



# CAIR MASSACHUSETTS

## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Edited February 7, 2017

[cairma.org](http://cairma.org)

# ABOUT CAIR-MA

CAIR-Massachusetts is a nonprofit 501(c)(3), grassroots civil rights and advocacy organization and is a chapter of The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). CAIR is America's largest Muslim advocacy and civil liberties organization, with about 33 regional offices nationwide. The national headquarters is located on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

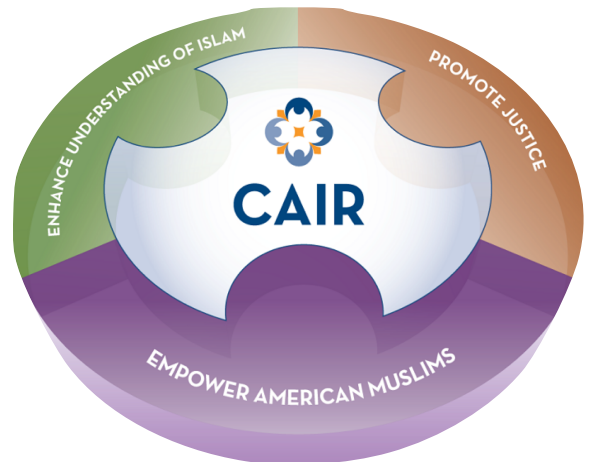
CAIR-MA was incorporated in June of 2015 by a core group of dedicated leaders who saw the need for greater representation and defense of their local Muslim community. Since its incorporation, the chapter has grown to multiple full-time staff, and has assisted hundreds of Muslims in their pursuit of justice.

## OUR VISION

To be a leading advocate for justice and mutual understanding.

## OUR MISSION

To enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.



## OUR PRINCIPLES

CAIR is committed to protecting the civil rights of all Americans, regardless of faith.

CAIR supports domestic policies that promote civil rights, diversity and freedom of religion.

CAIR opposes domestic policies that limit civil rights, permit racial, ethnic or religious profiling, infringe on due process, or that prevent Muslims and others from participating fully in American civic life.

CAIR is a natural ally of groups, religious or secular, that advocate justice and human rights in America and around the world.

CAIR supports foreign policies that help create free and equitable trade, encourage human rights and promote representative government based on socio-economic justice.

CAIR believes the active practice of Islam strengthens the social and religious fabric of our nation.

CAIR condemns all acts of violence against civilians by any individual, group or state.

CAIR advocates dialogue between faith communities both in America and worldwide.

CAIR supports equal and complementary rights and responsibilities for men and women.





Dear Friends and Supporters,



*Asalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatu.*

During the past year, our organization has grown from dream to reality. Thanks to the support of our energetic board, dedicated staff, dozens of active volunteers, and over 2,000 donors, we've become one of the fastest-growing CAIR chapters in history, and have been able to accomplish a tremendous amount of good for our community in a short period of time. Just eighteen months after our incorporation, we've moved from a fledgling organization to one with a functioning civil rights department led by seasoned staff, a strong local and national media presence, capacity to challenge anti-Muslim hate groups, robust interfaith presence, and plans to open a Government Affairs branch.

We're exceptionally proud of our accomplishments during the past year:

- Fielded and assisted with over fifty civil rights intakes
- Conducted over two dozen Know Your Rights talks at mosques and community centers throughout New England, reaching thousands of Muslims
- Expanded our staff from one to three, with an additional hire pending
- Hosted more than a dozen voter registration events to ensure participation from the Muslim demographic in the 2016 general elections
- Conducted over fifty press events and media interviews.
- During the last quarter of 2016 alone, news stories in which CAIR-MA was mentioned reached over 1.5 million local viewers – a total local market publicity value of over \$77,000.
- Participated in nearly two dozen interfaith events throughout New England
- Our Islamophobia intern produced a groundbreaking report on the Boston Globe's coverage of Islam and Muslims in 2015, and presented his findings to the paper's editorial board
- Convened the first Muslim Gamechangers Network program in Massachusetts, teaching two dozen high school students about leadership and civic engagement in a competitive thirteen-week program
- Delivered Islam 101 talks to elected officials and law enforcement authorities
- Built strategic partnerships with local Christian, Jewish, Latino, African-American, and other advocacy groups
- Assisted three mosques after incidents of vandalism at their facilities, and six more after they received threatening or hateful letters

Please consider this report as not just a summary of our accomplishments during the past year, but also an invitation to contribute to our ongoing work in some capacity. As you read the report you might imagine that you may be able to strengthen our work by doing as little as providing expert advice, to as much as joining one of our teams in an area that appeals to you most. As always, please contact us with comments or suggestions for improvement.

