

2013

# National Needs Assessment of Mosques Associated with ISNA & NAIT

Part I: Mosque Leader Survey

A study of mosques that are associated with ISNA or NAIT to determine their strengths, weaknesses, priorities and needs.

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# A NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF MOSQUES ASSOCIATED with Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) & North American Islamic Trust (NAIT)

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This study is a needs assessment of those mosques that are associated with the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and/or the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT). The general purpose of any needs assessment is to determine the strengths, weaknesses, priorities and needs of an institution, and based on the results to make recommendations for strengthening and growing that institution. The goal, therefore, of this needs assessment is to understand mosques in order to propose recommendations for developing mosques. ISNA and NAIT see this study as the first step in their efforts to make mosque development a top priority for themselves and the American Muslim community. Thus, this study was commissioned by ISNA and NAIT to begin the process of better serving mosques by providing support and guidance.

The term “associated” with ISNA/NAIT is admittedly ambiguous, but in general it refers to those mosques that are close to ISNA/NAIT, feel a historical connection to ISNA/NAIT or are organizationally linked to ISNA/NAIT. Mosques were included in the list of mosques associated with ISNA/NAIT if they met anyone of these criteria: (1) a mosque indicated in the US Mosque Study 2011 that it was associated with ISNA, (2) ISNA leaders indicated that a mosque was close to ISNA (a few ISNA leaders were asked to list those mosques that they felt are close to ISNA), and/or (3) the mosque is entrusted with NAIT.

The National Needs Assessment consists of two parts. Part One is the Mosque Leader Survey and Part Two is an in-depth study of three mosques. This document is the report on the Mosque Leader Survey. Part Two of the National Needs Assessment will be published separately.

**Methodology.** Using the criteria for establishing whether a mosque is associated with ISNA/NAIT, a list was generated which included 331 mosques. Of these mosques, 112 were randomly sampled based on their zip code. Mosque leaders—either the president, Imam or board member—were interviewed by telephone from June-August 2013; 112 questionnaires were completed, meeting the standard of  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error. 60% of the sample was mosques entrusted to NAIT.

Throughout this report, the findings from the National Needs Assessment are compared to the results of the US Mosque Study 2011, which was a comprehensive survey of all US mosques (see the three reports from the US Mosque Study 2011 at <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/>).

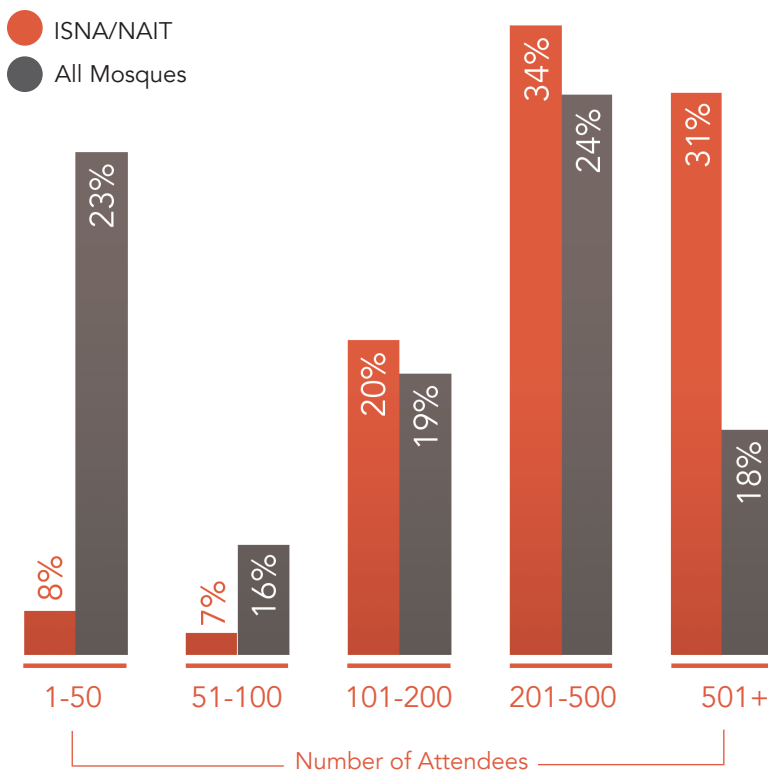
Note: Percentages throughout this report may not total 100% due to rounding.

