



Building Leaders, Shaping Futures

PATHWAYS TO REPRESENTATION AND
INFLUENCE IN POLICY, PUBLIC INTEREST
LAW, MEDIA, AND FILM

ISF ANNUAL REPORT 2024

ISF

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Right to the left:
Aïdah Aliyah Rasheed,
Iman Zawahry, and
Morgan Mathews.
Accepting an Impact
Grant award for the film
Clara's Fruit at the 2024
ISF Banquet.

Message from the Executive Director



Dear ISF Community,

As I reflect on ISF's accomplishments in 2024, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering dedication of our community. Together, we have strengthened Muslim voices and leadership in critical spaces—public interest law, public policy, media, and film—ensuring our perspectives are heard and respected in a time when they are needed most.

In 2024, ISF awarded scholarships, internships, fellowships, and professional development opportunities to over 105 exceptional and talented individuals. These changemakers are not only excelling in their fields but also breaking barriers and driving justice, equity, and cultural understanding. Their achievements give us cause to remain hopeful as we seek to expand our work of creating influential career pathways and building power within our communities.

We must remain hopeful because, even as we celebrate the successes of our scholars, creatives, journalists, researchers, and activists, we are keenly aware of the challenges ahead. As I write these words, the socio-political climate in the U.S. is marked by rising Islamophobia and an uncertain future for marginalized communities. Representation in the spaces where decisions are made has never been more critical. ISF remains committed to building a proactive pipeline of leaders who will shape a more equitable and inclusive society.

As we navigate these turbulent times, your generosity and prayers fuel the resilience and progress of our work. Together, we are not just meeting the challenges of today: we are creating the leaders of tomorrow.

With heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Somayeh Nikooei', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Somayeh Nikooei
ISF Executive Director

Message from the ISF President

To Our ISF Supporters and Community Members,
As ISF moves forward into 2025 and beyond, our mission has never been more urgent—or more promising. The leaders we support today will be the decision-makers, storytellers, and advocates shaping the future of our democracy. Thanks to your generosity, ISF has grown into a powerful force for representation, helping students and young professionals forge influential career pathways.



In the coming year, we are committed to expanding our reach and deepening our impact. We will strengthen our Bridge Programs, ensuring that more students seamlessly transition from education to career success. We will invest in leadership development, equipping changemakers with the tools and networks to thrive in spaces where decisions are made. And we will grow our endowment fund, securing ISF’s long-term sustainability so we can continue this work for generations to come.

Although ISF is keenly aware of the current challenges facing our communities, we are committed to remaining proactive; this is the time to go further and invest even more in our young people. ISF is uniquely positioned to meet this moment, but we cannot do it alone.

As we embark on this journey, I thank you for your commitment to ISF, whether through your donations, time, or prayers. Your contributions are the foundation of our success. Together, we can ensure that Muslim voices lead where they have long been excluded and build a future where equity and inclusion are not ideals but realities.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hamid Rezapour'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Dr. Hamid Rezapour
ISF President

Theory of Change: Comprehensive Support for Lasting Impact

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.

ISF supports awardees at every career stage, ensuring they have the tools and opportunities to lead and succeed. Our unique incubator model provides funding, mentorship, career counseling, and job placement, as well as hands-on professional experience through internships and fellowships. This proactive approach serves as a direct intervention to combat Islamophobic policies and media narratives targeting our community.

Values & Beliefs

Religion, culture, and race should not be barriers to equity, justice, or opportunity.

- 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.

Impact strategy should rely on data, not guesswork.

- By targeting fields that shape society, we gather measurable evidence of impact and refine our approach to maximize results.

Muslim voices and perspectives belong in positions of power and influence.

- We position ourselves to take action before challenges arise, ensuring our voices have a platform when our communities come under threat.

Mission Statement

We aim to increase American Muslim representation in media and government and protect the interests of our communities by improving public policy and public opinion.



Hasnaa Mokhtar

2017 & 2018 Scholarship Recipient,
Executive Director, Wafa House



Colette Ghunim
Filmmaker,
2022 Film Grant
Award, 2024
Building Bridges
Fellow

ISF Fields of Influence

OUR SCHOLARS, INTERNS, FELLOWS, AND ALUMS break barriers across four intersecting fields: public policy, public interest law, media, and film. With ISF's support, these students and young professionals drive systemic change at every stage of their career trajectories.

ISF PROGRAMS

Public Policy

- Academic Scholarships
- Congressional Policy Internships (2-3 months)
- Congressional Policy Fellowships (9 months)
- Professional Development

Media

- Academic Scholarships
- Journalism Internships (2-3 months)
- Journalism Fellowships (12 months)
- Professional Development

Film

- Academic Scholarships
- Film Grants
- Film Fellowships
- Artist Development

Public Interest Law

- Academic Scholarships
- Judicial Internships
- Public Interest Law Fellowships
- Bar Exam Scholarships
- Conference Stipends



Sinthia Shabnam,
(Far right),
during her 2022
Congressional
Internship with
Rep. Ilhan Omar



PUBLIC POLICY

Shaping Equitable Systems

“One of the beauties of this scholarship is that you have the power to use your dollars and use your hearts to really invest in these beautiful leaders.”

—ANTONIO LÓPEZ
Mayor, City of East Palo Alto
Scholarship Recipient

DIVERSE REPRESENTATION in government and public policy is essential to crafting laws and regulations that address systemic inequities, protect marginalized communities, and reflect the diversity of our nation. American Muslim perspectives remain significantly underrepresented in these critical spaces. This gap perpetuates policies and practices that fail to consider the unique challenges our community faces. At the same time, Islamophobia in the U.S. has reached historic levels, with widespread misinformation and discriminatory narratives fueling fear and division. Having true diversity at the table is the only way to effectively counter these forces and their influence on policymaking.

By increasing American Muslim voices in policy spaces, ISF’s work strengthens our governing bodies at every level, as well as our ability to combat discrimination through expanding civil rights protections, addressing racial and religious profiling in law enforcement, and advocating for inclusive immigration policies that respect the dignity of all individuals. By diversifying policymaking spaces, our awardees become vital forces fighting for international human rights initiatives that align with values of justice and equality. Without these perspectives, local, state, and national policies are shaped by incomplete narratives, further marginalizing our communities.

ISF’s work to prepare and support aspiring leaders in public policy ensures that our awardees become key contributors to the policies that define our shared future.

These examples represent the kinds of early-career roles our alums leverage as stepping stones to leadership positions in government, advocacy organizations, think tanks, or nonprofit organizations working on public policy.

- Chief of Staff
- Policy Analyst
- Legislative Aide
- Legislative Assistant
- Congressional Intern
- Government Affairs Associate
- Public Policy Associate
- Advocacy Specialist
- Community Engagement Coordinator

- Program Analyst
- Policy Fellow
- Research Analyst
- Constituent Services
- Campaign Staffer
- Field Organizer
- Data Analyst
- Policy Writer
- Public Affairs Associate
- Legislative Coordinator

OUR ALUMS WORK IN AREAS OF...

Nonprofit Organizations

- Poligon
- American Muslim Community Foundation
- Muslim Counterpublics Lab
- Ali Leadership Institute

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
- Georgia House of Representatives
- General Assembly
- USAID



Zohair Alam
Congressional Intern 2018
Office of Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

To read about specific examples of ISF-supported work in the field of Public Policy, please see the ISF Impact section on page 36.

