

KEY FINDINGS



Muslims for American Progress: NYC Key Findings



Today, issues surrounding American Muslims are central to our political discourse, policy debates, and popular culture. Yet, most Americans say they do not know a Muslim, and according to media content analysis, more than 80 percent of media coverage of Islam and Muslims in the United States is negative. This opens the door for a narrow media image to distort public perceptions of this diverse community. If an educated citizenry is vital to the health of our democracy, then providing accurate information on American Muslims is a civic duty. Muslims for American Progress, a project of the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), aims to do just that.

To fill the widespread gaps in knowledge about American Muslim citizens, including their positive impact on the country, the Muslims for American Progress (MAP) project quantified the contributions of American Muslims in New York City. We did so by analyzing contributions across eight key areas:

Medicine

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Civics and Democracy

Philanthropy and Nonprofits

Education

Economics

Arts and Entertainment

Sports

Our researchers quantified American Muslim contributions by combining hard facts with human faces. We achieved this goal by profiling individuals and organizations of distinction that showcase the community's diversity and reveal important, and oftentimes overlooked, contributions by Muslims to the city. New York City's Muslim community serves as a case study for the rest of the nation, and the findings from this project are in many ways indicative of Muslim contributions across the United States.

This study is a continuation of our initial project, the MAP Michigan Study, published in 2016. In both, we explore the dynamic ways in which Muslims contribute to wider American society. We found that, indeed, Muslim New Yorkers contribute a tremendous amount across issue areas to the success of the entire city and the health, happiness, and well-being of their fellow Americans.

Muslims of New York are dynamic and diverse.

Approximately **3.45 million Muslims** live in the United States. Muslims are on average younger than the general population, with **2.05 million** adults.

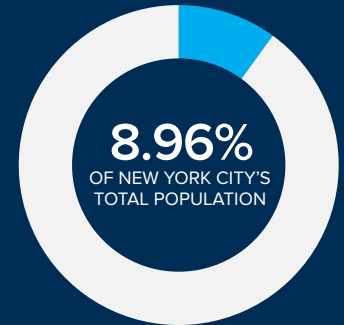
This extremely diverse populace includes descendants of Muslims who have lived in the United States' geographical area since before its founding, arriving in America as early explorers and enslaved Africans, as well as recent immigrants from **75+** nations.

22.3%
OF AMERICA'S MUSLIMS
LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY



Approximately **22.3%** of America's Muslims live in New York City, and the Muslim community is rapidly growing on account of immigration, reproduction, and conversion.

The state of New York also has more mosques than any other, largely concentrated in New York City. In 2015, there were **285** mosques across the five boroughs (98 in Brooklyn, 93 in Queens, 47 in the Bronx, 39 in Manhattan, and 8 in Staten Island).



Around **768,767 Muslims** live in New York City as of 2016, making up about **8.96%** of the city's total population of **8,583,000**.

Muslim New Yorkers provide healthcare to millions as active healthcare professionals.

Muslim New Yorkers are active participants in the city's healthcare apparatuses and make up:

12.5%
OF ALL PHARMACISTS

12.3%
OF ALL CLINICAL
LAB TECHS

10.7%
OF ALL PHYSICAL
THERAPISTS

9.7%
OF ALL DOCTORS

8.6%
OF ALL DENTISTS

Yearly, these medical professionals:

Provide **6.4** million appointments to patients.

Fill over **9.5** million prescriptions.

Support **36,001** jobs.

Contribute **\$384 million** in state and local taxes and pay over **\$4 billion** in local wages and benefits.

The impact of Muslims working in healthcare in New York City is felt strongly, especially to those who experience need. Many Muslim doctors **focus on serving the city's underprivileged and breaking through stigma surrounding mental health care.**

Key Examples:

Dr. Zehra Siddiqui's work centers on multifaceted community health work, in particular underserved populaces including the homeless population, immigrants, and those without health insurance or documentation.

Dr. Farah Alam, DDS, FSD, is director of the Dental Unit of the Rose F. Kennedy Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center, which is part of Montefiore Medical Center. Dr. Alam provides special care dentistry for medically complex and behaviorally challenging dental patients and trains approximately 50 residents per year. She is the first Muslim director of this center. She was the first female Muslim member of the national Special Care Dentistry Association.

