

## **The Omar Al-Farooq Legal Fellowship Program**

The Omar Al-Farooq Legal Fellowship Program was created to benefit law students who are interested in the protection of religious freedom and diversity in Oklahoma. This position is ideal for those who wish to gain experience in the non-profit field and who are interested in working with civil rights and human rights issues. The fellowship is open to law students or graduates from accredited law schools in the State of Oklahoma who are prepared to work in Oklahoma City for the duration of the fellowship term. The fellowship provides a stipend for up to three students who will work under the supervision of the CAIR Oklahoma Civil Rights Director for a term to be agreed upon by the Fellowship Patron, Civil Rights Director, and applicant.

The Omar Al-Farooq Legal Fellowship Program was named in honor of Omar Ibn Khattab, the second Caliph of the Muslims (second ruler of the Muslim world in succession after the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (“ﷺ”). Before passing away, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ gave Omar Ibn Khattab the title of “Al-Farooq,” which means “the one that can tell right from wrong.” He was praised by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ for his uncompromising commitment to always doing the right thing even if it meant that he had to make great personal sacrifices. Omar Al-Farooq’s honesty and integrity even in the face of great personal sacrifice is an exemplar of Islamic ethical values and also an exemplar of the ethical values that a member of the legal profession should strive for. The ideal candidate for this fellowship is someone who exemplifies the spirit of Omar Al-Farooq and makes a lifelong commitment to always standing up for justice and doing the right thing no matter what the personal consequences are.

### Fellowship Details:

- Fellowships will begin no later than May 13, 2020, and run until a date approved by the Civil Rights Director.
- The Fellowship will include a stipend of an amount up to \$750, to be issued at the beginning of the Fellow beginning work at CAIR Oklahoma.
- Review will be conducted by monthly reports made by the Fellow to the Civil Rights Director and to the Fellowship Patron, as well as a review of the Fellow’s end-of-term project.
- The Fellowship Patron will have an active role in reviewing applications, including full access to resumes, cover letters, writing samples, interviews, and the application essay.

### Fellowship Responsibilities:

- Client management from intake to resolution. Fellows will often be primary points of contact for clients as we assist in resolution of their complaint.
- Legal Research and Writing. Fellows will be expected to develop proficiency in both formal legal and non-legal writing styles and in putting together concise reports.
- Special research and project management. While the primary focus of the legal fellowship will be on legal work, the fellows will also be needed to help develop educational and promotional

material and to assist in marketing the work of the civil rights department. We will ensure that the majority of the work assigned will be related to the practice of law.

- Term project. Each fellow will be asked to select a project to be completed by the end of their term under the supervision of the Civil Rights Director and with the approval of the Fellowship Patron. Acceptable projects include research papers, program development, or event planning.

Applicants:

- Law students or recent graduates of accredited law schools in Oklahoma.
- Strong research and writing skills, both formal legal and non-legal.
- Excellent interpersonal work and phone skills.
- Confident and professional demeanor, punctuality, and reliability.
- Ability to work with minimal supervision on self-directed projects.
- Discretion in handling sensitive client or CAIR documents (all fellows must sign CAIR Non-Disclosure Agreement before beginning work).
- Students who have taken Constitutional Law, Federal Courts, First Amendment, Criminal Law/Procedure, and/or Human Rights Law will be preferred.
- While it is not a requirement, students with high levels of cultural competency will be preferred.
- Applicants must be prepared to devote a minimum of 20 hours a week to direct in-office work, as well as occasional weekends and evening projects. Split summers may be accommodated under special circumstances.
- *Note: while internship offers include a background check, derogatory background history is not necessarily a barrier to an internship with CAIR-OK.*

To Apply:

Submit the following documents to the Civil Rights Director no later than March 13, 2020:

- Resume
- Cover Letter
- Writing Sample of no longer than 3-5 pages (does not have to be legal writing)
- **Essay/personal statement – select one of the following four prompts and respond in as many or as few words as you think is necessary.**

1. *The Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, made it clear throughout his life that discrimination was unacceptable. In his last sermon, he made it clear to his disciples that “all mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white person has no superiority over a person of color and a person of color has no superiority over a white person – except by piety and good actions.”*

Discrimination has a very real impact on the lives of Oklahoma Muslims. Where one community faces violations of their rights, everyone becomes a little less safe. Tell us about an experience you have had with discrimination, whether it is something you witnessed or something that happened directly to you, and how it has shaped your understanding of the systems and structures that govern us as citizens.

- 2. The Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, surrounded himself with what his society at the time considered the lowest of society, the poor, the sick, and the refugee. He always commanded that immigrants and refugees be treated as well as any other member of society. He did this because of religious commandments but also that he and many of his disciples were at times refugees. The Prophet himself had been forced from his home and had to flee and become a refugee in Medina. Likewise, many of his disciples of a disadvantaged socioeconomic status were forced to leave their homes and take refuge in Ethiopia.*

Immigrants are some of the most vulnerable members of our population. Whether documented or undocumented, naturalized citizen or green card holder, immigrants bring with them skills and experiences that enrich the community and diversity the pool of talent we can leverage as a state. Describe an experience with immigration that has taught you about the immigration system in the U.S., the treatment of immigrants in this country, or other aspects of the American immigrant experience.

- 3. Islamic jurisprudence seeks to eliminate the underlying causes of crime, rather than needlessly punish people who commit those crimes. That is why there are many punishments in Islamic law in the history of Islamic jurisprudence that were seldom, if ever, actually administered.*

*This has been accomplished through a mandatory presumption of innocence, an extremely high standard of proof, and a merciful concept that the court needs to give each defendant the benefit of the doubt, determine the reason for the crime, and give that person an excuse if possible.*

*For example, if someone had been found to have been stealing, but that person did so because they were poor and/or hungry, even if found guilty, they would not be convicted because Islamic society takes the blame for anyone who is poor and hungry. Rather than being punished, the person would be given social security benefits and given work, if physically capable.*

Oklahoma's extremely high rates of incarceration have been a subject of much discussion and debate in the previous years. CAIR Oklahoma has been proud to support efforts to decarcerate Oklahoma's prisons and reduce the number of lives ruined by harshly punitive sentencing and disparities in the way the criminal justice system is employed. Tell us your thoughts about Oklahoma's incarceration crisis and some of the ways that we can help to reform our struggling justice system.

4. CAIR Oklahoma's mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. Please tell us about your commitment and connection to our mission, particularly with regards to your past experiences or your plans for your future as a legal practitioner.