

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



ABOUT US

Our Purpose

Defending Rights, Defeating Intolerance

for justice and mutual understanding. **Our Mission**

Our Vision

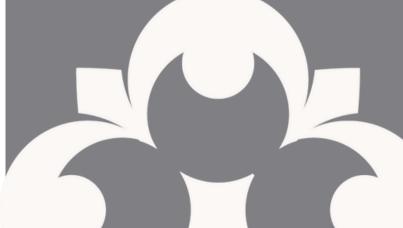
To be a leading advocate

To enhance the understanding of Islam, protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims.

CAIR-Oklahoma is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) grassroots civil rights and advocacy group. Established in 2006 by a group of local Muslims, CAIR-Oklahoma serves the entire state of Oklahoma through its Oklahoma City office. CAIR-Oklahoma is a chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), America's largest Islamic civil liberties group with chapters nationwide. The national headquarters is located on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C.

CAIR Oklahoma 3000 United Founders Blvd., Suite 226 Oklahoma City, OK 73112 405-415-6851 | info@ok.cair.com www.cairoklahoma.com





LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Assalamu Alaikum and Greetings of Peace,

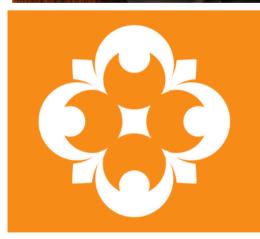
First and foremost, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your continued support of the Oklahoma chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR Oklahoma). We pride ourselves on striving to be a reflection of our beautiful and diverse community, and any success we achieve is a result of you and your genuine support of our mission and vision.

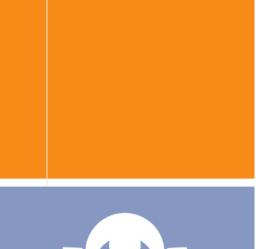
Speaking of which, 2023 was the first year in which your CAIR Oklahoma team was able to implement our new vision for building a better Oklahoma based on our new five-year strategic plan. This plan was built using the feedback of our staff, board of directors, donors, volunteers, and community members. While a challenging process at times, the results were worth the sacrifice as we came to the following conclusions.

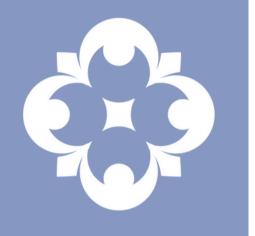
CAIR Oklahoma cares about Oklahoma as we strive to be...

- An organization focused on justice and equity through a system of principled and trustworthy programs, including legislative advocacy, proactive lobbying and education, refugee services, and other programs benefitting the Oklahoma Muslim community.
- Highly recognized through a communication strategy that highlights not only the impact of programs but the wealth of opportunities at CAIR Oklahoma for partnership to improve Oklahoma as a state.











- A trusted seat at the table for all types of convenings, not just those involving only Muslims, and an instigating convener for crucial conversations in Oklahoma.
- Providers of valuable services particularly for civil and immigrant rights - that would otherwise be inaccessible to the Oklahoma Muslim community.

Our ultimate goal is to be an organization that builds a future beyond Islamophobia for Muslims in Oklahoma and one in which future generations can thrive. We dream of a future in which Muslim children will not only be accepted for who they are but celebrated as a part of the diversity that makes our state and country stronger. To that end, we are committed to working day and night to do all we can to see that dream become a reality, and your generous support continues to propel our work.

Last but certainly not least, our hearts and minds have been and will continue to be preoccupied with the ongoing injustice being perpetrated against the Palestinian people. CAIR Oklahoma has been an advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people since our inception in 2006, and our commitment grows stronger by the day. It will remain until we see justice for the Palestinian people and a free Palestine.

