those who responded to the 2000 census "long form" questionnaire as having an ancestry from a predominantly Arabic-speaking country or area of the world. Lebanon was the country of origin for the most Arabs in the United States (440,000), followed by Egypt and Syria (about 143,000 each).

The population numbers, first released in 2003, showed the states with the largest Arab populations were California (191,000), New York (120,000) and Michigan (115,000).

The Arab population is 57 percent male and has a median age of 33, two years younger than the United States population over all.

About 64 percent of residents with Egyptian ancestry had a college degree, the highest among Arab groups. Lebanese residents in the United States made the most money, with a median family income of nearly \$61,000.