Dr. Faiz Bhora, chief of thoracic surgery at Mount Sinai Roosevelt and Mount Sinai St. Luke's Hospitals and president of the New York General Thoracic Surgical Club, works in thoracic oncology surgery and regenerative medicine, fields with few Muslim faces. Dr. Bhora has undertaken cutting-edge work, using 3-D printing to replace trachea and stem cells, and has a particular interest in serving the underprivileged, working to provide care to those in need, regardless of economic status.

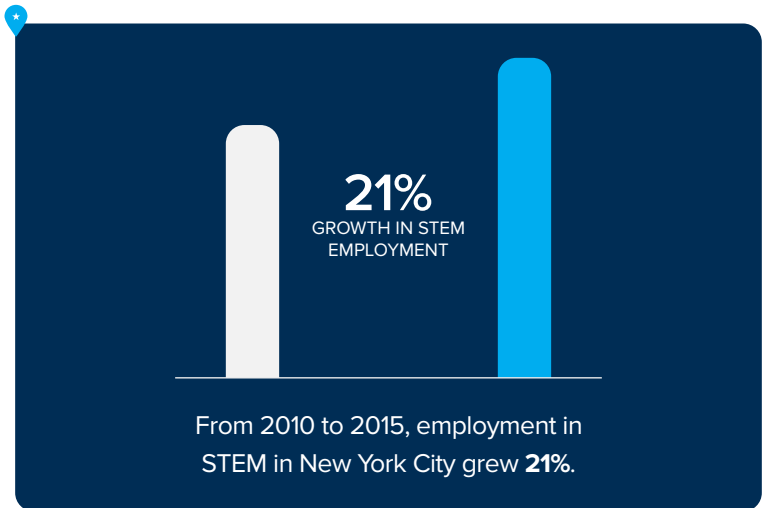
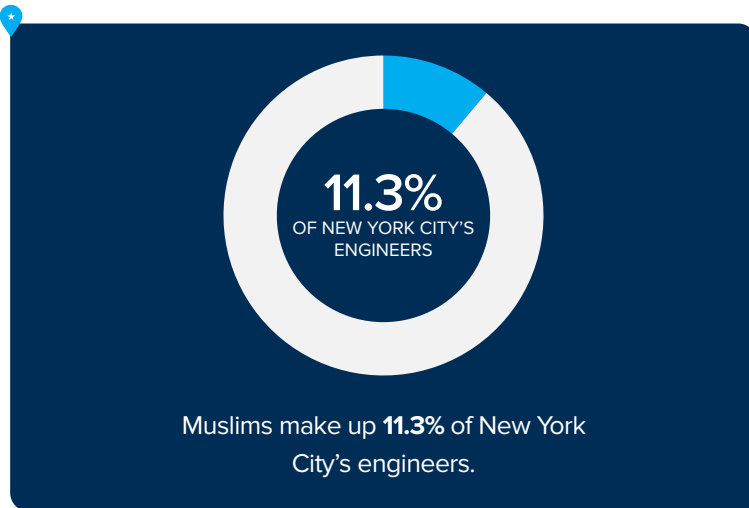
Gareth Bryant, who works as a Muslim chaplain in the mental health field at Lenox Hill Hospital, serving individuals from all religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

Dr. Tayeba Shaikh, PsyD, is a practicing clinical psychologist who serves patients of various backgrounds with neuropsychiatric counseling and also conducts research in the mental health field. She specializes in treating women with trauma and anxiety and has been a strong voice in identifying the need for mental health care in the American Muslim community.



Muslims New Yorkers help drive the city's innovation.

Muslim engineers promote sustainable technology-based solutions for underserved communities and protect and serve New Yorkers through their professional dedication and high achievements.



Key Examples:

Noha El-Ghobashy is vice president of Strategic Initiatives at the Institute for Transformative Technologies (ITT). Prior, she was founding president of Engineering for Change, a community dedicated to promoting sustainable technology-based solutions for underserved communities worldwide. She also held numerous roles at the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), most recently as the executive director of the ASME Foundation, focusing on STEM education and innovation.

Rumana Haque has worked as a transport engineer with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey since she finished training as an engineer at the City College of New York around 10 years ago. Haque has been involved with coordinating the construction of the George Washington Bridge (the world's busiest bridge) and managing traffic operations for the NY and NJ ports, traffic signals, and control over NY. She was one of the primary responders for traffic signal management after Hurricane Sandy.