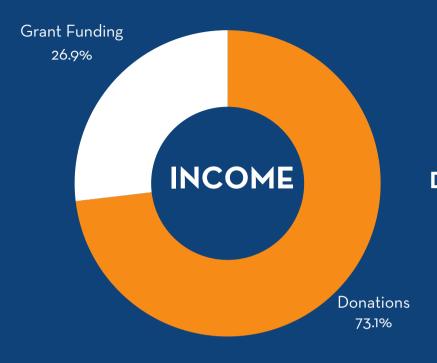
We live by the words of the late great South African leader, Nelson Mandela, when he said, "We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." The same applies here in Oklahoma, America, and across the world.

May God Almighty bless and protect you and your loved ones always!

With love & gratitude,

Adam Soltani

2023 INCOME AND EXPENSES



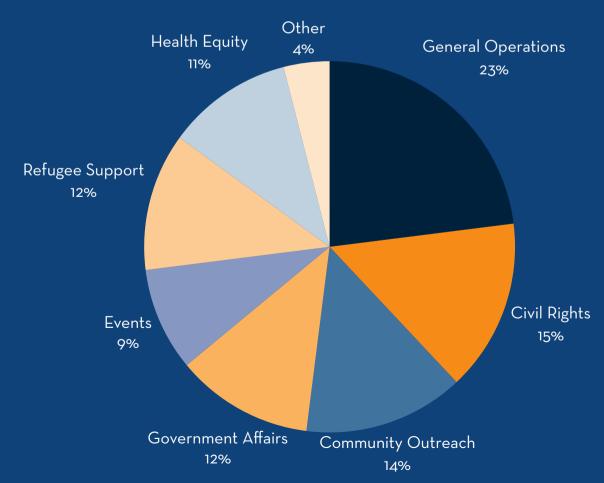
Total Income: \$728,582

Grant income: \$195,662

Donation income: \$532,920

EXPENSES

CAIR Oklahoma remains committed to being a community-based organization. All funds are spent on programming that benefits the Oklahoma Muslim community.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH DEPARTMENT

Assalam Alaikum and Greetings of Peace,

This has been my sixth year as your Community Outreach Director, and being able to serve the Oklahoma Muslim community is a rewarding and enriching experience. Every year I work with new organizations, build more community partnerships, and make new friends. I was able to design and publish the first brochure for the Community Outreach Department, attend multiple leadership conferences, and was blessed enough to receive the NextGen Under 30 Awards for the third consecutive year. I continued my role as a member of the Religions United Committee under the Oklahoma Faith Network and joined the Respect Diversity Foundation as a board member and joined the Many Beliefs Serving Together Committee under the Interfaith Alliance. My love for serving our Okie Muslim community remains, and I am finding the same excitement as I become more involved in serving our interfaith communities. Overall, 2023 was a busy year for CAIR Oklahoma; however, towards the end of 2023, we were deeply affected by the Israeli genocide in Gaza and the deaths of thousands of Palestinians. May Allah protect the lives of those who are suffering as we pray for a ceasefire and live to see a #FreePalestine.

Thank you for allowing me to serve our community and our state. The sky is the limit - CAIR Oklahoma's Community Outreach Department has much more to accomplish! Thank you for your generosity and continuous support. I am eternally grateful to be here and to be your friend and ally.