### Size of ISNA/NAIT Mosques—Jum’ah Attendance

ISNA/NAIT mosques are significantly larger than other American mosques. Average Jum’ah attendance in ISNA/NAIT mosques is 643 while the US Mosque Study 2011 showed that the average Jum’ah attendance at all American mosques was 353.

	Jum’ah Attendance	
	ISNA/NAIT Mosques	All Mosques
Average	643	353
Median	400	173

Almost two-thirds of ISNA/NAIT mosques (65%) have a Jum’ah attendance over 201 attendees but only 42% of all American mosques have attendance over 200.



The vast majority (71%) of all ISNA/NAIT mosques have experienced a growth of 10% or more in Jum’ah attendance over the past five years, as compared to 65% of all other mosques. Approximately 6% of ISNA/NAIT mosques can be classified as mega-mosques (over 2000 attendance at the main worship service).

ISNA/NAIT mosques are actually overflowing for Jum’ah Prayer. The average capacity for the actual musalla area of the mosque is only 467 while the average Jum’ah attendance is 643 (The median musalla capacity is 350 and the median Jum’ah attendance is 400.) A remarkable 75% of all ISNA/NAIT mosques are at full capacity or overflowing for Jum’ah prayer. To accommodate the overcrowded conditions, 16% of ISNA/NAIT mosques hold more than one Jum’ah prayer.

The size of mosques will undoubtedly continue to expand due to the increase of immigration and conversions. Pew estimates that the American Muslim population will experience a 138% increase, going from 2.6 million to 6.2 million by 2030 (Pew: Future of the Global Muslim Population). Immigration figures have rebounded from the lull after 9/11 and now they top about 90,000 per year. Pakistan and Egypt are the source of many of these immigrants, and these countries

typically have a high percentage of people who attend mosques. According to the US Mosque Study 2011, conversions increased by 64% from 2000 to 2011. In 2011 around 30,000 people converted to Islam.

Size of a mosque is one of the most important factors in analyzing a mosque. Larger mosques are much more likely to be engaged in activities and programs, to be women-friendly, and to have staff.

### The Mosque Building

Almost two-thirds of ISNA/NAIT mosques (63%) were built as mosques, compared to 56% of all mosques which were built as a mosque.

	Mosque Structures	
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Build as mosque	63%	56%
Purchased	34%	30%
Rented	4%	14%

Well over one-third of all ISNA/NAIT mosques (36%) are planning to build a new mosque. Of these mosques 29% are mosques that were already build as mosques. Undoubtedly their mosques were built earlier and they have now outgrown their facilities.

### Year Moved to Present Facilities

ISNA/NAIT facilities are slightly older than other mosque facilities. Among ISNA/NAIT mosques, 55% obtained their buildings between 1980-2000 while among all mosques, only 39% obtained their buildings during the same period. This is also reflected in the fact that 54% of all American mosques were built as mosques after 2000 while among ISNA/NAIT mosques 40% of their mosques were built as a mosque since 2000. The American Muslim community is experiencing a building boom since 2000, and although ISNA/NAIT mosques are slightly behind in this boom, the fact remains that a large percentage of ISNA/NAIT mosques have been erected since 2000.

