

Islamic
SCHOLARSHIP
Fund



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Voices *for* Change



The Islamic Scholarship Fund has served the American Muslim community for over a decade. Our scholars and alums work in media, journalism, film, public interest law, and public policy. We are incredibly grateful to our supporters who make this important work possible.

OUR VALUES

Why?

We believe that religion, culture, and race should not be barriers to equity and equality. All people should be treated with dignity and respect, and the voice of every citizen plays an integral role in creating inclusive communities that encourage participation by all.

What?

ISF offers access and professional development opportunities to emerging social justice leaders in the realms of public interest law, public policy, film, and media.

How?

We offer a unique incubator model that provides funding, mentorship, and career counseling, as well as real-world, professional experience through internships and fellowships.

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On the cover:
*Alaa Elassar, 2019 and 2020
 Media Scholarship Recipient
 and currently a writer at CNN*



Dear ISF Community,

As we reflect on the events unfolding in the world, we are reminded of the urgent need for organizations like the Islamic Scholarship Fund (ISF). Injustices towards marginalized populations underscore ISF's critical role in supporting and empowering our community.

In the United States, our community is impacted by various institutions, including media, Hollywood, Congress, and the courts. These sectors influence domestic and international policies and perceptions, making representation in these fields more crucial than ever. Through our focus on media, film, public policy, and public interest law, ISF aims to address the lack of diversity and representation, advocating for change and equity.

The power of ISF's support is evident in the story of Tahreem Alam, who embodies the impact of ISF's support cycle. Tahreem participated in ISF's Congressional Policy Internship Program in the spring of 2022 and subsequently progressed to the 9-month Congressional Fellowship Program. Tahreem secured a full-time position on Capitol Hill as a testament to our program model's effectiveness.

In 2023, we prioritized strengthening our existing programs and addressing gaps with the support of ISF alums. From creating bar scholarships for law students to funding alum attendance at prestigious film festivals, we provided opportunities for advancement and growth.

Furthermore, we focused on enhancing ISF's infrastructure by institutionalizing operations and implementing standardized procedures and systems. This groundwork lays the foundation for our continued expansion and impact.

Looking ahead to 2024, we remain committed to our mission of increasing Muslim representation across various sectors. We will continue to expand our program offerings, empowering individuals to pursue careers in the film industry, media, judicial system, government, social justice nonprofits, and academia.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our donors, supporters, and partners for making our work possible. We will strive to create a more equitable and inclusive world for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Somayeh Nikooei". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Somayeh Nikooei
Executive Director

2023 In Review



85

Total awards



42

Scholarships

13

Film and media grants

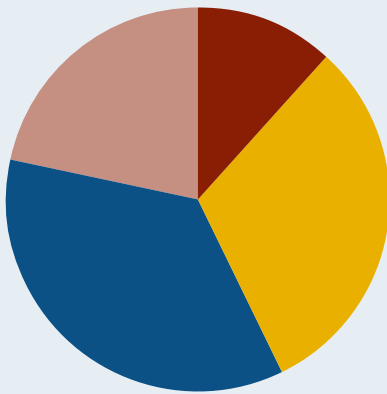
17

Internships/ Fellowships

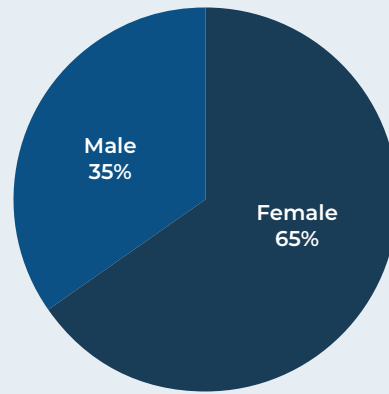
13

Professional development stipends

OF THE 42 SCHOLARSHIPS IN 2023:



- Ph.D.: 5
- Law: 13
- Masters: 15
- Undergraduate: 9



SCHOOLS ATTENDED BY 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

American University, Benjamin N. Cardozo Law School, Boston University, Columbia College Chicago, Columbia University, CUNY (The City College of New York), Duke University, Fordham Law School, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Harvard University, Hofstra University, IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, Johns Hopkins University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, New York University, Northwestern University, Occidental College, Pace University School of Law, Stanford University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, UC Berkeley, UC Law SF, UC Los Angeles, University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, University of Richmond, University of Southern California, UT Austin, Yale

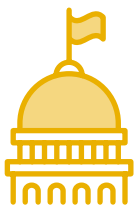


2023 Congressional Summer Interns

Cycle of Support

ISF empowers the next generation of American Muslims through dynamic leadership development initiatives and strategic funding opportunities, facilitating their access to careers within critical sectors such as the government, the judicial system, media, and the film industry. This proactive approach serves as a direct intervention to combat Islamophobic policies and media narratives targeting our community.