Advocating for Justice and Equity



Laila Ayub (middle)
2017 Law Scholarship Recipient.
Executive Director of Project ANAR

PUBLIC INTEREST attorneys, judges, and legal advocates have tremendous influence over our legal system and its provision of equal protection for all. Without meaningful representation, the law risks perpetuating bias and failing the communities it claims to protect. By investing in aspiring legal professionals, ISF has been building a network of attorneys and judges broadly committed to social justice, systemic change, and the defense of civil rights.

Our support of law students and early-career professionals in public interest law improves equitable access to legal representation and promotes diversity within the judicial system. ISF alums are positioned to challenge discriminatory practices, such as racial and religious profiling, and promote equal treatment under the law. They are equipped to address the disproportionate targeting of religious communities in the enforcement of counterterrorism policies, to promote workplace equity, and to fight for immigrant rights.

ISF's support also ensures that these leaders have the resources and networks to grow in their careers and make a lasting impact—building a legal system that upholds justice, equity, and dignity for all.

“It means the world to me ... that there are people out there who are invested in the next generation of Muslim American leadership, Muslim American civil rights workers, and people who are fighting to make this world and country a more just and welcoming place. This scholarship has made a lot possible for me.”

—FAROOQ CHAUDHRY, ATTORNEY
Scholarship Recipient



Nicole Fauster
 2017 & 2018 Law Scholarship Recipient. Community Advocacy Director at CAIR National

These examples represent the kinds of early-career roles our awardees leverage as stepping stones to leadership positions in legal nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and civil and criminal courts.

- Public Interest Attorney
- Judge Pro Tem
- Civil Rights Attorney
- Immigration Attorney
- Environmental Justice Attorney
- Housing Rights Attorney
- Public Defender
- Human Rights Advocate
- Nonprofit Legal Counsel

- Policy Counsel
- Judicial Law Clerk
- Legal Fellow
- Advocacy Coordinator
- Litigation Associate
- Community Legal Advocate
- Legal Program Associate
- Federal Law Clerk
- National Security Legal Fellow

- OUR ALUMS WORK IN AREAS OF...**
- Nonprofits and Legal Institutions
- University of California Irvine Law School
 - Human Rights Watch
 - National Women's Law Center
 - Project ANAR
 - Palestine Legal

- Government and Courts
- New York City Council
 - Michigan Court of Appeals
 - Committee for Public Counsel Services, MA
 - U.S. Court of Appeals (CA, NY, CT)
 - California Department of Social Services
 - U.S. Department of Justice

To read about specific examples of ISF-supported work in the field of Public Interest Law, please see the ISF Impact section on page 32.



FILM

Amplifying Voices, Changing Narratives

IN THE U.S., filmmaking is a notoriously difficult field to break into for artists from marginalized communities. ISF is opening doors by supporting talented filmmakers who tell authentic stories and reflect the diverse experiences and contributions of the American Muslim community. Our work ensures that emerging professionals across the film industry have the support they need to challenge stereotypes, amplify underrepresented narratives, and use the power of storytelling to drive cultural change.

For decades, the portrayal of Muslims in film has been largely limited to stereotypes that reinforce Islamophobia and deepen cultural misunderstandings. Authentic representation counters these narratives, fostering empathy and greater understanding among audiences and inspiring broader discussions about identity, human rights, and the common good we all seek.

By investing in emerging writers, directors, and others who help produce and promote films of all kinds, ISF is helping to fill gaps in mainstream storytelling and highlight the nuanced, diverse realities of Muslim lives. These stories have the capacity to enrich the artistic landscape while promoting social change, building bridges between communities, and ensuring that cinema serves as a platform for justice, equity, and shared humanity.

Samir M. Chiali

Co-Producer + Cinematographer of
A Town Called Victoria (2017 Film Grant)

“It has been so long since I have felt this safe and cared for in a film environment, and I feel more inspired than ever to dream big and keep doing the work. ISF has changed my life in so many ways. I hope to continue learning from and being with you all for many years to come.”

—SAMINA SAIFEE
Film Grant Recipient

These examples represent the kinds of early-career roles our awardees leverage as stepping stones as they pursue influential roles and opportunities in the field of film.

- Sound Designer
- Script Supervisor
- Location Scout
- Post-Production Coordinator
- Visual Effects
- Film Marketing Coordinator
- Film Festival Coordinator
- Distribution
- Documentary Researcher
- Animation
- Cinematographer

Iman Zawahry
2009 Scholarship Recipient
and Film Programs Director

- Television Director (Short Films, Documentaries, or Features)
- Screenwriter
- Producer
- Film Editor
- Production Assistant
- Assistant Director
- Art Department
- Casting



OUR FILMMAKERS REPRESENTED ISF AT FESTIVALS SUCH AS

- Tribeca
- CAAM
- International Documentary Association Conference
- Sundance
- SXSW



Akram Shibly
2017 & 2018
Scholarship Recipient
and 2024 Building
Bridges Fellow

To read about specific examples of ISF-supported work in the field of Film, please see the ISF Impact section on page 22.



MEDIA

Elevating Public Discourse

GREATER REPRESENTATION of American Muslim voices in the media helps ensure that our stories are told with authenticity and respect. By supporting aspiring journalists, writers, and media professionals, ISF creates opportunities for equitable access to the media landscape and nurtures careers so they can report on issues affecting marginalized communities, challenge harmful stereotypes, and amplify voices that are too often silenced.

Broad representation in media is vital to fostering informed public discourse and countering widespread misinformation, but for decades, mainstream media has perpetuated biased narratives about Muslims, fueling Islamophobia and skewing public perception about Islam. ISF-supported journalists and other media professionals disrupt these patterns by producing nuanced, accurate reporting that builds understanding and bridges cultural divides.

By investing in young reporters and journalists, ISF ensures that the news that influences public opinion reflects the diversity of our society. We invest in journalists who advance social justice, combat misinformation, improve media literacy, and advocate for marginalized communities, ultimately creating a more balanced and civil society. ISF's commitment to cultivating ethical journalism amplifies our collective voice and transforms media into a tool for equity and progress.

Left in photo: **Zainab Khan**
2014 Journalism Scholarship Recipient.
Managing Editor – Global Audience
Team at POLITICO

Right in photo: **Nesima Aberra**
2015 & 2016 Media Scholarship
Recipient. VP Digital & Content,
Change Consulting

These examples represent the kinds of early-career roles our awardees leverage as stepping stones as they pursue influential roles and opportunities in the field of media.

