



# Moving Forward

Promoting Iranian-American Civic Participation



**National Iranian American Council  
Annual Report July 2003 - 2004**





**Iranian Americans are making significant contributions in every field of endeavor in their adopted country. It is befitting that they have a voice in the decisions that affect the life of their compatriots in the United States and the destiny of their country of origin. NIAC's campaign to unite the Iranian community, to uphold the rights of Iranian Americans, and its work to help Iranians become active and productive members of the civil society in the United States is exemplary and deserving of our full support.**

**Dr. Mahnaz Afkhami**

Founder and President of the Women's Learning Partnership  
Former Minister of State for Women's Affairs in Iran

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## Foreword

Dear Reader,

NIAC was formed three years ago with the aim of transforming our community, one individual at a time, from an inactive and apathetic community to one that enthusiastically participates in and contributes to American political and civic life. Over the last twelve months, we have seen a remarkable transformation.

Voter participation was at a record high in the November elections, local Iranian-American chapters of the major parties have flourished nationwide, political fundraisers have been held by Iranian Americans in every corner of the country, and Iranian-American volunteers have been visible in almost every political campaign.

Most importantly, a record number of candidates for public office have approached our community for support, and offered their support in return.

We have managed to awaken our community and transform it.

Now it is time to move forward and deal with the next challenge—to sustain our new political enthusiasm, to make the most of our collective transformation, to give it meaning and direction.

Much of our community's civic enthusiasm has coincided with the political polarization of America. The key challenge for the next few years is to ensure that as our nation heals and comes together, our community's sense of civic duty and participation remains firm.

We need to leverage our new participation as well as the Iranian-American dollars that are donated to various campaign funds. We need to take the valuable lesson of democracy and apply it to every aspect of our life and culture.

The best gift we can give to future generations is to make the essence of democracy a pillar of our culture.

In the first part of this report, our great successes of last year will be described. We are proud that an organization run mostly by non-paid volunteers has accomplished so much on behalf of our community. Still, the best is yet to come.

In the second part of the report, we address the first step towards moving forward with our community's transformation. Here, we discuss how our community should be organized in order to successfully face future challenges. In this section, the U.S. policy process is explained, and the different types of organizations our community needs to form are described, as well as their function and role in the policy process.

We hope you will take pride in the work of NIAC, and that our efforts—and this report—will inspire you to join us in our mission to support and strengthen the Iranian-American community.

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trita Parsi", written in a cursive style.

**Trita Parsi**



## Remarkable Media Coverage in Just Two Years

### NIAC in the News

In the three short years since its inception, the National Iranian American Council has received a remarkable amount of media attention for its civic participation, anti-discrimination, and humanitarian work. Featured extensively on the Internet and in major newspapers, TV, and radio stations across the nation, NIAC has utilized this extensive media coverage to advance its goals.

In April 2003, NIAC took the lead on challenging Monster.com's policy of discriminating against Americans with educational backgrounds in Iran. NIAC was featured in major media outlets such as National Public Radio, the Associated Press, the Wall Street Journal, and on the front-page of the Washington Post on its fight to defeat the web service's discriminatory policy.

Following the devastating December 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran, NIAC's fundraising work on behalf of victims was covered by several major newspapers such as the Houston Chronicle, the San Francisco Chronicle, and The Washington Post. Post coverage, including a second front-page article, focused heavily on NIAC's earthquake relief efforts, the temporary waiving of sanctions to aid victims, and the explosion of activity by local Iranian Americans after the earthquake.

NIAC representatives were interviewed by CBS Channel 9, Fox Channel 5, NBC Channel 4, and CNN International. NIAC has been quoted in such prominent US magazines such as Forbes and OC Metro, and its recent civil liberties activities have been featured in Pacifica News and the New York Post.

#### **The Associated Press**

**CBS**

**CNN**

**Forbes Magazine**

**Fox**

**The Houston Chronicle**

**Iranians of Washington**

**Javanan**

**KIRN**

**NBC**

**National Public Radio**

**The New York Post**

**OC Metro**

**Pacifica News**

**Pardis**

**Pezhvak of Persia**

**Radio Farda**

**Rang-a-Rang**

**The San Francisco Chronicle**

**Voice of America**

**The Wall Street Journal**

**The Washington Post**

# COMMUNICATION

Most importantly, however, NIAC has enabled numerous of the organization's members to be interviewed on TV, radio, and in print media with regard to Iranian-American affairs. In many such cases, NIAC also provided these members with talking-points and media-training.

Finally, NIAC's activities have been extensively featured in the Persian-language media. In an effort to reach out to the Persian-speaking members of our community, articles and press releases have been published in Persian, as well as English, in such newspapers as Pezhvak of Persia, Pardis, Iranians of Washington, and Javanan. NIAC representatives have been interviewed by Persian-language television and radio stations such as 670-AM KIRN, Rang-a-Rang, Voice of America, and Radio Farda.

***We would like to thank WireMedia and Goli Fasshian, our communications consultant, for their excellent services.***



## Collaboration within the Iranian-American Community The IATC-NIAC Gala



In December 2003, over 430 people gathered in Washington, D.C. to recognize the outstanding contributions of prominent Iranian Americans at a gala dinner and awards ceremony sponsored by the Iranian American Technology Council (IATC), a membership organization of engineers and entrepreneurs. All proceeds from the sold-out event were donated to NIAC, which was presented with a \$30,000 check at the ceremony.

The event proved a significant milestone for the Iranian-American community, being one of the first times that one Iranian-American organization fundraised for another. In addition, the gala was a high point for NIAC because prominent members of the Iranian-American community recognized and awarded the achievements of the organization.

Ms. Rudi Bakhtiar, lead anchor of CNN'S Headline News Tonight, emceed the gala, which honored Iranian-American artists, technologists, and organizations. The gala also featured Firoozeh Dumas, author of *Funny in Farsi*, and Iranian-American actor and comedian Maz Jobrani.

NIAC President Trita Parsi, Executive Director Dokhi Fassihian, and Board Member Sean Murphy also took the stage to talk about NIAC'S mission and activities. The event became an outstanding testament to the collaboration between Iranian-American organizations, effectively modeling the kind of networking that NIAC has sought to encourage through its IraNexus project.

***NIAC thanks IATC for its generous support and for the leadership it showed in setting the standard of collaboration within our community.***

PHOTOS (top to bottom, left to right): Rudi Bakhtiar, CNN Headline News; Sean Jazayeri and Firoozeh Dumas, Author of *Funny in Farsi*; Maziar Jobrani, Comedian; IATC and NIAC Board Members.



# COLLABORATION

## Responding to an Unexpected Natural Disaster Bam Earthquake Fundraising

**O**n December 26, 2003, an earthquake that measured 6.6 on the Richter scale leveled the ancient city of Bam in southeastern Iran. More than 27,000 perished in the wake of the devastating tremors, and thousands more were injured and displaced from their homes.

While NIAC is not a relief organization and commands limited resources, we quickly realized that our vast network could be instrumental in aiding the victims of Bam. Hours after the quake, NIAC agreed to assist the American Red Cross (ARC) by raising money targeted for Bam through its website.

Working closely with the relief organizations Mercy Corps, the ARC, Earthquake Relief Fund for Orphans, Child Foundation, Children of Persia, and Relief International, NIAC helped raise over \$100,000 directly through its website and transferred 100 percent of these funds to be used by these organizations on relief work in Bam. An additional \$150,000 was channeled to those relief organizations through web links posted on NIAC's site.

