



# Islah LA

## 2023-2024

# Annual

# Report

Prepared for the Fiscal Year  
July 2023-June 2024



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**Dr. Jihad Saafir**

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## **Letter from the President of Islah LA**

Dear Community,

On behalf of Islah LA and Islah Academy, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your continued support of our mission and programs. Your generosity and dedication have played an essential role in our growth and success, enabling us to serve our community through critical initiatives such as our housing program, food pantry, and educational offerings.

In recent years, we have made remarkable strides— updating our building, upgrading our facilities, and providing more resources to those in need. These accomplishments would not have been possible without your unwavering commitment. Whether you have contributed financially, volunteered your time, or shared your expertise, you have helped us uplift the most vulnerable among us and helped create a stronger, more united community.

Your support is not only an investment in Islah LA but in the well-being of our entire community. As we continue to grow and face new challenges, your contributions help us meet the needs of those struggling with food insecurity, homelessness, and access to quality education. Through our collective effort, we can continue to provide these essential services and ensure that no one in our community is left behind.

We look forward to your continued support as we work together to build a brighter, more just future for everyone.

Thank you for your generosity and commitment to our mission.

With gratitude,



Dr. Jihad Saafir  
President, Islah LA



# MISSION, VISION, HISTORY

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## Mission

Islāh LA is a community restoration initiative rooted in the Islamic principles of social justice. We strive to revitalize community, education, civic engagement, and economic empowerment in South Los Angeles by providing needed services such as food pantries and supportive housing.

## Vision

To revitalize the South LA community, break the cycles of poverty, homelessness, and incarceration, build healthy families and communities.

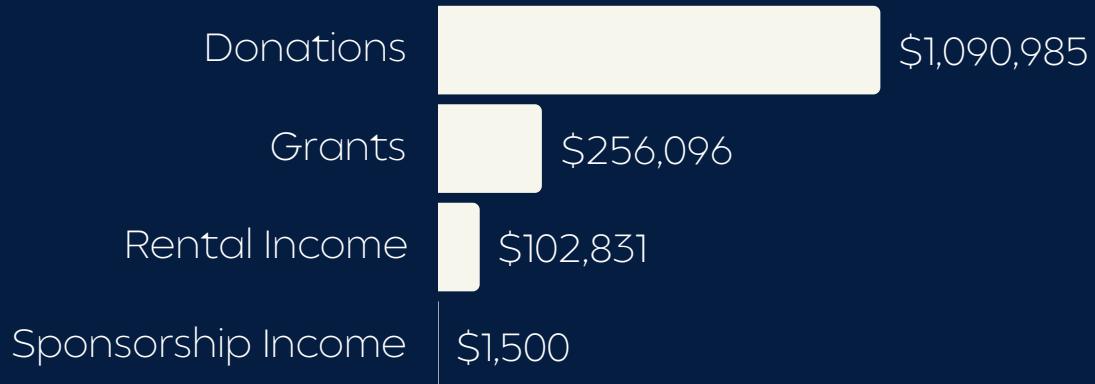
## History

Islah LA emerged from the historic Masjid Ibaadillah community in South Los Angeles. In 1985, led by Imam Saadiq Saafir, a group of families purchased storefront property on West Jefferson Boulevard to serve the local Muslim community. However, as the Muslim community grew, the storefront masjid model became inadequate to meet the comprehensive needs of the community. Therefore, Dr. Jihad Saafir led the effort to move to the new property on Slauson Avenue, where Islah LA was founded in 2013 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit charity.

Islah quickly developed into a leading example of a unique type of institution - an inner city community center founded by Muslim Americans to serve both the Muslims and the broader non-muslim community. As a secular organization with a primary focus on service, Islah allows people from diverse backgrounds to have a space where they can engage in their community. Islah continues to renew, revive, and restore the South LA Inner City.

