



**CAIR**  
MASSACHUSETTS



*Relentless Hope. Constant Growth.*

The Council on American-Islamic Relations - Massachusetts

**2018**  
annual report





## 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**.



## 2018 *a look back...*

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## 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 & Supporters,

## *Asalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu.*

**Relentless hope, backed by constant growth:** our community's themes have this year been oriented around a shared vision of clearing the path forward through increased organizing, training, education, and collective defense, tempered with a deep awareness of the continued struggle against injustice.

Each year for the past three years, **we've witnessed an escalation in anti-Muslim rhetoric, Islamophobic hate crimes and hate speech, and the mainstreaming of ideas that Muslims are dangerous, foreign, and suspect.** This past year we witnessed cultural and political figures from the highest echelons of our society engage in vicious attacks against our community through scapegoating and race-baiting, followed each time by physical attacks against American Muslim men, women, and children. And **we were crushed when the US Supreme Court this year issued a ruling upholding the Muslim Ban, which CAIR had also challenged in the courts** – a deeply challenging ruling that recalls other such cases in which the Court took views that history has found wrong, such as *Korematsu* (Japanese internment during WWII) and *Dred Scott* (slavery). Each time, we've cried out against the injustice, and urged our leaders – and our society – to stand with us alongside other minority groups from the African American, Latino, Asian, LGBTQ, indigenous, and other communities.

At the same time, the continued fight for civil rights that American Muslims and we at CAIR have undertaken has demanded that we address these challenges head on, and not just in the courtroom. **CAIR-Massachusetts was proud this past year to launch two inaugural events to equip local Muslims with strategies for enacting change in their communities:** the MA Muslim Lobby Day, and the Muslim Youth Leadership Program. Each of these high-impact programs are the result of months of effort and countless hours of staff time, and reflect the Massachusetts Muslim community's next step toward grassroots empowerment through principled engagement. Whether on Beacon Hill or one of the Commonwealth's hundreds of university campuses, **Muslims now, more than ever, must step up and confidently claim center stage and self-determination.** CAIR-Massachusetts is providing them with the tools to do so.

We're exceptionally proud of all our accomplishments during the past year, which we could only carry out with the support, volunteer hours, and donations of thousands of community members in our state. **Together, we:**

- ❖ **Fielded over 230 civil rights intakes**
- ❖ **We took legal action** against TSA, businesses, and prisons to ensure our community's safety
- ❖ **Conducted over two dozen Know Your Rights talks** at mosques and community centers throughout New England, reaching thousands of Muslims
- ❖ **Reached over 1.7 million local viewers** through traditional media – a total local market publicity value of over \$145,000
- ❖ **Conducted over 40 press events and media interviews**
- ❖ **Participated in over a dozen interfaith events**
- ❖ **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



# Civil Rights & Islamophobia

Since opening our Civil Rights department in December of 2016, **CAIR-Massachusetts has handled over 500 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.

This year, given the volume of our intakes and legal activities, our Civil Rights Department has issued a separate, fuller report documenting our work in 2018. **Please check out our 2018 Civil Rights Report** at: [www.cairma.org/CivilRightsReport](http://www.cairma.org/CivilRightsReport)

## Government Relations

Since 2018 was an election year at the state and local levels, and three ballot questions were up for public review, it was a busy time for our Government Affairs Department! Through countless hours in the State House, on phones, and at community events, we're proud of our department's impact in the Commonwealth:

### Hosted the First Annual Massachusetts Muslim Lobby Day

Despite an unexpected blizzard that made transportation grind to a halt, CAIR-MA nevertheless gathered **over 100 families, including over 50 Muslim children,** to the Massachusetts State House last January to learn about the legislative process, meet their elected officials, and advocate for legislation related to affordable housing, criminal justice reform, and environmental protection. **Our next lobby day will take place in April 2019** – we're looking forward to seeing you there!