NIAC also played an instrumental role in educating and providing Iranian Americans with legal avenues to send aid given US sanctions on Iran. NIAC was intimately involved in efforts to persuade the US government to temporarily waive sanctions for a 90-day period so that Iranian Americans could financially

support Iranian NGOs working on long-term relief and rehabilitation in Bam.

In addition, NIAC Executive Director Dokhi Fassihian and Board Member Hadi Ghaemi were the first representatives from an Iranian-American organization to visit Bam in January. The visit was aimed at providing accountability for Iranian-American donors and assessing future needs.

The delegation visited humanitarian camps and assessed recovery and relief operations being carried out by aid workers. They met with representatives from NIAC's three main partner organizations, as well as with various Iranian NGOs, the Iranian Red Crescent Society, and other members of the Federation of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

NIAC representatives also led a two-day workshop in Tehran aimed at strengthening the ability of NGOs to document and present their work to funders, the general public, and other NGOs through visual media. Back in the United States, NIAC helped coordinate fundraisers across the country. NIAC also launched a nationwide campaign on corporate matching, urging employees to get their companies to match individual donations to Bam relief efforts.

Finally, NIAC representatives appeared extensively in the US media, discussing the Iranian-

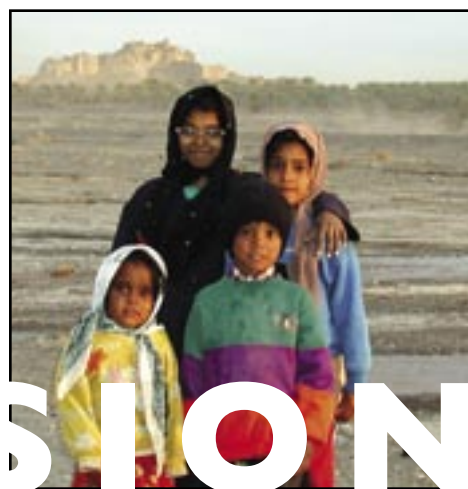


American community's efforts to assist in this emergency. The public relations effort attracted substantial donations from the American public.

NIAC's efforts were recognized by the Center for International Disaster Information, which honored NIAC for its efforts in informing the Iranian-American community on the importance of collecting cash in lieu of material goods to help the Bam earthquake victims.

**“The quick action and rapid response of the National Iranian American Council has been critical to Mercy Corps' ability to raise funds and put an experienced disaster response team on the ground in Bam. By mobilizing the generosity of Iranian Americans, the Council and its members have made a real difference in the lives of earthquake survivors who urgently need shelter, water and medical care.”**

**Dan O'Neill**  
President and Co-Founder of Mercy Corps.



# COMPASSION





## Connecting Iranian Americans Across America IraNexus

In July 2004, NIAC launched IraNexus—a much-needed tool that will network and strengthen Iranian-American organizations across the country. IraNexus is a database of non-profit organizations that represent the diverse interests of the Iranian-American community. The program is designed to connect the nationally dispersed Iranian-American community, and aid its ability to collaborate and mobilize rapidly.

By becoming members, Iranian-American organizations will access pertinent information about each other in order to network at the city, state, regional or national level. Through IraNexus, like-minded groups can collaborate and share resources for events and activities on a larger scale than ever before. Based on the survey information gathered in the membership process, NIAC will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organizations and design tools and resources specifically targeting their needs and interests.

# COMMUNITY



NIAC has created IraNexus to bring Iranian Americans one step closer to a more mobilized and active community through the vital organizations that serve it. Through IraNexus, individuals and other community members can also access a comprehensive online directory of organizations, housed on the NIAC website, to search for specific types of organizations, volunteer opportunities, Persian classes in their area, charitable opportunities, Iran-related resources for local schools, or to discover other ways in which organizations and their communities can become better connected.

The success of IraNexus depends on the number of Iranian-American organizations that become members. The database is growing rapidly. Membership is open to all non-profit organizations that serve our community. Participation is free and easy. Organizations need only visit the website and complete the IraNexus survey to become a member.

**To become an IraNexus member or access the database, please visit our website at <http://www.niacouncil.org/nexus/nexusindex.asp>.**

## Your Gateway to Political Influence Legislative Action Center

NIAC is the first Iranian-American organization to use the industry's most powerful solution for online political advocacy. Capitol Advantage's CapWiz™ provides NIAC site visitors with the necessary tools to quickly and easily submit letters and emails to their Senators and House Representatives online. The CapWiz system also helps constituents track legislation and PAC money, and compile voting records for individual members of Congress.

NIAC is unique in its use of the CapWiz system in that it uses the software to provide multiple viewpoints rather than a single perspective. The NIAC website provides two or more sample letters on each featured legislative alert – for example, one letter in favor of a proposed bill or resolution and one against it.

In the past year, NIAC has issued action alerts on numerous issues, including the Civil Liberties Restoration Act, the Security and Freedom Ensured Act (SAFE Act), the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal Act (CLEAR Act), and the proposed constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, resulting in more than 25,000 letters sent to Congress from Iranian Americans.

Another action alert addressed the STEP Act, which would deport all Iranian non-immigrant visitors and students from the United States within 60 days of its passing solely because they are Iranian. NIAC organized a phone campaign in which thousands of Iranian Americans across the country called their elected representatives to express their views about the Act. (The Step Act died in Congress in November 2004, but may be reintroduced in the 109th Congress.)

In addition to CapWiz's standard features which include candidate biographies, voting records, voter registration services, information on local ballot initiatives, and help in locating polling sites, two exciting new services were offered this election year: DemocracyNet (DNet), and links to candidate "Meet-Ups."

Capwiz's DNet service contains the policy positions of all candidates for public office –for the Senate, House and Presidency alike - in their own words. This information is shown in a grid format, which allows Iranian-American viewers to compare the positions of candidates on a variety of issues. Utilizing this new service, Iranian Americans can easily inform themselves on the differences between candidates in order to make an informed decision at the ballot box.



**Through NIAC's  
Legislative Action Center,  
hundreds of Iranian  
Americans sent letters  
to President Bush calling  
on him to urge the Iraqi  
Interim Government to  
charge Saddam Hussein  
for his use of chemical  
weapons against Iranians.**

# INFLUENCE



## Making an Iranian-American Difference in the 2004 Elections The 2004 Elections Project

Last year, NIAC began developing a project to educate Iranian Americans on the electoral process and to encourage their participation in our democracy. The NIAC 2004 Elections Project encompassed educational material on the US electoral process, a national voter registration campaign, customized Iranian-American voter guides on Presidential and Congressional candidates, and in-depth information about Iranian-American candidates running for public office around the country.

In addition to educating the community, NIAC took practical steps to ensure Iranian-American participation. In May, NIAC launched Project Iranian-American Vote, a nationwide voter registration campaign with the goal of registering every eligible Iranian-American voter across the country. NIAC coordinated an army of volunteers nationwide to organize and conduct voter registration drives utilizing "NIAC's Guide to Organizing a Successful Voter Registration Drive."

campaigns and educating them on our community and our issues. During the Democratic Presidential primary season, NIAC published the Democratic presidential candidates' detailed responses to a survey designed to address our community's issues. After the primaries, NIAC pursued the responses of President Bush and Ralph Nader as well.