We hope that you will continue to partner with us to defend civil rights, fight bigotry, empower the Muslim community, and promote understanding.

Sincerely,

John Robbins, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

# CIVIL RIGHTS

In the final month of 2016, CAIR-MA officially opened its Civil Rights Department with the addition of Barbara Dougan, a seasoned local civil rights attorney. We're thrilled by this new development, which we anticipate will enable us to serve the needs of our constituents in a significantly more robust way.





**Barbara Dougan** brings over 20 years of experience as a civil rights attorney in Boston. She was formerly Director of the Project to Combat Racial Violence at the Boston Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, representing the victims of hate crimes, police misconduct and discrimination in housing and public accommodations.

Most recently, she ran the Massachusetts office of Families Against Mandatory Minimums, where as the Massachusetts Project Director her legislative advocacy helped to reform harsh drug sentencing laws that overwhelmingly impacted minority communities. She was one of the organizers of a 9/11 legal response network in conjunction with the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the ACLU, and National Lawyers Guild, where she presented Know Your Rights talks at mosques and developed attorney referral lists and a help hotline. Along with a team of attorneys, she litigated one of the first post-9/11 airline cases (*Alshrafi v. American Airlines*) on behalf of a US citizen from Jordan. In 2010, Ms. Dougan was named one of the "Top Women in Law" by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly and has been honored by the NAACP, National Lawyers Guild, Community Change, and Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston.



# PUBLIC EDUCATION



During 2016, CAIR-MA delivered live presentations and trainings on a variety of topics related to Islam and Muslims at a total of over 30 events to thousands of participants. Venues for these events included the Suffolk University Law School, Harvard Arab Weekend, the Jobs-Climate-Justice Rally on the Boston Common, the Amnesty International New England Regional Conference, Brown University, Nahant Public Library, Rhode Island College, Springfield College, Smith College, and Mount Ida College, along with a variety of other venues. Topics included Islam 101, Contemporary Issues in Islamic Thought, Meet Your Muslim Neighbor, What Muslims Really Believe, and the role of Muslim women in leading social change.



# GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



On April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, eight CAIR-MA staff, board members, and volunteers - including four teenage Muslim young women - traveled to Washington, DC to advocate with elected officials on behalf of our community. We met with congressional staff and two Congressmen in eleven meetings, during which we discussed priority issues for our community, such as surveillance programming, initiatives to reduce urban food deserts, and proposed Countering Violent Extremism legislation.



KATHERINE CLARK  
UNITED STATES CONGRESS  
5TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

December 9, 2016

Dear John,

I write to express my sincere gratitude for giving your time and expertise as a panelist for our community conversation, "Moving Forward: Promoting Safety & Tolerance in Our Communities". Your knowledge and experience as an advocate for Muslim communities provided a critical perspective both in acknowledging the fears that families are facing and in offering action steps for community members to be strong allies. I know how valuable your time is, and I want you to know how much I appreciate your generosity and all the work that you do for our Muslim communities at CAIR.

Again, thank you for serving on the panel for this important discussion. Please do not hesitate to contact me if my office can be of assistance to you in the future.

Sincerely,

Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress



Additionally, this coming year CAIR-MA is excited to begin the hiring process for a full-time Government Affairs Director to increase our capacity to serve our community locally in this crucial realm.





# MUSLIM COMMUNITY & EMPOWERMENT

As a result of dedicated outreach, CAIR-MA enjoys close working relationships with nearly all of Massachusetts' 30+ mosques and Islamic schools, along with numerous Islamic Centers throughout New England, and non-affiliated Muslim cultural groups.

## ***Know Your Rights Presentations***

During 2016, CAIR-MA conducted over a dozen hour-long Know Your Rights presentations at mosques across the state, educating thousands of Muslim community members. These typically took place during Friday or Saturday evenings, during regularly scheduled "halaqa" (religious lecture) periods.

