



The Council on American-Islamic Relations - Massachusetts

2022 annual report



On the cover: Members of the CAIR-MA Youth Advisory Commitee (YAC) gathered for our 2022 BBQ on the Boston Common. *L to R:* Omar Hamoda, youth advocacy director Fatuma Mohamed, Maha Yehia, and Yumna El-Dib. <u>Read more about YAC on page 5.</u>

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Guests at our annual fundraising banquet. <u>Read more about our events on page 7.</u>

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.

From Dur Executive Director

Dear Friends & Supporters,

As you will see in the following pages, CAIR-MA provides a unique service of advocacy and education for the Muslim community.

In my first full year as executive director, I have had the honor of working with our staff members as we roll up our sleeves and serve the Muslim community.

This year, for example, I had the opportunity to observe our legal director, attorney Barbara Dougan, argue before the Massachusetts Appeals Court on behalf of a Muslim family, securing a major victory. You will see in <u>our civil rights report</u> that the legal department saw a stark increase in calls regarding hate crimes and children experiencing discrimination in schools. These are not just numbers; these are people and they receive her attention and zealous advocacy. She and her team of interns, volunteers, and network of lawyers navigate these needs with an unrivaled expertise.

When Fatuma Mohamed, who leads our youth department, walks in a room of Muslim youth, their faces light up with excitement. She creates

innovative programming for Muslim high school students, primarily via our two flagship programs: Muslim Youth Leadership Program and Youth Advisory Committee. Ms. Mohamed also provides support to young people who are clients in our legal work, or whose adult family members are clients.

As for me, my initiatives include a focus on donor and supporter engagement, creating partnership and collaboration with other nonprofit organizations, and performing community outreach at colleges, universities, mosques, and throughout the community.

We remain grateful to our donors, funders, volunteers, and interns who make our work possible. We are grateful to the many people who trust us to work with and for them.

The future is bright.

Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, Esq. CAIR-MA Executive Director & Chief Legal Officer

Thanks to your support in 2022, we were able to:

- Respond to 124 requests for legal assistance, including Islamophobic hate crimes, discrimination by schools, and travel abuses at the hands of federal employees
- Host our fifth annual Muslim Youth Leadership Program for Muslim high school students
- Welcome seven new Youth Advisory
 Committee members, who developed skills in event planning and community outreach

- Meet with lawmakers to draft a bill to create a statewide commission on issues facing Muslims in Massachusetts
- Organize our first community stakeholder roundtable discussions
- Create educational materials offered on several platforms
- Speak on panels at universities, corporations, and government agencies on issues facing the Massachusetts Muslim community

Implementing Dur Vision

In 2022, we began to implement the goals set forth in our 2021 strategic planning.

- We expanded our board of directors from five to seven. The increase in members brings greater geographic representation throughout the state and provides a wide range of professional and community expertise. See our board member profiles on page 14.
- A high point in our fundraising efforts was being awarded a 10-year \$250,000 Cummings Foundation grant. <u>See more</u> <u>details on page 16.</u> In addition, we continue to benefit from major grants from The Boston Foundation and Hyams Foundation as well as the generosity of the Rahman Family Internship Fund and major personal donors.

Legal Advocacy

In 2022, 124 people requested legal advice or representation. We noted two trends.

First, we saw a **72% surge in calls about school-related incidents.** These cases concerned the actions of other students as well as school officials and policies. In several matters, our Youth Advocacy Director enhanced the legal services we provided by offering individual support for the young person as well as strategies for enlisting other Muslim students to create a safer and more welcoming school environment.

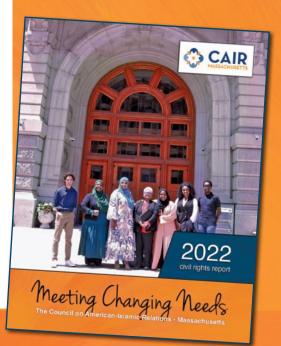
Second, hate crimes and harassment complaints increased by 33% this year, twelve in 2022 compared to nine in 2021. We went to court on behalf of the victims in two assault and battery cases. Requests for help concerning these incidents had steadily decreased since the CAIR-MA legal department was created in 2017, so we hope the 2022 increase does not signal an erosion of the past years' progress. We will monitor this trend so we may quickly increase support and resources as needed.