Before going to the polls in November, Iranian-American voters were provided with customized voter guides to the presidential



*The NIAC PSA's were made possible through generous contributions by Dr. Akbar Ghahary and Dr. Mina Houtan*

In an effort to ensure that Iranian Americans embraced their right and duty as citizens to participate in the elections, NIAC published educational material dealing with topics such as swing states, the evolving role of state and national parties in national elections, the importance of Iranian-American campaign volunteering, the impact of votes cast in primaries, and the significance of writing op-eds and letters to the editor. These pieces can be found on the NIAC website in both Persian and English. These educational articles were also published in Iranian-American newspapers around the country to reach our Persian-language audience.

NIAC produced several public service announcements urging Iranian Americans to vote. Prominent members of our community delivered a non-partisan message of participation which aired on Iranian satellite TVs and radios in the months of September and October. The PSAs helped create an atmosphere in our community in which not voting became socially unacceptable.

For the first time ever, NIAC placed Iranian-American issues on the electoral agenda this 2004 election cycle. Starting early in the year, NIAC began the process of relationship-building with the presidential and congressional

race, as well as twelve House races and three Senate races with high Iranian-American populations, two of which included Iranian American candidates. NIAC also covered Iranian-American candidates running for local elections around the country.

## Befriend Your Lawmaker Congressional Breakfast Series

NIAC's Congressional Breakfast Series allows members of the Iranian-American community to participate in meetings with their respective lawmakers, and establish long-term relationships with them. The most important goal of these meetings is to provide Iranian Americans the opportunity to experience democracy first hand. There is no more powerful way to influence decision-making than through a face-to-face meeting with your representative.

Setting up these congressional meetings can be a daunting task. They can be a time-consuming and unfamiliar process for many Iranian Americans. Some simply feel uncomfortable making the initial contact. Moreover, lawmakers prefer to meet constituents in groups rather than having one-on-one meetings. As a result, it is easier for a national organization like NIAC to organize these meetings on behalf of its members in the Iranian-American community.

The Congressional Breakfast Series is designed to allow participants to control the agendas of their meetings with members of Congress. As a non-partisan organization, NIAC acts solely as the facilitator of these events. The participants decide themselves what issues to talk about and what positions to take on issues. They control the discussion.

Since the successful launch of the Congressional Breakfast Series in April 2003, NIAC has held meetings with numerous lawmakers. In 2004, NIAC met with three Senators—Senators George Allen, Paul Sarbanes, and John Warner. Participants discussed issues such as civil liberties, discrimination, small business initiatives, medical malpractice, and immigration policy. In 2005, NIAC plans to schedule meetings in congressional district offices on the West coast, as a result of NIAC's growing membership in California and Washington.



**“I have been a citizen of the United States for almost twenty years and I have been voting for many years, but never had a meeting like this with any of my Senators. Thanks to NIAC, I was given an opportunity to meet with my Senator face to face and discuss my and the Iranian-American community's concerns. Today, as a result of this experience, I feel that I have become a part of our great democracy.”**

**Mitra Mortazavi Lore, Maryland**

# LEADERSHIP

The nationwide breakfasts for NIAC members will increasingly be organized through our regional Chapters and will be aimed at increasing our community's access to lawmakers at the local level. Please contact us if you wish to benefit from this service and befriend your lawmaker!

**“This is what American democracy is all about: participation and dialogue. I know that it takes time for immigrant communities to get involved in our democracy, and what NIAC is doing in helping them along the way is great.”**

**Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA)**



## Iranian-American Eyes and Ears in the Corridors of Power Washington Policy Watch

The purpose of NIAC's Washington Policy Watch is threefold: to bring transparency to debates on issues affecting Iranian Americans, to allow members of our community to react to and affect these debates at an early stage, and to give young Iranian Americans first-hand exposure to the policy world in Washington, DC.

By covering policy conferences and hearings in Washington DC, NIAC provides Iranian Americans nationwide with an opportunity to learn about the private discussions preceding the public pronouncements. Exposure to these debates at these embryonic stages enables Iranian Americans to influence policy on issues that they care about.

NIAC sends Iranian-American college and graduate students to cover these events so that they are provided with first hand experience on Congressional hearings, think tank conferences and policy seminars. Early in their career, our youth are afforded practical experience, expert knowledge, and networking opportunities within the American political system, which will serve them well later in their careers.

Since the Fall of 2002, NIAC has covered the vast majority of Congressional hearings and policy conferences in Washington, DC that affect the interests of the Iranian-American community. Featuring prominent scholars, journalists, politicians, and diplomats, these events take place at institutions such as the US Congress, the Woodrow Wilson International Center



LEDGE

for Scholars, the Middle East Institute, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the World Bank, and local universities.

NIAC's published reports on these events have not only been read by Iranian Americans, but also by members of the National Security Council, the US State Department and Department of Defense, Congressional staffers, and members of foreign ministries overseas. This program gives NIAC interns the invaluable experience of not only attending these hearings and conferences, but also writing for a highly sophisticated audience. Their hard work, in turn, enhances our community's knowledge of the policy process and further strengthens our ability to affect the outcomes.

***The cost of NIAC's Washington Policy Watch is approximately \$25,000 a year.***



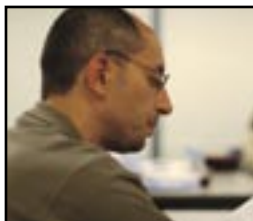
## The Key to Influence: Civic and Political Participation Civic Participation Workshops

In 2004, NIAC continued to offer its “Demystifying Democracy – The Seven Ingredients of Influence” workshop in major Iranian-American population centers. The workshops serve to advance the participation of Iranian Americans in American civic life, particularly the political process. They demonstrate the characteristics of influential individuals and communities, and train Iranian Americans both on how to adopt these behaviors and how to communicate effectively with decision makers.

The tools of influence, from knowledge about the political system to the leveraging of money in politics, are taught at these workshops in order to help transform the Iranian-American population from a politically apathetic group without a voice in politics to a vibrant, involved and influential community.



# PARTICIPATION



Through these workshops, we help provide a speaking platform to the Iranian-American community. Members have come to realize the importance of a systematic approach to civic participation. “As a result of what I learned in the workshop, I feel empowered to make a more powerful impact on decisions made in my district, state and the US,” said Sean Jazayeri, a Seattle-based High Tech executive.

Workshops have been held in Washington DC, New York, Chicago, Sunnyvale, Orange County, Atlanta, Seattle, Ann Arbor, San Francisco, Boston, and Baltimore. Iranian Americans of all political convictions have used the knowledge and skills they obtained in the workshop as a means to send letters to and meet with their decision makers, communicate with the media, volunteer with different organizations, and become involved in local politics.

NIAC has also developed an advanced workshop, which includes practical training in advocacy. “This workshop significantly simplified the process of how to become active and involved with the decision-making activities on Capitol Hill,” said Ramin Ostadhosseini of Washington, DC, who attended NIAC’s workshop in Boston.

