

# Why POOIA?

## (Professional Organization Of Iranian-Americans)

It is no mystery to anyone who has looked at statistics and made even cursory observations that the community of Iranians in this country has by and large been quite successful and prosperous. If you stop by any major hospital, any reputable university, any research organization or any successful business, the abundance of Iranian-American professionals on their staff is truly amazing. This does not even take into account thousands of others of Iranian decent who have made it successfully in small and medium size private enterprises. The individual contributions that this large productive segment has made, and continues to make, to the betterment of American society in science, technology, business, arts, culture etc. is overwhelming and cause for pride and celebration. That is true despite the fact that one cannot help but agonize over the reality that such monumental productivity and positive impact could have potentially manifested itself in our beloved homeland under more favorable circumstances. As the second generation of Iranian-Americans reaches professional maturity, the overall positive impact of the Iranian-American community is bound to multiply and become more pronounced.

An equally glaring but unfortunate fact is the absence of cohesion both from a cultural and a professional perspective among the large community of Iranian-Americans. Even though the cycle of formation, flourishing (and subsequent withering in some cases) of many cultural, and at times professional, organizations of Iranians has been ongoing for years, such efforts have been fragmented and by and large ineffective on a meaningful scale. No lasting and credible unification and pooling of talents and resources commensurate with the numbers and calibers of Iranian-Americans have taken root thus far in any significant way. As a consequence, the Iranian-American community, despite its rich cultural heritage and important professional weight, has consistently been deprived of opportunities to exercise positive social influence as a cohesive community on par with some other ethnic groups in this country. Neither have we created any credible resistance to counter the spread of misinformation and lies that abounds in the popular media and culture about Iranians. Nor have we created the foundational elements that would allow our upcoming second generation to use as an anchor of support for professional and social advancement.

Against this backdrop, the formation of the Professional Organization Of Iranian Americans (POOIA) is a small step in the direction of filling some of these gaps, albeit from a more professional perspective. The purpose of POOIA is to create an organization that can deliver targeted, meaningful and impactful activities that (a) create a sense of synergy within the population of Iranian-American professionals and a vehicle to achieve more than the sum of our individual contributions; (b) enhance and ensure the growth and professional success of our children; and (c) combat propagation of misinformation about Iranians. This is a tall order in and of itself. What makes it even more challenging is the fact that it will be conceived as yet another effort in the string of previous countless, and mostly unsuccessful, attempts to unite Iranian-Americans around a professional axis in different parts of the country. Nonetheless, there is no other alternative but to try again, even as times become more trying!

As the next generation of Iranian-Americans comes of age professionally and becomes productive, POOIA is aiming to become an anchor of support with an organizing principle that promotes creation of a conduit for Iranian-American professionals to share the fruits of their success, experiences, and resources with others. This will not only benefit the new generation of Iranian-Americans by creating a web of support to help in identifying professional and educational opportunities, but will also facilitate actual placement of qualified Iranian-Americans in various enterprises, universities, etc. Other forms of support like internships, scholarships, mentoring, career counseling, recommendations for admissions and the like are also part of POOIA's ongoing and planned initiatives.

But there are two other important aspects to POOIA's mission, each driving a distinct set of activities. The first is the "Good Citizen" aspect of POOIA. Since most POOIA supporters are expected to be quite successful in their careers, both from professional and financial points of view, POOIA has embraced the goal of being a donor of occasional specialized services to the community. Periodic sessions to provide free dental / medical care, free legal counseling, free financial advice, and free engineering advice by POOIA supporters are examples of community activities undertaken by POOIA. These efforts will not only boost Iranians' image within the community, but will also materially help those in need in a meaningful way.

The second aspect of POOIA's mission, as alluded to earlier, is to counter the negative propaganda and misconceptions that abound in the media about the Iranians. We need to show that Iranians not only have nothing to be ashamed of, but everything to be proud of as an ethnic group with a magnificent cultural heritage and a remarkable track record of productive contribution to their host countries. Being an independent, non-political, non-religious organization, POOIA is going to project a strong image of who we really are as Iranians: proud, diverse, successful, and productive members of society, and a cohesive body to be reckoned with on its own merit independent of the nuanced political news and views propagated through sensationalized news cycles. We will stand strong and tall to defend our image and reputation and educate the communities in which we live on who we really are, what we have done and how we are advancing the cause of progress in society.

In short, POOIA is about all of us together as a professional and diverse community with a mission to help ourselves and our children, to help our communities, and to project the right image of our proud identity, our glorious heritage and our remarkable achievements. With these goals and aspirations in mind, we strongly encourage all Iranian-American professionals from all walks of life to visit us online at [www.POOIA.com](http://www.POOIA.com) and support us in any way they can.