

Medical Interpreting Services Department  
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## National Arab American Heritage Month

Source: <https://www.si.edu/spotlight/arab-american> and <https://www.insightintodiversity.com/national-arab-american-heritage-month/>

Efforts to celebrate and honor Arab American heritage started decades ago. Indeed, the first congressional resolutions date back to the 1980s, with one Joint Resolution proclaiming October 25, 1989, as "National Arab American Day" in the 101st Congress that became law. There have also been various congressional statements and resolutions that have addressed the discrimination targeting Arab Americans but the first resolution on the federal level to celebrate our community and officially declare April as Arab American Heritage Month (AAHM) came in April 2019. Subsequent versions have been introduced in the House of Representatives and while various communities had celebrated Arab Americans during different times of the year, April was chosen to coincide with the annual Kahlil Gibran Spirit of Humanity Awards.

In 2022, President Biden became the first U.S. president to declare April as Arab American Heritage Month, in recognition of the contributions of Arab Americans to the nation's history. Americans of Arab heritage have advanced the nation's achievements in diplomacy, science, technology, as well as in art and culture. "For a community often misunderstood, excluded, erased, or targeted with bias and discrimination, the impact of our fellow Americans joining us in honoring our heritage and contributions is deeply meaningful. From statements issued by elected officials, businesses, coalition partners, or schools and universities, proclamations affirming and celebrating the role Arab Americans have played in shaping our nation have helped countless Arab Americans with inclusive messages that honor their heritage and reject their defamation."

## Who is considered an Arab American?

Arab Americans have ancestry in one of the world's 22 Arab nations, which are located **from northern Africa through western Asia**. The people of these nations are ethnically, politically, and religiously diverse but share a common cultural and linguistic heritage.

The world's 22 Arab nations are Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoro Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and Yemen.

In the U.S., many people conflate "Arab" and "Middle Eastern," but linguistic and geographical factors mean that **these terms are not fully interchangeable**, according to the Arab American National Museum (AANM). The Middle East includes non-Arabic nations such as Iran, Israel, and Turkey. Similarly, not all Arabic nations are located in what is considered the Middle East — including Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco.

A common misconception is that all Arab Americans are Muslim. Approximately 25 percent practice Islam, and an estimated **63 to 77 percent are Christian**, according to the Arab American Institute.

A 2016 study by the Pew Research Center found that Arabic is the **fastest growing language** in the U.S. The number of people who speak Arabic at home increased by 29 percent between 2010 and 2014. There are approximately **3.7 million Arab Americans** in the U.S.

Political instability and war have led to a significant rise in Arab immigration. Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the number of Arab American refugees has skyrocketed, with **nearly 70,000 moving to the U.S. in 2017**, compared with just 26,000 in 2003. President Donald Trump's Muslim travel ban and immigration policies, however, decreased the number of refugees able to find asylum in the U.S. in recent years.

Arab Americans are among the most educated demographic. More than 40 percent have a four-year degree, and **17 percent have a postgraduate degree**, according to the website [arabamericanstories.org](http://arabamericanstories.org).



## April 2025 Calendar

World Autism Awareness Month  
Sexual Assault Awareness Month

- 1 – April Fools Day (International)
- 2 – Autism Awareness Day (US)
- 6 – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Day (International)
- 10 – Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)
- 11 – World Parkinson's Day (International)
- 13-20 – Passover (Judaism)
- 14 – Vaisakhi (Sikh, Hindu)
- 15 – National ASL Day (US)
- 20 – Easter (Christianity)
- 20 – Chinese Language Day (International)
- 22 – Earth Day (International)
- 23 – English and Spanish Language Day (International)
- 30 – Adopt a Shelter Pet Day (US)

## Now Is the Time To Advocate

Source: [https://interpreted.com/now-is-the-time-to-advocate/?utm\\_source=InterpreterEd.com&utm\\_campaign=c83d16fa0e-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_3\\_13\\_2025\\_March\\_newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_2c765a503d-c83d16fa0e-266458137](https://interpreted.com/now-is-the-time-to-advocate/?utm_source=InterpreterEd.com&utm_campaign=c83d16fa0e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_3_13_2025_March_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2c765a503d-c83d16fa0e-266458137)



Much has been written about the March 1, 2025, Executive Order (EO) establishing English as the official language of the U.S. This EO also revoked Executive Order 13166 issued by President Clinton, where he instructed government agencies to develop formal language access plans.

One of the best, most informative reads on this subject was written by Mara Youdelman of NHELP—the National Health Law Program. Mara has been a tireless advocate of language access for decades and I feel her accolades are well deserved. Her article reinforces my understanding that one government official can't overturn constitutional protections any more than they can change the truth.

