

News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 14, 2004**



Contact: **Public Affairs Office**
(614) 466-9063

ISLAMIC CULTURAL DISCUSSION TO TAKE PLACE IN COLUMBUS AMID CONTINUED PROBLEMS NATIONWIDE

Columbus, Ohio – The Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) Executive Director, G. Michael Payton, announced today that the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service (CRS), Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), Columbus Community Relations Commission and OCRC will co-host a seminar to discuss the Islamic culture in America on April 20, 2004, 9am to 1pm at the Ohio Civil Rights Commission.

“There is a lot of misinformation out there about Muslims, so what we hope to accomplish from this event is to educate the public, particularly law enforcement agencies, on what Muslim culture is and that it is an integral part of the American fabric” said Ahmad Al-Akhras, President of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Ohio).

“The Ohio Civil Rights Commission is always happy to bring together diverse communities with government agencies in our quest to eliminate intolerance and discrimination. Hopefully, the continuation of these dialogues will lead to awareness,” said Christia Alou, Director of Public Affairs for OCRC.

The Department of Justice Community Relations Service is the “peacemaker” federal entity for community conflicts and tensions arising from differences in race, color and national origin

“CRS is proud to cosponsor this cultural diversity program with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission to increase communication and understanding between the Arab and Muslim community and law enforcement in Columbus, Ohio. CRS has sponsored several series of diversity programs for community leaders, law enforcement, and federal, state, and local officials in communities across the country with significant Arab and Muslim populations,” said Sharee M. Freeman, Director of Community Relations Service.

The half-day seminar is open to the community, at The Ohio Civil Rights Commission, located at 1111 E. Broad Street Columbus, Ohio. For further information about the OCRC or this event please call the Office on Public Affairs at 1-888-278-7101.

The OCRC receives and investigates charges of discrimination in employment, housing, credit and higher education on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, country of national origin, age, ancestry, disability and families with children.

###