Sidrah Mirza is a project engineer at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, serving the New York District (NY, NJ, CT). As a geologist and a geophysical hazards specialist, she holds a civilian position but works with the army, and her role includes working in cooperation with several government agencies. Mirza leads engineering teams on construction contracts like dam and levee inspection, coastal storm risk management, and inland flood risk management. The broader contribution of her work is to take care of the land and its resources while protecting people from flooding, hurricanes, and other natural hazards.

Muslims are engaged at every level of civic life in New York City.

Muslims hold positions throughout every level of public life, from senior advisor in NYC government to director for outreach at NYC Council. Muslim women from NYC are behind key political movements, civic engagement, activism, and advocacy, including the public recognition of Eid holidays in schools, the locally organized Women's March on Washington, and the first Shura Council for women in the U.S.

Muslim New Yorkers are at the forefront of interfaith work centered on fostering diversity, understanding, and equality across the five boroughs. (See profiles in full MAP NYC report.) Many Muslim lawyers in New York City are dedicated to utilizing law as a way to accomplish social justice, from immigration and national security issues to the pro-bono representation of veterans.

Key Examples:

Dr. Sarah Sayeed, a prominent example of a Muslim woman in democratic practice, is a senior advisor in the Community Affairs Unit of the New York City government. She was appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio in June 2015 to expand outreach to Muslim communities across the five boroughs. Prior to attaining this position, Sayeed was a trailblazer in interfaith work and activism, instrumental in uniting religious leaders from diverse backgrounds in NYC, helping them to cooperate on solving prescient social problems.

Omar Mohammedi has litigated numerous civil rights cases across minority communities and is a major figure in defending the civil rights of minorities targeted by the NYPD and other institutions, including significant pro-bono work. Mohammedi is currently president of Association of Muslim American Lawyers, on the advisory board of the Tanenbaum Center, a board member of Public Safety and Civil Rights Committee, Citizen Union, and an advisory board member on Hate Crimes for the New York Public Advocate Office. Mohammedi was a central figure in the campaign for the recognition of Eid holidays.



Muslim New Yorkers are devoted to teaching the next generation.

1.1 million students are taught in over **1,800** public schools in NYC, the largest public school system in the United States.

9,497 K-12 teachers in NYC are Muslim.

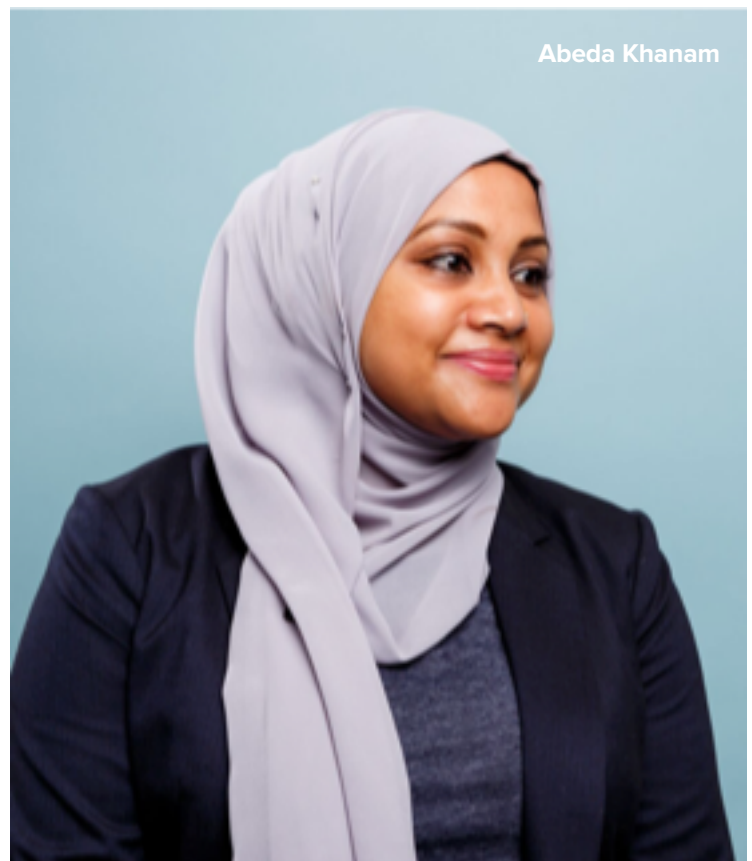
250,000 students per year are taught by a Muslim educator in NYC.