For a more complete description of the legal issues that Massachusetts Muslims face, and our efforts on their behalf, please see <u>our 2022 Civil Rights Report, "Meeting Changing Needs."</u>



72% increase in school-related incidents

33% increase in hate crimes & harassment complaints



Youth Advocacy

Youth Advisory Committee

Our Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is composed of Muslim youth leaders from across the state who are passionate about issues impacting the Muslim community, and Muslim youth specifically. They engage in a year-long leadership training that develops youth-centered resources and projects by participating in planning, outreach, and recruitment efforts. Our valued YAC members play a key role in advising CAIR Massachusetts' long-term youth advocacy goals.

YAC 2022 members:

- Yumna El-Dib
- Omar Hamoda
- Huda Sarhan
- Yasin Siddiqui
- Aly Tahoun
- Zainab Wasim
- Maha Yehia

YAC Fellowship

At the end of our first YAC term in 2021, we wanted to create an opportunity for members to stay involved and serve as mentors. YAC Fellows work with our Youth Advocacy Director to provide support and mentorship to current YAC members as they complete their terms. Jana Amin was the perfect choice as our first YAC Fellow, having been a YAC member in 2021 and a participant in our Muslim Youth Leadership Program in 2020.

Muslim Youth Leadership Program

In August, CAIR-MA was proud to host our 5th annual Muslim Youth Leadership Program (MYLP) in Boston — our first in-person gathering after two years of virtual programs. MYLP, a four-day intensive leadership program for Muslim high school students in Massachusetts, engages young Muslims to be changemakers in their communities. Our 28 participants spent four days building their community organizing, public speaking, and media literacy skills. They learned about trauma-informed civic engagement and the impact Islamophobia has on the lives of Muslims, civil rights, civic engagement, and much more. Our participants also had the opportunity to connect with MYLP alums at our first-ever alumni ice cream social and panel discussion, "Where are MYLP alums now?"



After daylong workshops, MYLP participants took a lovely evening walk to Boston's Seaport District to enjoy the summer breeze and beautiful city views.

Template for change

A college student contacted CAIR-MA about the years of Islamophobic harassment he and other Muslim students endured at his high school, with little response by school officials. Years later, he is still feeling the effects, reminding us of the very real harm that results from Islamophobic and racialized discrimination from peers and school personnel. Fortunately, he is determined to prevent the same traumatic school experience for other students. As a joint effort, our Youth Advocacy Department and our Legal Department are working with him on a strategy to organize current and former students and their parents, so they can share information and advocate for the safety and well-being of Muslim children. We hope this may become a model for other parent groups to use. **The college student told us:**

"Fatuma and I have been working hard on the diversity and inclusion initiative for my former high school. Her unwavering help has been instrumental in this entire process. She always takes the precious time to provide sound editing feedback for all the statements we have collected. I would not have been able to create our goal list without her."



BBQ on the Boston Common

Our 2022 Youth Advisory Committee hosted a summer social event, bringing together almost 30 young people to discuss issues facing Muslim youth and to build strong connections with their peers throughout Massachusetts.

Muslim Youth Leadership Awards

At our annual banquet (<u>see more on page 7</u>), we recognized two of the state's best and brightest young people, **Syed Zain Ali** and **Maryam Ware**. We created this award category to highlight and encourage young Muslims who are boldly making a difference in the world in the spirit of CAIR-MA's mission.



August 20, 2022

Events

2022 banquet

After two years of remote galas, we were delighted to celebrate once again in person at our annual fundraising banquet in November. Our 2022 theme was "United in Strength." CAIR-MA was honored to host CAIR Executive Director and co-founder **Nihad Awad** as our keynote speaker. Other highlights:

- Dr. Altaf Husain, from the Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research, was our always-enjoyable motivational speaker
- Jana Amin, MYLP 2020 alum, YAC 2021 member, and YAC 2022 fellow, received our Volunteer of the Year award
- Syed Zain Ali and Maryam Ware won our 2022 Muslim Youth Leadership awards
- Steward of Justice awards were given to Dr. Mohammad
 Saleem Bajwa, Ms. Noor Elshaar, Br. Azeddine & Aimee Fadli
 & family, Dr. Abrar & Mrs. Laura Qureshi & family, and
 Ms. Afnaan Zeabi
- We were honored to be joined by Sen. Jamie Eldridge, Middlesex and Worcester District, and Malden Mayor Gary Christenson during the evening's program



Nihad Awad, co-founder and Executive Director of CAIR.