# Islah LA REVENUE

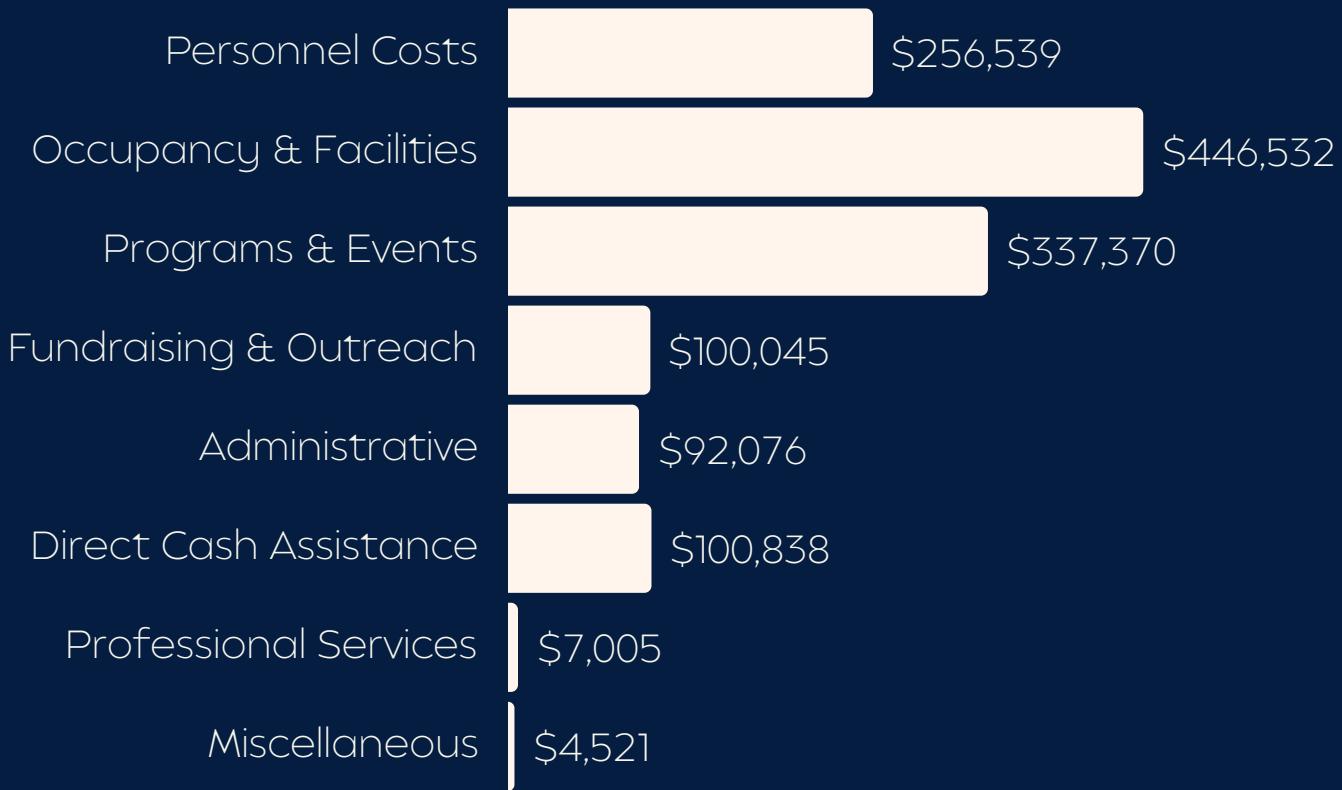
## \$1,451,411



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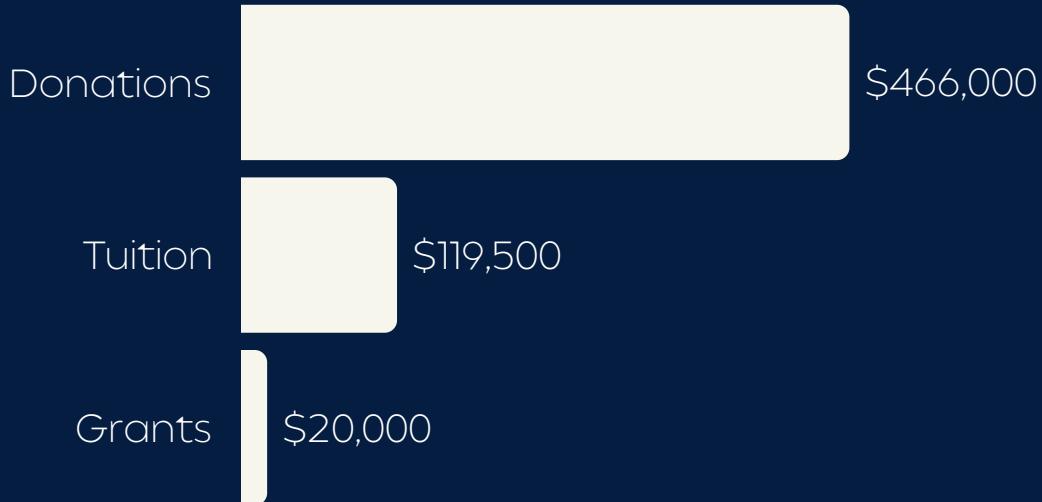
# Islah LA EXPENSES