\$1,234,426,284 is spent on education by Muslim households in NYC annually, over **4 times** more than the average American household.

Key Examples:

Abeda Khanam has been a biology teacher at Robert F. Wagner High School for 20 years. She also serves as the faculty advisor for the school's National Honors Society and faculty advisor of both the diversity and garden club. Two years ago, Khanam created a program that matches high-achieving students with students that need academic support based on emotional intelligence and personality traits (as opposed to traditional programs that pair high and low scorers). "Even though I was born in a village, my village is now Jamaica Queens, and I must serve my village if I am to serve God. The lessons I have learned with my family—including the joys as well as the heartbreaks—I offer to my community. For a collection of resilient families in resilient communities make a great nation. After all, isn't the welfare of the country the true concern of the patriot?"

Dr. Dalia Fahmy is associate professor of political science at Long Island University, where she teaches courses on U.S. foreign policy, world politics, international relations, military and defense policy, and causes of war. Her research focuses on democratization and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, as well as the effects of Islamophobia on U.S. foreign policy. Dr. Fahmy has three published books and has given several briefings on the future of democracy in the Middle East.



Abeda Khanam

Muslim New Yorkers help fuel the city's economy and create thousands of jobs.

In New York City, in 2016:



95,816

Small businesses were owned by Muslims



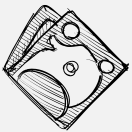
176,744

Jobs were created by Muslims



251,864

Workers were employed by Muslim-owned small businesses



\$17 Billion

Muslim household consumer spending totaled **\$17 billion**



176,744

Almost **40% of taxi drivers** and more than **57% of street food vendors**, two professions epitomizing New York City culture, are Muslim

Key Examples:

Abu's Bakery was opened by Idris Conry in 2001 and is now run by his son, Idris Braithwaite. Located on the corner of Bedford Avenue and Fulton Street in Brooklyn, Abu's Bakery was featured in the *New York Times* in July 2017 for its celebrated bean pies. The bean pie is intimately connected to African American Islam and the Nation of Islam, in particular, as founder Elijah Muhammad advised his followers to consume navy beans. The Abu's Bakery bean pie is now sold in supermarkets across Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens.

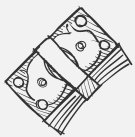
Azra Khalfan is the CEO of Plaques by Azra. The company was started by her father 43 years ago after her family immigrated to New York from Tanzania. The company specializes in engraving, digital printing, and laser cutting. Her clients range from government offices to schools, nonprofit organizations to corporations. Her products have been sent internationally to prime ministers and Nobel Prize winners.

Azra Khalfan



Muslim New Yorkers are incredibly charitable, to both domestic and international causes.

Our research revealed Muslim New Yorkers donated:



Over \$608 Million

In charity in 2016 — **33%** more than the average American household



124,370

Pounds of food in 2017



5,500

Backpacks in 2017

Charitable contributions often stay close to home. For example, after Hurricane Sandy devastated parts of Staten Island in 2012:

900 individuals from Muslim organizations volunteered to deliver food, conduct needs assessments, and help with cleanup.

The Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) spent **\$325,611.53** on relief efforts.

Key Examples:

Individual Muslim nonprofits based in NYC create impact that reverberates far beyond city limits. In 2017, **Islamic Circle of North America** (ICNA) Relief donated more than **\$576,454** through its food pantry, hunger prevention/meat drive, women's transitional housing, and zakat financial assistance.

Citizens Against Recidivism was founded in 1992 by **Mika'il Deveaux** who is also the current executive director. Citizens Against Recidivism serves both Muslims and non-Muslims, filling a gap by providing services not usually available to ex-prisoners. Its re-entry program provides clothing, emergency cash, MetroCards, art intervention programs, counseling services, and anger management training.

MALIKAH—formerly The International Muslim Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment, IM(WISE)—is a self-defense, social entrepreneurship, and leadership development movement for young Muslim women.