### Helped secure Safe Communities Act protections as a budgetary amendment

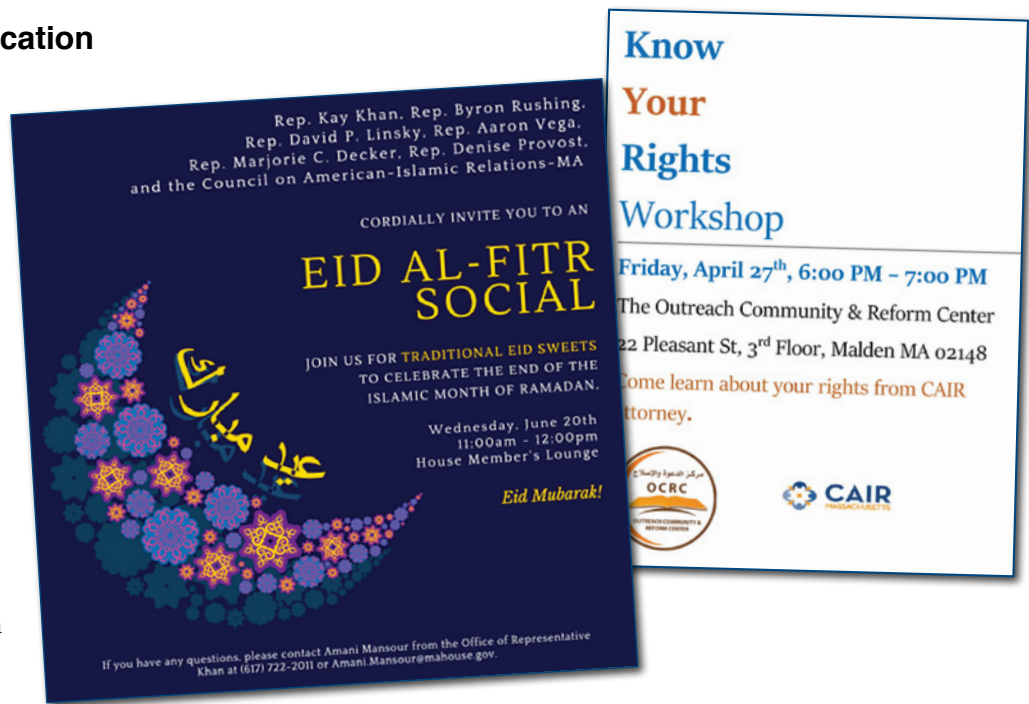
While we're disappointed that Governor Baker declined to pass a final budget including the amendment, which would have ensured that Massachusetts not designate funds toward the creation of a Muslim registry, we were proud to work with State Senator Jamie Eldridge and his office to ensure that **this bill, and later amendment, remained in the public eye and at the top of State House priorities.**

### Co-Hosted Eid Al-Fitr social with Representative Khan at the State House for staff & legislators

We were proud to partner with Representatives Khan, Rushing, Linsky, Vega, Decker, and Provost to co-host a social that **celebrated the end of the month of Ramadan.**

### 2018 Election Community Education

CAIR-MA strongly supports the right of all citizens to engage in the electoral process. In 2018, our office prepared and released the **2018 Massachusetts Muslim Voter Guide** ([www.cairma.org/vote2018](http://www.cairma.org/vote2018)), contributed questions to candidate questionnaires for the Primary Gubernatorial, CD3, and CD7 elections, hosted phone banking sessions to Get Out the Vote for the general election which made over 500 calls, and sent e-mails and text messages to thousands of Muslims in Massachusetts encouraging them to vote.







## Youth Advocacy

2018 was the first year in which **the entire Massachusetts Muslim community was served by a full-time youth advocate, Sumaiya Zama** of our office. Already during only one year of service, Sumaiya has hosted programs impacting hundreds of young people, teachers, parents, and policy makers.

## Inaugural Muslim Youth Leadership Program

This year, CAIR-MA was proud to host the **first annual Muslim Youth Leadership Program**. This four-day immersive program, which has been implemented by CAIR chapters across the country for over a decade, exposed a group of 35 Muslim high school students to advocacy, community organizing, media and messaging strategies, civil rights, and Muslim and African American history through a series of workshops and sessions with experts in the fields. Additionally, they spent a full day at the Massachusetts State House where they met with legislators and held a mock legislative session.





## Responding to Bullying & Youth Discrimination

Unfortunately, our office regularly receives calls to report discrimination and severe bullying of Muslim youth, sometimes as young as six years old. One prominent case involved a **10-year-old Muslim girl in Framingham, who received threatening and Islamophobic notes** in her cubby at school. CAIR-MA responded to the case immediately by assisting the family with media requests, managing exposure, and coordinating with the school administration and local police. Additionally, we encouraged allies to write letters of support for the middle schooler, to offset the messages of hate she had received. **We were blessed to receive over 1,000 letters on her behalf**, which we then hand delivered to the family.

Additionally, in response to a series of reports of harassment against young Muslim women in Quincy, Massachusetts, our chapter has begun hosting a **monthly series of workshops about combatting bullying**, held within a mosque and directed toward both girls and their mothers.




Have you ever been harassed or witnessed a Muslim girl/woman be harassed for their faith?


Do you know your rights if this happens?

Do you feel your school hasn't handled bullying or harassment well?