Dr. Altaf Husain and board president Rev. Corey J. Sanderson.



Banquet attendees from Western Massachusetts.



Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, speaker Bilqis Abdul-Qaadir, and a young guest at our annual fundraising iftar.

ICB Wayland iftar

The Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland generously hosted our annual fundraising iftar during Ramadan. We were incredibly blessed to hear from <u>Bilqis</u> <u>Abdul-Qaadir</u>, who told of her meteoric career in Massachusetts high school basketball, her success as a Division 1 hijab-wearing ball player, and her devastation when the International Basketball Federation denied her right to play basketball in her hijab, ending her hopes to play professionally in Europe.

Ramadan community drop-ins

CAIR-MA Executive Director Tahirah Amatul-Wadud was introduced at community iftars at the Islamic Society of Greater Lowell and the Islamic Center of New England in Sharon.

Government Affairs

Along with several other Muslim civic organizations, we met with Sen. Jamie Eldridge to plan a strategy for passage of a <u>bill</u> to create a statewide commission on issues facing Muslims in Massachusetts. The bill, "An Act promoting the civil rights and inclusion of American Muslims in the commonwealth," was filed early 2023. CAIR-MA staff and volunteers testified before the Legislature's Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight in support of the bill.

Senator Eldridge also met with our 2022 Muslim Youth Leadership Project participants. They were able to learn about his journey into politics and hear about the key issues his office has been working on. MYLP students also met with Sen. Paul Feeney; Yusufi Vali, Deputy Chief of Staff for Boston Mayor Michelle Wu; and Boston City Councilor Tania Fernandes Anderson.



Sen. Jamie Eldridge met with our 2022 MYLP participants.

Community Dutreach & Education

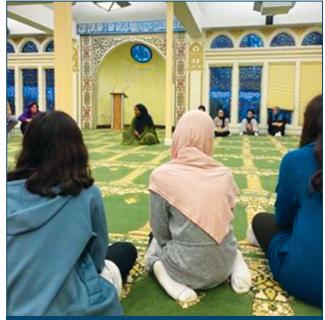
Outreach to young Muslims

CAIR-MA Youth Advocacy Director Fatuma Mohamed met with the Youth Group at the Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland about our youth programming and recruited volunteers for the ICB's annual iftar that raises funds for our office. She also attended a Braintree Muslim youth group to talk about opportunities with CAIR-MA programming.

CAIR-MA and Northeastern University's Black Islamic Association co-hosted a community discussion with Black Muslim college students from the Greater Boston area about the intersection of Islamophobia and racism on their college campuses.

Response to bomb threat

When a Worcester area Muslim school received a bomb threat, we assured them that CAIR-MA stood ready to help



Youth Advocacy Director Fatuma Mohamed (center, facing front) met with the ICB Wayland Youth Group.

as needed. We issued a press release condemning the threat of violence and reminded the public about the helpful advice in CAIR's security booklet, "Best Practices for Mosque and Community Safety."

Spreading the word

CAIR-MA Executive Director Tahirah Amatul-Wadud continues engaging in outreach in the college and community networks. CAIR-Arizona kicked off its Women's History Month series on Muslim Women in Leadership by <u>interviewing</u> her. In addition, Tahirah was a panelist for the Middlesex District Attorney's <u>Anti-Hate, Anti-Bias</u> <u>Task Force</u>. She also spoke about our work at Al-Noor Academy, Western New England University, Western New England University, Western New England University School of Law, Brandeis University, Mt. Holyoke College's Muslim Student Association, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a joint program of the Muslim Students Association and Black Student Union at MIT.

New "know your rights" guides

We added to our <u>resource library</u> new flyers about <u>bullying</u> and <u>passport photos</u>. We also created informational flyers for our 2022 MYLP participants about the issues high school students may encounter.



Media & Communications

Thanks to the communications department at CAIR's national office, our press releases are distributed across the country, and even overseas, giving us wide visibility. The discrimination claim that we filed against McDonald's for adding bacon to a child's food received global social media attention, as did the case involving the 8th grade girl who was punished for wearing hijab in her charter school. A family member of the student received over 14,000 responses to her social media posts about the incident.

