



# AUAF

ASSYRIAN UNIVERSAL ALLIANCE FOUNDATION

## At a Glance: The Assyrian Community in Chicago

- There are more than 100,000 Assyrians living in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. The first Assyrians to settle in Chicago immigrated from modern-day Iran in 1889.
- The Assyrian community in Illinois represents the highest concentration of Assyrians outside the traditional homeland, and is considered the center of the Assyrian diaspora. It is also one of the largest Middle Eastern communities in the area.
- Assyrians make up the largest ethnic group in the suburb of Skokie, Illinois, with approximately 20,000. In 2015, Skokie reported that 30% of students at District 219 High Schools were of Assyrian descent. Earlier this year, the first Assyrian was elected to the D219 School Board.
- Many important Assyrian organizations are headquartered in Chicago, including the Assyrian Universal Alliance Foundation, the Assyrian National Council of Illinois, the Assyrian American National Federation, the Assyrian American Bar Association, the Assyrian American Chamber of Commerce, and the Assyrian Athletic Club.
- There are currently upwards of a dozen Assyrian churches in the Chicagoland area (including the Assyrian Church of the East, the Ancient Church of the East, the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Syriac Catholic Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church, as well as various protestant churches).
- There are hundreds of Assyrian-owned businesses in the Chicagoland area, and a rapidly growing number of Assyrian professionals.
- Thousands of Assyrian children are enrolled at various Assyrian language schools, organized and funded by Assyrian nonprofits or churches.
- The community continues to grow in influence, e.g. The first-ever Assyrian Food Festival in Chicago was held this year in August, drawing thousands of locals in just two days.
- Former U.S. Congressman Adam Benjamin, Jr. was from Chicago, as was IL State Senator John Nimrod. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo of California is currently the only Assyrian representative on Capitol Hill. Two Assyrians from Chicago have recently announced their intention to run for office at both the state and federal level.