CAIR’s mission focuses on enhancing the understanding of Islam, empowering American Muslims, and promoting justice.
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 35 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 local Muslim leaders who saw the need for greater representation and defense of their community. Since its incorporation, the chapter has grown to four 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 in Massachusetts.

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.
2017 was a challenging year. Across the country, we witnessed a level of bigoted rhetoric and action that we had hoped were things of the past: fearmongering and scapegoating of Muslims, immigrants, and people of color that brought out our society’s worst tendencies. We watched in horror as mosques received unprecedented numbers of threats and individual Muslim men, women, and children faced levels of violence and harassment that defied our ability to document them all. With clearance from the upper echelons of American power, bigoted campaign promises coalesced in the form of the discriminatory Muslim Ban, which devastated tens of thousands of American Muslims, and countless more around the world. In Massachusetts, we witnessed the FBI declare our state as having the highest level of per-capita hate crimes in the country, while our office received hundreds of calls from frantic Muslim families who had been separated from their loved ones. Yet when times have looked the bleakest for our community, CAIR has been there and has stood strong. Our lawsuit against the Trump administration’s Muslim Ban, filed days after the executive order was released, continues to receive federal victories and injunctions. Our rally in Copley Square, just thirty-six hours after the order was issued, drew a staggering 25,000 people, including Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, Representative Ted Kennedy, and dozens of elected officials and leaders from the interfaith community. We have pushed back against local hate crimes by representing families who have been victims of discrimination at the airport, work, or on public transportation, assisting them entirely free of charge. And we have responded to the disturbing uptick in reports of bullying of Muslim school children – some as young as first-graders – by hiring a Youth Empowerment Coordinator to focus on our community’s youth. We’re exceptionally proud of all our accomplishments during the past year, which we could only accomplish with the support, volunteer hours, and donations of thousands of community members in our state. Together, we:

- **Rallied over 25,000 people together in Boston’s Copley Square** for the largest public demonstration against the Muslim Ban in the country, and the largest by a Muslim organization in US history
- **Were named CAIR Chapter of the Year for 2017**
- **Fielded and assisted with over 250 civil rights intakes** – an average of one every weekday
- **Conducted over two dozen Know Your Rights talks** at mosques and community centers throughout New England, reaching thousands of Muslims
- **Expanded our staff** to four full-time employees, including a new Youth Empowerment Coordinator
- **Reached over 2.4 million local viewers** through traditional media – a total local market publicity value of over $180,000
- **Conducted over 50 press events and media interviews**
- **Participated in nearly two dozen interfaith events** throughout New England
- **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

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

Sincerely,

John Robbins, Ph.D. – Executive Director of CAIR-MA
Civil Rights

Since opening our Civil Rights department in December of 2016, CAIR-Massachusetts has handled over 250 requests for assistance – nearly one every weekday. The overwhelming majority of these come from within the Commonwealth, although we regularly receive calls from other New England states that don’t yet have CAIR chapters.

Some of the cases on which CAIR-MA worked in 2017 include:

**Hate Crimes and Harassment**

* A Muslim grandmother was attacked by a white male on the Orange Line as she traveled to Ramadan services. Her assailant screamed at our 61-year old client and struck the window by her head so hard that he cracked it. As she was leaving the train, he punched her with the end of an umbrella and kicked her. We arranged a meeting with the Suffolk County District Attorney and accompanied her to court when she testified before a grand jury. Her assailant was indicted on four felony counts, including two hate crime charges. The criminal prosecution is pending.

* A Moroccan man who works as a concierge in an apartment building was punched in the head by a drunk white male who refused to leave the premises. He sustained a concussion with lingering headaches and dizzy spells. We represented him at a clerk-magistrate’s hearing, where we obtained an assault and battery charge against his assailant. The criminal prosecution is pending.

**Housing Discrimination**

* We settled a housing discrimination complaint filed at the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination by obtaining a Section 8 certificate for our client, a disabled Iraqi refugee with two children, which allowed her escape harassment from other tenants and move to affordable housing in a more diverse community. We then found volunteers who kindly paid for the move to her new apartment. We also recruited two Arlington churches that generously collected and delivered needed household goods.

* Another disabled Muslim mother was subjected to slurs and harassment by employees at her apartment complex. The landlord also failed to address her complaints about lack of heat and hot water in a timely manner. When she complained to the health department, she was threatened with eviction. We filed a lawsuit with claims for illegal discrimination and retaliation, and for failing to provide adequate heat and hot water. The case is scheduled for trial in July 2018.
A 13-year old Muslim middle school student who was subjected to Islamophobic cyber bullying and threats of violence by an older student responded with social media posts that were deemed threatening. When she was suspended, we met with school officials to negotiate a reduced suspension as well as to ensure a plan for her safety.

A flyer sent out to families in Everett, MA espousing Islamophobic sentiments.
Public Education

During 2017, CAIR-MA delivered live presentations and trainings on a variety of topics related to Islam and Muslims at a total of over two dozen events to thousands of participants. Venues for these events included Massachusetts Moral Revival, the Boston Center for the Arts, Andover-Newton Theological School, conservative radio talk shows, Suffolk University, the Nonprofit Center of Boston, Jewish Voice for Peace Boston, Tufts University, Harvard University, and numerous churches throughout Massachusetts. Please contact us if you would like to have a CAIR-MA representative speak at your event!