**Young Muslim Women of Quincy's Anti-Harassment Group**

Saturday, November 10, 2018, at 6 pm  
For Young Muslim Women in Quincy  
Ages 13-25

 **ICNE**  
ISLAMIC CENTER  
of NEW ENGLAND

 **CAIR**  
MASSACHUSETTS

Join us for a conversation and working meeting on how we can take on bullying, harassment, and hate crimes together.





# Media & Communications

## Visibility in Traditional Media

CAIR-MA conducted **over forty 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. Our metrics indicate that this media was **seen by over 350,000 people** throughout the United States. One such example of media exposure is the 2018 Open Mosque Day, which CAIR-MA helped organize and publicize to the general public. The event was **attended by over 1,000 people, the majority of whom had never been inside a mosque.**

## Social Media

Our social media efforts this past year have focused on **user engagement, of which we have seen a 20% increase** over 2017. We hope to continue using strategies such as short videos, direct conversations, messaging, and tagging with affinity groups to continue to actively engage in the online space.

## 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, in 2018 CAIR-Massachusetts was again able to reach out to **leading supermarket chains in New England and successfully encourage them to include holiday wishes for Muslims.** Based on market shares, we estimate that these messages **reached over 10 million individuals and families** throughout the region. Additionally, we're happy to report that Whole Foods in particular has begun including the announcements in the circulars of all of their stores across the United States, potentially reaching millions more.

**Second Annual Massachusetts Open Mosque Day**

*Open Minds. Open Hearts*

*April 8th from 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm*

Visit 21 Mosques Across the Commonwealth,  
meet your Muslim neighbors, learn about Islam,  
enjoy cultural food and have fun!

**Participating Mosques:**

- Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center - Boston
- Islamic Society of Boston - Cambridge
- Islamic Center of Boston - Wayland
- Islamic Society of Southeastern Massachusetts, South Dartmouth
- Boston Islamic Center, Roxbury
- Islamic Center of New England in Quincy
- Islamic Center of New England in Sharon
- Al-Huda Society Chelsea
- American Muslim Center - Everett
- Outreach Community and Reform Center - Malden
- Islamic Society of Framingham
- Islamic Society of Greater Lowell
- Revere Bosnian Mosque
- Islamic Society of the North Shore - Lynn
- Islamic Masumeen Center of New England - Hopkinton
- Masjid Alhamdullillah Boston
- Yusuf Mosque Brighton
- Al-Rawda Mosque Dorchester
- Selimiye Mosque Methuen