## ***Voter Registration Drives***

CAIR-MA undertook an aggressive voter registration drive during the period leading up to the 2016 elections. Through the talents of our dedicated summer intern, Molly Hickey, along with the efforts of countless volunteers, we conducted voter registration drives at fifteen mosques throughout Massachusetts. We additionally held events at community functions taking place outside of the formal mosque structure, such as the annual gathering of the Pakistani Association of Greater Boston.

OUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITY  
AS AMERICAN MUSLIMS

WITH  
**JOHN ROBBINS, PH.D.**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
COUNCIL ON AMERICAN-ISLAMIC RELATIONS MA

**SATURDAY, MAY 21 @ 9:00PM**  
DINNER AFTER MAGHRIB (8:06 PM)

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470 SOUTH ST QUINCY, MA

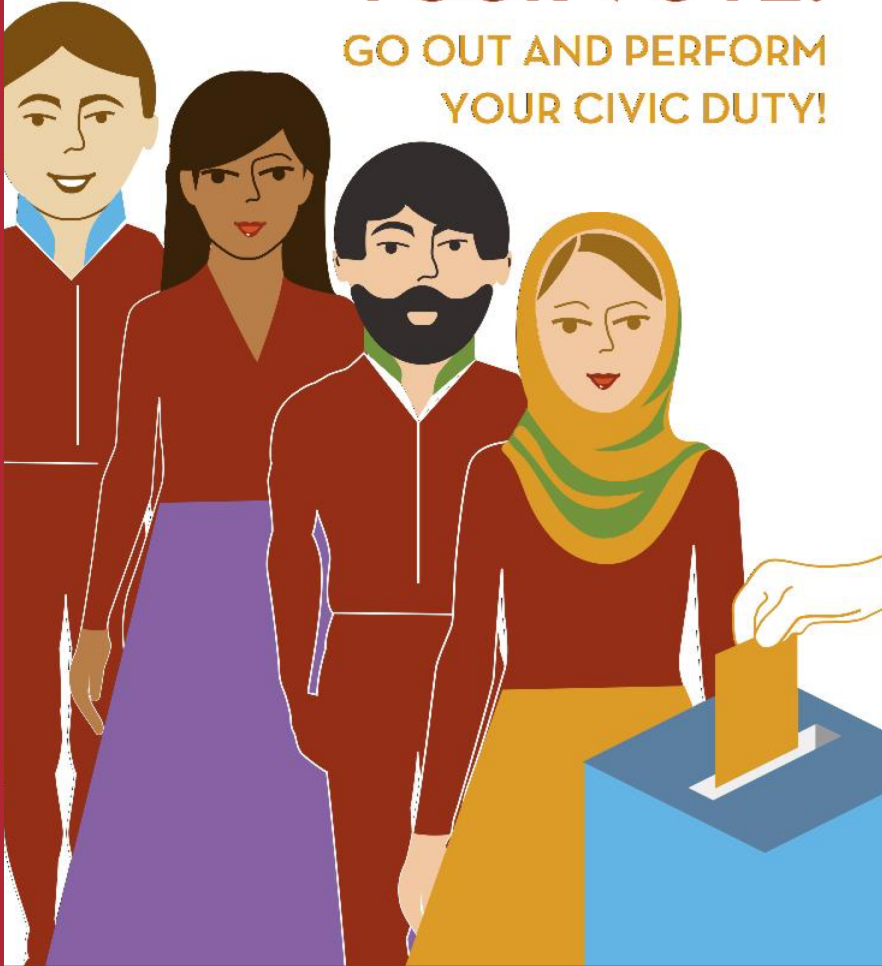


CAIR  
MASSACHUSETTS

# TOMORROW

BE SURE TO CAST **YOUR VOTE!**

GO OUT AND PERFORM  
YOUR CIVIC DUTY!