Sincerely,

Natasha Saya



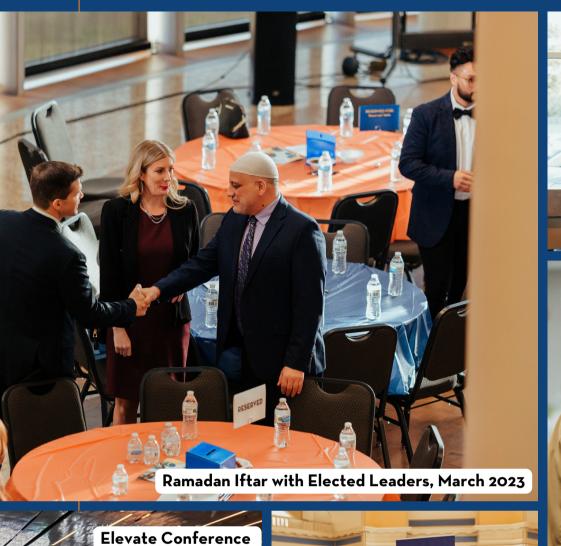
Events

CAIR Oklahoma hosted many events in 2023! From our annual events such as our Muslim Day at the Capitol to our Ramadan Day of Service, CAIR Oklahoma also hosted events for our up-and-coming Muslim Young Professionals Network, our refugee neighbors, and hosted guest speakers at different mosques throughout the state. It was also the first year where we partnered with Rockwell YMCA and cohosted an Eid Festival for our beloved Afghan community in Oklahoma City. Throughout the year, we were able to organize events that showcased our love and dedication to our mission for the Oklahoma Muslim community.



Community

The Community Outreach Department continued to work closely with the Spero Project and visited with the Afghan community at their ELL classes and events. We were able to host a series of 'Women's Day Out' events for Muslim women to enjoy an evening at the park and get to know each other, participate in an exercise activity and make new friendships. In Norman, Jen and I met with the Norman Coalition for Refugee Support and helped them establish their own 'Women's Day Out' events for the resettled Afghan community residing there. On the other hand, I was also able to visit with leadership at our local Islamic schools to discuss projects in partnership and how CAIR Oklahoma could support their efforts in education and civic engagement.







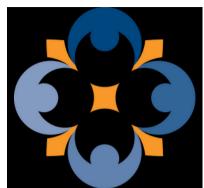
Young Professionals Iftar











GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

I am so grateful and humbled to work with the Government Affairs department to advocate and educate for better policies for our Muslim community. Oklahoma is home to many diverse and wonderful communities, and it's imperative that we lift each other up and feel safe in the place we call home.

Working with elected officials and connecting them with their Muslim constituents is a key part of this process, and these opportunities help build bridges of acceptance, dignity, and respect that benefit us all.

Maurum Nicole Baumann



The Government Affairs Department remains a core aspect of the CAIR Oklahoma team. With areas of work focused on civic engagement, advocacy, and more, the heart of the work is to connect the Muslim community with their elected officials and keep them aware of what policies are being enacted at the state level.

Legislative Session

With the second session of the Oklahoma Legislative Session beginning, there are thousands of bills seeking to make it to the Governor's desk by May. We are actively tracking over 1,600 of these bills based on the categories in our policy platform. This work carries many highs and lows, as the rhetoric at the State Capitol is often divisive and seeks to dismantle our civil rights. However, the work of this department, in conjunction with other organizations tracking and advocating for better policies gives hope. The more people know what occurs, the more willing and empowered they will be to act and advocate.

With efforts from the Advocacy Coordinator, Deputy Director, and Executive Director, these achievements from the Government Affairs Department will help push our mission further and solidify CAIR Oklahoma's work at the State Capitol and beyond.

Advocacy meetings promote the CAIR Oklahoma mission through meetings with elected officials, other like-minded nonprofits, and representation at capitol advocacy days and conferences.





Civic Engagement

A key component of any type of government affairs, civic engagement is a crucial part of the department. From voter registration, social media posts, and voting guides, we are constantly engaging in ways to get people prepared and excited to vote!

This year we participated in National Muslim Voter Registration Day on September 15th where we had voter registration tables set up at mosques in OKC, Tulsa, and Stillwater.

We published a voter guide for the Edmond House District Special Election and continue to create information on social media for various county, city, and state-wide elections.

Mosque Visits

One of the most unique and meaningful aspects of advocacy in the Government Affairs Department are mosque visits with legislators.

Last year we had several incredible opportunities to have state officials visit mosques in Stillwater, Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

These experiences help them further understand our wonderful community here in Oklahoma and learn more about the religion and priorities of community members.

Resolutions and Citations

Since this time last year, we have received four citations from state elected officials and from the Mayor of OKC's office. These accolades help uplift the work of CAIR Oklahoma and to acknowledge the efforts and contributions of the community.