What started as a scholarship program has evolved into so much more. Through a comprehensive cycle of support, ISF supports American Muslim leaders in the most critical parts of their career development through scholarships, mentorships, internships, fellowships, and grants.



PUBLIC POLICY

ISF prepares American Muslims to enter and excel in the fields of government and politics. Having an active voice at the table guarantees that our community's needs and interests are represented in the making of policies, laws, and regulations.

Policy career development supports:

- Scholarships
- Congressional Policy Internships
- Congressional Policy Fellowships
- Mentorship



PUBLIC INTEREST LAW

ISF encourages American Muslims to pursue careers as public interest attorneys, judges, and legal advocates, to ensure our civil rights are protected, not just in principle, but also in the practice of the law. A legal system without representation is prone to bias and injustice against those it claims to represent.

Law career development supports:

- Scholarships
- Judicial Internships
- Bar Scholarships
- Mentorship
- Conference Stipends

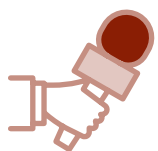


FILM

ISF empowers talented filmmakers to tell our stories through our own perspective to provide a more balanced representation of our experiences, commonalities, and contributions as vital members of the American community.

Film career development supports:

- Scholarships
- Film Grants
- Artist Support
- Writers' Lab
- Gotham EDU Fellowship



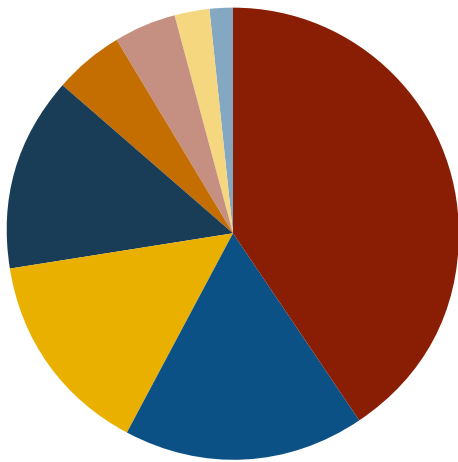
MEDIA

ISF supports scholars dedicated to increasing American Muslim representation in media so that our voice will be heard and respected.

Media career development supports:

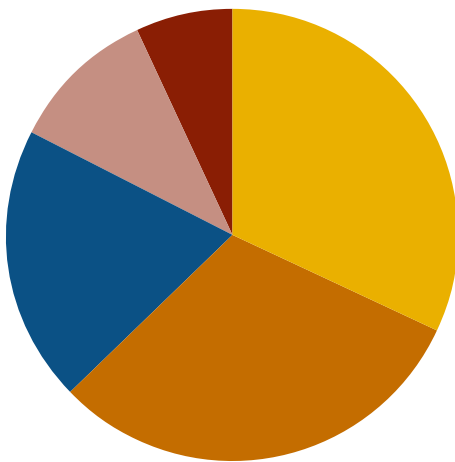
- Scholarships
- Mentorship

PROGRAM BREAKDOWN (\$)



- Scholarships
- Film Grants
- Artist Support
- Congressional Policy Internship Stipend
- Congressional Policy Fellowship Salary
- Writers' Lab
- Judicial Internships
- Mentorship

PROGRAM SERVICES MIX (\$)