**“The NIAC workshop in Seattle was very informative and highly organized. I was very impressed by the level of detail that was presented in a way that was so easy to follow. In the span of one afternoon, the presenters laid a clear foundation as to how to get involved in the American political process.”**

**Vafa Ghazi**  
Seattle workshop participant

**“The fast-paced, articulate, and organized presentations by NIAC served both as a map and a guide to increased Iranian-American participation in American civic life. Even for those of us born in the U.S., this workshop truly is an indispensable tool for building Iranian-American presence, political capital, and influence in America.”**

**Susie Naficy**  
Seattle-based lawyer



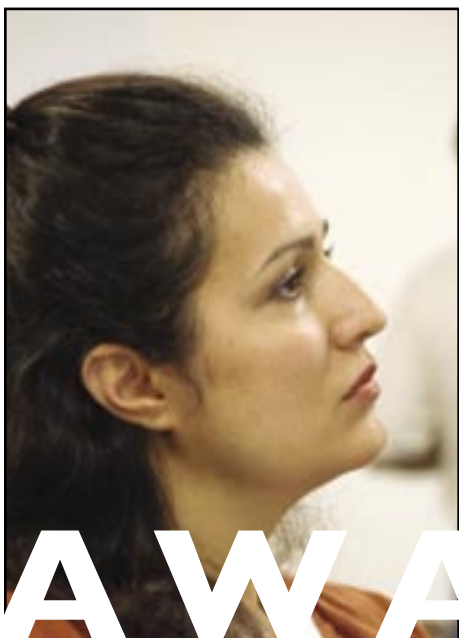
## Iranian-American Rights: Monitoring and Responding to Discrimination Civil Rights Watch

Going into the fourth year of the post-9/11 era, Iranian Americans continue to battle against discrimination. Worried that such forms of institutionalized discrimination will become common practice, NIAC works to bring such policies into public light and challenge them. As part of this effort, NIAC is cooperating with other Iranian-American organizations to monitor and, when needed, challenge government and private sector policies to ensure that discrimination against Iranian Americans is exposed and eradicated.

On February 13, 2004, NIAC accepted a public apology made by radio show host Don Imus of the “Imus in the Morning” program, simulcasted on MSNBC and WFAN-AM. Mr. Imus apologized to the Iranian-American community for the insensitive and offensive remarks he made regarding the crash of an Iranian Kish Airliner in the UAE on February 10th. NIAC was contacted by numerous individuals and groups outraged by Mr. Imus’s remarks regarding an event that has left hundreds of relatives mourning the loss of their loved ones.

NIAC demanded an apology from Mr. Imus to the Iranian-American community, the families of victims, and his millions of listeners. In less than 24 hours, 1,500 letters were sent from members of the Iranian-American community through NIAC’s website to executives of MSNBC and WFAN protesting Mr. Imus’s remarks.

NIAC is currently involved in documenting and studying potential discrimination cases, and is establishing partnerships with civil rights organizations to bring needed legal and media attention to this situation.



**On April 24th, 2003, Monster.com removed references to Iran from its standard format for job-seekers’ resumes—effectively preventing individuals with degrees from Iran to effectively compete on the US job market.**

**NIAC immediately organized a nationwide campaign aimed at ending this corporate discrimination. Within two days—with over 1,500 complaint letters sent to Monster.com via NIAC’s website—Monster.com offered NIAC written guarantees that the company would end its discrimination against Iranian Americans.**

# AWA RENESS



## Giving Iranian-American Businesses a Fair Chance SBA 8(a) Support Program



# BUSINESSES



Last year, NIAC initiated its support program for the Small Business Administration's 8(a) program on behalf of Iranian Americans in order to level the playing field for Iranian-American small businesses. The 8(a) program is designed to give assistance to small business owners who are deemed to be at a social and economic disadvantage. Currently, many ethnic groups and other minorities enjoy 8(a) status, qualifying them for special consideration under the law. NIAC's goal is to include Iranian Americans in the program in order to assist eligible small, disadvantaged firms to compete more effectively in the American economy.

Participants of the SBA 8(a) Program receive business development assistance from the SBA and other government agencies at various levels. Participants typically remain in program for a period of nine years, during which they are encouraged to grow their competitive and institutional know-how through a monitored combination of 8(a) and non-8(a) contracts. The Iranian-American community has been seeking this status for several decades, to no avail. NIAC has studied several successful applications, and is designing an application for the Iranian-American community based on proven successful strategies.

NIAC's course of action for the 8(a) petition has been to:

- 1) establish NIAC as a representative of Iranian Americans as a group
- 2) establish Iranians as an identifiable, separate and unique group
- 3) establish a pattern of chronic racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias
- 4) to establish Iranians as a significant group of small business owners

We are currently in the latter stages of the application process to obtain 8(a) status for Iranian Americans. NIAC has conducted over 40 interviews with members of our community who have faced ethnic discrimination in the work place, and has collected signatures for the purpose of NIAC's standing. In addition, NIAC has met with and secured the political support of a number of elected officials for the application. We intend to submit the petition to the Small Business Administration in January 2005.

***The estimated total cost for the project is \$50,000.***





## Jump-starting the Careers of Iranian-American College Students NIAC Public Service and Journalism Fellowship Program

As Iranian Americans participate more in American civic life, it becomes increasingly important, particularly for the youth, to be exposed to the workings of various organizations that are headquartered in the nation's capital. Many other ethnic groups, through their representative national organizations, assist in opening doors to valuable career opportunities for their youth. Iranian Americans deserve the same.

NIAC is partnering with Iranian-American individuals and groups to launch the NIAC Public Service and Journalism Fellowship Program in May/June 2005. Through this program, outstanding Iranian-American college students will have an opportunity to work at political and media organizations

in Washington DC, including congressional offices, agencies of the federal executive branch (the White House, Departments of State, Defense, and Health and Human Services), mass media outlets, think tanks, and advocacy groups.

All the summer fellows will be co-located at a dormitory and will participate in bi-monthly NIAC events. A small stipend will be provided to each fellow to cover basic living expenses and travel. Additionally, each fellow will be required to complete a comprehensive report on their fellowship. During the program's first year, NIAC aims to place three fellows at prestigious institutions in Washington DC, with the aim of increasing the number of fellows every year.

**NIAC is still fundraising for this project and needs your help!**

*The estimated cost is \$6,000 per fellow to secure and coordinate internships, promote the program, review applications, provide a small weekly stipend, provide 9-12 weeks dormitory accommodations, and organize summer activities.*

**Our youth are worth it!**



# ER



## Strength in Numbers

IranCensus: The Relative Concentration of Iranian Americans across the United States

In September 2003, NIAC published its IranCensus study, detailing the relative size of the Iranian-American community in each Congressional district vis-à-vis the size of other communities. This knowledge is pivotal for the community to be represented in political life, as it identifies where our comparative advantage is the greatest. The analysis of the Census Data in this study is intended to be used as a map for any group or entity that wishes to mobilize the Iranian-American community, regardless of their goals and agendas. It is NIAC's belief that increased political participation among all segments of the Iranian-American community will ultimately lead to a strengthening of democratic traits and practices in our community. NIAC's IranCensus study has become a fundamental tool for many within and outside the Iranian-American community.



# STRENGTH IN NUMBERS





# MOVING FORWARD

**“Three years after the tragedy of September 11, another tragedy continues to unfold - dividing us as a nation. Innocent men, women and children who trace their origins to the Middle East wake up every day knowing that they may face discrimination, violence and intimidation.**

**In many ways, this tragedy is a silent one, because those who are targeted are often afraid to come forward. NIAC has helped amplify these voices and has become an important bridge between the Iranian-American community and their legal rights.**

**We at NLSCA look forward to further cooperative efforts with NIAC, ensuring the protection of the civil and human rights of Iranian Americans.”**

**Banafsheh Akhlaghi**

President & Founder  
National Legal Sanctuary for Community Advancement (NLSCA)



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# MAKING SENSE OF THE POLICY PROCESS:

## *A Guide for the Iranian-American Community*

By Dr. Bahram Rajaei, the American Political Science Association  
Trita Parsi, President, NIAC  
Sam Fayyaz, NIAC

***How can the Iranian-American community become influential? How do issues or ideas get on the public agenda? Who or what grabs the attention of policy-makers? What patterns guide the process of transforming an idea into policy?***

### **Seeing the Big Picture**

Too often, groups seeking to affect the course of public policymaking in the U.S. take a narrow view of the process at the expense of fully understanding the bigger picture. A good example is the tendency for public debate to focus on controversial political issues of the day. Another example is the tendency to focus almost exclusively on political campaigns and the role of campaign contributions as a singular vehicle in advancing the agendas of interest groups.