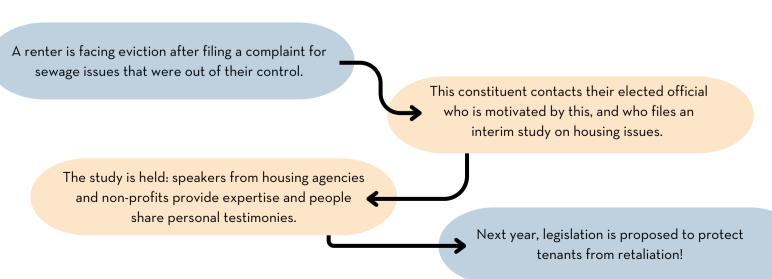
SPECIAL FEATURE: INTERIM STUDIES

After the legislative session ends in May, the work of the Oklahoma Legislature does not end. Rather, lawmakers are engaged in special sessions, campaigning, and hosting interim studies. Interim studies are designed to serve as formal research sessions that go on public record via the state's House and Senate websites. The public is allowed to attend, but they are not allowed to ask questions or speak unless they have been invited to be a part of the study. Even then, only members of the committee and the legislator presenting the study are allowed to ask questions. The studies are recorded, and the materials presented during the study are archived as well for people to view and reference.

Interim studies are the closest option people can get to the legislative process, outside of personal advocacy with their elected officials. These studies are the only chance for members of the public to speak their expertise on record about issues that might become policy. However, even this process is limited. The study topics are chosen either by the elected officials themselves based off their personal preference, or they may come as a request from a constituent or organization.

From there, it is subject to approval by chamber leadership, and like a bill filed during session, it must wait to be assigned and scheduled for a hearing in the relevant committee. If a proposed interim study does succeed in receiving a date, it is then up to the office of the elected official to coordinate and prepare the study itself. Some studies are given hours or days; in others, experts only have one hour to share their presentations.

EXAMPLE OF AN INTERIM STUDY PROCESS



In 2023, for the first time ever, CAIR Oklahoma participated in an interim study at the State Capitol. Senator Carri Hicks, who represents a portion of Oklahoma City, sponsored an interim study focused on the resettlement of our new Afghan neighbors. This study looked at the efforts non-profits and volunteers provided to make this successful, as well as the challenges faced due to our state's lack of affordable housing and struggling social safety network.

Our participation included intense collaboration with other organizations, who helped us collect data and schedule speakers to present during the study. We were only allotted one hour to share data, stories, and recommendations from over two years of the Afghan resettlement project.



Speakers from Catholic Charities of OKC and The Spero Project joined volunteer sponsor families and a representative from the Afghan community to share their experiences in helping Afghans settle into Oklahoma City as our neighbors. Together, we presented to the State Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee to reveal how inadequacies in our statewide social safety net created more challenges for our Afghan friends. We made a few recommendations to the committee that will help our Afghan community, and all struggling communities in Oklahoma, to thrive.

Dozens of supporters joined us to provide a visual show of how many Oklahomans from different backgrounds, faiths, and belief systems had joined together to support these newest members of our Oklahoma family. It was truly an honor to show our state's leaders both how far we have come in building a strong, supportive, and healthy state - and to guide them to better policies that will protect all our communities as we rise together. From years ago, when we were the targets of Islamophobic hate at the Capitol, CAIR Oklahoma and the Muslim community have come a long way into building power at the state capitol and beyond.



REFUGEE SERVICES DEPARTMENT



Peace to you, friends of CAIR Oklahoma,

Thank you for your continued support of the CAIR-OK Refugee Services Department! It was an honor this past year to meet with Muslim newcomers, connect them with resources, and learn about their hopes and dreams for the future. I'm excited for 2024 and will continue creating ways for Muslim newcomers to enhance social emotional wellness, increase positive health outcomes, reduce isolation, and connect more deeply with CAIR Oklahoma and the larger Muslim community.

I look forward to seeing you throughout the year at CAIR Oklahoma events and volunteer opportunities.