From <u>Saura.com</u>, Hong Kong's Indonesian language newspaper:



Responding to increased white supremacist/neo-Nazi activity

- We spoke out against the rising tide of white supremacist and neo-Nazi agitation on several occasions in 2022.
- We condemned a march by the white supremacist group Patriot Front over the 4th of July weekend in Boston.

"While all Americans — even bigots — have the right to march, people valuing a just and inclusive society also have the right to condemn the hatred those bigots spew and to reject the division they seek," said CAIR-MA Executive Director Tahirah Amatul-Wadud.

- A few days later, we spoke out against the distribution of neo-Nazi flyers in Ipswich, Hamilton, and Chatham.
- We also condemned racist and antisemitic flyers found at Williams College in Williamstown and Curry College in Milton.

From the London-based The National:



Supermarket Project

Thanks to a group of dedicated volunteers, CAIR-MA's Supermarket Project has successfully encouraged leading supermarket chains in New England to include holiday wishes for Muslims. It may not seem like much,



but based on market shares, we estimate that these messages now reach over 10 million households throughout the region. Muslims are validated as part of the community while non-Muslims are reminded that their neighbors are celebrating important religious holidays.

A Few More 2022 Highlights

Top row, L to R: Steward of Justice award winner Afnaan Zeabi with Malden Mayor Gary Christenson at our banquet. Wahaaj Farah, Aly Tahoun, legal intern Tiffany Igwe, and Youth Advocacy Director Fatuma Mohamed. Legal Director Barbara Dougan, Executive Director Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, and Steward of Justice award winner Fazaan Qureshi at our banquet. *Bottom row, L to R:* MYLP participants. Banquet attendees Dr. Ashraf Sharif and Steward of Justice award winner Br. Azeddine Fadli. Board members Yasmin Abdulatheem and Sarah Khatib at our annual banquet.



2022 Financial Summary



CAIR-Massachusetts is an efficiently run, high-performance nonprofit organization. This year we were awarded grants from the Cummings Foundation, The Boston Foundation, and Hyams Foundation, along with contributions from many individual donors. We are proud that 100% of

> CAIR-MA's income is and has always been domestic. We are grateful for all of the support that keeps us strong.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations – Massachusetts

Meet CAIR-Massachusetts

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 25 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.

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 Staff

Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, Executive Director & Chief Legal Officer. Tahirah Amatul-Wadud is a respected attorney based in Springfield, Massachusetts with over 16 years of experience in corporate, family, and civil rights law. A former staff attorney with Western Massachusetts Community Legal Aid before entering private practice, she served as a commissioner with the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women from 2014-2020. In 2016, she rose to national prominence serving as the principal attorney on behalf of the residents of Islamberg, New York against Robert Doggart, an anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist who had planned a violent attack against the community. More recently, in 2018



she ran for U.S. Congress in Massachusetts' first district, securing 30% of the vote. Ms. Amatul-Wadud is active in the Western Massachusetts interfaith community and serves on nonprofit executive boards and committees throughout the region. In recognition of her service, she was named a "Top Woman of Law" by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly, and in 2021 she received the prestigious Massachusetts Bar Association Community Service Award. She served as the Vice-President of the Board of Directors at CAIR-Massachusetts from 2016-2018 and its President from 2018-2021, and during her tenure has overseen the organization's restructuring and rapid growth. Ms. Amatul-Wadud is a graduate of Western New England University School of Law (2005) and Elms College cum laude (1998). She identifies as an African American Muslim woman, and is a proud married mother of seven.



Barbara J. Dougan, Esq., Legal Director. Barbara J. Dougan brings over 30 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.

Fatuma Mohamed, Youth Advocacy Director. Fatuma Mohamed is a committed community organizer and youth advocate passionate about contributing to the creation of a just and equitable society. She graduated from Northeastern University with a major in Political Science / International Affairs and minors in African Studies, History, and Women's and Gender Studies. As a high school student, Ms. Mohamed served as a youth organizer for Boston Mobilization, working on various campaigns such as the campaign to increase the minimum wage in Massachusetts. Her passion for community organizing followed her into college where she served as Vice President and campaign leader for



Students Against Institutionalized Discrimination (SAID), advocating for increased culturally competent mental health services for students from marginalized communities, among other projects. Ms. Mohamed is also passionate about research, and has previously conducted research on Environmental Justice and water system sustainability as well as a thesis project on the experience of Boston Somali youth with policing and surveillance. Additionally, Ms. Mohamed has served as an organizer for Hormar Academy, a mentorship program for Somali High School students in the Greater Boston Area, working to address barriers of access to higher education faced by first-generation low-income immigrant students. Ms. Mohamed is inspired by all the freedom fighters before her.