To become a community that has the power to influence every day decisions in America, we need a deeper understanding of the dynamics of government decision making. By attaining a broader sense of the context within which policy is made, we will improve our ability to participate effectively by adopting strategies that are multi-dimensional and sustainable.

### **The Two Myths**

There are two myths about the policy process in general—and held by our community in

particular—that have plagued Iranian-American efforts to influence policymaking. The first myth is that the policy process operates in a predictable, linear, and mechanical manner. Or, that ideas and initiatives go through orderly and pre-determined, sequential stages before being written into law. From this perspective, the policy process is initiated through the rational definition or identification of a problem, which then prompts the search for a solution. Once a likely solution is found, it will go through various reviews before finally—if successful—being adopted as policy.

### **The first myth is that the policy process operates in a predictable, linear, and mechanical manner.**

However logical this approach may appear, it does not reflect the reality of policymaking. Although certain aspects of the legislative process do tend to follow a linear and structured pattern, the policy-making process in the United States is more accurately characterized by the coupling of problems with pre-existing solutions. More often than not successful groups are those that are proactive, and which continually float ideas and solutions on Capitol Hill while awaiting the emergence or formulation of a problem that will enable their solution to become policy.

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**A good lobbyist has a product to sell first, and only then goes and tries to convince policymakers that there is a demand for that product.**

The ongoing coupling of problems with solutions is necessarily both fluid and non-linear. It requires the continuous reframing of problems in order to make them fit a rapidly changing political context and with one's preferred solution. This can even cause the policy process to move in apparently contradictory directions at times. As a result, not only is it incorrect to assume that the policy process is linear and unidirectional, such an assumption can actually damage the cause of groups that rely on it at the expense of other approaches. It can lead to frustrated communities who waste huge amounts of resources—money in particular—on badly timed proposals for what are seen as “non-existing” problems.

The second myth is that the success or failure of an initiative depends on one factor above all others; in other words, that a single variable determines whether an idea is translated into policy or not. The most widespread example of this myth is the perception that money, channeled through an all-encompassing lobby group or PAC, is the one magic factor when it comes to community mobilization. That is, if a community group doesn't have an entity through which it can fund sympathetic candidates for political office, that community will not be successful in influencing the policy process in its favor. This myth is based on the flawed notion that if a particular lobby group has an idea as well as the money to put into the right people's hands, then it is only a matter of time before their idea becomes law or policy. These two

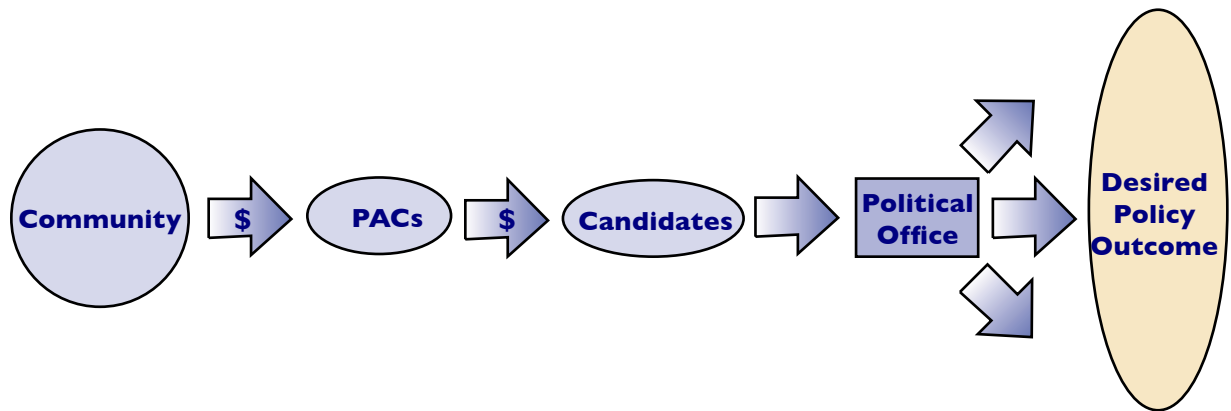
myths yield an approach to the policy process that can be described as the “Simple Model,” as illustrated in Figure 1 on Page 18.

This model also feeds off a perception that money is the only “oil” that can lubricate the policy-making machine. Although sufficient financial support is very clearly important to the success of a policy initiative, it is by no means the only important resource that communities can bring to bear on issues of interest to them. Nor is the simple cause and effect model that flows from this assumption reality. Lastly, no one single type of civic organization or public interest group can, in and of itself, adequately protect and advance the full spectrum of an entire community's interests. Such a strategy is doomed to fail in the long-run.

**Ideas do not receive prominence at a national level through the work and wealth of a select few. The process is far more muddled, in which many different types of actors, processes, and ideas float in an informal arena where outcomes are a function of how the different ingredients (problems, solutions, and participants' resources) are sorted out.**

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**FIGURE 1: Community Impact on Decision Making – The Simple Model**



### How the Policy Process Really Works

Instead of using a simple linear model and seeing only a few important actors and an even smaller number of relevant resources as the keys to success, the Iranian-American community needs a more accurate model of the policy-making process—a model that appreciates and accounts for the multidimensional and dynamic nature of policymaking. *Figure 2* illustrates this model.

This alternative model is also far more promising in terms of yielding results by virtue of its ongoing (i.e., not episodic/every 2 or 4 years) and balanced approach. The ultimate path by which a proposed solution becomes adopted as policy in reality involves a multitude of actors and competing agendas, whose success largely hinges on the persistence and creativity through which they are pursued. Single-mindedly relying on a strategy to “grease the political gears” via lobbies or

campaign contributions ignores the full range of these actors and agendas.

The most influential communities in shaping policy are those that have members present and working at all times, and in as many areas in this model as possible. Ideas, groups, and individuals that are successful are active and attentive—not in the sense that they are constantly setting specific goals and dedicating resources to solving specific problems, but active and attentive insofar as they have readily available solutions to any relevant problem or political current that comes their way. The core concept of this approach is to pursue your group’s interests by viewing the emergence of problems or crises as opportunities, taking full advantage of those opportunities by presenting relevant solutions that are beneficial to your constituency, and doing so in a timely and adroit manner through a variety of means simultaneously.