Jen Hund

After 18 months of collecting and distributing free resources to the Afghan community with 12 of those months at St. John's Episcopal Church, CAIR Oklahoma closed its Refugee Resource Center and shifted its work towards expanding relationships across interfaith and community groups, connecting Muslim newcomers with existing resources and services as well as creating outlets for them to enhance social emotional wellness and reduce isolation, and offering training and educational materials to groups providing services and resources so they can better serve Muslim newcomers.

149 unique households visited

432 unique volunteers

2,222 total hours of service

\$55,562 value of hours served



Desi Clothing at Goodwill Industries

We established a relationship with Goodwill Industries to create a Desi clothing section specifically for Muslim customers, including Afghan Oklahomans, at their North MacArthur location. This section of the Goodwill store is continuously stocked through generous donations from the Oklahoma Muslim community, and it is unique amongst Goodwill store locations in our region.

Eid ul-Fitr Celebration

We built a partnership with YMCA to co-host the 2023 Eid ul-Fitr Festival in April for Afghan Oklahomans at the Rockwell Plaza location.

This special event brought dozens of volunteers together to serve hundreds of Afghans in an Eid celebration that included dinner, gifts, activities for children, decorations, and even cultural dancing! We were proud to work with valuable community partners like the YMCA, The Spero Project, and other volunteers.



Home Visits and Community Building

Throughout the summer and fall of 2023, CAIR Oklahoma staff visited over 30 Afghan Oklahoman families in their homes to learn more about them, their ongoing needs, and their hopes and dreams. Based on these visits, we started the CAIR Oklahoma Women's Day Out and Men's Days Out, small social events at local parks that encourage physical activity and conversation.



Computer Classes

In early November 2023, four Afghan women completed Computer Class 101, a basic computer literacy course held at and taught by The Computer Club of Oklahoma City in partnership with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Through this training, Afghan women not only gained skills that would help them obtain employment for their families, but also built confidence and fostered leadership opportunities within their community. CAIR Oklahoma introduced these organizations to one another and shepherded their relationship through the creation and implementation of the course as well as in exploring next steps.



HEALTH EQUITY DEPARTMENT



As-salam Alaikum! The last year has been a year full of growth and a learning process for me and the Health Equity department. I am very humbled to have worked with such an amazing team in serving the Muslim community of Oklahoma. Over the last year and half, I was able to partner with multiple entities, organizations and individuals who played a vital role in helping us serve the amazing Muslim community of Oklahoma. None of this work would have been possible without your support and my amazing team.

I am forever grateful to Allah for blessing me with such an amazing team and the opportunity to serve such a great community. This will be my second year at CAIR Oklahoma, and every day here has been a blessing. I stay committed to assisting my community and look forward to working with them InshAllah!

Sincerely,

Ruslan Ahasan

OSDH Covid-19 Disparities Grant

As per the agreement, CAIR Oklahoma successfully completed all the requirements, programs and activities assigned through the OSDH grant in August of 2023. The first half of the year consisted of finishing up on programs and events for the grant; for the second half of 2023, we still continued our work in the health sector with the help of the CAIR Oklahoma team.

Throughout the year, the Health Equity Coordinator along with the team visited community members at different locations and was able to conduct focus groups, to assess and identify health concerns and needs for them. These successful visits and interactions helped us to create sustainable interventions that were implemented throughout 2023.



Men's Day Out

As a part of our mental health interventions and in order to build a relationship between the Afghan community and the general Muslim community of OKC, we worked to organize a Men's Day Out at Bluff creek park. A total of 28 men from different backgrounds attended the event to play cricket. This event will be repeated on a regular basis in 2024 as a foundation for encouraging health and fitness.

Healthcare Providers Guides

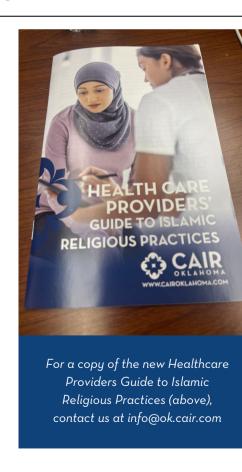
We had preexisting guides to Islamic religious practices for healthcare providers; however, they were last revised 5 years ago. So in conjunction with our training for healthcare providers, we updated, published, and distributed our new edition of the Healthcare Providers Guide to Islamic Religious Practices to provide up-to-date, relevant information on treating immigrant and Muslim communities.