# COUNTERING ISLAMOPHOBIA

2016 witnessed a significant spike in anti-Muslim hate crimes, fueled by toxic campaign rhetoric which explicitly demonized the American Muslim community, alongside other minority groups. Locally, CAIR-MA worked actively to challenge hatred against the Muslim community, specifically in the following incidents:

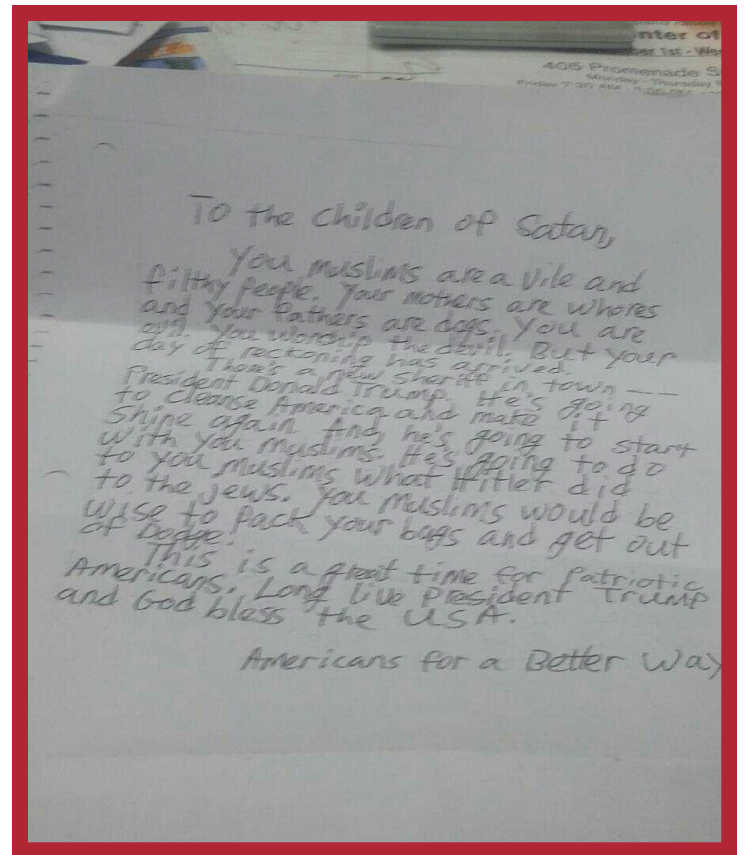
*Responded to three separate incidents of vandalism targeting mosques in New England: a brick thrown through the window of the Islamic Society of Greater Nashua; a window broken with an axe at the Islamic Center of Rhode Island in Kingston; and a beer bottle thrown at the door of the Islamic Society of Western Massachusetts. CAIR-MA coordinated the media and PR responses for each of these incidents, and called on local law enforcement agencies to investigate the attacks as hate crimes.*



*December: Responded to six separate letters sent to New England mosques. The letters told the Muslim congregants to leave, and threatened to do to them “what Hitler did to the Jews.” Each was laden with racist, anti-immigrant rhetoric and praised President-elect Donald Trump.*



March: Sought and obtained the censure of an elected official in Easton, Massachusetts who posted offensive material on social media against Muslims, African-Americans, and women.



February: Responded to an anti-immigrant rally at the Rhode Island State House. The conveners asked the state's governor to rescind support of Syrian refugees, claiming that they were generally anti-Semitic and a threat to America. CAIR-MA coordinated over 200 protestors to the event, and convened a separate press conference to respond to the hateful rhetoric.

November: Responded to the invitation of three anti-Muslim speakers to present at a synagogue in Stoughton, MA. Jerry Boykin, Frank Gaffney, and Tom Trento each lead major Islamophobic organizations with national prominence, and have records of demonizing the Islamic faith as a whole. CAIR-MA hosted a counter-event outside the institution offering hugs and donuts to attendees to demonstrate the positive nature of their Muslim neighbors, and invited local media to observe the interactions.

November: Organized a protest against the group Americans for Peace and Tolerance, which held a town hall gathering in Hopkinton, MA to claim that the majority of mosques in Massachusetts were "radicalized" and secret extremist front groups.

# MEDIA & COMMUNICATION



## ***Visibility in Traditional Media***

CAIR-MA conducted over fifty separate press and media interviews during the course of the past year, on topics such as Islamophobic campaign rhetoric, mosque vandalisms, voter registration efforts, and Muslim civic engagement. Additionally, writings from our staff appeared in outlets such as the Huffington Post, Fortune, the Boston Herald, and the Boston Globe.