- Public Policy
- Film
- Public Interest Law
- Media
- General Program

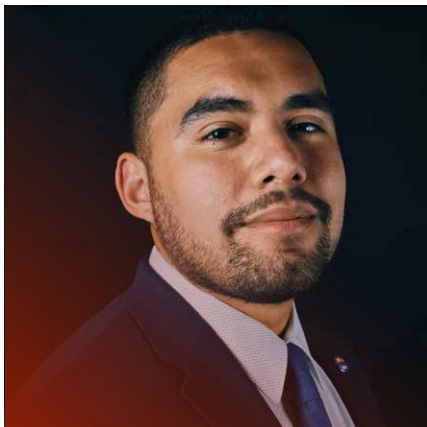
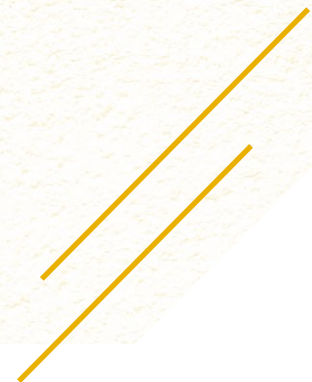
2023 PROGRAM SPONSORS

- Abdul Sattar Rydhan Memorial Scholarship
- Afshin Riaz Future Leaders Scholarship
- Afzal Family Foundation
- Amana Mutual Funds
- Ayub Kundi Foundation
- Capitol Area Muslim Bar Association
- Chicago Muslim Bar Association
- David Dobbins Memorial Scholarship
- Doris Duke Foundation
- Dr. Rahbar Scholarship
- Dr. Alassar Family Scholarship
- El Hibri Foundation
- F. Basma Scholarship
- Fikry and Dorria Fahmy Memorial Scholarship
- Foundation for Intelligent Giving (FIG)
- Ghulam and Arifa Azad Family Scholarship
- Goats Foundation
- Guillen-Omar Family
- Hasan-Brown Family
- Hashmi Family
- Hina (Fakhera) Sherwani Memorial Scholarship
- Hussain Family
- Kosar and Javed Mohammed Media Scholarship
- Linda Sarsour Courage and Leadership Scholarship
- Mahmoud Abdelmageed Memorial Scholarship
- Makhraj Endowed Scholarship
- Muhammad Kulsum Zikar Scholarship
- Muslim Bar Association of New York (MuBANY)
- Muslim Women Giving Circle
- National Association of Muslim Lawyers (NAML)
- Omar Sultan
- Palo Alto Network Group
- Rahmatara Begum Scholarship
- Seham Elasmr Memorial Scholarship
- Shahin-Fatemeh Scholarship
- Shazi Iqbal
- Shohoud Family
- Shireen Abu Akleh Memorial Scholarship
- Syed / Hijazi Family
- Syed Shaukat Husain Memorial Scholarship
- Syeda Zehra Batool Jafri Scholarship
- Tarek Al Kadri, Social Justice Leadership Scholarship by MLFA
- UC Irvine Muslim Alumni Scholarship
- WF Fund
- Zehra Attari Memorial Scholarship

Public Policy

Supporting individuals pursuing government and public policy careers ensures diverse representation in politics and equitable policies.

By investing in this vertical, ISF empowers future policymakers to advocate for social justice, address systemic inequalities, and champion policies that uplift marginalized communities. These aspiring policy leaders are pivotal in shaping fair and inclusive policies, leading to a more equitable society for all.



“You have American mainstream politics, community organizing, film, advocacy, journalism — that is every pillar of American civic change. You don’t just have one tool in the toolbox — you can’t just fix it within the system, you have to work outside of it, you have to portray it, you have to lobby it, you have to represent it. Every single person has the ability to make a difference.”

Antonio López

2017 & 2023 Scholarship Recipient

Current role: Mayor, City of East Palo Alto

ALUM CAREERS

GOVERNMENT

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Department of Energy

U.S. Department of Defense

U.S. House of Representatives

U.S. Department of Transportation

State Representative, Georgia

General Assembly

USAID

NONPROFIT ORGS

Poligon

American Muslim Community Foundation

Muslim Counterpublics Lab

Ali Leadership Institute



“As a policy practitioner and community advocate, I’ve dedicated years to bridging the gap between organizing and policy, striving for equitable, compassionate outcomes.”

Haleema Bharoocha
2023 Scholarship Recipient



10

In 2023, ISF placed **10 aspiring policymakers** into internships on Capitol Hill

ISF placed a fellow in a **9-month program with Rep. Ilhan Omar**. After concluding her fellowship, she was offered a full-time position in the office of Congresswoman Ilhan Omar.



“My experience on Capitol Hill revealed just how underrepresented we are in the halls of power, and how much impact we can have when we enter public service.”