## Decade in Which Mosque Moved into Present Facilities

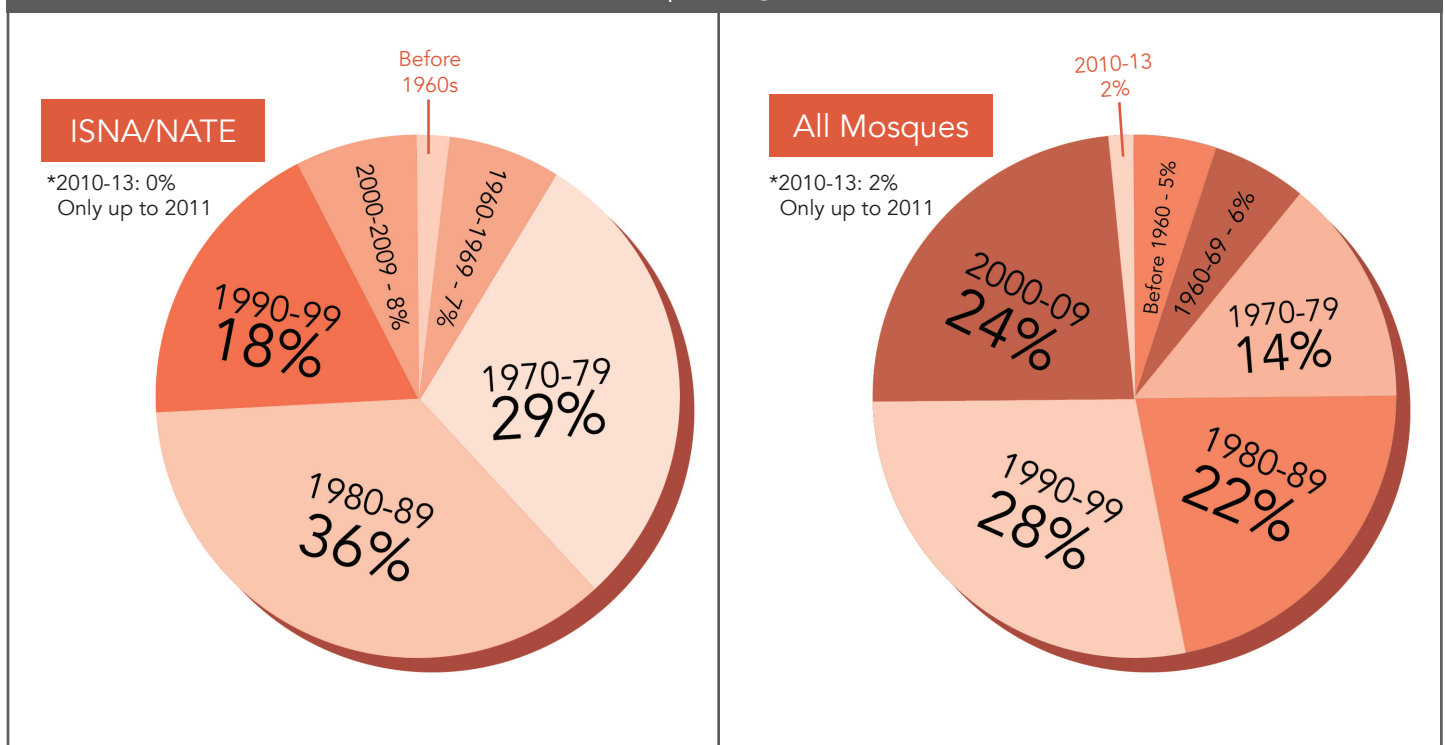
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Before 1960s	0%	1%
1960-69	0%	1%
1970-79	6%	6%
1980-89	26%	13%
1990-99	29%	28%
2000-09	32%	54%
2010-2013	8%	9%*

\* (only up to 2011)

## Year Founded

ISNA/NAIT mosques were founded slightly earlier than the average American mosque. Almost three-fourths of ISNA/NAIT mosques (74%) were established before 1990 as compared to 47% of all American mosques. The US Mosque Report in 2011 reported that the overall number of mosques has increased from 1209 in 2011 to 2106 in 2011—a 74% increase. New mosques are being established but few of these new mosques are associated with ISNA/NAIT.

## Decade in Which Mosque Organization Was Founded



Newer mosques tend to be unaffiliated. Over three-fourths of all mosques (77%) established from 2000-2011 are unaffiliated, compared to those mosques founded in the 1970s where 50% of those mosques are unaffiliated. ISNA and NAIT are not attracting newer mosques to affiliate with them.

### Location

The location of ISNA/NAIT mosques is very similar as the typical American mosque, although slightly more ISNA/NAIT mosques are located in suburbs.

Location of Mosques		
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Small Town	21%	20%
Large City-Downtown area	18%	17%
Large City-Older residential area	28%	36%
Older Suburb	24%	21%
Newer Suburb	9%	7%

As might be expected, smaller mosques tend to be located in small towns; 75% of all small ISNA/NAIT mosques (attendance 100 or less) are located in small towns. Larger mosques tend to be located in the suburbs: 60% of all large ISNA/NAIT mosques (attendance 500 and above) are located in suburbs.

### Region

ISNA/NAIT mosques are better represented in the Midwest, but much less represented in the Northeast. Approximately 35% of ISNA/NAIT mosques are located in the Midwest, but only 15% of ISNA/NAIT mosques are found in the Northeast. The South is experiencing the greatest growth—in 2000 26% of all mosques were located in the South and in 2011 the percentage was 34%. Texas, Florida and Georgia are the driving force behind this growth.