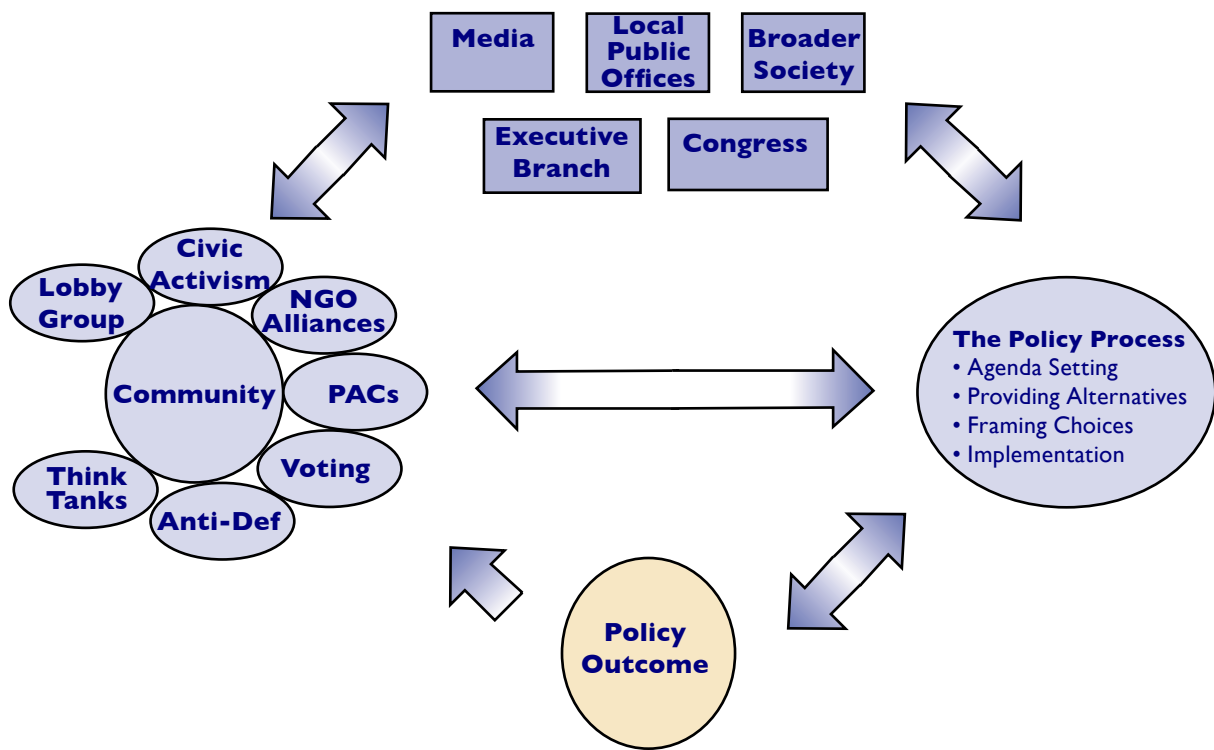
**Policy actors chart the direction of U.S. policy by utilizing events and political currents to propose pre-drafted, self-interested solutions that are relevant to emerging problems.**

Mobilizing a community coalition consisting of organized political forces (interest/advocacy groups), civil servants, scholars, political parties, and the media, and getting them to bark the loudest at the most opportune time—despite their diverging agendas—is a challenge whose success will make or break a policy initiative. But just getting these groups to bark at once does not mean their policy recommendations will be

accepted. Aggressive lobbying in support of an initiative in a political atmosphere that perceives the initiative as illogical or irrelevant will not get the initiative at the top of the policy agenda—the all-important “front burner.” There are bad times for good ideas, as well as good times for bad ideas.

From the perspective of the Iranian-American community, investment needs to be made in future political influence through the active development of a plethora of *different types of organizations* involved in the policymaking process as shown in our model. In the following pages, the most important of these types of organizations are described.

**FIGURE 2: Community Impact on Decision Making – The Dynamic Model**





## Preparing people for democracy

# Civic Education and the Role of NIAC

Civic education is arguably the most important element in readying a community for political action in the United States. Through civic education, organizations can generate political capital at the local level by enhancing the collective political knowledge and activism of a community. Civic education is the necessary condition that enables the political activism and influence of a community or group.

### **Successful Communities are Politically Educated Communities**

Only when a community is well familiar with the policy process will it be able to effectively participate in the democratic process and advance its interest. Successful communities are ones that have intimate knowledge of political institutions, as well as up-to-date information regarding changes in trends, laws, and procedures. Well informed communities are better equipped to use their resources (money, manpower, and media-related tools) in an efficient manner. Some of the strategies or activities employed by organizations to educate their communities include holding educational workshops; providing up-to-date information on key legislation; facilitating face-to-face discussions between constituents and their representatives; and perhaps most importantly, exposing members of the community to the policy world.

### **The Role of NIAC**

The National Iranian American Council (NIAC), unlike issue-specific interest groups, dedicates its resources to the goal of civic education while remaining ideologically and politically neutral. NIAC does not take stands on specific legislation and/or ideological platforms. As a result, NIAC is able to disassociate itself from potentially divisive issues and welcome involvement by all interested individuals in a culturally homogenous community with heterogeneous political stripes.

NIAC Board Member Sean Murphy describes NIAC's mission and goals for the Iranian-American community in this way: "In choosing to remain apolitical, NIAC has been able to aid, through education, the Iranian-American community in its quest to achieve greater political viability, without all the messiness that comes with partisan politics." Through its civic education activities and programs, NIAC is creating the necessary foundation for the flourishing of Iranian-American interest groups who can advance the collective goals of our community.



## "If you only hear one side, the vote is easy."

# Communication with Elected Officials

**Building meaningful relationships with lawmakers on Capital Hill is essential for a community's political influence. Senators and Congresspersons have the authority granted by statute and constitution to directly affect the political agenda and policy alternatives considered for legal application. It should be self-evident, then, as to why these powerful individuals ought to be courted if even a nominal level of influence is to be attained. Although these men and women are fighting the political battles on the front lines in Washington, D.C., their attentions are most often fixed on the needs and wants of their constituency back home. Ultimately, it is the people in the lawmakers' local districts that give them the chance to stay in office and make a difference.**



### ***Money is Not the Only Oil in the Political Machine***

A widely held public misperception is that lawmakers respond most acutely to campaign contributions and the wishes of powerful interest groups—in effect, that money is the only form of “oil” in the political machine. In reality, principles and persuasion are the foundations of lawmakers’ decision-making method. Former Wisconsin Congressman Jim Moody, who spent two years in Iran in the 1970’s and serves on NIAC’s Advisory Board, states that personal principles are the reason most people are compelled to run for public office: “Courage is rewarded in the system. You don’t go to Congress to be an applause meter, and you certainly don’t go to make more money or spend more time with your family.”



Congressman Jim Moody

For instance, Jim Moody was faced with an initiative that he favored yet was very unpopular among his constituents. “Eighty-five percent of my constituency was staunchly against the burning of the American flag and supported amending the Constitution to make it a federal crime. I disagreed and voted against changing the Constitution, and yet survived and even prospered politically because it showed that I had convictions.”

### ***Any Three to Four People Can Tip an Election***

Politically influential communities take advantage of lawmakers’ primary focus on events and currents in their districts by acting locally. These communities mobilize their local members through grassroots political education and campaigning. They build mutually beneficial relationships with influential leaders at the local level as well as coalitions with other communities that have similar interests and complementary resources. The most influential communities are ones that are able to persuade lawmakers by presenting themselves not as mere individuals, but as representatives of a network of individuals, or an active community. “People that are involved in their community get bonus points because they have networks,” says Jim Moody, stressing the importance of local networking. “All members of Congress know that any group of three to four people, if properly organized and very active, can tip an election, even in a non-competitive seat.”

### ***Meeting in the District***

Influential communities provide opportunities for their interested members to meet with their lawmakers face to face at the local level. District gatherings, as opposed to meetings in Washington D.C., are beneficial for both constituents and lawmakers. For constituents, or members of a community, local meetings are generally the most effective in terms of time and cost. In the district, constituents do not compete with lobbyists for the time of the representative. According to Jim Moody, “Money can help you buy ‘face time’ back in Washington DC, but face time is free in the district.” For lawmakers, district meetings are also very attractive because they are able to devote more time to organized constituents and their set of concerns.