MALIKAH recently conducted a study on the city's responses to gender-based violence, while identifying how the city can be culturally sensitive to communities that are stereotyped and over-policed. MALIKAH has also worked with and provided self-defense trainings to other communities, including Jewish community groups and Black Lives Matter.

Mika'il Deveaux



Muslim New Yorkers are important figures in arts, entertainment, and sports, shattering stereotypes and highlighting the intersection of performance and social justice.

17.4%
GROWTH IN
ARTISTS RESIDING
IN NYC

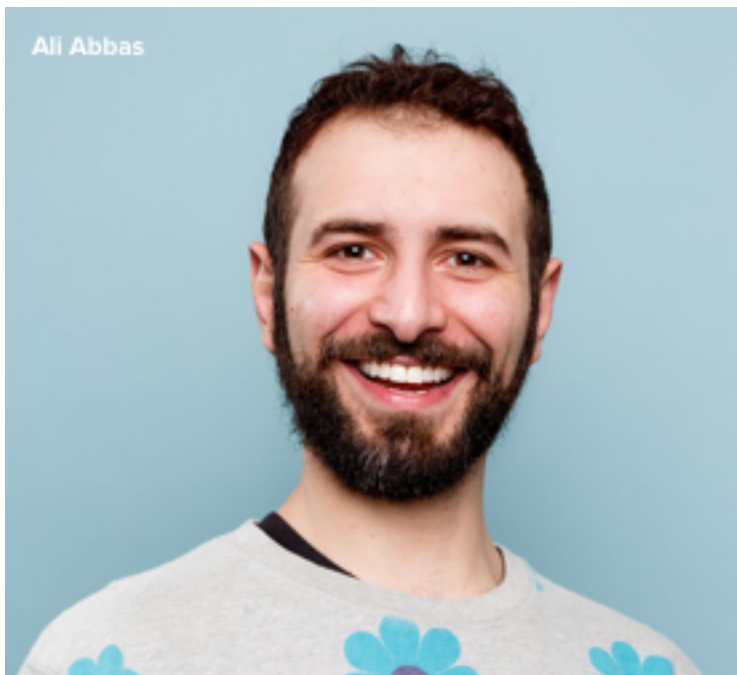
More and more artists are living moving to the city. Artists increased **17.4%** from 2000 to 2015, with **56,268** professional artists residing in the five boroughs as of 2015.

Muslims utilize art as a platform for empowerment, social critique, and building community cohesion. The deep intersection of art and social justice came through in our research, as did the far-reaching dynamism of Muslim artists who are forging new frontiers through their crafts.

High-profile athletes like Enes Kanter, Sadam Ali, Oday Aboushi, Kenneth Faried, Zainab Ismail, Ibtihaj Muhammad, Dalilah Muhammad, Mohamed Sanu, and Muhammad Wilkerson hail from diverse backgrounds and participate in the social life of the city in and beyond sports through their works in philanthropy, advocacy, and community service. Many of them have returned to their home communities to help local efforts and service projects, showing passion for civic participation and dedication to service at all levels within their communities.

Key Examples:

Ali Abbas



Ali Abbas is an American Muslim writer and filmmaker, and New Yorker of Lebanese descent. He is creator and producer of *The Ridge*, a series about a group of Brooklyn Muslim youth with

superpowers, and the current diversity fellow at the Upright Citizens Brigade. Abbas commutes between New York and Chicago where he recently released *The Girl Deep Down Below*, a web series produced by the Chicago Digital Media Production Fund about a group of young Muslim girls who unite to stop the abductions of young women in their community.

Nicole Najmah Abraham is a Brooklyn native, mother, spoken word artist, and fashion photographer. She is also project manager for Green Earth Poets Café; workshop facilitator for New York State Senator Jesse Hamilton's The Campus, which is a technology and wellness hub in Brownsville and Crown Heights, Brooklyn; project contractor for the Center for Community Alternatives, which promotes community-based alternatives to incarceration; and visual marketer, producer, and social media manager for Halalwood Entertainment, an international halal production company ("A Muslim Netflix"). She is also a resident speaker and guest lecturer at the Fresno Kremen School of Education and Human Development, where she teaches master's students. Abraham additionally teaches hip-hop, poetry, and fashion design to around 1,000 youth within the juvenile detention system, as well as prisons in and around New York.