Regional Breakdown of ISNA/NAIT Mosques		
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Midwest	35%	21%
South	33%	34%
West	18%	18%
Northeast	15%	27%

## TAKE AWAY

- » The continued growth of mosques in terms of attendance and construction is an extremely positive indicator. Mosques are doing something right.
- » Increased attendance at ISNA/NAIT mosques will keep the pressure on these mosques to expand and build new mosques. Thus, construction of new mosques will continue.

## QUESTIONS

- » How can ISNA/NAIT support mosques as they engage in construction projects to expand or build new mosques?
- » What are the best practices for overflow at Jum'ah prayer?
- » Why are newer mosques not associating with ISNA/NAIT?

## Ethnicity

ISNA/NAIT mosques, like most American mosques, are extremely diverse. About 95% of all ISNA/NAIT mosques have more than one ethnic group that attends the mosque (a mosque with only one ethnic group is defined as a mosque with attendance of 90-100% of one ethnic group). South Asians and Arabs are the largest groups that attend ISNA/NAIT mosques. ISNA/NAIT mosques, however, have few African Americans that attend their mosques.

Ethnic Breakdown of Regular Mosque Participants		
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
South Asian	42%	33%
Arab	38%	27%
African American	8%	24%
African (sub-Saharan)	6%	9%
Southeast Asian	2%	1%
European (Bosnian, etc)	1%	2%
Trukish	1%	1%
White American	1%	1%
Caribbean	<1%	1%
Iranian	<1%	1%
Latino/Hispanic	<1%	1%

Almost one-third (32%) of ISNA/NAIT mosques are equally attended by South Asians and Arab; among all American mosques, only 16% of mosques are equally mixed with South Asians and Arabs. Few African American mosques are associated with ISNA/NAIT. The absence of African American mosques is a major factor in the overall differences between ISNA/NAIT mosques and all US mosques.