## ***Social Media***

This past year, we have taken deliberate steps to increase our exposure on social media, particularly in an effort to reach younger community members. A testimony to our success is the organic growth of our Facebook community, which recently exceeded 1,000 followers.

## ***Media Trainings***

In May, CAIR-MA hosted two media training for community leaders. The first, Best Practices in Social Media, was designed to increase the ability of mosque leaders to engage their congregants using Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. The second, Interviewing Techniques, provided training on talking points, body language, messaging, and crisis communications to imams, members of mosque boards, and other community leaders likely to be interviewed for television, radio, or newspapers. Both were led by veteran media professionals who are experts in their respective fields.



## ***Analysis of the Boston Globe's coverage of Islam and Muslims in 2015***

Led by our Media & Islamophobia summer intern, Harrison Cramer, our chapter undertook a statistical analysis of the Boston Globe's coverage of Islam and Muslims in 2015. The results were striking: 86% - six out of seven instances - of articles on Islam or Muslim were in the context of violence. Additionally, more than half of articles about Islam also featured key terms such as "terrorism," "extremism," or "jihad." The Boston Globe has a daily circulation of over 571,000 adults. CAIR-MA generated a full report of its findings, which it has presented to the Globe's Editorial Board in the hope of encouraging more balanced and representative coverage of the American Muslim community.

### **Website**

With the generous assistance of a volunteer team of website designers, CAIR-MA is currently in the process of redesigning our website, [www.cairma.org](http://www.cairma.org). Look for its formal launch at the beginning of 2017!

# STAFF AND BOARD

## **STAFF MEMBERS**



**Dr. John Robbins, Executive Director.** John Robbins is a dedicated and experienced community organizer, nonprofit leader, and public intellectual. He holds a Ph.D. in English, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Tufts University. A dedicated educator, he has taught algebra to high-risk youth at a public high school in Maryland, English to refugee and orphan children in Turkey, and literature at Cornell and Tufts Universities. His writings have appeared in numerous outlets including Fortune, Time, Muslim Matters, the Hill, the Jewish Journal, the Boston Globe, and the Boston Herald, and he is a regular contributor at the Huffington Post. Dr. Robbins sits on the board of directors of Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, the greater Boston area's oldest interfaith social justice network.





**Barbara Dougan, Esq., Civil Rights Director.** Barbara Dougan brings over 20 years of experience as a civil rights attorney in Boston. She was formerly Director of the Project to Combat Racial Violence at the Boston Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, representing the victims of hate crimes, police misconduct and discrimination in housing and public accommodations. Most recently, she ran the Massachusetts office of Families Against Mandatory Minimums, where as the Massachusetts Project Director her legislative advocacy helped to reform harsh drug sentencing laws that overwhelmingly impacted minority communities. She was one of the organizers of a 9/11 legal response network in conjunction with the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the ACLU, and National Lawyers Guild, where she presented Know Your Rights talks at mosques and developed attorney referral lists and a help hotline. Along with a team of attorneys, she litigated one of the first post-9/11 airline cases (*Alshrafi v. American Airlines*) on behalf of a US citizen from Jordan. In 2010, Ms. Dougan was named one of the "Top Women in Law" by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly and has been honored by the NAACP, National Lawyers Guild, Community Change, and Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston.



**Haley Rodgers, Director of Development and Community Engagement.** Haley Rodgers is dedicated to serving marginalized populations around the world. After spending six years abroad working in Kenya, Jordan, and Iraq, Haley is returning to her home city of Boston to work as Development Director for CAIR-MA. Haley holds a Master's degree in Development Practice from Sciences-Po in Paris, France and a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from American University. She is also a competitive athlete and enjoys learning new languages.



## BOARD MEMBERS

**Tahirah Amatul-Wadud** is a litigator licensed to practice in Massachusetts state and federal courts, as well as the federal court in the Northern District of New York. Her practice areas are civil rights and domestic relations law. She is general counsel for a New York Muslim congregation, regularly develops and chairs continuing education courses for legal professionals and members of the non-legal community, sits on a panel for her local bar association, and has served on boards for Western Massachusetts non-profit organizations. Ms. Amatul-Wadud is also an appointed volunteer commissioner for the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women; her biography on the Commission's page can be found [here](#).

