

A branch of JEDI work at CIVHC, the Inclusive Language subcommittee distributes educational materials on topics related to monthly heritage and community observances. The words we use to describe and communicate with our communities hold great importance. Using inclusive language that reflects our values as an organization helps historically excluded communities feel included and safe in showing up as themselves, as well as illustrates our dedication to greater equity by fostering mutual understanding. The use of inclusive language also equips us to better understand and communicate with our teammates, and helps foster belonging in our workplace by breaking down barriers and building trust.

Thanks in large part to congresswomen Rashida Talib and Debbie Dingell of Michigan, a 2017 resolution proclaimed April to be Arab American Heritage Month. Officially recognized by the Department of State in 2021, it is a time to honor and celebrate Arabs and Arab Americans for their historical contributions in countless areas. The 2024 theme is 'Celebrating Arab American Resilience and Diversity'

### Arab American Heritage, Close to Home:

- ➔ [Syrian & Lebanese immigrants in historic Boulder](#)
  - Retired union organizer Bob Rossi delves into the history of the Syrian and Lebanese immigrant experience as related to the Boulder coal industry and labor strikes in the 1920s.
- ➔ **Denver-born Palestinian American State Representative Iman Jodeh**
  - Colorado's first Muslim lawmaker discusses her life and experiences in [this interview with History Colorado](#)

### Inclusive Language Highlights:

- 'Arab' as a cultural and linguistic term
- How inclusive language can apply to conversations
- Learn a new phrase!

### Conversation starters:

- Explore [the afikra library](#), a digital archive of free content from a community collective exploring the histories and cultures of the Arab World
- Expressing discomfort (see *flowcharts on page 2*)

### Consulting Coworkers:

Each month, it is top priority to include language and input from those with lived experience in the toolkit topics we share. Keep an eye out for an email requesting feedback each month prior – we'd love to hear from you!

### CO APCD Numbers:

- Research has shown that [Arab Americans face unique health disparities](#) due to a number of factors.
- The Data Submission Guide race/ethnicity categories come from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which [recently updated](#) the categories to include "Middle Eastern and North African." This new category can be collected in future DSG updates.

### Cultural Terminology

- "Arab" refers to those who speak Arabic as their first language-- Arabs are not a race
- The Arab World is made up of 22 countries: a wide range of diversity across culture, religion, and region

### Workplace Inclusivity

- Avoid othering\* in conversations: practice compassion by not pushing people to talk about their identities if they aren't comfortable doing so
- Be mindful of distinctions-- Arab Americans practice a range of religions, and not all communities are Muslim

### Learn a Greeting

- Arabic is the fastest-growing language in the world!
- A common greeting in Arabic is the Islamic greeting "As-salamu alaikum", which means "Peace be upon you"
- See more options and responses [here](#)

# Arab American Heritage Month Toolkit: Additional Resources

CIVHC is proud to be embedded in community. Here are some local options to celebrate the Arab American community. Please feel free to share your personal recommendations in the General Slack channel!

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| <u>Eat</u> : Check out a guide to Denver's Middle Eastern cuisine | <u>Listen</u> : Denver Lebanese musician Mona Eye-yoob   |
| <b>Ways to Engage Locally</b>                                     |  |
| <u>Visit</u> : St Rafka Lebanese & Middle Eastern Food Festival   | <u>Watch</u> : Denver Public Library offers Arabic language films through their streaming platform |

## Further Reading:

- [“If I Must Die”](#): a poem written by beloved Palestinian poet Refaat Alareer, who was killed in an airstrike on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2023, along with his brother, his brother’s son, his sister, and his sister’s three children
- Jacobin interview with author Ussama Makdisi, [How The West Remade the Middle East](#), delves into the rich history of multiethnic coexistence throughout the region
- Enjoy curated playlists of Arabic music from [music journalist Danny Hajjar](#)
- Watch whistleblower [Mona Hanna-Attisha’s TEDMED Talk](#) on providing America’s children with clean drinking water

## References:

- Arab: linguistic overview from the [Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee](#)
- \*Othering: article overview from [Association for Talent Development](#)
  - Cultural Diversity with Muslim Coworkers from the [Human Rights Commission](#)
- [20 Ways to Say Hello in Arabic](#) (with audio)

## Resources:

➔ [Anti-Racism for Arab American & Middle Eastern Communities](#) (Women’s Foundation of Colorado)

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| <p><b>What to do when you HEAR non-inclusive language</b></p> <p>Consider taking these three steps when you hear language that is not inclusive. Remember, be intentional and do not overreact or shame others. Mistakes happen and can be teaching moments.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Inquire</b></p> <p><b>INQUIRE:</b> <u>Seek to understand</u> where the individual is coming from.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“I noticed you used the phrase...What does that mean to you?”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Inform</b></p> <p><b>INFORM:</b> <u>Help educate</u> the individual on the historical context or negative connotations associated with the word(s) or phrase(s) they used.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“I see, thank you for explaining. To me that word/phrase means...”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Empathize</b></p> <p><b>EMPATHIZE:</b> <u>Focus on how it made you feel</u>, not anyone else.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“It made me feel uncomfortable because...”</p> | <p><b>What to do if you SAY a non-inclusive word or phrase</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Forgive</b></p> <p><b>FORGIVE:</b> Acknowledge what you said and forgive yourself. Apologize to an individual(s), if appropriate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Start Over</b></p> <p><b>START OVER:</b> Recognize that you used a word or phrase that you are trying to remove from your vocabulary. Consider saying, “Let me start that sentence or thought over.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Understand</b></p> <p><b>UNDERSTAND:</b> Reflect on why you said it. Was it the first thing that came to mind or were you in an environment where it was being used?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Share</b></p> <p><b>SHARE:</b> Tell someone what you said. Consider identifying an accountability buddy to help you remove non-inclusive language from your vocabulary.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Practice</b></p> <p><b>PRACTICE:</b> Make a list of words or phrases you want to remove from your vocabulary and alternative words or phrases you can use instead. Actively practice changing your language.</p> |
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Flowcharts via Deloitte’s [Inclusive Language Resource Blog](#)