- News Reporter
- Broadcast Journalist
- Investigative Reporter
- Multimedia Journalist
- Assistant Editor
- Copywriter
- Social Media Coordinator
- Digital Content Producer
- Photojournalist
- Videographer

- Podcast Producer
- Audio Editor
- Fact-Checker
- Local News Anchor
- Assignment Editor
- Features Writer
- Editorial Assistant
- Research Assistant
- Public Affairs Correspondent
- Editor-in-Chief

RECENT ISF ALUM AFFILIATIONS

- 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
- Mondoweiss



Jamil Kochai
2015, 2017, & 2018 Media Scholarship Recipient. Author and Assistant Professor at California State University – Sacramento

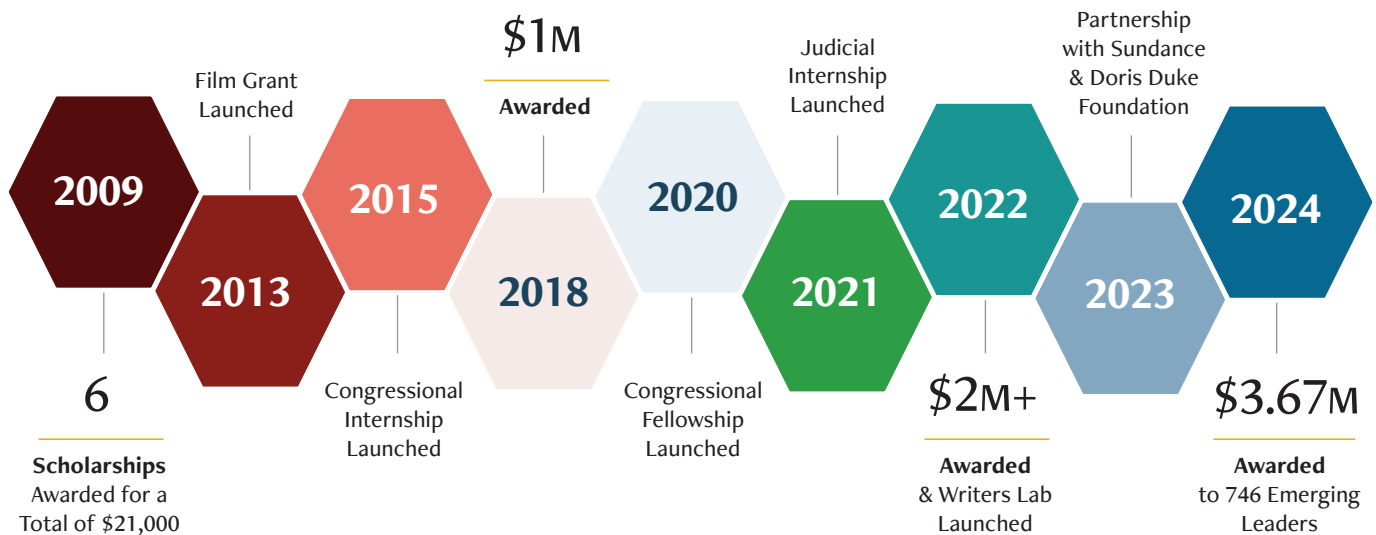
To read about specific examples of ISF-supported work in the field of Media, please see the ISF Impact section on page 28.

Transforming Lives, Shaping Society

ISF'S HOLISTIC SUPPORT MODEL extends far beyond the individuals we serve. Our theory of change relies on the premise that, to create lasting social and systemic change, we must invest in individuals and empower them as changemakers.

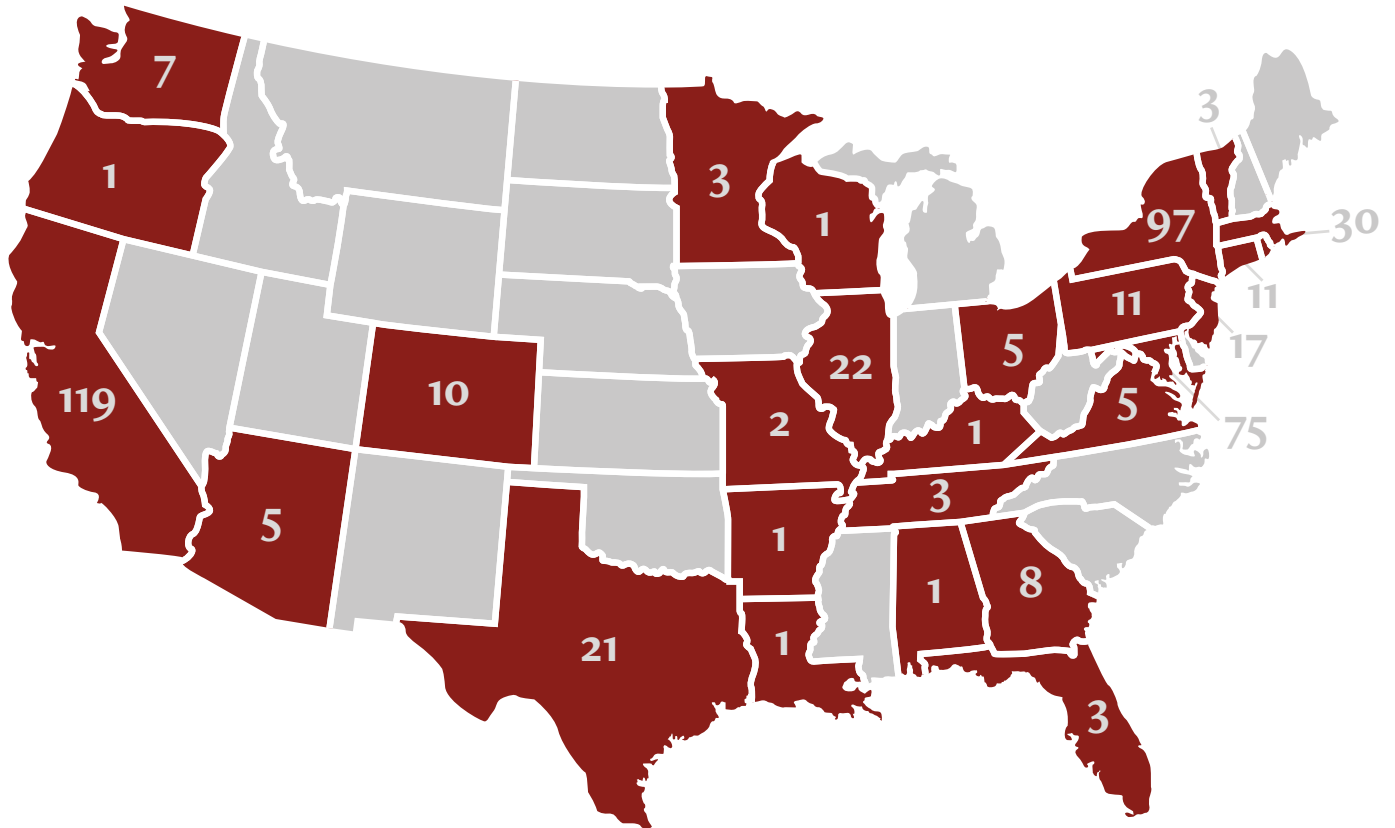
By supporting students and early-career professionals in the fields of public interest law, public policy, media, and film, ISF not only opens doors for underrepresented voices but also empowers them as systemic and cultural changemakers who shape the narratives, policies, and institutions that define our nation.

OUR HISTORY



GEOGRAPHIC REACH

ISF alum voices represent communities from across the U.S.



ISF has awarded
over **\$3.67 Million**
in 746 prestigious awards
to 661 unique recipients
since our launch in 2009.

ISF REACH AND IMPACT

\$3.67M

Invested,
Empowering future
leaders since 2009

746

Awards Granted,
Building change
in key fields

661

Emerging Leaders
Shaping public
opinion and policy

SUCCESS METRICS

ISF by the Numbers

Since 2009, our alums have achieved a 100% graduation rate.

88% go on to work in their chosen fields of study, compared to the national average of 26%.

AWARDS BY FIELDS OF INFLUENCE SINCE 2009

AWARDS, INTERNSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS

141 | Film

112 | News/Media

264 | Public Policy

154 | Public Interest Law

75 | Related Fields

UNIQUE RECIPIENTS

125 | Film

105 | News/Media

246 | Public Policy

126 | Public Interest Law

59 | Related Fields

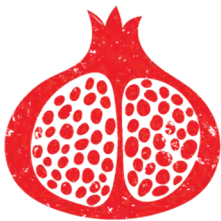
“Simply having a seat at the table can sometimes be symbolic and may not always translate into the meaningful impact needed to protect our interests and advocate for change. It is essential that we work tirelessly to ensure our voices are not only heard but also respected and acted upon in shaping policies and narratives that affect our communities.”