# Ethnicity of Mosques

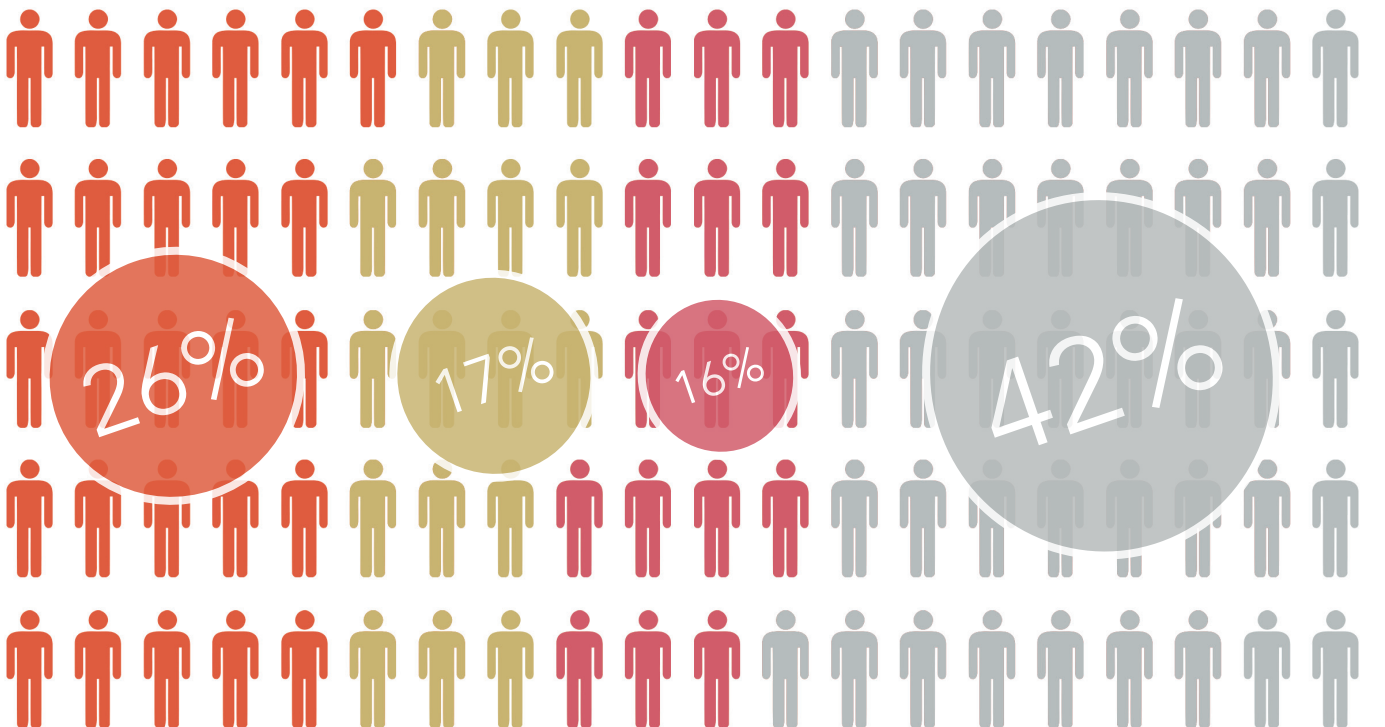
## ISNA/NAIT

● South Asian ● Arab ● Mixed South Asian and Arab ● Other (African American, etc)



## All Mosques

● South Asian ● Arab ● Mixed South Asian and Arab ● Other (African American, etc)



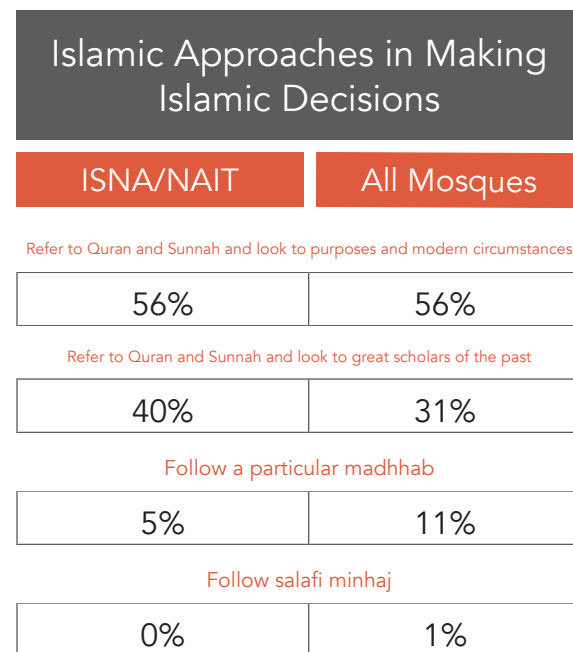
The National Needs Assessment and the US Mosque Study 2011 asked a question to gauge how mosque leaders interpret Islam. The purpose of this question is to generate a rough measure of a conservative-moderate continuum. The question asks which approach the mosque leader uses in making an Islamic decision. There were four choices:

- » “Refer to Quran and Sunnah and follow an interpretation that takes into account its purposes and modern circumstances.” This approach is typically a more flexible approach.
- » “Refer to Quran and Sunnah and follow an interpretation that follows the opinions of the great ulama’ (scholars) of the past.” This approach varies a great deal in application but for the most part it is more conservative than the approach that is more open to the consideration of the purposes of the Law and modern circumstances.
- » “Follow a particular madhhab.” Overall this approach means the mosque leader leans towards following the traditional way of doing things as defined by the madhhab.
- » “Follow the salafi minhaj.” This approach is typically associated with a more literal understanding of Islam.

### TAKE AWAY

- » Ethnic diversity is a badge of honor for Muslims but it is also a challenge. Integrating the various ethnic groups with their own cultural understandings of Islam is a major task for ISNA/NAIT mosques.
- » The various approaches to Islam found among mosque leaders are undoubtedly duplicated among mosque participants, thus making the integration of different understandings of Islam another major task.

Most ISNA/NAIT mosques (56%) mosques follow the more flexible approach of taking into account the purposes of the Law and modern circumstances—the same as other American mosques. Among ISNA/NAIT mosques a close second is the second approach of looking to the great scholars of the past. Few ISNA/NAIT mosques follow the traditional way of a madhhab or the very conservative way of salafi thought.



### QUESTIONS

- » How can ISNA/NAIT increase the number of African American mosques that associate with it?