### ***Getting “Face Time” with Lawmakers***

How exactly does one get “face time” with these seemingly insulated powerbrokers? First and foremost, lawmakers are not as insulated as one might assume. Putting together a small group and requesting to see your lawmaker is usually all it takes. Another route is to show up at a small fundraiser, discuss the issues that are important to you and your community with a representative, make a small donation, and then fit yourself into his or her schedule. This “face time” with lawmakers is crucial to advancing the interests of a community. And if you don’t do this, you are almost sure to lose. As Jim Moody puts it about the decision-making process, “If you only hear one side, the vote is easy.”



## **Making intolerance “socially repulsive” Antidiscrimination Groups**

**Antidiscrimination or civil rights groups seek to ensure civil rights compliance and the equitable treatment of all Americans under law. They play a crucial role in the policy process by filtering out ideas deemed detrimental to the interests of a community well before these ideas reach the final stages of the decision making process.**

### ***The First Line of Defense***

Antidiscrimination groups play an important, yet subtle role for communities in setting the political agenda. Antidiscrimination activities serve as an “intolerance filter” for what is deemed acceptable in terms of rhetoric, public discourse, and government policies pertaining to specific groups. In other words, antidiscrimination groups campaign to ensure that ideas deemed detrimental to the interests of a community are eradicated before they reach Washington, D.C. and enter the policy process. In that sense, antidiscrimination groups play a crucial role for communities by constituting their first line of defense.

A good example is the STEP Act of 2003. This controversial bill would deport all Iranian non-immigrants from the United States within 60 days of its passing—even though they were lawfully in the US – simply based on their national origin. From the Iranian-American community’s perspective, the problem with this bill was not that it had a realistic chance of passing—because it didn’t—but that it was introduced in Congress in the first place.

The idea that you can target Iranian immigrants simply because they are Iranian should have been filtered by an antidiscrimination group at an early stage in order to disable the idea from finding its way to Congress. Once in Congress, the task of confronting the bill is best suited by a lobby group, but there is no reason that it should not have been stopped at an earlier stage through the efforts of antidiscrimination groups. After all, a failure to stop it in Congress can spell disaster, so Congress must be the last—and not the first—line of defense. The introduction of the STEP Act was an indication that the Iranian-American community’s first line of defense had been breached, for the simple reason that we lacked effective antidiscrimination groups.

***The role of antidiscrimination groups is to make racially-motivated, hateful, or malevolent comments and policies socially and politically unacceptable—thereby making their political success inconceivable. This task is best done at the grassroots level, much like the activity of civic education groups.***



## Owning the debate Think Tanks

Think tanks play a crucial role in framing the debate on policy issues. Though they may have little influence on the final decisions lawmakers arrive at, they define the parameters of the debate by offering various alternatives that may not have been on the agenda previously.

From a community's perspective, think tanks are where ideas are manufactured to add intellectual weight to the message of the community. In order to permeate the policy world and influence lawmakers' decisions, communities must package and sell a message crafted by reputable scholars that spend the vast amount of their time thinking about these issues. The ability to craft your message is a crucial ingredient, no less important than numbers, money or organizational strength.

Council on Foreign Relations' Program Director Daryl Edwards remarks, "You want your ideas to come from a think tank environment.

You can have all the money in the world and even have a good issue, but, above all, you have to hone a message. The goal is to shape the parameters of the debate. Once you own the debate, it's like owning the highway. You can charge any amount for the toll you want. If you lack the ability to frame the debate then you are at somebody else's mercy in this country."

There are many different viewpoints on every issue each with its own merits, but the side that shapes the meaning of the issue in Washington will have a distinct advantage. The most successful think tanks have credibility and knowledge on their side, which is attained by being "fair and balanced," and having high quality scholars on their team. Daryl Edwards concurs, "One of the things that can really influence the debate in Washington is how you are seen by the other players of the game. If you don't have credibility on both sides of the aisle, then you are not going to have much influence on the debate."



Council of Foreign Relations Program  
Director Daryl Edwards



**“It’s fun to be the general, but first you have to build your army.”**

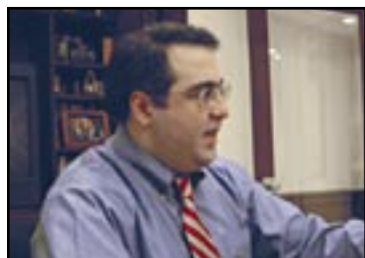
## **Lobby Groups**

**Lobby groups are instrumental actors in American politics. They direct their efforts toward influencing the legislative and executive branches of government. By providing in-depth knowledge on specific issues and solutions to complex problems, and through promises of continued support, lobby groups work to persuade legislators to endorse legislation favorable to the lobby.**

### ***Lobbies: Communities’ Representatives to their Representatives***

Media often portray lobby groups as shadowy figures who callously buy off government officials at the expense of the average American. Though some very powerful lobbies have dabbled in corruption to put their items of choice on the agenda, the common perception of lobbies as purely self-interested is flawed. Lobby groups are instrumental in educating and mobilizing communities and decision-makers. By harnessing the political capital – i.e. political support for their concerns – generated by efforts at a local level, lobbyists convince lawmakers to fight for causes important to that community. One may think of lobbyists as a community’s representatives to their representatives. The question then becomes: what does a lobby group need in order to succeed in the highly competitive Washington political environment where other opposing groups may be tirelessly working against their interests? Moreover, how do they create political capital, and how do they spend it wisely? Though there is no single formula for success, there are a few attributes that lobby groups must possess if they are to effectively sew a community into the enduring fabric of Washington.

### ***Lobbying is a Bottom-Up Process***



Aram Hamparian, Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA)

Directly lobbying government officials is a key component to the political success of a given community. However, without knowledge of the political process or political involvement at the local level, the chances of putting a desired initiative on the agenda in Washington are extremely low. According to Aram Suren Hamparian, the Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), “The most fruitful strategy in advocacy is working locally, in educating and mobilizing local communities. This is a bottom-up process. Spending political capital is easy, but unless you are out there generating it you will have nothing to spend.”

### ***Lobbies Provide Communities with “Political Savvy”***

Community members must have a keen understanding of how the policy process works in order to ensure a high level of activity at the grassroots level. Lobbies, civic education groups, and other advocacy groups have the duty to educate their community on the ins and outs of the political process. Workshops, seminars, and other educational tools provide communities with an understanding of how to effectively translate their interests into results. Both the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and ANCA devote considerable resources to educating their respective communities. Hamparian notes the secret to the ANCA’s success: “You can’t mobilize people that aren’t educated. Fifty percent of political success is done through education at the local level. This is a constant process. You have to remember that you are swimming up stream, so training is a constant effort. The second you stop or slow down you get swept away.” Once a community attains a base level of knowledge of the political process—or “political savvy,” as Keith Weissman of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) puts it—it can effectively mobilize to create the political capital needed at a local level to supplement the work being done at the national level.

### **Communities Must Have a Multitude of Lobbies**

Political capital is best generated at the local level. Communities leverage political support by building mutually beneficial relationships with local politicians, which can eventually be translated into influence at the national level. Relationships with local officials must be established, nurtured, and maintained, while a genuine interest and commitment to local issues that fall outside the realm of a community's broader interests must also be developed. When local officials sense that a community cares about issues important to them, and they can count on their support, these officials will develop an acute awareness of that community's concerns and consider their interests when fulfilling their role in office.