Health Education videos are available for viewing on our website and social media platforms.



Health Education Videos

One of the areas we have excelled in as a non-profit is creating video content that is highly consumable. The Health Equity Coordinator, along with our Executive Director and CEE fellow Dr. Iqbal Hussain from Pakistan, created a series of videos addressing various health Issues. Many of these videos were also recorded in Pashto to make it more accessible for our Afghan community in OKC.



An Evening with Dr. Abdul El-Sayed

CAIR's longtime friend Dr. Abdul El Sayed, who is also a physician, epidemiologist and public servant whose public health service focuses on health equity, resiliency, and environmental justice, joined the community to talk and educate about the current concerns on Muslim health. During this event, the community had a chance to ask questions, interact, and share health-related issues with Dr. Abdul El Sayed.



Dr. El Sayed's conversation focused on the health equity issues facing the Muslim community, covering topics such as mental health, environmental justice, political inequality, and economic disparities that face certain segments of our community. While Oklahoma Muslims are well-represented in the medical community, it's always valuable to be reminded that health is complex and that we can all be part of the movement to make our state a safer place for all.

The Health Equity Department plans to host more events such as this to bring prominent speakers, educators, and public health professionals to our community to educate families and leaders on how to create a healthier Muslim community and make Oklahoma a better place to live.

Dental Checkups, Services, and Fluoride Tests

After multiple visits with the Afghan community residing in OKC, it came to our attention that the dental crisis amongst the community is acute. Due to the financial challenges, time sensitive issues, and lack of transportation. many of the members in the Afghan community were deprived of much-needed checkups and treatments. CAIR Oklahoma partnered with Neighborhood Service Organization Dental Services and The Spero Project to take mobile dental clinics to the community. During these visits, community members were provided with free checkups, fluoride tests, and scheduled for their next line of treatments. A total of 56 clients were assisted during these visits.



Similar to the dental crisis, many of our Afghan

community members faced challenges in trying to schedule medical appointments and to get the care they needed. This was brought to our attention when the Health Equity Coordinator visited the members to conduct focus groups. Following that, all the members needing care were assisted and scheduled appointments with physicians from ICNA Shifa Clinic and Clara Community Health Center. A total of 32 clients were assisted.

During one of our visits to the Stillwater Mosque, we learned that there was a shortage in Halal meat amongst the Afghan community.



CAIR Oklahoma partnered with Raindrop Turkish Institute to distribute 161 bags of Halal beef to 69









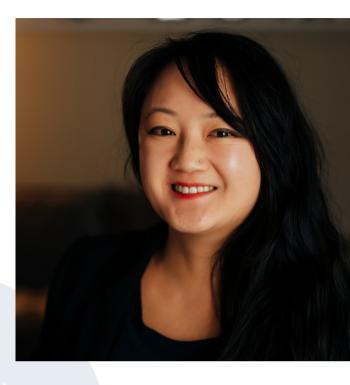
Halal Meat Distribution



CIVIL RIGHTS DEPARTMENT

Salaam alaikum and greetings of peace,

2023 was a challenging year for the Oklahoma Muslim community. From lawsuits against unconstitutional policing to defending our community against some of the worst Islamophobia we've ever seen, the Civil Rights
Department has been working hard simply to keep up with increasing anti-Muslim bias. Although my title has changed to that of Deputy Director, I remain at the head of the Civil Rights Department to assist anyone who has experienced harassment, discrimination, or bias due to their faith. I firmly believe that Oklahoma is capable of being a safe, healthy, and welcoming state to all people, and I also recognize that we have a long way to go to make this possible.



However, the Oklahoma Muslim community has stood with us at CAIR Oklahoma for nearly two decades as we've continued to fight for civil liberties and social justice in our beloved state. I am confident that with your continued support, we will see change at the state capitol, in the courtroom, and within our communities as we work together.

