

**Canadian Arab Institute's Inaugural Policy Forum:
Experiences, Challenges and Opportunities for Canadian Arabs**

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS—DEADLINE EXTENSION

The Canadian Arab Institute (CAI) will host a policy forum in Toronto on June 2, 2012, the first in a series that will explore issues that impact the life experiences of Canadian Arabs. Short 15-20 minute presentations will be presented for discussion to a diverse audience of community members, academics, activists and organizers. Following the forum, papers may also be developed into policy briefs, and/or published on a forthcoming CAI website.

The CAI is currently accepting abstracts (no longer than 500 words) for papers for this policy forum. Submission guidelines are found below.

There is a critical lack of research and published materials on the experiences of Canadian Arabs, even though more momentum has been emerging in recent years. Canadian-Arab initiated studies of statistics relating to Canadian-Arabs, for example, are largely outdated and last studied in 2001.¹ *Statistics Canada* maintains an archive of data about the “Arab community in Canada” but lacks information about the attitudes and experiences of the Canadian Arab community that Khouri’s study documented well (e.g. with regards to Canadian Arab attitudes or opinions toward Canadian foreign policy and to the ways Canadian Arab communities perceive their socio-cultural and political roles in Canadian society). Moreover, little has been written that documents specific issues, such as: the challenges of low-income Canadian-Arab families in relation to government policies around social welfare and social services; Canadian-Arab women’s experiences in the media and in accessing government funding (for women’s shelters and organizations, for example); Canadian-Arab youth's access to education and employment; Canadian-Arab experiences with recently changed immigration policies; the experiences of new Canadian-Arabs and economic and social challenges they face; and the experiences of Canadian-Arab communities with respect to discrimination and profiling. In addition, big gaps remain when it comes to examining Canadian-Arab cultural production or the dimensions of political engagement. These are just a few of the issues CAI seeks to study, research, document and collect in the interests of creating a rich national database available to all Canadian institutions as a resource. CAI is also interested in producing this research as accessible policy briefs intended for Canadian politicians and policy makers.

For the purposes of the policy forum to be held in June 2012, CAI seeks wide-ranging, original, unpublished work that addresses the gaps in understanding the needs and experiences of Canadian-Arab communities. Selected papers will be presented in panels followed by a community town-hall during which CAI will seek more ideas for future research and commentary from the Canadian-Arab community at large. Papers on issues, ranging from foreign, domestic, social, immigration, cultural and economic amongst other fields are welcome. Presentations selected may be used following the forum to write policy briefs (of approximately

¹ See: Khouri, Raja G. *Arabs in Canada-Post 9/11*. Toronto: G7 Books. 2003.

1000 words) that outline the author's methodology and impart directed recommendations to government officials and policy makers.

Proposal Submission Guidelines

Please include the following details in your submission:

- Name, title and contact information (including email)
- Brief bio (no more than 200 words) explaining your interest and background in dealing with the research topic of your choice
- Proposed topic and sub-themes to be explored in your paper
- Potential relevance to policy recommendations if possible
- Research methods informing the production of your paper, including sources of information

Papers will be reviewed by members of CAI's Policy Forum Organizing Committee and selected on the basis of:

- relevance to the experiences of Canadian Arabs
- thoroughness and quality of analysis
- clarity and coherence of form and structure
- accessibility to a wider community audience

Papers making the final selection for presentation at the policy forum will be presented in panel format, receiving comments from selected respondents and questions from audience members. Please note that some of the proposals not selected for presentation at the policy forum will be pursued by CAI for future work and publications. Authors will be contacted about this prospect.

The deadline for submission of proposals is April 28, 2012.

Selected proposals will be confirmed by May 7, 2012.

Please email proposals to: info@CanadianArabInstitute.org with the subject line "Policy Forum." Attachments should be in Word format. Submissions should be one document (i.e. include all required information in one attached document).

Thank you.