Methodology

The Muslims for American Progress (MAP) project team conducted quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis between March 2017 and March 2018. Qualitative interviews, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, were conducted with 86 individuals from all eight focus areas: medicine; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; civics and democracy; philanthropy and nonprofit; education; economics; arts and entertainment; and sports. Secondary analysis was conducted on economic and population source material from *The Muslim Green: American Muslim Market Study 2014–15* (DinarStandard and AMCC), the Bureau of Labor Statistics Aggregate Expenditures reports, the Pew Research Center 2011 report *Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism*, the Pew Research Center 2017 report *U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream*, and *A Journey through NYC's Religion Project*. A detailed accounting of our methodology is available in our full report.

Research Team



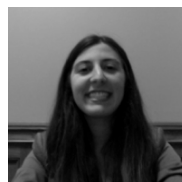
Dr. Elisabeth Becker, Principal Investigator & Author



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Dalia Mogahed, ISPU Director of Research



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Katherine Coplen, ISPU Senior Comms. Manager



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Advisory Team

Dr. Debbie Almontaser – Community activist, advocate, entrepreneur, and educator who works across sectors in NYC. Among her numerous roles, Almontaser is the founding principal of the Khalil Gibran International Academy, the CEO of the Building Cultures Group Inc, founding board member of the Muslim Community Network and the Yemeni American Merchants Association, and is on the board of Micah Institute. Dr. Almontaser is an advisor on cultural and religious diversity issues for Public Advocate Tish James, Borough President Eric Adams, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the NYC Commission for Human Rights, and New York City Council members. She is also a member of the NYC Department of Education Diversity Advisory Board.

Gareth Bryant – Chaplain, mental health advocate, suicide awareness/prevention advocate, community activist, member of Muslims Giving Back, writer/poet, model.

Mustafa Davis – Photographer, film producer, digital media consultant, and founder of Mustafa Davis Studios™.

Dr. Sally Howell – Associate professor of history and director of the Center for Arab American Studies at the University of Michigan - Dearborn.

Jennifer Maytorena Taylor – Award-winning documentary producer and director of character-based social issue feature films, and assistant professor of social documentation at UC Santa Cruz.

DinarStandard – A growth strategy research and advisory firm covering OIC markets; Halal, Ethical, Social entrepreneurship; Islamic finance; and the Muslim market.

Supporters

ISPU would like to acknowledge our generous supporters whose contributions made this research project possible, including:

- The New York Community Trust
- El-Hibri Foundation
- The Proteus Fund: Security & Rights Collaborative
- Global Giving Campaign Donors
- Dr. Yahya Basha
- Tharackandathil Ooran Shanavas

Photography

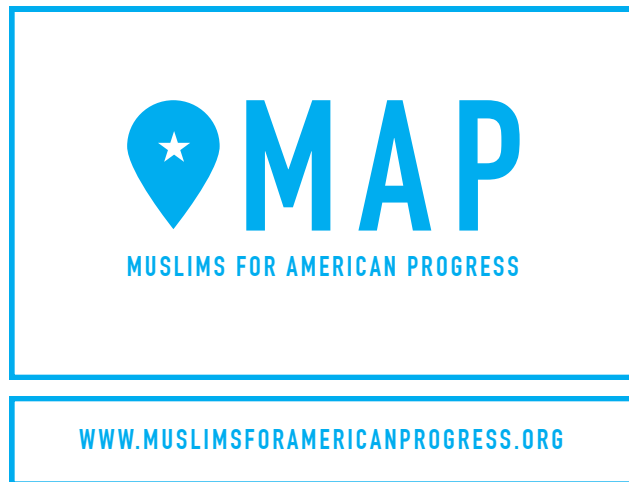
MAP participants were photographed by:

- Syed Yaqeen



ISPU conducts objective, solution-seeking research that empowers American Muslims to develop their community and fully contribute to democracy and pluralism in the United States. Since 2002, ISPU has been at the forefront of discovering trends and opportunities that impact the American Muslim community. Our research aims to educate the general public and enable community change agents, the media, and policymakers to make evidence-based decisions. In addition to building in-house capacity, ISPU has assembled leading experts across multiple disciplines, building a solid reputation as a trusted source for information for and about American Muslims.

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