## Budget

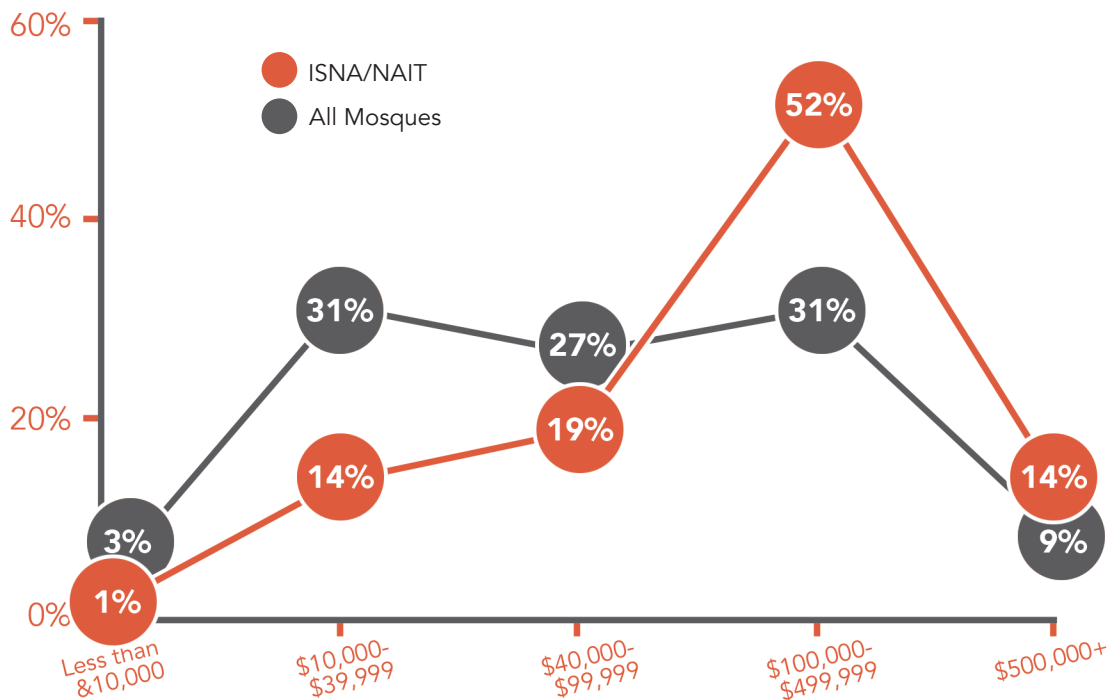
The annual income of ISNA/NAIT mosques is significantly larger than other mosques: the median income of ISNA/NAIT mosques is \$125,000 as compared to just \$70,000 for all US mosques.

The median budget for all religious congregations in the US, based on the 2010 FACT study (see Hartford Seminary, Faith Communities Today), was \$150,000 which is somewhat higher than the figure of \$125,000 for ISNA/NAIT mosques. However the median attendance in the FACT study for all US religious congregations is 108 as opposed to 400 for ISNA/NAIT mosques. In other words, it takes 108 people in a church/synagogue to generate an income of \$150,000, but it takes 400 people in an ISNA/NAIT mosque to produce an income of \$125,000.

Budget of Mosques	
ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
<i>Average</i>	
\$266,005	\$167,600
<i>Median</i>	
\$125,000	\$70,000

Two-thirds of all ISNA/NAIT mosques (66%) have an income of \$100,000 or more; compared to 40% of all mosques.

## Categories of Mosque Budgets



## Giving Rate

Dividing the mosque's income by the number of people who attend Jum'ah, an annual "giving rate" for each attendee can be generated. For ISNA/NAIT mosques the annual giving rate is \$487 per attendee and the median giving rate is \$333. Other mosques have a comparable rate if not better: the average giving rate for all mosques was \$475 and the median giving rate was \$405. In comparison to churches, the giving rate in 2012 for churches was \$763 (Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches).

The giving rate for small ISNA/NAIT mosques is much higher than the rate in larger mosques. For mosques with Jum'ah attendance of 100 or less, the median giving rate is \$643, and for mosques with attendance over 100 the median giving rate is \$344. The small number of attendees in smaller mosques feel a great responsibility to donate to the mosque; fewer attendees in larger mosques feel the need to donate.

## Investments and Insurance

The National Needs Assessment asked questions about investments. Almost one-fourth (24%) of ISNA/NAIT mosques have an endowment fund. The majority of ISNA/NAIT mosques (76%) put aside money for contingency or expansion, but only one-third (33%) of mosques invest money in some type of way. Therefore, two-thirds (67%) of mosques do not invest their money.

