



## Muslim Legal Fund of America 2021 Strategic Plan Brief

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### SUMMARY

- The Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA) is a 501C3 charity that funds legal work and programs to defend Muslim against injustice in America courtrooms, prisons, and communities.
- The MLFA concept: Turning charitable donations into legal services for select cases with potential civil liberties impact, sometimes known as impact litigation.
- MLFA is the only nonprofit legal fund dedicated to defending Muslims' civil rights and liberties **at the federal level**.
- In the guise of national security, MLFA is addressing unwarranted actions towards Muslims, such as travel restrictions, immigration denials, bank account closures, extra scrutiny of nonprofit work, prisoners denied religious accommodations, unjust prosecutions and unfair trials, excessive sentences and cruel conditions for Muslim prisoners, informants targeting vulnerable youth and Muslims being intimidated into betraying their faith.

### VISION

A nation where Muslims are treated like everyone else: An America in which constitutional rights and liberties are upheld equally for all, regardless of ethnicity, religion or cultural heritage.

### MISSION

To advance equality and justice for American Muslim organizations and individuals by combating the injustices done in the name of national security.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Justice, Courage, Excellence, Accountability, Community

### CORE BELIEFS

- The U.S. Bill of Rights applies to Muslims in America.
- Muslims have the right to fair trials.
- Being Muslim should not make you a suspect or target of law enforcement agencies.
- Injustice against one is an injustice against all.
- Without justice, there is no freedom or liberty.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### 1) Strengthen & Protect the Muslim Nonprofit Community

- a) MLFA is recognized by the American Muslim nonprofit community as the leading resource for legal counsel and technical legal support in the areas of compliance, mitigation of risk from government scrutiny, and mission impact.

Actions:

- Continue funding the Constitutional Law Center for Muslims in America (CLCMA). Established in 2014 by MLFA, CLCMA has taken over 500 cases since inception.
- In partnership with the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, fund the opening of the Muslim Philanthropy Initiative (MPI) to support Muslim-American nonprofits to be compliant with legal, governance and nonprofit best practices.

- b) MLFA is a curator and aggregator of thought leadership on issues related to the legal risk posed to American Muslim organizations and individuals by the government's national security programs and best practices for risk mitigation. As a result, understanding has increased among American Muslims and the legal community regarding their level of vulnerability, in order to create stronger organizations and effective representation.

Action:

- Produce the Muslim Nonprofit Leadership Conference, in partnership with the Lilly School of Philanthropy.

### 2) Prevent the Unwarranted Indictment of American Muslim Individuals and Organizations

MLFA has contributed to an overall decrease in the number of American Muslim organizations and individuals adversely impacted by FBI, Homeland Security and/or Treasury investigations and related enforcement actions. MLFA is considered a top-of-mind resource and first responder of choice among American Muslim organizations and leadership when they are at risk of federal investigation as a result of current national security policies.

Actions:

- **CIVIL RIGHTS LITIGATION:** Funding CLCMA to represent individual American Muslims as well as organizations whose civil liberties are under attack, in order to set precedents that will benefit the American Muslim community.
- **CRIMINAL DEFENSE:** Funding CLCMA to represent individuals and organizations who have been targeted based on guilt by association in order to protect their constitutional rights and set precedents to maintain "good law."

### 3) Increase Reach & Effect of Impact Litigation

MLFA is recognized as a leader in national security-related legal defense for American Muslim nonprofits and their leadership with national reach and visibility. MLFA has built a demonstrated record of challenging the lack of due process and unfair administration of



extreme vetting and guilt by association policies and regulations resulting in government encroachment on the civil liberties of American Muslims.

Actions:

- **IMMIGRATION CASE WORK:** Take on cases to reduce Controlled Application Review and Resolution Program (CARRP), unlawful extreme vetting programs, and discriminatory denials for American Muslims.
- **CIVIL RIGHTS LITIGATION:** Represent individual American Muslims as well as organizations whose civil liberties are under attack, in order to set precedents that will benefit the American Muslim community.
- **CRIMINAL DEFENSE:** Represent individuals and organizations who have been targeted based on guilt by association in order to protect their constitutional rights and set precedents to maintain “good law”
- **DENATURALIZATION CASES:** Expand capacity to take on denaturalization cases related to national security. This can include the precursor matters like administrative revocation of passports, or refusal/delay in issuing passports to U.S. citizens without explanation or a meaningful opportunity to be heard.
- **PEER PARTNERSHIPS:** Establish a network of national partnerships to extend the reach and impact of MLFA/CLCMA’s work, establish referral relationships with peer organizations and law firms, explore opportunities for joint initiatives, and support fundraising