—SOMAYEH NIKOOEI
ISF Executive Director

ISF Writers Lab
Fellows 2023



Nonprofits Founded by ISF Alums



PROJECT
ANAR

AFGHAN NETWORK FOR ADVOCACY & RESOURCES



AMPLIFYING MUSLIM AMERICAN
VOICES IN CONGRESS



Opportunities and Achievements

Whether by holding institutions accountable, protecting civil rights, sharing Muslim experiences, or informing the public, ISF awardees and alums drive cultural understanding, challenge stereotypes, and advance justice in profound and measurable ways. Their stories demonstrate the extraordinary results of nurturing diverse leaders with the vision and skills to protect and strengthen our inclusive democracy.

Achievements in Film

ISF HAS SUPPORTED OVER 125 FILMMAKERS THROUGH 141 FINANCIAL AND MENTORSHIP AWARDS.

\$158k

Awarded to 45 film students

\$625k

Awarded in 71 film grants

200+

Films Produced by our awardees



In 2024, ISF...

Awarded 10 film grants worth \$115,000. This includes our inaugural Palestinian filmmaker grant.

Awarded 5 film scholarship recipients \$19,000 in awards.

Nijla Mu'min
2016 and 2022
Film Grantee

Major 2024 Milestones in Film

In 2024, ISF...

- Sent 37 filmmakers to Sundance, SXSW, and Tribeca Film Festivals, and the International Documentary Association Conference
- Partnered with Gotham EDU to fund student attendance at a six-week summer networking and skills program
- Co-created a year-long residency with Sundance in which six Fellows received skills training, industry connections, script reviews, and mentorship
- Brought 12 Sundance/Building Bridges Fellows to Hawaii for an intensive industry skill-building event at the Doris Duke Museum in Shangri-La
- Screened a shorts anthology at SXSW, with over 100 Muslims working in front of and behind the camera
- Awarded ten film grants worth \$115k



Ali Kareem
2013 Film Scholarship
Recipient, 2015 Film
Grant Recipient

A Selection of Film Awards Received by ISF Filmmakers

- International Documentary Association – Best Short Doc Nomination
- 40 Under 40 Award 2023 – Arab American Foundation – Washington D.C.
- CAAM Fest Audience Award
- SXSW Special Jury Mention
- IDA Award for Best Documentary Series
- WON 2 Canadian Screen Awards:
 - Best Direction in a Feature Film, Fawzia Mirza Director’s Guild of Canada
 - Canada’s Top Ten TIFF
- Jury Prize Winner | Social Media Impact Awards
- Best Actress | NBC Universal Short Film Festival 2015
- Emmy Award
- Webby Awards
- Winner – Fall Production Grant – Doha Film Institute (DFI)
- Winner – Best International Short Film Comedy – Best of New Filmmakers LA Awards
- Winner – Best Director – Muslim International Film Festival
- Grand Jury Award – Best Screenplay – American Black Film Festival
- 25 New Faces of Independent Film – Filmmaker Magazine
- Princess Grace Recipient
- Peabody Award Recipient
- Student Academy Award

A Selection of Film Festival Acceptance and Screenings by ISF Filmmakers

- San Francisco Film Festival
- DOC NYC
- The New Yorker
- Chicago International
- BAM Cinema Fest
- CAAMfest
- PALM SPRINGS
- New Orleans FF
- PBS Indie Lens
- Toronto International Film Festival
- Official Selection – Mosquers Film Festival Edmonton ‘23
- Slamdance Film Festival
- Austin Film Festival
- Atlanta Film Festival
- Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival
- Big Sky Documentary Film Festival
- SXSW
- American Black Film Festival
- Blackstar Film Festival
- London/BFI Film Festival
- Urbanworld Film Festival
- Pan African Film festival
- AFI Fest
- Bentonville Film Festival
- Tribeca
- American Pavilion at Cannes
- San Diego Comic-Con

1,362+

Films by ISF recipients and alums have received **more than 1,362 awards.**

1,644+

Films by ISF recipients and alums have been screened at **over 1,644 festivals.**

500

ISF recipients and alums have participated in nearly 500 fellowships, labs, and residencies

\$115k

Awarded 10 film grants worth \$115,000

A Selection of Film Fellowships, Labs, and Residencies Attended by ISF Filmmakers

- SFFILM Artist Residency
- The New Harmony Project, Writer-in-Residence
- Bernheim Artist-in-Residence
- COLLIDER Artist-in-Residence
- Ravi Screenwriters Lab Fellow
- Gotham Week
- Sundance x ISF Building Bridges Fellow
- Warner Bros. Discovery Access Directors Program
- Disney TV Writers Fellowship
- ISF Writers Lab
- Building Bridges Fellowship
- Sundance Screenwriter's Intensive
- Gotham Week Project Market
- Hamptons International Film Festival Screenwriter's Lab
- Pillars Fellowship
- Guggenheim Fellow
- Film Independent Producing Lab
- Gotham/Rotterdam Producing Lab
- Muslim List's Blacklist
- The Squad, Mentee, DGA Women's Steering Committee
- TIFF/Maison Birks Women Filmmaker Honorees
- TIFF Screenwriter Lab
- TIFF Filmmaker Lab
- TIFF Share Her Journey Fellow
- Yall And Laughter Lab Winner
- Pew Artist Fellowship from Pew Center for Arts & Heritage
- Netflix Non-Fiction Directing and Producing Fellowship
- IF/Then x Hulu Lab
- NBCu Original Voices Accelerator Fellowship, NBC Universal
- Hulu/Kartemquin Accelerator
- Obama Fellow
- Sundance Episodic Lab
- Project Involve Fellow for Film Independent
- MPAC Black Muslim TV Writers Lab
- Sundance Institute Music & Sound Design Lab
- IFP Narrative Lab



Featured Streaming Platforms of ISF Supported Films

- Kanopy
- Amazon Prime
- Al Jazeera Documentary
- The Criterion Channel
- Netflix
- Omeleto
- PBS
- Arogo
- Vimeo Staff Pick
- The New Yorker
- XFinity
- PBS Independent Lens
- Films streaming on airlines
- AMC+

Faroukh Virani

2013 Film Scholarship Recipient.
Editor – WALKER Season 1– 4
at CBS Studios / CW



WHERE ARE ISF FILM ALUMS WORKING NOW

- Netflix
- Hulu
- Amazon
- HBO Max
- Riot Games
- Imagine
- CBS
- OWN
- Disney
- EA
- Epic Games
- PBS

- Sony
- Mindhouse
- Nat Geo
- Apple TV +
- History Channel
- Discovery
- Fox Business
- 20th Television
- Freeform



Tarek Albaba

2016 & 2024 Film Grant Recipient

30 Seconds: Portrait of a Hate Crime



Film Awardee In Action

Tarek Albaba's film *36 Seconds: Portrait of a Hate Crime* profoundly captures the devastating ripple effects of hate and Islamophobia. The documentary has impacted viewers across the country at university screenings, film festivals, community screenings, and online, spreading the message to audiences that we must demand greater attention, accountability, discourse, and push for more for more effective hate crime policy and legislation.