Tahreem Alam

2022 Congressional Internship & Congressional Fellowship Recipient
Current role: Legislative Correspondent/Staff Assistant at U.S. House of Representatives

WHERE OUR POLICY ALUMS ARE NOW:

- 16** Government
- 8** Attorneys
- 15** Policy/Research
- 15** Nonprofits/Advocacy
- 20** Education/Academia
- 21** For Profit
- 39** Students
- 7** Related Fields

Public Interest Law

Supporting law students pursuing public interest law is critical as it ensures equitable access to legal representation and promotes diversity in courts.

By investing in this vertical, ISF empowers future lawyers and judges to advocate for social justice, challenge systemic injustices, and protect the rights of underserved populations. These aspiring attorneys play a vital role in promoting fairness and equality within the legal system, ultimately creating a more just and equitable society.



“We need to be more strategic in how we create change over time, and so I’ve tried to bring that to my work. One of the lessons I’ve learned is the power that one person can have in an institution.”

Omar Shakir

2010 & 2011 Scholarship Recipient
Current Role: Israel and Palestine
Director at Human Rights Watch

ALUM CAREERS

GOVERNMENT

New York City Council
Second Circuit Court, New Haven, CT
Michigan Court of Appeals

Committee For Public Counsel
Services, MA
ACLU, Hawaii
US Court of Appeals (CA, NY, CT)

NONPROFIT ORGS

University of California Irvine
Law School
Human Rights Watch
National Women’s Law Center
Project ANAR
Palestine Legal



Hoda Katebi

2020 Scholarship Recipient
Current Role: Attorney

“It’s so important for organizations like ISF to be able to fund areas like film and media, as well as public interest lawyers. The goal is ‘how do we create power outside of the system? How do we create power for ourselves, on our own terms?’ We have that ability within our community.”

IN 2023, IN ADDITION TO 13 ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS, WE...



...awarded 3 bar scholarships to graduating law students who were preparing for the state bar exam. **All three passed the bar exam in the same year.**

...placed four Muslim **judicial interns** with state and federal judges to give them access to the judicial system.



Malak Afaneh

2022 Scholarship Recipient
Current role: J.D. Candidate

“My journey to law school was motivated through the burning passion to be able to uplift the voices of the Muslim community, through the field of civil rights. To be the face of Muslim representation in the legal field in a time when we really do need it, and to uphold and protect the rights that all of us so deserve.”

WHERE OUR PUBLIC INTEREST LAW ALUMS ARE NOW:

- 18** Law clerks / Public Defender / Judge
- 21** Nonprofits / Advocacy
- 30** Law Firm
- 28** Law School – Student

Film



ISF Filmmakers at the 2023 Tribeca Film Festival

Supporting aspiring filmmakers through ISF’s film vertical is essential as it fosters diverse representation and ensures marginalized voices are heard in the film industry.

By investing in this vertical, ISF empowers future filmmakers to tell authentic stories, challenge stereotypes, and amplify underrepresented narratives. These emerging filmmakers play a crucial role in promoting cultural diversity, fostering empathy, and advancing social change through the power of cinema, fundamentally contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.



“Films have the unequivocal ability to create empathy and understanding between all peoples.”

Li Lu

2017 American Muslim Storytellers
Film Grant Recipient
Current role: Director, Filmmaker

\$65,000

We celebrated the 10th anniversary of the film grant and awarded 7 grants, totaling \$65,000

**FILM FESTIVALS
ATTENDED/PRESENTED:**

Sundance Black Star
SXSW Gotham EDU
Tribeca



Provided **14 filmmakers with industry badges** at this year's Tribeca Film Festival.

ISF facilitated travel for filmmakers to attend the Sundance Film Festival and hosted a panel where filmmakers shared insights into their career journeys.

Made it possible for 6 filmmakers to attend SXSW to screen their films.

Filmmakers were able to connect with industry professionals and garnered jobs.



"It is only through owning our own narratives, unapologetically, accepting ourselves as we are, as Muslim Americans, that we will begin to bring power to our communities."

Colette Ghunim

2022 Film Grant Recipient
Current role: Filmmaker



"Amidst the unnecessary challenges we faced to bring an authentic story of redemption to life, I firmly believe that our representation, expertise, and unique perspective as filmmakers hold greater significance today than ever before. Now is the time to tell our own unique stories by fearlessly dismantling negative stereotypes head-on!"