**Samiyah Diaz** holds BS, MS, and JD degrees. Professionally, she practices as a litigator and IP attorney. She is involved with several non-profit organizations, working on governance, compliance, and strategy. In addition to English, she is proficient in Spanish, French, German, Arabic, and Greek. Attorney Diaz is a native of Massachusetts.

**Nadeem Mazen** is a local business owner, civic activist, educator, and innovator. After moving to Cambridge for undergraduate and graduate work at MIT, Nadeem fell in love with the city and opened two small businesses in Central Square. Both provide community access to cutting-edge technology, services, and job training. Nadeem also holds a faculty position at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, where he teaches entrepreneurship and small business practices to emerging artists. He currently serves as a Cambridge City Councilor.

**Sarfraz Nistar** is President of CAIR-MA. Entrepreneurial by nature, she has started and managed businesses in the design and healthcare space. Her interests are in civil rights, healthcare, and disruptive technologies. She holds BA and MBA degrees.

**Zahid Siddiqui** is a Braintree native working for Pricewaterhouse Coopers in Boston as a corporate tax CPA. He completed his Masters in Taxation from Northeastern University in Boston, MA and his Bachelors in Accounting from Bryant University in Smithfield, RI. He has been working in the accounting industry for over 10 years, specializing on the reporting of business income taxes to regulatory agents such as the SEC and IRS. He serves as the CFO for the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center in Roxbury, MA. He is also the co-founder of the Fasting 5K, a charity run during Ramadan for underprivileged children. The Fasting 5K just completed its third annual run, spans six cities, and has raised approximately \$75,000 for various charitable organizations.



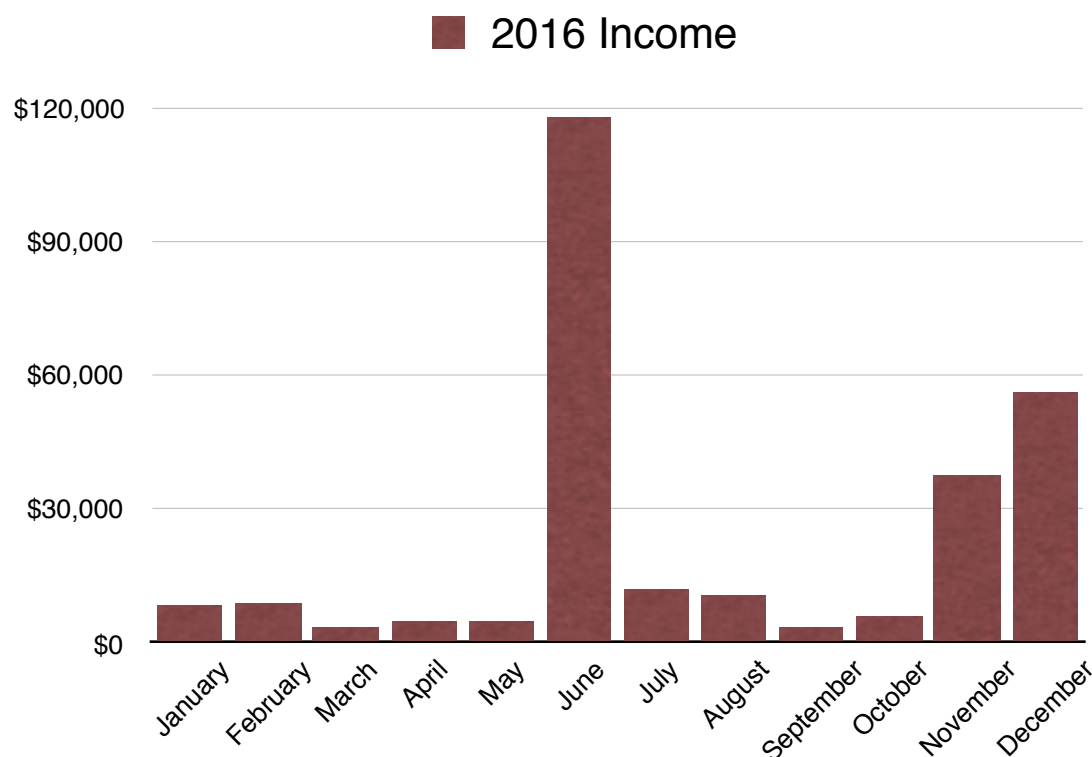
# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

CAIR-Massachusetts is an efficiently run, high-performance nonprofit organization. In 2016, our first full year of operations, and our first year with a full-time staff, we successfully raised \$269,660 to support the Massachusetts Muslim community.