Watch Films Made by ISF Grantees



Scan the QR code to watch the films, or visit islamicscholarshipfund.org/film-posters

FILM

2024 FILM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

1. Aisha Akorede, Emerson College
2. Daanish Ahmad, New York University
3. Dina Amin, California Institute of the Arts
4. Kareem Soussan, Chapman University
5. Shazia Mian, UCLA



2024 FILM GRANT RECIPIENTS

1. Amar Chebib, *J is for Jihad*
2. Aya Hamdan, *Borders*
3. Fatima Wardy, *White Musk*
4. Mary-Elizabeth Esquibel, *White Musk*
5. Maryam Mir, *Borders*
6. Michael Steves, *Autum*
7. Mike Elsherif, *Goodbye Habibi*
8. Morgan Mathews, *Clara's Fruit*
9. Mustafa Rony Zeno, *J is for Jihad*
10. Omar Al Dakheel, *Everybody's Watching*
11. Rafi Jahangir, *Autum*
12. Saif Jaan, *Witness*
13. Simi Sonubi, *Last Time to See You*
14. Yumna Patel, *Truce*



2024 BUILDING BRIDGES FELLOWS

1. Mithra B. Alavi, *Arranged*
2. Aqsa Altaf, *Sonapur*
3. Khaula Malik, *Alien Nation*
4. Kausar Mohammed, *Exorsisters*
5. Fatima Wardy, *White Musk*
6. Habib Yazdi, *When Pluto Was A Planet*



Achievements in Media



Nargis Rahman
2024 Media
Scholarship Recipient

SINCE 2009, ISF HAS GRANTED 112 MEDIA AND JOURNALISM SCHOLARSHIPS TO 105 UNIQUE RECIPIENTS

51 | Journalism
awards granted

33 | Media
awards granted

28 | English &
Literature
awards granted

Major 2024 Milestones in Media

In 2024, ISF...

- Launched a new journalism fellowship to support aspiring journalists with a stipend, mentorship, and access to journalism conventions and conferences
- Awarded 11 media scholarship recipients \$43,000 in awards

WHAT ARE ISF MEDIA ALUMS DOING NOW?

- 6 Published Authors
- 21 Reporters
- 12 Media Producers
- 3 Editors
- 26 University Students
- 23 Related Fields
- 35 ISF Alums Are Working in Newsrooms

Sawsan Morrar
2016 Media Scholarship
Recipient, Education
Reporter





**ISF alums
have generated
3,000+ articles,**
shedding light on
crucial issues that
impact marginalized
communities like ours.

Alaa Mostafa
2019 and 2020
Media Scholarship
Recipient

Media Awardee In Action

Awardee Alaa Mostafa, a journalist for KQED Public Radio, uncovered the spread of misinformation about a widely prescribed drug. Her investigative report brought the issue to light, pressuring the FDA to revise the drug's labeling. This change not only safeguarded public health but also demonstrated how accurate, ethical reporting can drive institutional accountability and protect communities.

“ISF has become a major player for the Muslim American community as we work toward representation in the media. This organization offers guidance and support for aspiring journalists, as well as a well-connected network for careerists looking for their next move. I truly believe ISF will take our media representation to the next level in the coming years.”

—REEM NASR
News associate at CNBC and 2013 Scholarship Recipient

MEDIA

2024 MEDIA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

1. Aman Rahman, Stony Brook University
2. Amber Alirahi, Pace University
3. Antonio Lopez, Stanford University
4. Diba Mohtasham, Columbia University
5. Mariam Ali, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
6. Nargis Rahman, Wayne State University
7. Noor Al-Samarrai, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
8. Suha Musa, New York University
9. Umiemah Farrukh, Columbia University
10. Zoya Altabaa, California State University, Sacramento
11. Hasibeh Haddabeh (not pictured), Columbia University



2024 JOURNALISM FELLOW

Sarah Raza,
Washington Post intern,
Stanford University



Achievements in Public Interest Law

SINCE 2009, ISF HAS GRANTED AWARDS TO 126 UNIQUE RECIPIENTS

127

Academic Scholarships

9

Bar Scholarships

9

Conference Stipends

9

Judicial Internships



Noor Hasan
2018 Law Scholarship Recipient

ISF has placed nine judicial interns

with state and federal judges, giving them access to a broad range of legal careers, including public interest pathways.

67%

Of ISF law recipients have finished their education and are working as public interest attorneys

Major 2024 Milestones in Law

In 2024, ISF...

- Placed four judicial interns with state and federal judges
- Awarded 18 law scholarship recipients totaling \$105,000 in awards
- Awarded six bar exam scholarships to graduating law students. All six passed the bar exam in the same year



**Christopher
Nevarez Azdar**
2022, 2023
Law Scholarship
Recipient, 2024
Bar Scholarship
Recipient

WHAT ARE ISF LAW ALUMS DOING NOW?

- 19 Work in Public Service
- 24 Work in Nonprofit Legal Services
- 28 Are Students
- 33 Work in For-Profit Legal Firms



Public Interest Law Awardee In Action

Awardee Laila Ikram, an appellate attorney and judge pro tem, argued a landmark case before the Arizona Supreme Court that expanded defendants' self-representation rights at sentencing. This legal victory grants greater autonomy to defendants across Arizona and strengthens the principles of fairness and justice in the courtroom.

"The Islamic Scholarship Fund (ISF) played a pivotal role in my journey through law school by providing financial support and affirming the importance of Muslim representation in the legal field. Their investment in students like me has a ripple effect, empowering us to serve our communities and advocate for justice. I am deeply grateful for ISF's commitment to fostering future leaders, and I hope to pay it forward by supporting the next generation of scholars."

—LAILA IKRAM
Appellate Attorney and Judge Pro Tem

LAW

2024 LAW SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

1. Adam Soliman, Georgetown University
2. Ali Fazal, Washington & Lee University School of Law
3. Dina Sayedahmed, Rutgers University
4. Esma Karakas, American University Washington College of Law
5. Hamna Chaudhry, Villanova University
6. Ibrahim Bharmal, Harvard Law
7. Josue Rodriguez, University of Colorado Law School
8. Kosar Kosar, Yale Law School
9. Lara Hafez, Stanford University
10. Lena Ghrama, CUNY School of Law
11. Malika Kounkourou, Harvard Law School
12. Merima Tricic, University of California, Irvine Law
13. Nellie Ghosheh, Washington University in St. Louis
14. Noor Khaled, Yale Law School
15. Nooran Alhamdan, UC Law San Francisco
16. Razi Hashmi, George Washington University
17. Reema Doleh, Harvard Law School
18. Shanzeh Faheem, UC Berkeley



2024 BAR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

All six passed the bar exam.