Hakeem Khaaliq

2020 Film Grant Recipient
Current role: Director, Filmmaker, Visual Anthropologist

101

Filmmakers supported

200+

Films produced

Media

Supporting aspiring journalists and writers through ISF’s media vertical promotes diverse representation and ensures equitable access to the media landscape.

By investing in this vertical, ISF empowers future journalists to report on issues affecting marginalized communities, challenge mainstream narratives, and amplify often silenced voices. These emerging storytellers play a crucial role in promoting media literacy, fostering informed discourse, and advocating for social justice, resulting in a more unbiased and civil society.



“Our biggest assets as journalists — particularly journalists of color — are our abilities to connect with sources and bring unseen perspectives to light. Punishing journalists for calling for unbiased coverage and holding ourselves to higher standards hurts everyone.”

Lila Hassan

2019 Scholarship Recipient
Current role: Independent investigative journalist



ALUM CAREERS

The Guardian
CNN
NBC News
Columbia University School of Journalism
CBS News

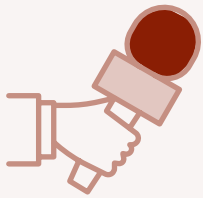
The Black Studies Collaboratory at UC Berkeley
CNET
Crosscut
Fresnoland
Speechwriter, New Jersey Department of State



Alaa Elassar

2019 & 2020 Scholarship Recipient
Current role: Writer at CNN

“My biggest passion as a journalist is finding gaps and filling them, and one of the gaps that has always existed in media, especially American media, is good stories about Muslim communities. Not just stories about terrorist attacks or violence committed against us, but about our accomplishments. Always write the stories you care about, always stand on the side of justice, always choose kindness, and always think about the people.”



96

Total awards



41

Academic Journalism Scholarships

31

Academic Media Scholarships

24

Academic English and Literature Scholarships



Erum Salam

2021 & 2022 Scholarship Recipient
Current role: Writer/Reporter for The Guardian US

“It’s because of people like you, that people like me, can break the mold of these largely exclusive and homogeneous industries like journalism.”

WHERE OUR MEDIA ALUMS ARE NOW:

- 6** Published Authors
- 20** Reporters
- 10** Media Producers
- 2** Editors
- 23** Related Fields
- 17** University – Student

2023 Recipients

PUBLIC POLICY

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Banan Abdelrahman
Anthropology & Sociology



Fareed Abdullah
International Studies



Amal Ali
Political Science



Nasir Almasri
Political Science



Bushra Amiwala
Public Policy



Haleema Bharoocha
Public Policy



Butheina Hamdah
Anthropology & Sociology



Bilal Khan
International Studies



Wajiha Mekki
Political Science



Zubair Merchant
Public Policy



Dawud Omar
Political Science



Rasheed Shabazz
Public Policy



Shaan Shaikh
International Studies



Mira Tarabeine
International Studies



Hasan Zai
Political Science

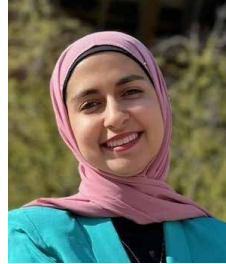
CONGRESSIONAL POLICY INTERNS



Yosra Abdulwahid
Spring Intern



Sarah Alkhafaji
Summer Intern



Reem Elsaad
Summer Intern



Ahmad Kattaa
Fall Intern



Isha Khan
Summer Intern



Sanya Khan
Summer Intern



Wajiha Mekki
Spring Intern



Heba Mohiuddin
Spring Intern

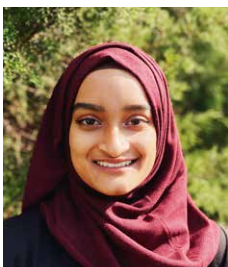


Ayesha Rahman
Summer Intern



Isra Qadri
Fall Intern

CONGRESSIONAL POLICY FELLOW



Tahreem Alam
Congressional Fellow

2023 Recipients

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Malak Afaneh



Nooran Alhamdan



Woorod Atiyat



Zainab Bhindarwala



Ayesha Durrani



Philsan Isaak



Zainab Kahloon



Nayab Khan



Afsha Malik



Christopher Nevarez
Azdar



Rimsha Saeed



Areeb Siddiqui



Adam Soliman



CONFERENCE/BAR EXAM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Ali Fazal
Conference Scholarship



