

IRANIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH TEXAS

QUICK OBSERVATIONS

Country/region of origin	Iran
Population (community leaders)	30,000
Population (Census 2000)	6,285
Main reasons for migration	Religious intolerance, economic hardship, came to student and stayed
Years in this region	10-20 years
Primary areas of residence	Plano, Richardson, Frisco, Fort Worth, Garland, Dallas, Carrollton, Arlington, Addison, Lewisville, Irving, Allen
General level of education	High school, Bachelor's or graduate degree
Employment	Engineering, retail trade, child care, medicine, manufacturing, technical
Principal religions	Bahai, Muslim, Baptist, Sufi, Jewish, Zoroastrian
Languages	Farsi, Turkish
Media (newspaper or radio)	One monthly magazine and one weekly newspaper, radio by subscription
Community newsletter	
Cultural organizations	More than 20

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 targeted the educated and the successful. Iranian immigrants selected the DFW Metropolis as a site for secondary migration and have quickly overcome the many challenges to assimilation. Men who arrived here as penniless exiles, as well as upper-class women who at first cleaned homes or painted nails to survive, are not employed as professionals, engineers, architects, doctors and lawyers or own numerous businesses across the region.

At first, the community maintained a low profile because of significant anti-Iranian feeling during the charged political events of the Khomeini era. More recently, differences in religious (Bahai, Muslim, Baptist, Sufi, Jewish, Zoroastrian) and political persuasion (pro or anti-Shah) have further hindered attempts to unify the community via strong cultural or professional organizations.

Community leaders rue the cultural isolation in which they attempt to maintain their rich traditions. They lament that in spite of their significant contributions to the region in the areas of economic growth and services, the Iranian community still lacks recognition and a communal voice in the Metropolex's development. They worry that international political events will continue to negatively affect their social acceptance.

OTHER SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Age distribution	Primarily middle-aged
Percentage of men and women	50% men, 50% women
Ties to country of origin	Close relatives remain, phone relatives regularly, send money back home regularly
Frequency of travel to country of origin	Every year or every 2-5 years
Estimate of undocumented	Less than 5%

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Excellent Iranian leaders are available to consult.
 Transitional ministries for new immigrants – driver's license, forms, aid
 Visit cultural events and build relationships one on one
 Invite a family to dinner

Materials Source: DFW International
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HOW DO YOU OPEN THE DOOR TO CONVERSATIONS ABOUT FAITH?

Share your everyday relationship with God...answered prayers, Scriptures that comfort

Ask about how needs are met through their faith...loneliness, courage, direction

Offer to pray for their needs

Give books/videos that tell a faith story

Discover their interests and find Christians in that field to share their story

Look for Bible stories or principles that teach a value they respect.

Prove that you are trustworthy and sincere and look for bridges to the gospel