Thank you for joining us in this fight - may we continue to stand together and rise to meet every challenge that faces us.

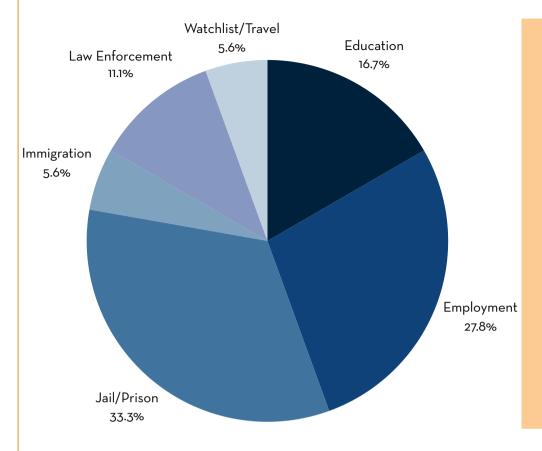
Sincerely,

Veronica Laizure

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DISCRIMINATION CASES



Unfortunately, after several consecutive years of reduction in the rate of employment discrimination, 2023 saw a spike in the percentage of cases related to employment discrimination. Over half of these complaints took place in the last quarter of the year, undoubtedly related to the overall spike in bias incidents documented nationwide in the wake of October 7th and the subsequent violence in Palestine.

Use the "Request

Legal Help" form

on our website to

get in touch with

us quickly!

Although we try to provide guidance to every complainant that reaches the Civil Rights Department, some cases are far outside the scope of our work or do not present sufficient evidence of discrimination for us to take action. Cases that we cannot handle and that will be referred to another expert legal practitioner include:

- Criminal defense cases
- Family, divorce, custody cases
- Property and contractual disputes
- Landlord/tenant issues that do not involve discrimination
- Immigration

If you believe you are the victim of discrimination:

	▼
I DOCUMENT SVERVING	Our first step will be to construct a timeline of events, so write down the date, time, location, any witnesses, and other details.
Get it in writing.	Wherever possible, try to back up verbal conversations with emails or letters.
	Never sign any document if you aren't sure what it means. Contact our office or another attorney to get guidance.
Know your rights.	Being able to politely but firmly advocate for yourself can prevent many discrimination complaints from escalating.

Federal Watchlist Lawsuit



In early 2023, we joined the legal team from CAIR National in a lawsuit against the Oklahoma City Police Department on behalf of our client, who has experienced over 10 years of harassment from law enforcement agencies because of his name being on an illegal government watchlist. Saadiq Long was stopped by OKCPD 5 times in 2 months in a series of escalating

encounters that included him being pulled out of his vehicle at gunpoint while his car was searched. Although OKCPD agreed that the federal watchlist is not probable cause to stop people like Mr. Long, the lawsuit is ongoing as of the time of this report.

Policy Research and Capitol Work

Our work continued at the state capitol, as we joined various organizations and coalition partners to call for an end to the death penalty and rallied for causes that included reforms to the criminal legal system, commonsense gun regulations, and the protection of civil liberties for all Oklahomans. We spoke out on behalf of Representative Mauree Turner, the state's only Muslim legislator, during a time when Rep. Turner was censured for allowing a distraught citizen to take refuge in their office after a protest at the Capitol turned contentious. As always, we keep a close eye on movement at the capitol as threats to our civil rights remain a concern.



Palestinian Advocacy and Leadership

The events of October 7, 2023 launched some of the worst Islamophobia that the Muslim community has ever experienced. From our National office in D.C. to every individual CAIR chapter across the country, we have seen anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, Islamophobic hatred displayed at a level unseen since the months following 9/11. CAIR's National office reported over 1,000 incidents in the last three months of 2023 – a 178% increase over the previous year's complaints. As local community members speak up, they are facing threats to their employment, being silenced as they speak out, and being ignored in the political arena. It's evident that we still have a lot of work to do in protecting the voices of our beloved community as we speak up against atrocities here and abroad.

