

MuBANY

Muslim Bar Association of New York

Address / Phone: PO Box 1171,
NY, NY 10013

Website: www.muslimbarny.org

Founded: 2006

Number of Members: 65 dues-paying members; more than 275 lawyers and law students subscribe to an active listserv.

Association Vision: To serve the educational, professional and social needs of Muslim legal professionals and law students living or working in the New York metropolitan area.

Brief History: MuBANY was formally created in 2006 when a group of lawyers and students saw the need for a member-based organization that could meet the needs of Muslim lawyers in the New York area.

Beyond providing bar services to attorneys and students (e.g., networking opportunities, career development events, mentorship programs, news and job announcements, etc.), MuBANY provides guidance to local Muslim community organizations on civil rights issues and not-for-profit matters and works with a variety of

bar associations on educational and diversity initiatives.

In recognition of its work in educating community organizations on legal and financial best practices, MuBANY received the New York State Conference of Bar Leader's 2010 Bar Leaders Innovation Award.

Favorite Meeting Place: The law firms of Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP and Debevoise & Plimpton LLP have been extraordinarily generous to our organization. In addition to holding monthly board meetings at these firms, MuBANY has held several events at their offices.

Most Popular Outing / Social Event: Beyond our Annual General Meeting, our most popular social event is our annual "iftar." An iftar refers to the evening meal when Muslims break their fast during the Islamic month of Ramadan. This event, which attracts both old faces and new, is a festive occasion that allows law students and lawyers the opportunity to network in a relaxed and fun setting. We hold the event at a halal restaurant in New York

City and our tickets sell out every year. This year's iftar was August 9.

In tandem with the iftar, MuBANY organizes a Ramadan toy drive with a local community organization. The end of Ramadan culminates with the joyous holiday of Eid ul-Fitr, and through the toy drive our members purchase gifts for disadvantaged children in South Brooklyn.

Most Pressing Concern Regarding the Legal Profession: MuBANY's top priority is making sure that the legal field continues to diversify and better reflect the demographics of our country. We need to remember that diversity refers not only to race, gender, national origin and sexual orientation, but also to religion.

A growing number of Muslims are practicing law at a time when American Muslims in general have come under intense scrutiny. As a bar association, we want to make sure that these lawyers—and all diverse lawyers—feel able to excel in their practice while being proud of their identity.

If we had no budget restrictions, the project / initiative MuBANY would take on: Our strength comes from our membership. If resources were unlimited, we would launch a campaign to reach out to every Muslim lawyer in New York and find out how our bar association can better serve them. Like

other minority bar associations, MuBANY is well known in certain legal and student circles, but there are many Muslim lawyers in the community who may not be aware of us or who might not appreciate the benefits of joining a bar association.

The membership has helped to improve the association: As a small bar association with no staff and an all-volunteer board of directors, we would be nothing if it were not for the energy and dedication of our members.

Aside from our elected officials, our members have improved our association by taking the lead on our various initiatives. For example, members have spearheaded interfaith efforts with professionals of other religious traditions. They have helped research and draft documents on topics ranging from law enforcement accountability to the religious accommodation of Muslim attorneys. They also have been active participants in our annual election monitoring efforts that MuBANY organizes with the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. They have helped the board run events and have provided valuable feedback on how the organization can better serve their needs. ♦

The Bar Around The Corner is a project of the New York State Conference of Bar Leaders, www.nyscbl.org.