## \$1,344,926



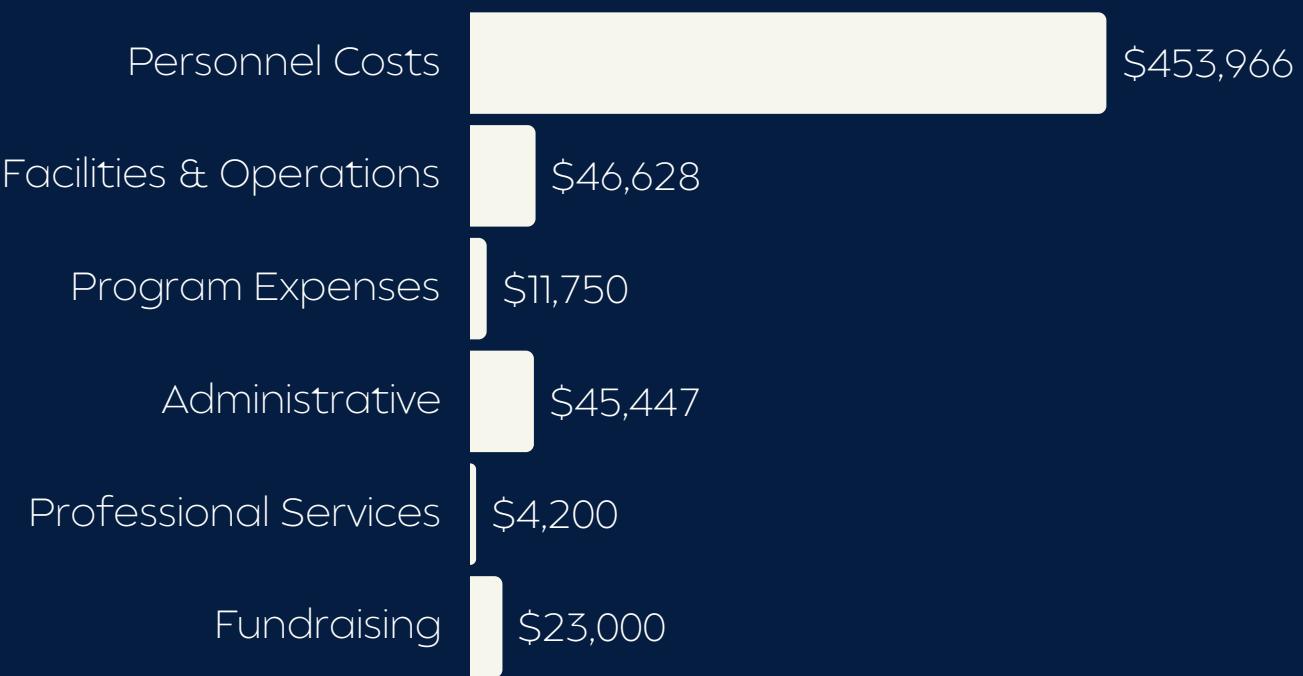
# ISLAH ACADEMY REVENUE

\$605,500



# ISLAH ACADEMY EXPENSES

\$584,991



# Islah LA: Programs and Highlights

Islah is an Arabic word, meaning to Revive, Renew, and Restore. The purpose of Islah LA is exactly that - to revive, renew, and restore the South LA community, which has been plagued by systematic problems for generations. Like many Inner City areas, South LA is home to many communities stuck in cycles of poverty, incarceration, broken homes, and lack of opportunity. Islah LA seeks to break these cycles.

## Islah LA Serves South LA's Needs:



**Food Pantry** - With a partnership with LA Regional Food Bank, Islah LA provides food to over 625 individuals per week who are struggling to buy enough quality food for their families.



**Support for Returning Citizens** - Islah LA has run many effective programs for returning citizens over the last 10 years. With programs like multi-day retreats, support in job acquisition, and providing travel to social services.



**Transitional Housing** - provides low-cost, safe, affordable housing for returning citizens, migrants, and refugees. Currently housing 20+ residents.



**Tayseer Zakat program/Direct cash assistance** - provides a source of financial relief for many local Muslims who are struggling to make ends meet, are at risk of losing their residence or falling into serious debt.



**Counseling** - The Peace Pods program are for both individuals and families to improve the health and well-being of our families and communities. This program served 60+ individuals and families.



**Family Nights & Special Events** - Islah LA hosts two family nights/month for the community to come together for dinner, activities and programming providing a third space for families and young adults to foster community.