1. Aasha Shaik, Yale Law School
2. Christopher Nevarez Azdar, Chicago-Kent College of Law
3. Malak Afaneh, UC Berkeley Law
4. Masooma Haider, Harvard Law School
5. Shaheed Ansari, City University of New York School of Law
6. Zainab Bhindarwala, University of Michigan Law



2024 JUDICIAL INTERNS

1. Adam Soliman, Georgetown University, Judge Michael A. Shipp – U.S. District Court for the District of NJ
2. Fatimah Eighazawi, Case Western Reserve University School of Law, Judge Charles Flemming – U.S. District Court for the District of Northern Ohio



3. Sakina Bhatti, Penn State Law, Judge Michael A. Shipp – U.S. District Court for the District of NJ
4. Shahnur Said, Berkeley Law, Judge Myrna Pérez – Second Court of Appeals



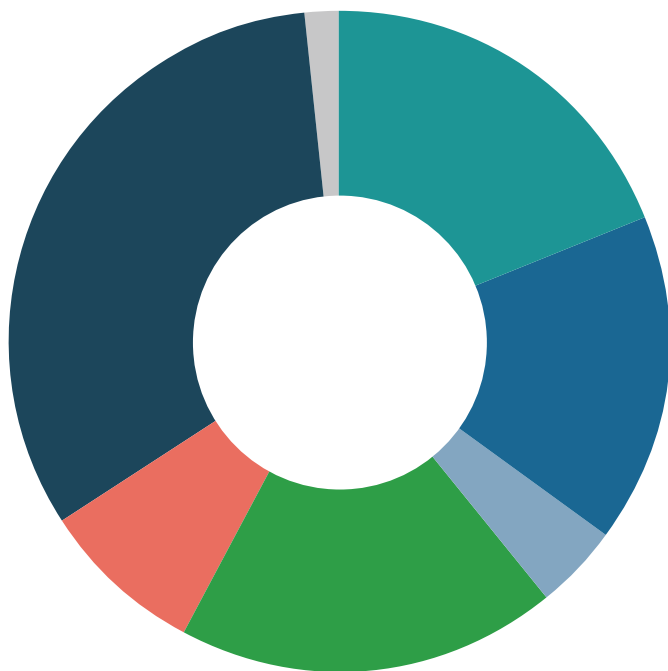
Achievements in Public Policy



Ruwa Romman
2018 Scholarship Recipient and Georgia State
Representative for House District 97

Since 2009, ISF has supported recipients with 264 policy scholarships, congressional internships, and fellowships, presented to 246 unique recipients.

ISF has placed 90 aspiring policymakers into internships on Capitol Hill, 42 in the past two years alone. These internships open the doors for policy-related careers, introduce interns to a network of policymakers, and provide on-the-job experience working with congressional representatives and staffers.



- 86 Congressional Interns
- 43 Political Science Scholarships
- 50 Public Policy Scholarships
- 49 International Studies/International Relations Scholarships
- 21 Anthropology/Cultural Studies/Sociology Scholarships
- 11 Middle Eastern/Near Eastern Studies Scholarships
- 4 Congressional Fellows

Major 2024 Milestones in Public Policy

In 2024, ISF...

- Placed 13 aspiring policymakers into internships on Capitol Hill
- Launched our Policy Bridge Program which bridges the gap between education and job placement
- Placed our fourth congressional fellow into the Office of Rep. Pramila Jayapal
- Awarded 22 policy scholarship recipients \$91,000 in awards

ISF created the nation's first and only Muslim Congressional Policy Fellowship program on Capitol Hill and has placed four fellows in congressional offices.

WHAT ARE ISF POLICY ALUMS DOING NOW?

- 18 in Government Positions
- 9 Attorneys
- 16 Policy/Research
- 15 Nonprofits/Advocacy
- 21 Education/Academia
- 23 For-Profit
- 58 Students
- 7 Related Fields



Dr. Maha Hilal
ISF 2012 Scholarship Recipient, Founder/ Executive Director of Muslim Counterpublic Lab



Professor Youssef Chouhoud
2013 & 2015 Policy Scholarship
Recipient

Public Policy Awardee In Action

Alum Dr. Youssef Chouhoud, professor of political science at Christopher Newport University, authored the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding's report *Banking While Muslim*, which shed light on the disproportionate challenges American Muslims face when executing financial transactions. The report got the attention of White House staffers, and Senator Warren and Congresswoman Omar cited the report in the letters they co-led to the CEOs of major U.S. banks.

POLICY

2024 POLICY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

1. Abou Ibrahim-Biangoro, Johns Hopkins University
2. Ajarat Bada, Johns Hopkins University
3. Aminah Gassama, Johns Hopkins University
4. Anaum Virani, Johns Hopkins University
5. Bilal Khan, Georgetown University
6. Bilal Nadeem, Stanford University
7. Bushra Amiwala, Northwestern University
8. Butheina Hamdah, University of Toledo
9. Daiyan Zakaria, The University of Texas at Austin
10. Donya Lechqer, Georgetown University
11. Duaa Faquih, Vanderbilt University
12. Eshal Warsi, University of Houston
13. Isra Qadri, University of Maryland College Park
14. Mariam Keita, George Washington University
15. Mira Tarabeine, Johns Hopkins University
16. Mohammed Shakibnia, University of Oregon
17. Qadria Naji, Duke University
18. Sabahat Nabihah, University of California, Davis
19. Wajiha Mekki, University of Alabama - Birmingham
20. Yasmeen Azam, UC Berkeley
21. Zahra Hannan, Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs
22. Zeytun Ahmed, Johns Hopkins University



2024 SPRING POLICY INTERNS

1. Haadiya Ahmed, Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12)
2. Imaan Shikoh, Rep. Ilhan Omar (MN-5)
3. Irshad Molla, Sen. Michael Bennet (CO)
4. Sarah O'Neill, Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (NY-8)



2024 FALL POLICY INTERNS

1. Juveriah Hussain, Rep. Nydia Velázquez (NY-7th)
2. Marwa Elessawy, Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12)
3. Sumayya Khan, Rep. Sydney Kamlager (CA-30)



2024 SUMMER POLICY INTERNS

1. Abhinav Kumar, Rep. Cori Bush (MO-1)
2. Ferdous Dehqan, Rep. Andre Carson (IN-7)
3. Kaashif Shaikh, Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12)
4. Maahum Jan, APCO
5. Zainab Olaniyan, Sen. Michael Bennet (CO)



2024 CONGRESSIONAL POLICY FELLOW

Shaezmina Khan, Rep. Pramila Jayapal (WA-7)



YOU CAN'T HIDE
THE OCCUPATION



YOU CAN'T HIDE
THE OCCUPATION



Omar Shakir
ISF 2010 and 2011 Scholarship
Recipient - Director of Israel and
Palestine at Human Rights Watch

ISF Blueprint for Change

ISF'S proven model drives change by investing in talented, passionate individuals, equipping them with the skills to shape policy and culture, and following their career journeys. This strategic, long-term approach creates a multiplier effect:

Every career we launch strengthens the civic fabric of our nation and advances justice, equity, and inclusion for all.



PROJECTIONS FOR 2030

Over the next five years, ISF will empower hundreds more leaders to drive systemic change across key decision-making spaces.

145

More Attorneys
and legal advocates fighting for equal rights

80

More Journalists
writing and reporting in newsrooms

200

More Filmmakers
bringing our stories to screens, big and small

282

More Students
and young professionals shaping policy on Capitol Hill

Upcoming programs, partnerships, or focus areas

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, ISF will focus on scaling its programs to provide even greater opportunities for emerging leaders in policy, public interest law, media, and film. Our goal is to expand both access and impact, equipping a growing number of aspiring changemakers with the resources, mentorship, and guidance they need to thrive in these critical fields.

A central part of this vision is bridging the gap between education, internships, fellowships, and influential careers. ISF is committed to supporting students as they transition from higher education to professional opportunities and ultimately into full-time roles where they can make a lasting difference. By creating clear pathways and offering robust, tailored support, we aim to significantly increase the number of leaders from underrepresented communities who enter and excel in these key fields.

At the heart of this effort are the ISF Bridge Programs, which will serve as the cornerstone of our work for years to come. These programs will provide professional development, mentorship, and career placement services, ensuring that the leaders we support are not only prepared to enter their chosen fields but also positioned to succeed and lead.

