**CAIR-SFBA Muslim Appreciation and Awareness (MAAM) Month Guide**

**Background**

In 2016, during a presidential election cycle marked by unprecedented levels of Islamophobia manifesting in increased hate crimes and government targeting, Assemblymember Bill Quirk worked with Moina Shaiq, CAIR California, and others to introduce H. Res. 59 in the California Assembly. The resolution, titled ‘Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month,’ sought to highlight the positive influence of Muslims and expand mutual respect and understanding among the community. Since then, Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month has been introduced by the state legislature five times and in 17 cities and counties.

**Why Celebrate MAAM?**

* Help fight Islamophobia and increase public awareness and goodwill
* Empower Muslims to feel a sense of belonging and appreciation as parts of their communities by sharing about our faith, values, and accomplishments
* Create opportunities for Muslims to build relationships with each other and with allies
* Motivate elected officials and others to become stronger and more consistent allies of Muslims on the issues we care about and are impacted by
* Connect elected officials and others with our community, specifically by working to bring them into the community so they can witness our robustness, unique struggles, and resilience

**How to Come Together and Mobilize During MAAM**

This guide supports our encouragement of community members, leaders and activists (YOU!) to mobilize during MAAM and help enhance the understanding of Muslims. You can do so through one or more of the following (or something else you can think of!):

* Honor a Muslim organization, community leader or individual who has made a great contribution locally: [bit.ly/celebratemuslims2021](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfQfbPxYXovOEm9iW2BnIKnAMgQBv20iLoktGaUamKuTbDJ2g/viewform?usp=sf_link)
* Distribute literature and materials about Muslims at schools, libraries, community centers, farmer markets or other public gathering spaces
* Conduct Muslim Awareness presentations in your school or workplace to answer questions your colleagues might have regarding our faith and traditions
* Host interfaith dialogues at your school, workplace, library, or other local community center
* Host a mosque or Islamic organization Open House for the broader community to enhance their understanding of Islam

*Interested but need help? Have a plan of action and want support with amplification?* Email [info@sfba.cair.com](mailto:msikandar@cair.com) with the Subject ‘Muslim Awareness and Appreciation.’

**Pursuing a MAAM Proclamation in Your City or County**

* A proclamation is a government recognition that celebrates or acknowledges an important event. Alternately, your local government may call this a ‘resolution.’
* The recognition should be repeated every year to uphold its importance and influence. Additionally, every change in government leadership after elections is an opportunity to create new relationships with policy makers who influence our everyday lives. Community members, like you, have the power to ensure MAAM continues every year.

**Steps to Obtain a MAAM Proclamation:**

Just about anyone can ask the elected officials within their city, county, or school board to introduce a MAAM proclamation. The most recent proclamations are listed at [bit.ly/2020amaam.](https://ca.cair.com/sfba/updates/amaam/) In order to establish MAAM in your local community to mirror that of the state’s, follow these steps:

1. Call or email the office of the executive official in charge of your city, county, or school board to ask if they would be willing to introduce a Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month proclamation. Find their contact information at <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials> or email [info@sfba.cair.com](mailto:info@sfba.cair.com) for further assistance
2. Work with community leaders to build on the sample MAAM proclamation/resolution language below. Provide your draft language to the official’s office and work with them as they take the steps to get it passed
3. Invite community leaders and Muslim organizations to accept the proclamation when it is passed and presented to the community
4. Share your success stories and pictures with us at [info@sfba.cair.com](mailto:info@sfba.cair.com) so that we can highlight them, and tag partners, on CAIR’s social media!

NOTE: While we’ve provided sample language for a proclamation, we encourage you to adapt it so that it is unique to your local community. Discuss how you would like to uplift your Muslim community’s accomplishments and volunteerism, as well as highlight any specific struggles you have overcome.

**Sample Language:**

**MUSLIM APPRECIATION AND AWARENESS MONTH**

City of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Proclamation [or ‘Resolution’]

***WHEREAS,*** Freedom of religion holds distinction as a cherished and essential right and a fundamental value upon which the law and ethics of the United States are based; and

***WHEREAS***, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ takes great pride in supporting individual religious freedoms and is strengthened by the many varied religious, political, and cultural traditions and contributions of its diverse population, including those who practice Islam; and

***WHEREAS,***Islam has been part of U.S. history since enslaved Africans brought their faith to this country along with their innumerable contributions; followers of the faith have contributed to the production of wealth and construction of the nation, and have been actors in a rich history of civil rights movements; there are today millions of Muslims -- both immigrant and native-born -- of diverse backgrounds and beliefs; and

***WHEREAS,***Muslims are teachers, lawyers, doctors, social workers, nurses, and business owners among numerous other valued professions, as well as peace builders, activists, entrepreneurs, and politicians; in their pursuits they make significant social, cultural, and economic contributions in numerous fields such as science, education, politics, film, athletics, and many others. and

***WHEREAS,*** throughout the Bay Area, Muslim organizations and mosques have contributed to the COVID-19 pandemic efforts by gathering donations to assist those who need help with payments, distributing food groceries, or by sewing masks to help those on the front line; and

***WHEREAS,*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is home to Muslim communities who each have a history of giving back to the community, including during this COVID-19 pandemic; \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ mosque/organization provided \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in funding for those in need / distributed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ pounds of food / [insert description of community service initiative]. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ created \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ programs to bring the community together through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ albeit virtually; and

***WHEREAS,*** While Muslims within California and throughout the nation strive to promote peace and understanding between all faiths, identities, and nationalities; they have nonetheless been forced to endure harassment, assault, and discrimination. It is therefore appropriate to acknowledge and promote awareness of the myriad invaluable contributions of Muslims in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and across the country, and extend the respect and camaraderie every resident deserves; and

***WHEREAS,***The United States benefits greatly from the myriad of contributions of Muslims in California and across the country, from their contributions to the health and vitality of their communities to their work providing food and shelter to those without it to their service on volunteer commissions; it is appropriate to acknowledge and promote awareness of and extend to Muslims the respect and camaraderie every person deserves; and

***Now, therefore, be it resolved***, the City of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does hereby recognize the California State Designation of August 2021 as Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month (HR [look up at [leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml)]) to acknowledge the rich history, contributions, and guiding virtues of Muslims and to commend all Muslim communities in California for the lasting positive impact they have made toward the advancement of our city and country.

**Credits**

We would like to thank community leader Moina Shaiq for spearheading the effort to make California the first state in the nation to recognize Muslims, and Assemblymember Bill Quirk for championing the statewide resolution every year since 2016.

We also would like to thank the Sikh Coalition for their efforts to mobilize Sikhs and allies around Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month, which began in 2011, including their guide - which inspired the creation of this guide.