# Islah LA Legacy Project



The Islah LA Legacy Project is our most ambitious donation campaign to date, with a goal of raising \$4 million to secure a brighter future for our community. This campaign will help build a lasting legacy of services that reflects the heart of Islah LA's mission - A new building right on Slauson ave - empowering and uplifting those in need. Your generous contributions will expand our vital programming, from youth and educational services to mental health support and community outreach, ensuring that these life-changing resources continue to thrive for generations to come. Join us in making a difference that lasts!

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## IMPACT #1 | Community as an Alternative to Crime

Homicide is the top cause of premature death for men under 75 in South LA (SPA 6), with gang violence harming safety and opportunity. Islah LA's new building expands crime-reduction programs—education, PeacePods mental health support, mentorship, and job training—while partnering with local groups to provide safe spaces for growth. This investment can help build a safer, stronger South LA.



Causes of Premature Death (Death Before Age 75)	
Los Angeles County	SPA 6
Coronary heart disease	Homicide
Homicide	Coronary heart disease
Suicide	Motor vehicle crash
Motor vehicle crash	Liver disease
Liver disease	Stroke

## IMPACT #2

## Breaking the Bondage of Substance Abuse

In South LA's SPA 6—home to 1.3M people (60% Latino, 30% Black)—poverty (29.1%) and limited mental health resources drive substance abuse. Rising opioid deaths disproportionately harm youth and marginalized groups. Islah LA's new center will combat this through mental health services, mentorship, faith-based therapy, and family support, addressing root causes with early intervention and culturally responsive care.

## IMPACT #3

## Providing Nutrition in a Local Food Desert

Islah LA's Food Pantry fights food insecurity in South LA (SPA 6), a food desert with limited affordable, fresh options. The new facility will include a full-service café, expanding access to nutritious meals while offering job training and community space—a sustainable solution addressing hunger and local economic needs.



## IMPACT #4

### Shelter for the Unhoused

Islah LA's new building will help us expand our services which combat homelessness in South LA (SPA 6), where over 17,000 unhoused people—76% unsheltered and 60% Black/Latino—face systemic barriers. The facility offers critical services: case management, housing navigation, mental health support, and job assistance to reduce barriers to care.



## IMPACT #5

### Pathways to Education

The new Islah LA building provides vital adult education—GED prep, ESL, vocational training, and digital literacy—to tackle SPA 6's high unemployment and 30% high school diploma gap. With limited local resources and long waitlists, these programs offer a path to better jobs and economic stability.



## IMPACT #6

### Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline

Islah Academy disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline in South LA, where dropout rates exceed 20%—and dropouts are 8x more likely to be incarcerated. With Black and Latino youth representing 80% of school arrests (and Black students 3.5x more likely to be suspended nationally), our model prioritizes culturally responsive teaching, restorative justice, and small classes to replace punishment with emotional growth.

## IMPACT #7

## Addressing Mental Illness

Islah LA must expand its PeacePods program to address SPA 6's mental health crisis. With 1.3M residents—20% facing severe distress and youth experiencing elevated trauma—the area has just 17 mental health providers per 100K (vs. 32 countywide). PeacePods delivers culturally responsive care, peer support, and community healing to close this gap.



## IMPACT #8

## A Place for Young Adults

Throughout the nation, the number of young Muslim adults between the ages of 18 and 35 is nearly nonexistent due to social impediments. The new Islah LA café will offer a lively environment for young adults, fostering creativity and connection through a tranquil gathering place. In response to the scarcity of positive social venues in the area, the café will provide a secure and inviting environment for young adults to convene, study, and participate in meaningful conversations. The café will foster dialogue, mentorship, and collaboration by offering culturally pertinent programming, free Wi-Fi, and community events.



**Luminaries Shine Bright!**



## Islah LA Board of Directors



Dr. Jihad Saafir



Garland Bush



Umar Hakim



Fawad Shaiq



Ambreen Zaheen-Watson



Dr. Rasul Miller



Na'im Sunday



Niarobia Francis-Sunday



## Islah Academy Board of Directors



Katrina Hassan



Dr. Samiha Rahman



Sharyn Muhammad



Dr. Esa Syeed



Dr. Alden Young

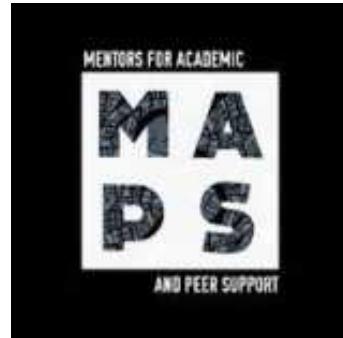
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**Salam Charity**



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