Our Board Members

Yasmin Abdulatheem is the owner of Complete Virtual Services, a company providing small business development and educational consulting. She has over two decades of nonprofit management experience centered in providing service to the Muslim community. Abdulatheem is a civic engagement leader focused on raising the voice of Muslims and the youth. She believes in taking shared actions to preserve human rights through open interreligious dialogue and advocacy. Abdulatheem holds a bachelor's degree in Business Management, and a master's degree in Education.

Sarah Khatib has a background in civil structural engineering. She is deeply involved in her community, serving on the Walpole Planning Board, as a Town Meeting Member, and through other community organizations. She founded a community-focused nonprofit and serves as its president. She and her husband are raising four amazing children. Khatib is passionate about enriching people's understanding of Islam, promoting justice, protecting civil rights, political representation, and the advancement of the Muslim Ummah.

Othman Ladan is a health educator specializing in Islamic Education and behavior counseling. He is currently the Program Director for the Quran program at Worcester Islamic Center. Ladan has worked with youth and family development within New York City and Central Massachusetts for more than 11 years. He is passionate about uplifting the community and believes in the importance of staying true to one's values.



Board members Mouaad Lebeche and Zahid Siddiqui at our 2022 fundraising banquet.

Mouaad Lebeche (Secretary) is a Civil Engineer by trade, specializing in Multi-Family / Commercial Construction. A life-long resident of the South Shore, he has spent over 20 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 nearly 10 years. Coupling technical skills with a widely developing network, Mouaad is committed to justice for those in need and protecting their civil, American rights.

Raheela Rahman (Vice-President) is a Massachusetts attorney specializing in small business and intellectual property law. Her practice is focused on helping small businesses and startups through all stages of growth. She obtained her J.D. as well as her certificate in media and technology law from the Franklin Pierce Law School. Raheela is passionate about civil rights, public policy, and social justice. The **Rev. Corey J. Sanderson (President)** has served a number of United Church of Christ congregations throughout Massachusetts for over 20 years. He has been part of a number of inter-faith projects, ranging from medical ethics to politics to racial justice. Corey has also taught college courses in Philosophy, Ethics, and Religious Studies regularly since 2004. 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 (Treasurer) 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 15 years, specializing in 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.

Our Interns



Jana Amin, Harvard College Fellow, Youth Advisory Committee



Sasha Hussain, University of Southern California Intern, Muslim Youth Leadership Program



Acknowledgments

We couldn't do it without you! CAIR-MA is profoundly grateful to the many people and organizations that make it possible for us to serve Massachusetts' Muslim community. We were thrilled to be a 2022 recipient of a 10-year \$250,000 grant from the **Cummings Foundation**. It was humbling to be one of only 40 non-profits, out of 180 grantees, to receive this very generous long-term funding, which frees us from annual grant applications.



CAIR-MA staff with Cummings Foundation trustees Robert Keefe (*Wilmer Hale*) and Hon. Margot Botsford (*Ret.*).

In addition, we are most grateful for major financial support from:

- The Boston Foundation
- Hyams Foundation
- Rahman Family Internship Fund

How to Support Us

Show Your Support

- Sign up for our mailing list: <u>www.cairma.org</u>
- Follow us on Facebook: <u>www.facebook.com/CAIRmassachusetts</u>
- Follow us on Instagram: <u>www.instagram.com/CAIRmass</u>
- Follow us on Twitter: <u>www.twitter.com/CAIRmass</u>

Give Your Time

- Volunteer your talents: <u>www.cairma.org/employment</u>
- Intern with CAIR-MA: e-mail us at info@ma.cair.com

Financial Contributions

Islamic Council of New England

Our many individual donors

for sponsoring MYLP scholarships

Make a donation to support our legal and advocacy work at <u>www.cairma.org/donate</u>

Our New Mailing Address

CAIR-MA

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- All content compiled by CAIR-Massachusetts staff
- The CAIR-Massachusetts team thanks Catherine A. Wheeler (Incantare Effect, LLC) for design & layout of this annual report! Her design portfolio is available at: <u>www.incantare-effect.com</u>