We are also proud to launch a new Public Interest Legal Fellowship designed to support recent law school graduates who are pursuing non-profit legal careers. This fellowship will provide a strong stepping-stone for new attorneys to access influential public interest opportunities focused on equity and civil rights.

This strategic focus reflects ISF's unwavering commitment to empowering future leaders, fostering diversity, and driving systemic change in the sectors that shape public perception, policy, and justice. Together, we will continue to build a legacy of impact and inclusion.



The Future of the ISF Endowment Fund

A key priority for ISF in the coming years is the strategic growth of our endowment fund. Our vision is to build the endowment to a level that fully offsets 100% of our operating costs, ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of our mission and programs.

Achieving this goal will provide a stable, predictable source of funding, freeing us to focus entirely on expanding our programs, deepening our impact, and serving our communities. With a strong endowment, we can future-proof our work, enabling us to innovate, take bold steps, and respond to emerging needs without the constant pressure of operational fundraising.

We are dedicated to working closely with our donors, supporters, and advisors to turn this vision into reality. Every contribution to the endowment helps secure a foundation for lasting impact and organizational self-sufficiency. This strategic focus underscores our commitment to building a sustainable and thriving ISF—one that will continue to uplift and empower leaders, transform communities, and drive systemic change for generations to come.

Funders and Program Sponsors

FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATE PARTNERS



ISF 2024 PROGRAM SPONSORS

Abdul Sattar Rydhan Memorial Scholarship

Ali M. Bhat Scholarship

Afshin Riaz Future Leaders Scholarship

Afzal Family Foundation Scholarship

Alassar Family Scholarship

Asmina and Arif Khan Family Scholarship

David Dobbins Memorial Scholarship

Dr. Ayub Kundi Memorial Scholarship

F. Basma Scholarship

Fikry and Dorria Fahmy Memorial Scholarship

Ghulam and Arifa Azad Family Scholarship

Guillen-Omar Family Scholarship

Hasan-Brown Family Scholarship

Imam Family Fund

Iqbal Family Charitable Fund

Iqbal Family Scholarship for Media & Journalism

Kosar and Javed Mohammed Scholarship

Linda Sarsour Courage and Leadership Scholarship

Mahmoud Abdelmageed Memorial Scholarship

Makhraj Endowment Fund Scholarship

Muhammad and Kulsum Zikar Scholarship

Muhtasib-Renie Family Scholarship

Nabila Mango Memorial Scholarship

Radwan Family Scholarship

Rahbar Family

Rahmatara Begum Scholarship

Seham Elasmr Memorial Scholarship

Shahin-Fatemeh Scholarship

Shohoud Family

Syed Shaukat Husain Memorial Scholarship

Shireen Abu Akleh Memorial Scholarship

Soltan Family

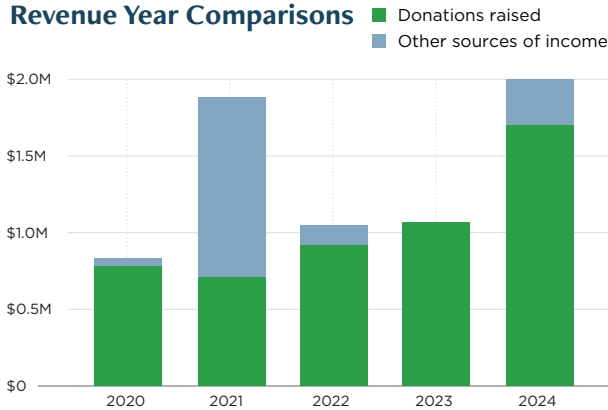
Syeda Zehra Batool Jafri Scholarship

UC Irvine Muslim Alumni Scholarship

Zehra Attari Memorial Scholarship

Financial Overview

Revenue Year Comparisons



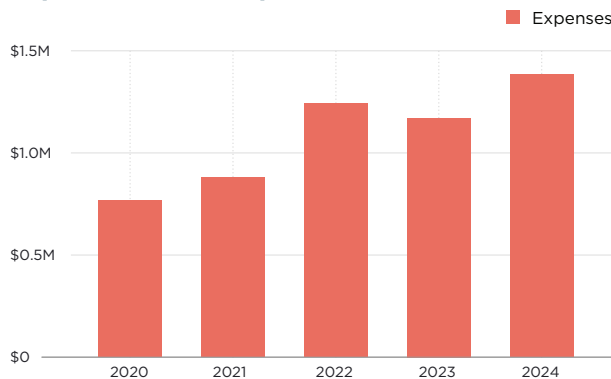
Revenue Comparison Notes

ISF’s financial growth over the past five years reflects our expanding impact and the steadfast support of our community. The graph is composed of two key revenue streams: donations received, represented by the blue section, and other sources of income—primarily returns from our endowment fund—displayed at the top of each bar.

Year over year, ISF has experienced an upward trajectory in total revenue, allowing us to expand scholarships, internships, fellowships, and career placement opportunities in media, film, policy, and public interest law. While 2023 saw a temporary dip in endowment returns, our overall financial health remained strong, leading to a significant rebound in 2024.

Looking ahead, ISF remains committed to sustaining this momentum by strengthening donor engagement, growing our endowment, and ensuring long-term financial resilience to support the next generation of changemakers.

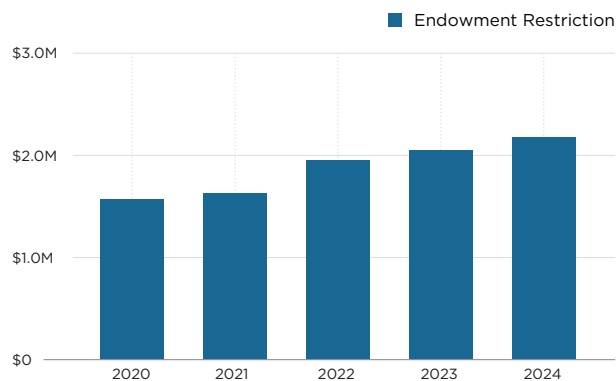
Expenses Year Comparisons



Expense Comparison Notes

Over the past five years, ISF’s expenses have steadily increased to support our expanding programs and services. This growth reflects our commitment to funding more scholarships, internships, fellowships, and career placements across media, film, policy, and public interest law. As we scale our impact, we remain dedicated to financial sustainability, ensuring that every dollar spent strengthens our mission and empowers the next generation of leaders.

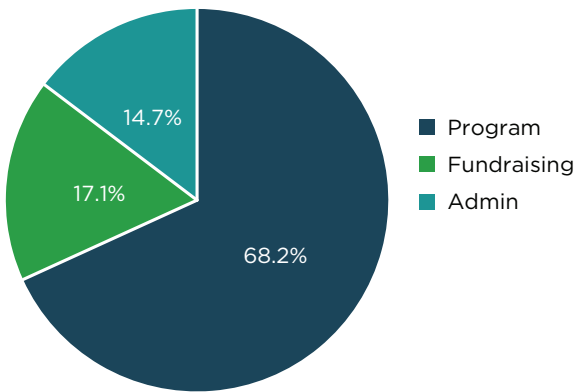
Endowment Donations



Endowment Notes

ISF’s endowment has steadily grown over the past five years, reflecting increased donor confidence and long-term investment in our mission. This upward trend strengthens our financial sustainability, ensuring we can continue empowering scholars, professionals, and changemakers for generations to come. As we expand our programs, our endowment remains a critical pillar in securing ISF’s future impact.

