

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 230259)

RESOLUTION

Recognizing April as Arab American Heritage Month and celebrating the heritage and culture of Arab Americans in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, from April 1, 2023, through April 30, 2023, the United States celebrates Arab American Heritage Month; and

WHEREAS, for over a century, Arab Americans have made valuable contributions to every aspect of American society, in medicine, law, business, technology, civic engagement, government, and culture; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia was home to the first Arabic-language newspaper ever published in the U.S. in 1898, called Al-Hoda. The fact that Philadelphia is where the first Arabic-language newspaper was founded is emblematic of the rich history of the city's Arab community; and

WHEREAS, Saint Maron Lebanese Church in South Philadelphia was founded by Lebanese immigrants in 1892 establishing an enclave in the neighborhood for the Lebanese diaspora that exists to this day. Kensington also has a strong Arab population, particularly a Palestinian presence; and

WHEREAS, since migrating to the United States, people of Arab descent have shared their rich culture and traditions with neighbors and friends, while also setting fine examples of model citizens and public servants; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans have brought with them to America their resilient family values, strong work ethic, dedication to education, and diversity in faith and creed that have added strength to our democracy; and

WHEREAS, writer Ameen Rihani's 1911 masterpiece, "The Book of Khalid", the first Arab American novel, is an important record of Arab immigration to the "Little Syria" community of Lower Manhattan and today is a powerful example of the potential of the United States to strengthen ties with the Arab world; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 230259 continued

WHEREAS, Arab-American poet Kahlil Gibran’s masterpiece, “The Prophet”, was a transformative piece of literature, with over 100 translations, making it one of the most translated books in history, and discusses topics of the human condition in the most eloquent of ways by highlighting inclusion and understanding of all peoples; and

WHEREAS, the first Arabic speaker to come to North America, Zammouri, arrived an enslaved person from Morocco in 1528 and was an important explorer of the present-day American Southwest; and

WHEREAS, world fairs were one of many ways that some Americans of Arab descent came to visit the United States from the Arab world and helped grow this country by creating businesses in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Arab American Institute estimates that there are roughly 3,700,000 Arab Americans living in the United States, and approximately 30,000 – 50,000 living in the greater Philadelphia area; and

WHEREAS, according to Census Bureau data, Arabic is one of the fastest growing languages in the United States; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for public education, awareness, and policies that are culturally competent when describing, discussing, or addressing the impacts of being Arab American in all aspects of American society, including discourse and policy; and

WHEREAS, the incredible contributions and heritage of Arab Americans have helped us build a better Nation; now; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, that the City of Philadelphia recognizes April as Arab American Heritage Month celebrating the heritage and culture of Arab Americans in Philadelphia.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 230259 continued

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 230259 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the Thirtieth day of 2023.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Squilla

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Squilla, Gilmore Richardson, Jones,
Gauthier, Driscoll, Johnson and Thomas