ISNA/NAIT Mosque Investment	
Mosque puts aside money and invests it	33%
Mosque puts aside money but does not invest it	43%
Mosque does not put aside money and does not invest it	24%

Many of the ISNA/NAIT mosques (41%) invest their excess money in NAIT's Islamic Center Cooperative Fund, but about one-third (34%) invest in other stock funds, such as AMANA, and one-fourth (25%) have invested in real estate, typically houses in the neighborhood of the mosque.

Over half of the mosques (57%) are willing to consider investing in NAIT Islamic Center Cooperative Fund (22% said no, and 22% didn't know).

In the sample for the National Needs Assessment, a majority of the mosques (60%) associated with ISNA/NAIT are entrusted to NAIT. Only one other mosque was entrusted to a waqf which was not NAIT. Of those mosques that are not entrusted to NAIT, only 11% indicated a willingness to become entrusted to NAIT; 44% said no and 44% didn't know.

Almost all the ISNA/NAIT mosques (97%) have liability insurance. Virtually the same percentage of mosques (96%) indicated a willingness to join a group insurance.

## TAKE AWAY

- » Mosques are significantly underfunded, as compared to other US religious congregations. The median mosque budget of \$125,000 is not sufficient to finance necessary staff and programming. Mosques need to increase their income.
- » The amount of money that each mosque attendee gives is extremely low. The average annual giving rate for an ISNA/NAIT mosque attendee is \$487 but the giving rate of an average church goer is \$763. Mosques need to find ways to increase the giving rate of mosque attendees.
- » Research is needed to better understand the charitable giving patterns of mosque attendees.
- » Mosque leaders need to be educated in investment strategies—mosques have excess money but most do not invest it.
- » NAIT's Islamic Center Cooperative Fund needs to be more widely propagated.

## QUESTIONS

- » What are the best practices for fund raising strategies?
- » How can mosques motivate attendees to increase their donations to the mosque?
- » What low-risk investment options are suitable for mosques?

**Imams**

A remarkable one-third (33%) of ISNA/NAIT mosques do not have an Imam, compared to 19% of all mosques.

The difference between ISNA/NAIT mosques and other mosques is that among mosques that are best able to hire an Imam (Jum’ah attendance between 201-500 and income of \$100,000-\$499,999) ISNA/NAIT mosques are much less likely to have an Imam. Approximately 40% of ISNA/NAIT mosques with Jum’ah attendance between 201-500 people do not have an Imam, compared

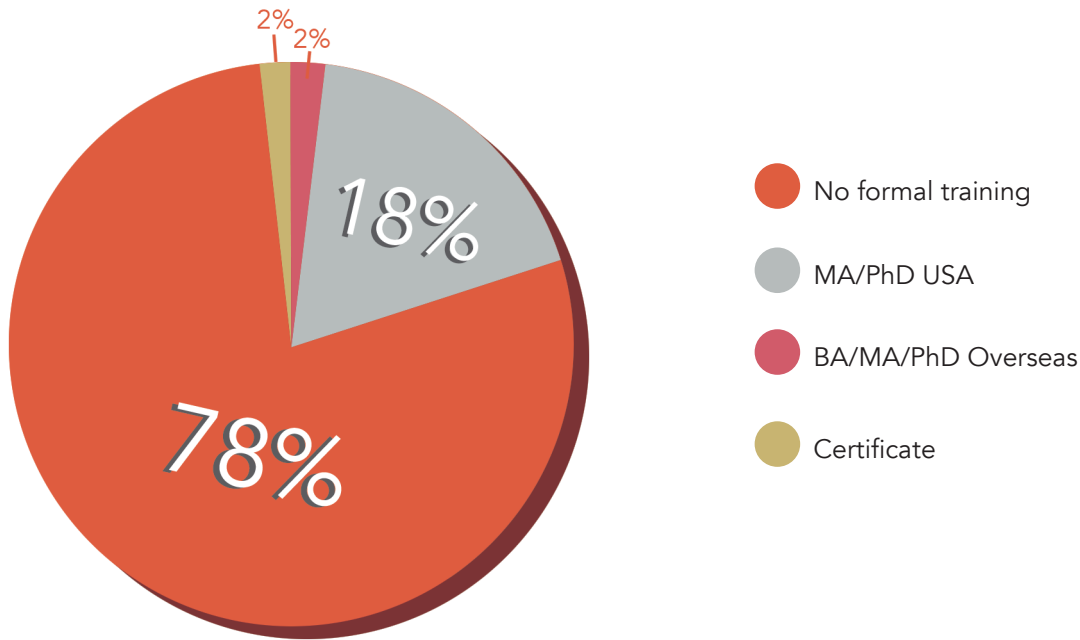
to 12% of all mosques. Of those mosques with a budget of \$100,000-\$499,999, 31% of ISNA/NAIT mosques do not have an Imam, compared to 13% of all mosques. The reluctance to hire or appoint an Imam is probably due to the thinking expressed by many ISNA/NAIT mosque leaders that they are uncomfortable about hiring or appointing an Imam who might be unfamiliar with American mosques and therefore unprepared to serve American Muslims.