Functional Expense Allocation Mix

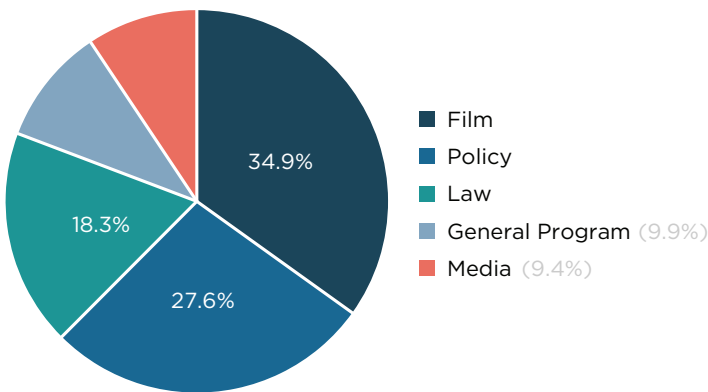


At ISF, we are dedicated to smart, transparent, and responsible financial management to maximize our impact. The majority of our funding directly supports programs that create meaningful career pathways in media, film, policy, and public interest law.

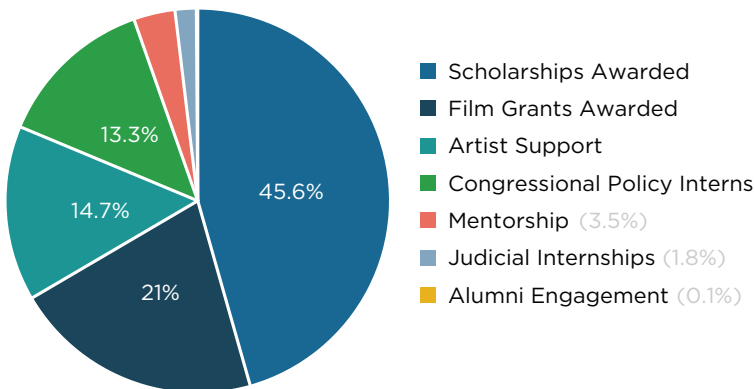
Our resources are strategically allocated to ensure emerging leaders within each sector receive the necessary support to thrive. Scholarships remain a cornerstone of our work, empowering emerging leaders with access to education. Film grants and artist development programs help amplify diverse voices, while investments in congressional policy internships and judicial placements ensure our communities are represented in key decision-making spaces.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are deepening our investments in media and law, strengthening representation in newsrooms and the judicial system. By balancing direct program funding with operational sustainability, ISF remains committed to driving systemic change while ensuring long-term stability and growth.

Program Services Mix



Program Breakdown



OUR TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. Dr. Dalia Fahmy
2. Dr. Hamid Rezapour
3. Ismail Mahomed
4. Mazen Asbahi
5. Shahed Amanullah



ADVOCACY COUNCIL

PUBLIC POLICY COUNCIL

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Tooba Hussain, Esq.
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Laila Al-Arian
Malika Bilal
Dr. Muniba Saleem
Nesima Aberra
Rhonda Roumani
Rowaida Abdelaziz
Sharaf Mowjood
Tahera Rahman

FILM COUNCIL

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Iman Zawahry
Karim Ahmad
Mahin Ibrahim
Michael Wolfe
Minhal Baig
Qasim Basir
Shireen Alihaji
Tariq Jalil

STAFF & CONSULTANTS

1. Somayah Nikooei, Executive Director
2. Omar Elsayed, Program Director
3. Iman Zawahry, Film Programs Director
4. Aizzah Fatima, Artist Development & Partnerships Manager
5. Shajuti Hossain, Legal Programs Advisor
6. Wardah Khalid, Senior Policy and Strategy Advisor
7. Zahraa Saheb, Senior Policy Advisor
8. Tina Tran, Accountant
9. Osama Yaish, Marketing Manager
10. Muna Sultana, Policy Programs Coordinator
11. Aisha Ghorri, DEI+ Advisor
12. Firdaus Arastu, Media Programs Advisor
13. Ali Hussaini, Alumni Engagement Associate
14. Kaleemah Muttaqi, Alumni Engagement Associate
15. Haajrah Gilani, Alumni Engagement Associate

“You have community organizing, film, advocacy, journalism — that is every pillar of American civic change. You have to lobby it, you have to represent it. Every single person has the ability to make a difference.”

—ANTONIO LÓPEZ
Mayor, City of East Palo Alto
Scholarship Recipient



Partner With Us

THIS FUTURE we envision is within reach—but only with your support. At a time when global anti-Muslim sentiment is at historic highs, your generosity can empower the next generation of changemakers to lead where they've been historically excluded.

With a 100% graduation rate and 88% of alums working in their fields—far surpassing national averages—our alums are proving, year after year, that they have the capacity to strengthen democracy and foster equity, justice, and cultural understanding. Supporting these scholars and early-career professionals is a direct way to transform both lives and public perception of Muslim communities.

Join us in shaping a future where diverse perspectives inform decision-making and representation reflects the strength of our shared humanity. Whether you give a one-time gift, set up a recurring contribution, or name a scholarship in honor of a loved one, your support helps build a proactive, resilient future for the American Muslim community and beyond.



Ways to Give or Get Involved

- Donate stock to maximize your impact
- Support ISF financially
- Join as a board member
- Become a program advisor
- Join as an ambassador to expand our reach
- Become a mentor

Please reach out to Somayeh Nikooei at snikooei@IslamicScholarshipFund.org to learn more

GIVE TODAY, AND TOGETHER, WE CAN ENSURE THAT EVERY VOICE IS HEARD, EVERY STORY IS TOLD, AND EVERY COMMUNITY THRIVES.

Ways to Get Involved

Your contributions are the foundation of our holistic model for success. Thank you for your prayers and support and for considering these ways to give and get involved.

GIVE A ONE-TIME OR RECURRING MONTHLY GIFT.



Scan the QR code or visit secure.islamic scholarshipfund.org/forms/annualreport

HONOR THE MEMORY

of a loved one, leave a legacy, and establish a sadaqah jaryiah.



Scan the QR code or visit islamic scholarshipfund.org/create-your-own-scholarship

*To sponsor a congressional policy internship, a congressional policy fellow, a judicial internship, or public interest fellowship, contact **Somayeh Nikooei** at snikooei@IslamicScholarshipFund.org.*

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

and take advantage of your employer's corporate matching program.



Scan the QR code or visit islamic scholarshipfund.org/double-my-gift

JOIN OUR SUSTAINERS CIRCLE,

an exclusive opportunity for our most esteemed supporters to invest in the long-term stability of our holistic model through a Waqf, or endowment. Establishing an endowment ensures that your values and priorities as a donor are maintained by our organization for perpetuity.



Scan the QR code or visit islamic scholarshipfund.org/sustainers-circle

DONATE STOCK AND MUTUAL FUNDS

to help ISF support the next generation of leaders. Making this gift is simple and offers you valuable financial benefits:



1. You can donate appreciated stocks, bonds, or mutual funds.
2. The total value of the stock upon transfer is tax-deductible.
3. There is no obligation to pay any capital gains taxes on the appreciation.

Scan the QR code or visit islamic scholarshipfund.org/stock-donations



Salina Nasir
2017 Media
Scholarship
Recipient

**TOGETHER, WE ARE BUILDING
A FUTURE WHERE EVERY
VOICE IS HEARD AND EVERY
STORY IS TOLD**

ISF

WE ARE THE CHANGE

IslamicScholarshipFund.org

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