

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

**PROCLAMATION NO. 2024-022**

Proclaiming April 2024 as Arab American Heritage Month in Multnomah County, Oregon.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:**

- A. Multnomah County, Oregon is deeply enriched by the diversity of its residents and is proud to be home to a thriving Arab American community.
- B. Arab Americans come from more than 20 countries ranging from North Africa through Western Asia. As of 2022, more than 31,000 Arab Americans lived in Oregon, and of those, 10,000 were located in Multnomah County.
- C. For over a century, Arab Americans have contributed to virtually every aspect of American society, including science, medicine, law, business, education, technology, government, and culture.
- D. Since migrating to America, those of Arab descent have shared their rich culture and traditions with neighbors and friends, while also setting fine examples of model citizens and mission-driven leaders. This includes Arab Americans employed at Multnomah County.
- E. Victor George Atiyeh, who served as the 32nd Governor of Oregon from 1979 to 1987, was the first Arab American elected Governor of a US state.
- F. Arab Americans, like all Americans, share the desire to be a part of a peaceful and diverse society, in which every individual is treated equally and feels safe to thrive in their community.
- G. The history of Arab Americans in the U.S. remains defaced by misconceptions, bigotry, pervasive Orientalism, and anti-Arab hate. This can be seen in hate crimes and speech, racist or romanticized stereotypes, and a worldview that justifies Western colonialism and imperialism.
- H. Today, Arabs are enduring violence in multiple places in the Middle East and North Africa. It is important to increase awareness about ongoing events that affect Arabs. This is more relevant than ever as Islamophobia and Anti-Arab sentiment have re-surfed after the October 7th, 2023 war in Gaza.
- I. On March 7th, 2024, the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners unanimously called for an immediate de-escalation and ceasefire in Israel and Palestine. This included a formal call for the return of hostages, safe passage, and free access for humanitarian organizations to provide medical aid, supplies, and shelter to Gazan civilians.
- J. On December 12, 2023, a [United Nations panel](#) held by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) concluded that “genocide is already happening” in Gaza.

- K. Sudan is an Arab country that has been battling lack of necessities, combined with violence and uncertainty that has forced many people to flee their homes. As of February 2024, nearly 8 million people have been displaced. This includes more than 6 million people displaced within Sudan and more than 1.5 million people who fled to neighboring countries.
- L. With strength and resilience, Arab Americans have survived and rebuilt their communities here in the U.S. and in their home countries abroad. Over the decades, Arab immigrants have enriched the United States in countless ways, but they have never forgotten the history that brought so many of their ancestors to our shores.
- M. In July 2021, Governor Brown signed HB 2914 into law, which declares April of each year as Arab American Heritage Month. Oregon is one of a handful of states which has permanently recognized Arab American Heritage Month.
- N. We honor the stories and the lives of the Arab Americans in our community. The incredible contributions and heritage of Arab Americans have helped us build a better community and a better nation. We are proud to have Arab Americans as members of our community and as employees of Multnomah County.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaims:**

April 2024 is National Arab American Heritage Month in Multnomah County and encourages all residents to observe this month.

**ADOPTED this 11th day of April, 2024.**



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

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Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair

REVIEWED:  
JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By:

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Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

**SUBMITTED BY:** Mohammad Bader, DCHS Director