Zainab Kahloon
Conference Scholarship



Hoda Katebi
Bar Exam Scholarship



Sarah Khan
Bar Exam Scholarship



Syeda Malliha
Bar Exam Scholarship



Eman Naga
Conference Scholarship



**Christopher Nevarez
Azdar**
Conference Scholarship

JUDICIAL INTERNS



Afaaf Amatullah



Ayesha Durrani



Ali Fazal



Yousef Ziyadi

2023 Recipients

FILM

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Shiraz Ahmed



Rafeeat Bishi



Zaid Hassan



Cayla Miller



Sumana Syed

GRANTEES



Tarek Albaba



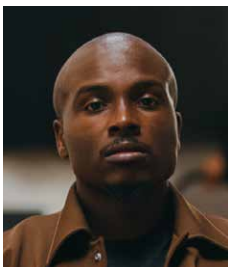
Arti Ishak



Sofian Khan



Shehrezad Maher



Morgan Mathews



Sarah Mokh



Mo Naqvi (w/ Abubakar Khan)

FESTIVAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Huda Abdul-Razzak
SXSW Festival Scholarship



Mustafa Eck
SXSW Festival Scholarship



Mahnoor Euceph
SXSW Festival Scholarship



Maryam Mir
Gotham EDU Internship &
SXSW Festival Scholarship

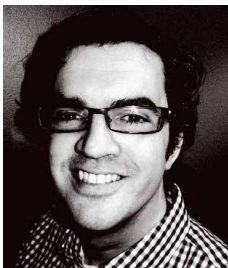


Ayesha Nawal Mubin
Gotham EDU Internship



Mohammed Saffouri
SXSW Festival Scholarship

RIFELION X ISF WRITERS ACCESS INITIATIVE



Jeff Chanley
(w/Faroukh Virani)