2023 HONORS & RECOGNITIONS



Adam Soltani was
recognized on the Journal
Record's Nonprofit
Power List as a nonprofit
leader making an impact
in the field.

Adam was also named as one of the top Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion Leaders in OKC by 405 Business
Magazine, alongside other
OKC leaders who are pushing DEI efforts forward.



Veronica Laizure was named as one of the Journal Record's 50 Women Making a Difference, an award that honors leadership in both their professional endeavors and in the communities where they live.

Veronica also serves in the following organizations:

- ACLU of Oklahoma Board President
- Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation Secretary
- Asian Task Force of Oklahoma, Cofounder
- National Lawyers Guild Oklahoma Chapter, Executive Director



For the third consecutive year, Natasha Saya was listed on the Next Gen 30 Under 30 list and honored for her drive, talent, and service to the community. Natasha also serves on the following boards and committees:

- The Interfaith Alliance Many Beliefs Serving Together Committee
- Religions United Committee under OK Faith Network
- Respect Diversity Foundation
- Greater OKC Asian Chamber of Commerce

INTERNS

Spring 2023

CAIR Oklahoma has been fortunate to enjoy the service of dozens of interns throughout the years. We offer internships in the Government Affairs, Civil Rights, and Community Outreach Departments to give students and young professionals the chance to hone their skills, get course credit, and experience a civil rights career from the inside.

Summer 2023



Kale Parker

Timothy Gunsaulis



Community Engagement **Exchange Fellows**

For the past two years, CAIR Oklahoma has participated in a unique program run by the U.S. Department of State which brings young professionals from around the world to work in civil service organizations here in the U.S. In 2023, we welcomed Dr. Igbal Hussain from Pakistan and Heba Shatila from Palestine



Seth Hulse

Kennedy

Summers





Zara Raja



Hannah Edmondson



Iqbal Hussain

Iqbal is a medical professional whose experience in rural Pakistan made him a great fit for our Health Equity work.

Heba Shatila

Heba's work as a young activist for her beloved Palestinian community was incredibly helpful in empowering our new Afghan friends









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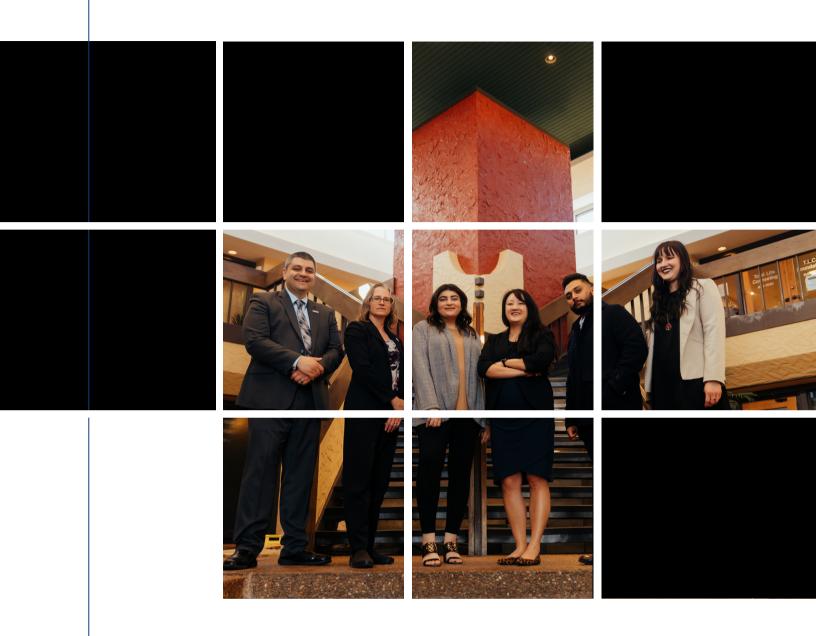


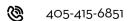
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- 3000 United Founders Blvd., Suite 226 Oklahoma City, OK 73112
- www.cairoklahoma.com
- f facebook.com/cairoklahoma
- @cair_oklahoma