Interestingly, Slator.com reported that the March 1 EO did not revoke President Biden's EO 14091, Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. I can imagine it's only a matter of time until this EO is revoked as well.

### What will happen next?

I've also heard from colleagues worried about the future. Make no mistake, this is an unprecedented time. However, I am hopeful for the future—I remind people that the sun will still rise tomorrow, and the seasons will still change.

History is full of examples of everyday people being the major force effecting significant change. The Arab Spring of 2010 is a very recent example, and the protests in Poland, leading to the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 another.

Similar struggles happened too in the U.S. There was a bloody civil war followed by excruciatingly cruel policies, but friends and advocates joined forces in peaceful marches leading to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### You Have a Voice

So, I urge you, dear reader, to make sure your voice is heard. Join or support one of the many industry groups listed at the end of this article. These organizations amplify our voices to advocate for the changes we want to see.

As you advocate, remember that change takes patience and perseverance. I commonly talk with administrators and purchasing agents who don't really understand the benefit of a certified interpreter, for example. I explain and I advocate, I never get angry, but I never back down.

Now is a time for all of us to advocate—and I hope you will join the effort.

- [American Association of Interpreters and Translators in Education \(AAITE\)](#)
- [American Translators Association \(ATA\)](#)
- [Association of Language Companies \(ALC\)](#)
- [Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters \(CCHI\)](#)
- [FIT North America](#)
- [National Association of Educational Translators and Interpreters of Spoken Languages \(NAETISL\)](#)
- [National Association of Judiciary Interpreter and Translators \(NAJIT\)](#)
- [National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters \(NBCMI\)](#)
- [National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare \(NCIHC\)](#)
- [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. \(RID\)](#)

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## NYC Council, NYIC Announce Launch of First-Ever Language Access Bank and the Protect NYC Families Initiative to Support Communities in Response to the Federal Administration

Source: <https://council.nyc.gov/press/2025/01/29/2787/>

New York City Council (1/29/25) The New York City Council, along with the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) and community partners, announced the launch of New York City's first Community Interpreter Bank.

The NYC Community Interpreter Bank will centralize interpreting services available to immigrants across the five boroughs. The initiative will also create sustainable pathways for community members to gain certification and employment as interpreters who provide essential language services to limited-English-proficient New Yorkers for city-funded legal service providers, community navigation sites, and NYC Council offices. Interpreters fluent in the most commonly requested languages will help ensure that every immigrant in the city can access services and information in their preferred language.

The second of its kind in the country, and the first in the state of New York, the NYC Community Interpreter Bank will recruit interpreters from around the city, including those contracted with other worker-owned language cooperatives and interpreters who have completed the interpreter certification courses at Hostos Community College (part of the City University of New York). These interpreters will work as independent contractors, delivering vital language services across the city.

"We are proud to celebrate the council's investments to create the city's first Community Interpreter Bank, which will help ensure that services are available in the languages that residents speak," said NYC Council Speaker Adrienne Adams.

"Language interpreting services are a vital pillar of a healthy, thriving, and diverse New York City, for both new and long-term immigrants navigating complex systems in an unfamiliar language," said Murad Awawdeh, president and chief executive officer of NYIC. "The NYC Community Interpreter Bank ensures these individuals can access critical services in their preferred language while also creating a direct pipeline to employment for New Yorkers trained in interpreting."

[Read Full Article](#)

## New Staff Profile: Anthony Kearns



Anthony Kearns is the newest staff interpreter with the Spanish-language team at MIS. His journey in healthcare began at the age of 16 when he became a volunteer EMT in Virginia, sparking his dedication to patient care and advocacy. Originally from Washington, DC, Anthony grew up on the East Coast and has always valued cultural connection and communication. His Spanish fluency comes from both his mother and grandmother. As a proud half-Peruvian with family from Lima, he is deeply committed to supporting diverse communities. Anthony began his interpreting career in 2023 as a contract interpreter in the DC, Maryland, and Virginia area, gaining valuable experience in medical interpretation across various healthcare settings. Now, as he pursues his Master of Science in Nursing and Family Nurse Practitioner degree at Samuel Merritt University, he is eager to integrate his interpreting expertise with the growing clinical knowledge to enhance patient-centered care.

"My passion for healthcare, language access, and patient advocacy drives me to make a meaningful impact in my role at UC Davis Health. I look forward to contributing to the team and ensuring that all patients receive compassionate and accurate communication in their healthcare journey. I am excited to join UC Davis Health as a medical interpreter, bringing a strong passion for bridging language barriers in healthcare."

Outside of work and school, Anthony enjoys staying active and exploring the outdoors. Whether hiking, scuba diving, or simply spending time in nature, he finds balance and inspiration in new experiences.

Welcome to MIS, Anthony! We are happy to have you as a part of our team!