The table and graph below provide a month-by-month rounded breakdown of our income during the course of the year.

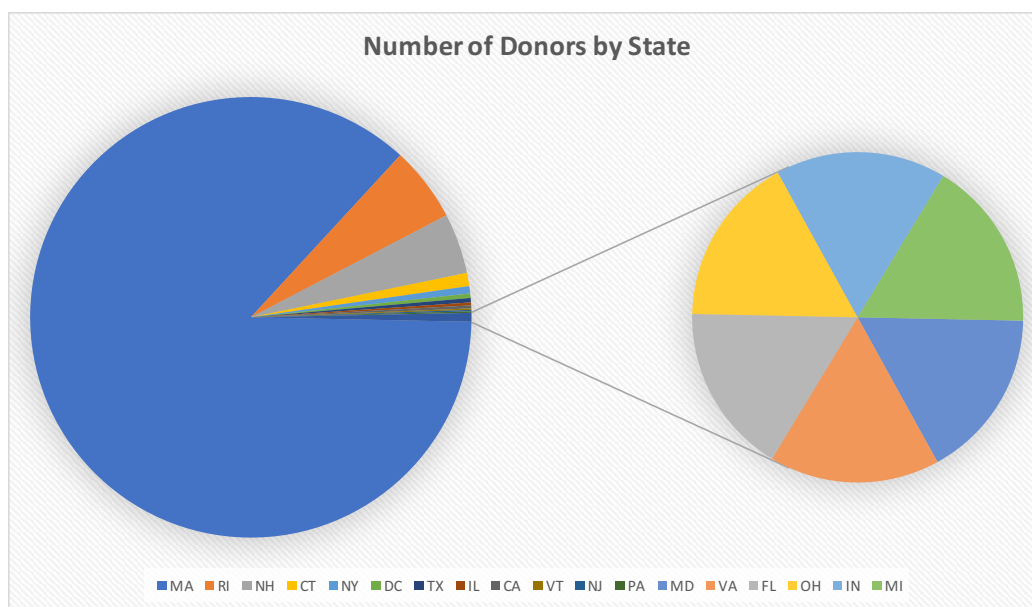
January	\$8,550
February	\$9,000
March	\$3,500
April	\$4,810
May	\$4,928
June	\$117,553
July	\$12,095
August	\$10,895
September	\$3,745
October	\$5,845
November	\$37,632
December	\$56,025





\*Note: During June 2016, Muslims observed the holy month of Ramadan, a time of fasting, prayer, and increased charity.

Over 97% of these donations were from local donors in Massachusetts and New England, while the remainder were from local nonprofits and mosques eager to support our work, as well as from donors across the United States. 100% of CAIR-MA's income is and has always been domestic. The average donation to CAIR-MA in 2016 was \$389, but we also saw gifts of \$1 per month by dedicated supporters.



# HOW TO SUPPORT US

## **Show Your Support**

Sign up for our mailing list: [www.cairma.org](http://www.cairma.org)

Respond to Action Alerts

## **Follow us on Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/cairmassachusetts](http://www.facebook.com/cairmassachusetts)

**Follow us on Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/cairmass](http://www.twitter.com/cairmass)

## **Give Your Time**

Volunteer your talents: [www.cairma.org/volunteer](http://www.cairma.org/volunteer)

Intern with CAIR-MA: e-mail [info@ma.cair.com](mailto:info@ma.cair.com)

## **Financial Contributions**

Make a general donation to support our legal and advocacy work:

[www.cairma.org](http://www.cairma.org)

## **Mailing Address**

Arch Street

Suite 1950

Boston, MA 02110

## **Contact Us**

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E-mail: [info@ma.cair.com](mailto:info@ma.cair.com)

Website: [www.cairma.org](http://www.cairma.org)