Follow us on Facebook! Questions? Contact (801) 336-6861

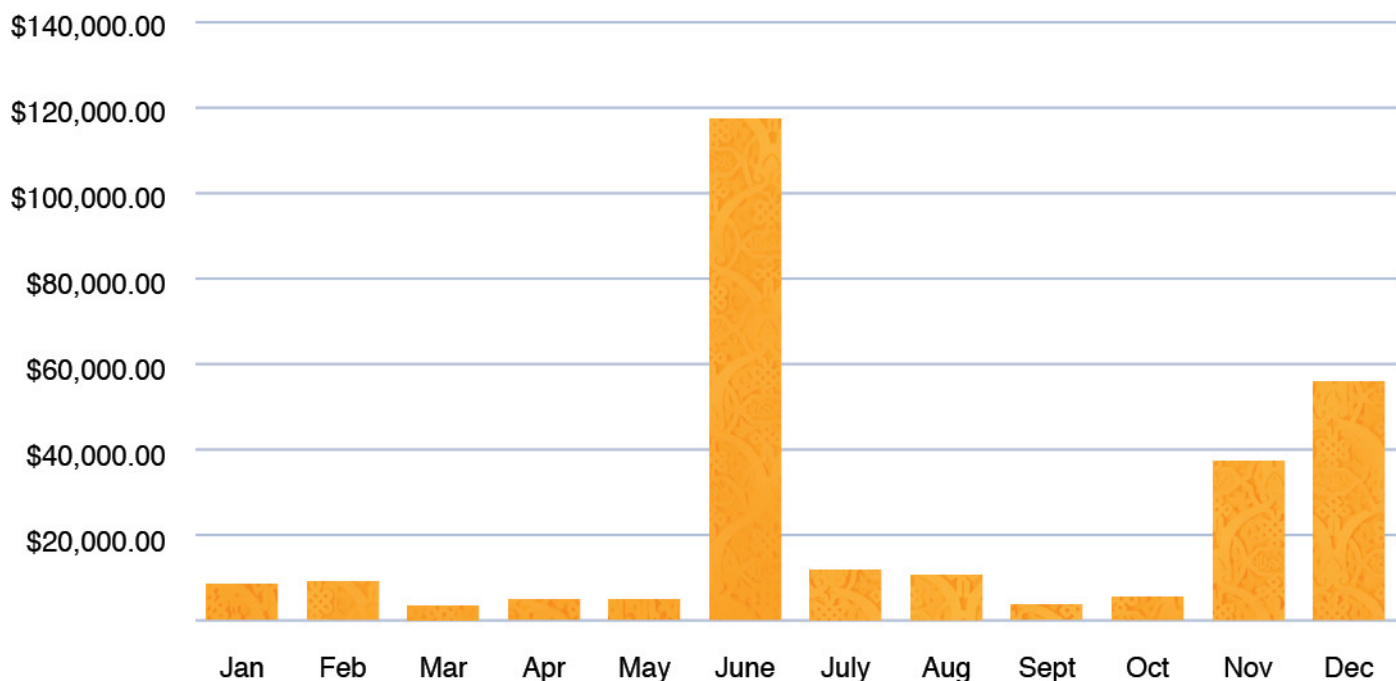




# Financial Summary

CAIR-Massachusetts is an **efficiently run, high-performance nonprofit organization**. In 2018, our third full year of operations, **we successfully raised \$441,000** to support the Massachusetts Muslim community. The graph below provides a month-by-month rounded breakdown of our income during the course of the year.

## Monthly Donation Breakdown for 2018



*Note:* During June 2018, Muslims observed the holy month of Ramadan, a time of fasting, prayer, and increased charity.

**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 \$284, 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, **and a Cummings Foundation \$100k for 100 award.**

**The Boston Foundation** is honored to support CAIR Massachusetts' 2018 Annual Banquet. Thank you for all you do to promote cultural understanding and social justice throughout the Commonwealth.

For more information about the Boston Foundation, please visit [www.tbf.org](http://www.tbf.org).

The Boston Foundation **tBf**



## Staff

**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, Director of Community Advocacy and Education.** Sumaiya Zama is an educator, community organizer, youth advocate, and civil 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. She is currently serving as the youngest board member of the Praxis Project, a national public health organization aimed to empower grassroots organizing in communities of color. Currently she works as the Community Advocacy and Education Director at CAIR - MA working to provide all young

*Sumaiya's bio, continued on the next page >>*



<< *Sumaiya's bio, continued from the previous page*

people, community members, educators, and youth workers with the tools to self-advocate, implement inclusionary practices, build power, and hone leadership skills. 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 believes in our ability to teach others and build bridges through storytelling and art.

## 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/service-details/commissioners-staff](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/commissioners-staff)

**Mouaad Lebeche** is a Civil Engineer by trade, specializing in Multi-Family/Commercial Construction. A life-long resident of the South Shore, he has spent the past 17 years serving his local Muslim community at the Islamic Center of New England. He began volunteering for various committees at age 16, and has now been serving as a member of its Board of Directors for the past 5+ years. Coupling technical skills with a widely developing network, Mouaad is committed to justice for those in need and protecting their civil, American rights.

**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 Councillor.

**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.



The **Rev. Corey J. Sanderson** is the minister of The Second Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Greenfield Massachusetts. Corey is past President and a member of The Interfaith Council of Franklin County and has worked closely with a number of area social service organizations such as The Literacy Project, The Communities That Care Coalition, and The Opioid Task Force. On the state level, he currently serves as the chair of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, the largest Protestant denomination in the state. For the past twelve years, Corey has been an adjunct instructor at Northwestern Michigan College where he has taught Philosophy, Ethics, and Religious Studies courses, both in the classroom and online. Corey is interested in fostering a healthy religiously diverse democracy in our country and finding places where the three Abrahamic faiths can work together on issues that affect the common good.

**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.



# How to Support Us

## Show Your Support

- ❖ Sign up for our **mailing list**: [www.cairma.org](http://www.cairma.org)
- ❖ Follow us on **Facebook**: [www.facebook.com/cairmassachusetts](https://www.facebook.com/cairmassachusetts)
- ❖ Follow us on **Twitter**: [www.twitter.com/cairmass](https://www.twitter.com/cairmass)

## Give Your Time

- ❖ **Volunteer** your talents: [www.cairma.org/employment](http://www.cairma.org/employment)
- ❖ **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 at [www.cairma.org](http://www.cairma.org)

## Mailing Address

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## Contact Us

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- ❖ All content compiled by CAIR-Massachusetts staff
- ❖ The CAIR-Massachusetts team thanks Catherine A. Wheeler for design & layout of this annual report! Her design portfolio is available at: [www.incantare-effect.com](http://www.incantare-effect.com)