Ambassadors Program

Following the inauguration of President Trump, our chapter is grateful to have been flooded with offers from people of all backgrounds to support our work. In response to hundreds of people asking how they can help their Muslim neighbors, and to the tremendous need for community engagement which extends beyond the capacity of our staff to address directly, CAIR-MA launched the Ambassadors Program. This program aims to train, educate, and empower dedicated volunteers from all backgrounds to advocate on behalf of the local Muslim community through workshops and seminars. During 2017, CAIR-MA conducted six of these workshops in mosques and community centers across Massachusetts and Rhode Island, focusing on media interview training, building relationships with elected officials, writing op-eds and letters to the editor, responding to negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims, and effective citizen lobbying. We’re excited to continue this platform for encouraging public education and engagement in the year ahead.
Government Relations

This past March, CAIR-Massachusetts was excited to welcome our first Government Affairs Director, Nazia Ashraful, MPH. Since joining the CAIR team, Nazia has facilitated meetings between dozens of elected officials and their Muslim constituents, educated community members about the civic process, and lead over a dozen public presentations on engaging with elected representatives. Since 2018 is an election year for many state and local offices in Massachusetts, Nazia is going to be very busy!
Muslim Community Education & 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

CAIR-MA conducted over a dozen hour-long Know Your Rights presentations in 2017 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.

Youth Empowerment

In October of 2017, CAIR-MA welcomed Sumaiya Zama, our new Youth Empowerment Coordinator. In just the few months since she began, Sumaiya has already led student workshops at Al-Hamra Academy in Shrewsbury and Al-Noor Academy in Mansfield, and delivered talks at mosques in Sharon and the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center as well as at public schools throughout the state. We’re excited to see what she’ll be able to accomplish in 2018!
On January 27th, 2017, President Trump signed an Executive Order severely limiting immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries. Less than 36 hours after the signing of the order, CAIR had filed a federal lawsuit, and CAIR-Massachusetts organized the largest rally opposing the act in the country. In the largest rally organized by a Muslim organization in American history, the Copley Square Rally in Boston drew over 25,000 residents from across New England from all racial and religious backgrounds. Protestors held thousands of homemade signs expressing solidarity with their Muslim neighbors and immigrants, and were joined by Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, Representative Joe Kennedy, and representatives from the Christian and Jewish communities.
Visibility in Traditional Media

CAIR-MA conducted over forty-five 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, Time, Muslim Matters, the Hill, and the Boston Globe.

Social Media

This past year has seen CAIR-Massachusetts’ social media engagement skyrocket – growing from just over 1,000 likes and follows on Facebook at the beginning of the year to over 8,000 by its end. We’re thrilled at the enormous increase in coverage, and have significantly revamped our efforts to engage with and educate the online community.

Supermarket Project

While monthly supermarket advertising circulars routinely include messages for Easter, Christmas, Hanukkah, and Passover, they have not traditionally recognized Muslim holidays. Thanks to a group of dedicated volunteers, CAIR-Massachusetts was able to reach out the leading supermarket chains in New England and successfully encourage them to include holiday wishes for Muslims this past year. Based on market shares, we estimate that these messages reached over 10 million individuals and families throughout the region.
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.

Nazia Ashraful, MPH, Government Affairs Director. Nazia Ashraful is a committed advocate and organizer for minority populations and women’s rights. She was formerly the Legislative Affairs Coordinator of NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts, where she focused on government relations. She has a sound understanding of the inner workings of the Massachusetts State House and the necessary steps to turn a community concern into a solution in the form of a law on the Governor’s desk. Ms. Ashraful holds a Masters of Public Health from Boston University where she specialized in minority women’s reproductive health, and a bachelor from Drake University, where she was President of the Muslim Students Association.

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.
Sumaiya Zama, Youth Empowerment Coordinator. Sumaiya Zama is a youth advocate and human rights activist from the Boston area. Prior to joining CAIR, Sumaiya was a youth worker for the City of Cambridge, working primarily with children of color from immigrant and refugee communities. Currently, Sumaiya serves as a committee member for the Human Rights Committee of Easton, MA her hometown, as well as the Programming Director for WISE Boston. She holds a degree in Political Science with minors in Human Rights and African Studies from the University of Massachusetts in Boston. She is also a writer and poet, and believes in the healing and transformative power of storytelling and art. In her spare time, Sumaiya writes and performs poetry at local venues in the Boston and Cambridge area.

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 at www.mass.gov/women/about-the-commission/commissioners/tahirah-amatul-wadud.html.

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 2017, our second year of operations, we successfully raised over $363,981 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.

Monthly Donation Breakdown for 2017

Over 96% 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 2017 was $275, but we also saw gifts of $1 per month by dedicated supporters. Finally, we're grateful to have been the recipients of an Open Door Grant by The Boston Foundation, the largest grantmaker in New England.

Donors by State

During June 2017, Muslims observed the holy month of Ramadan, a time of fasting, prayer, and increased charity.

Over 96% of CAIR-MA's donations came from Massachusetts, followed by Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and New York.
How to Support Us

Show Your Support

* Sign up for our mailing list: www.cairma.org
* Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/cairmassachusetts
* Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/cairmass
* Respond to Action Alerts

Give Your Time

* Volunteer your talents: www.cairma.org/employment
* Intern with CAIR-MA: e-mail info@ma.cair.com

Financial Contributions

* Make a general donation to support our legal and advocacy work at www.cairma.org

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