Halimah Iman Shaheed



Sarah Mostafa



Wahab Shayek



Sarwat Siddiqui



Faroukh Virani

2023 Recipients

MEDIA

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Sumya Abida
Writing



Nadir Al-Saidi
Communications &
Media Studies



Haajrah Gilani
Journalism



Safa Hijazi
Writing



Pashmina Khan
Journalism



Antonio Lopez
Writing



Fatima Moien
Journalism



Farah Qureshi
Communications &
Media Studies



Zaynah Waseem
Communications &
Media Studies

CONFERENCE STIPEND RECIPIENT



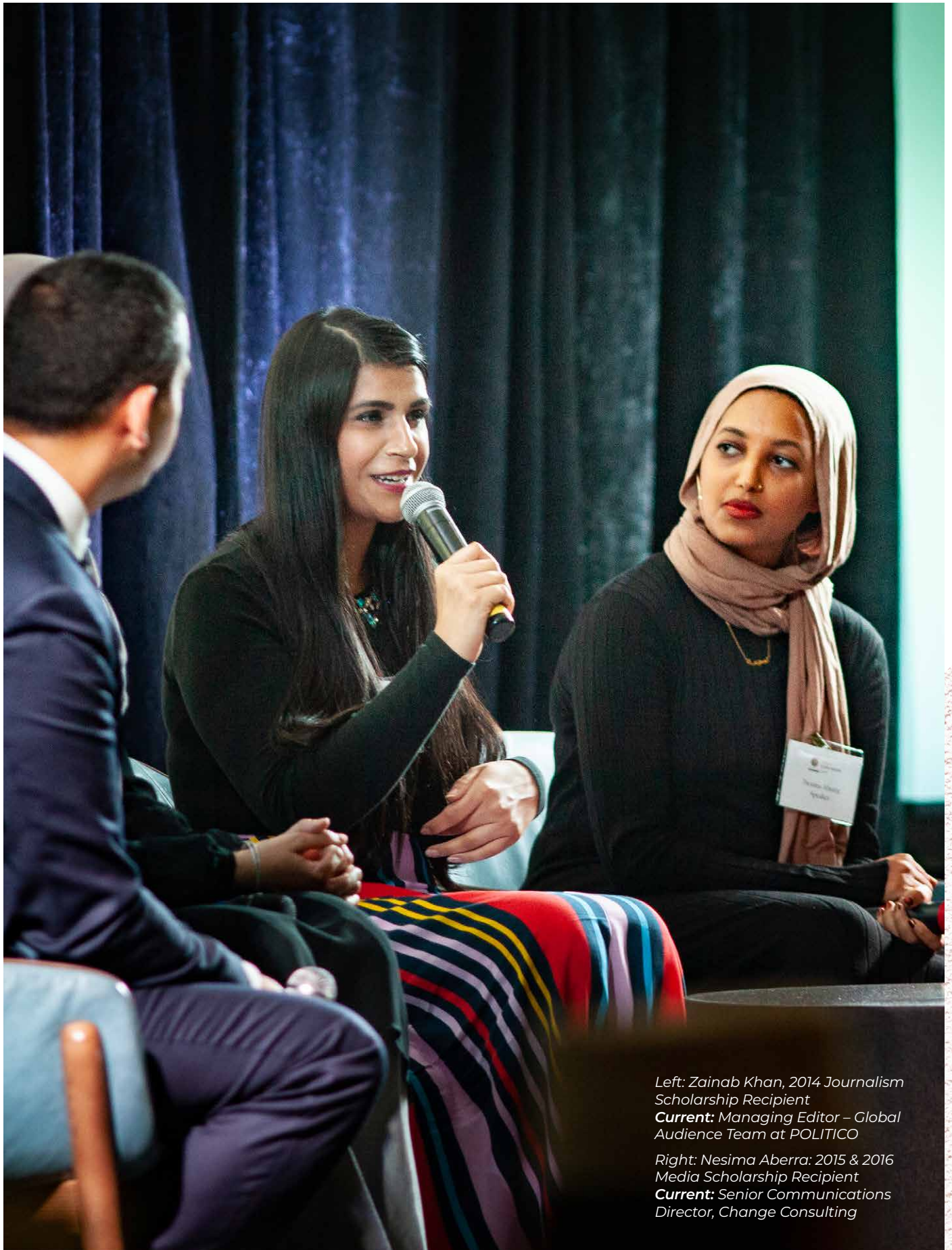
Lila Hassan

“I cannot be more grateful. With more Muslims in journalism we will start to see more narratives about us ... inshaAllah I hope to play a role in that.”

Omar Rashad

2021 Scholarship Recipient

Current position: Government Accountability Reporter, FresnoLand



Left: Zainab Khan, 2014 Journalism Scholarship Recipient

Current: *Managing Editor – Global Audience Team at POLITICO*

Right: Nesima Aberra: 2015 & 2016 Media Scholarship Recipient

Current: *Senior Communications Director, Change Consulting*

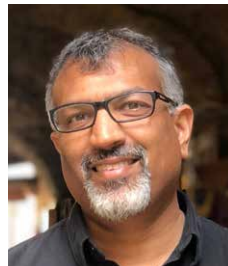
Board



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Founder & Board Chair



Ghada Alkiek
Board Member



Shahed Amanullah
Board Member



Mazen Asbahi, Esq.
Board Treasurer



Dr. Dalia Fahmy
Board Member



Ismail Mahomed
Board Secretary



Rhonda Roumani
Board Member

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Zahra Billoo

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Laila Al-Arian
Malika Bilal
Anser Hassan
Rhonda Roumani
Muniba Saleem

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Somayeh Nikooei
Executive Director