Hamparian discusses ANCA's grassroots strategy: "The group that is generally going to have the most political success is the one generating it in the field. A member of Congress might be torn on an issue, and one of the things they will take into consideration is 'what do the folks back home think?' If you have a significant number of local relationships you can sustain what you are trying to do nationally."



Keith Weissman, American Israeli  
Public Affairs Committee

AIPAC's Keith Weissman echoes Aram Hamparian's sentiments when he discussed AIPAC's secret to success: "What we pride ourselves on is being active in every district. Every town with a substantial Iranian-American population must have a chapter of their national lobby organization."

Focusing on the intricacies of inside government lobbying is futile if those lobbyists are not supported by a well-informed and active community that is committed to its causes, and prepared to fight at the local level for the benefit of that community. As Aram Hamparian puts it, "It's fun to be the general, but first you have to build your army."

### **Lobbies Must Use their Influence Responsibly**

AIPAC's Keith Weissman stresses the importance of building trust with one's community by "using your influence responsibly." Weissman recommends "cultivating a relatively simple message, remaining non-partisan, and being responsible enough to know that you can't ask for everything." Lobbying government officials not only involves asking them to consider the interests of one's community, but also educating them on issues that they do not have the time or the resources to become experts on.

Changing the frames of reference used by legislators is a crucial element of rendering them more sympathetic to your communities' interests. Thus, it is important to craft and deliver a message that not only resonates with the community at large, but also with decision-makers.

Weissman adopts a clever metaphor, stating that "If you go fishing in Washington you have to use the bait the fish like, not the bait that you like." If a community does not have a substantial localized presence, or is not prepared to recognize their representatives' other concerns, they will find few allies on Capitol Hill. Weissman sagely concludes that "If you want a friend in Washington, you have to be a friend."



## **“We are just a campaign organization”**

### **Political Action Committees**

**Political Action Committees (PACs) are set up to raise money for candidates running for office, or to serve as a general fund for a particular party committee. PACs mostly represent business, labor, and political interests. Individual PACs may contribute \$5,000 to a candidate per election, \$15,000 annually to any national party committee, and \$5,000 annually to any other PAC. PACs may accept \$5,000 from any one individual, PAC or party committee annually.**

#### ***PACs Don't Lobby***

Individual communities utilize PACs to raise and spend money on campaigns and candidates sympathetic to the community's interests. In this respect, it is fair to say that PACs are campaign oriented interest groups. What happens the day after the election in terms of working with elected representatives on their agenda, and making sure your community's interests are included, is better performed by lobby groups. Melissa Schiffman, the deputy communications director of EMILY's List, widely considered the most successful political action committee in Washington D.C., notes, “We are just a campaign organization. We don't lobby, we are not an issue advocacy group. We help candidates, and once they are elected we don't do much with them. Once they're members, they're members: we have done our job.”

#### ***PACs and Lobbies Go Hand-in-Hand***

Although PACs are extremely important in providing communities with the means of putting sympathetic candidates in office, they are usually not suitable as principal leaders of a community mobilization strategy. That task is better left to national level interest groups who unlike PACs, are involved in the policy-making process on a continuous basis—not just during elections. Without PACs, interest groups clearly would have difficulty contributing funds to current or aspiring lawmakers; yet, without interest groups, coordinated leadership and the continuous negotiation and dissemination of a community's political preferences would be absent. While money certainly is a very important ingredient in the electoral process, it does not necessarily have to be channeled through PACs. According to Aram Suren Hamparian, Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), eighty-five percent of the Armenian community's political contributions go directly to candidates or campaigns rather than through PACs.

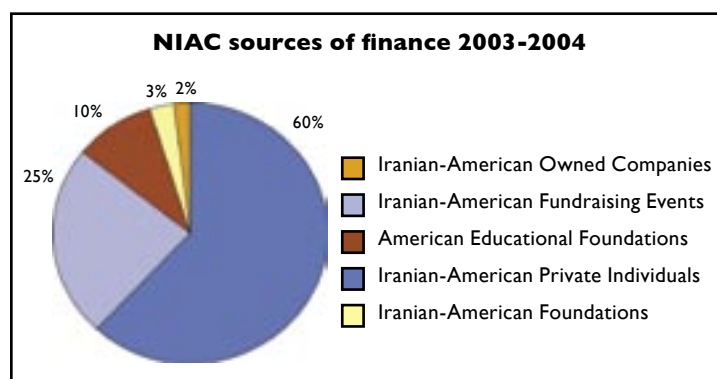
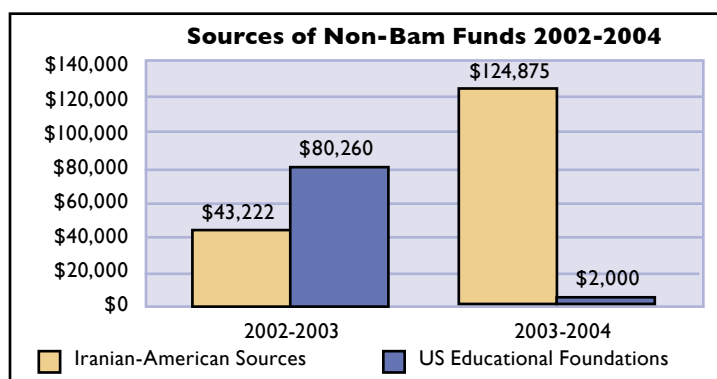
#### ***The Most Effective Money Is Money that Travels the Shortest Distance***

Although EMILY's List has garnered national recognition and enjoys a substantial annual budget, its campaign operations remain localized. Schiffman notes, “We don't do anything at the national level: it's just too expensive.” Instead, EMILY's List empowers and educates its community at the grassroots, emphasizing the stakes of elections at the district level. Accountability is the greatest when the distance between the donor and recipient is the shortest. As a result, the most effective money is money that travels the shortest distance.

# BALANCE SHEET

During the last twelve months, NIAC has almost tripled its revenues from Iranian-American individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations. We have actively sought to increase our Iranian-American funding sources in order to leverage future support from American foundations.

In the coming year, we expect continued growth in Iranian-American funding, as well as increased support from American educational foundations. (In late July 2004, NIAC was awarded \$50,000 from the Open Society Institute towards NIAC's civic education activities).



## INCOME

Bam Earthquake Funds Received	\$111,955
Businesses (Unrestricted Contributions)	\$12,398
Fundraising Events	\$31,541
Total Membership Dues	\$67,567
Project Income	\$15,369

**TOTAL INCOME** **\$238,830**

NIAC is a recipient of grants from the following U.S. foundations:

- The Open Society Institute
- Tides Foundation
- National Endowment for Democracy
- Kenbe Foundation
- Kamyar and Goli Foundation

## EXPENSES

Bam Earthquake Funds Disbursed	\$111,875
Advertising and Promotion	\$8,144
Administrative Fees	\$5,353
Professional Fees	\$80,866
Communications	\$3,955
Dues and Subscriptions	\$5,438
Printing and Reproduction	\$5,125
Travel Expenses	\$8,102
Transportation	\$743
Rent	\$6,340
Research Material and Expenses	\$878
Fundraising Program Expenses	\$7,444

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$244,263**

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*The National Iranian American Council is a Washington, DC-based 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization promoting Iranian-American participation in American civic and political life. All donations to NIAC are tax-deductible.*



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