Iman Zawahry
Film Programs Director



Omar Elsayed
Program Manager



Aizzah Fatima
Artist Development & Partnerships Manager



Aisha Kishta
Administrative Coordinator



Tina Tran
Accountant



Shajuti Hossain
Legal Programs Advisor



Wardah Khalid
Senior Policy & Strategy Advisor



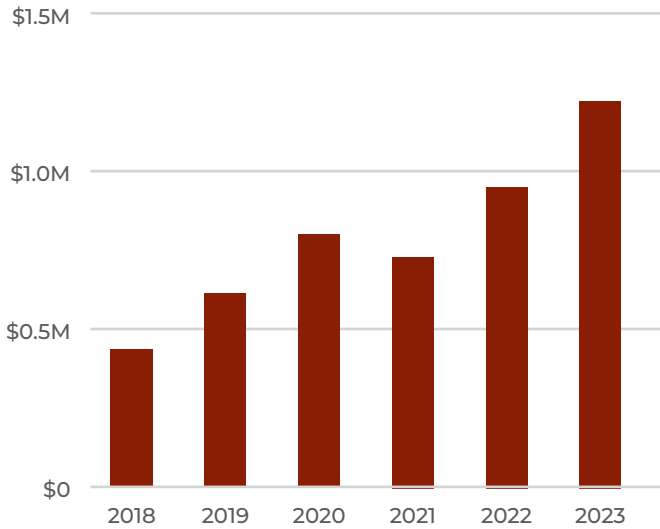
Osama Yaish
Consultant



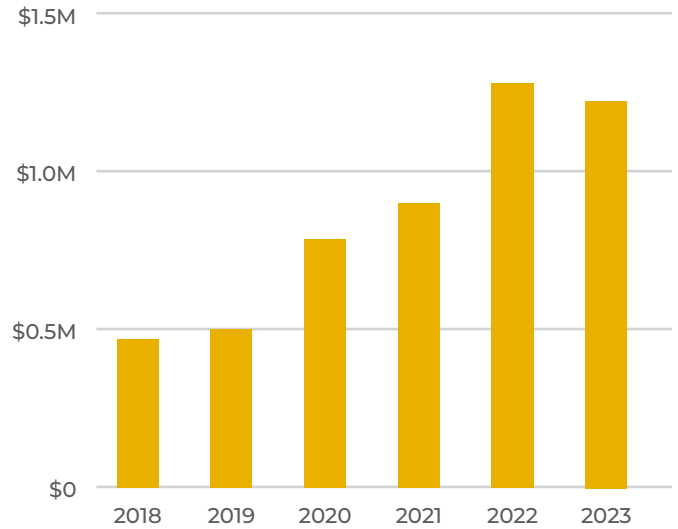
Aisha Ghori
DEIJ+ Advisor

Financials

DONATIONS

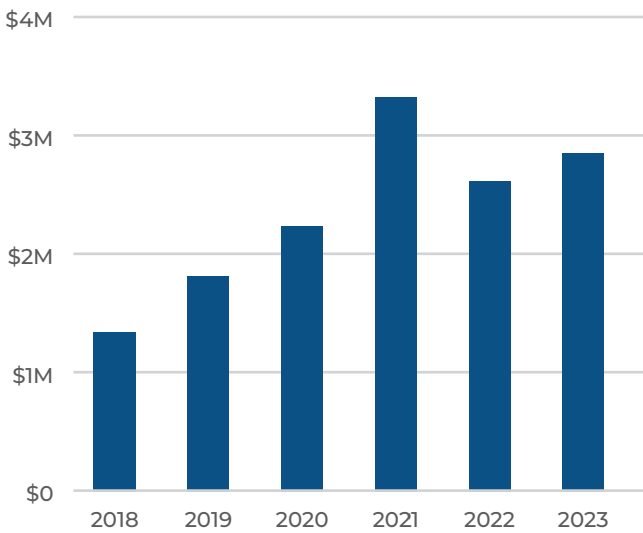


EXPENSES



ISF ENDOWMENT FUND

Building a sustainable financial future



Partner with us

When you donate to ISF, you help amplify the diverse American Muslim voices that assert our inclusion in society and uplift Muslim-centered representation. You empower legal minds to advocate for human rights, and political leaders who set policies to protect those rights. You help build a proactive, resilient future. With your support, our community thrives.

WAYS TO GIVE



Donate your stock or your old car to connect resources and maximize your gifts.



Participate in your employer's corporate matching program to double your gift and impact.



Become a sponsor or name a scholarship or internship that enables the work of a student, grantee, intern, fellow, or even one of our verticals. This is a great way to honor a loved one or connect your business to American Muslim civic engagement efforts.



Give a one-time gift to support our mission.



Set up a monthly contribution to transform your gift into a lasting impact.



Contribute to our endowment fund to build the future.



Support ISF with a gift by scanning above

Email us at contact@IslamicScholarshipFund.org
or call us at 650.995.6782



Islamic
SCHOLARSHIP
Fund

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Berkeley, CA 94704
650.995.6782



IslamicScholarshipFund



islamicscholarshipfund



ISFScholarships



islamic-scholarship-fund