Most Imams in ISNA/NAIT mosques (60%) have a formal degree in Islamic Studies. Almost 24% have a certificate, which in most cases certifies that they have memorized the entire Qur’an. Only 15% have no formal training.

	Formal Islamic Training of All Imams	
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
No formal Training	15%	43%
Certificate	24%	9%
BA Overseas	38%	33%
MA/PhD Overseas	20%	12%
MA/PhD USA	2%	3%

The percentage of formally trained Imams is even higher among full-time, paid Imams: 80% of these Imams have a formal degree. When ISNA/NAIT mosques hire an Imam, they typically hire someone with a formal Islamic degree.

Islamic Education of Full-Time Paid Imams



The percentage of formally trained Imams is even higher among full-time, paid Imams: 80% of these Imams have a formal degree. When ISNA/NAIT mosques hire an Imam, they typically hire someone with a formal Islamic degree.

Where Imams Received their Islamic Degree (BA/MA/PhD)

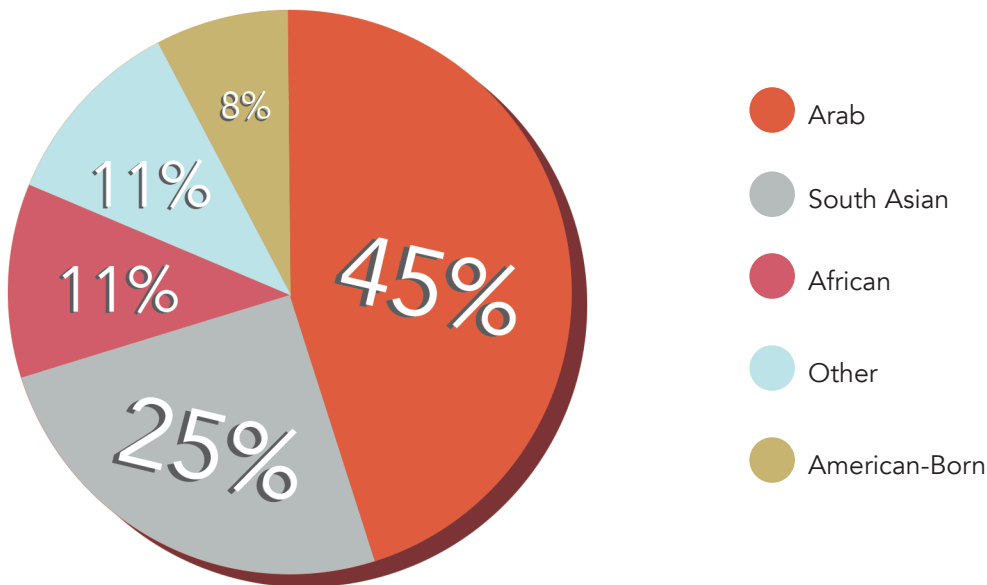
- 1. Egypt 44%
- 2. Saudi Arabia 16%
- 3. India 11%
- 4. Pakistan 9%
- 5. Syria 4%
- 6. USA 4%
- 7. Other countries 12%

Areas of the World Where Imams Received their Islamic Degree

- 1. Middle East 71%
- 2. South Asia 20%
- 3. Other 6%  
(Turkey, South Africa, England)
- 4. USA 4%

Almost half of ISNA/NAIT mosques (49%) have a full-time, paid Imam—compared to 43% of all

## Ethnic Origins of Full-Time Imams



Almost half (47%) of all Imams in ISNA/NAIT mosques, who were born outside America, arrived to America after 2000—the exact same figure for all US mosques. The average number of years that an Imam has been in America is 17 years and the median number is 14 years.

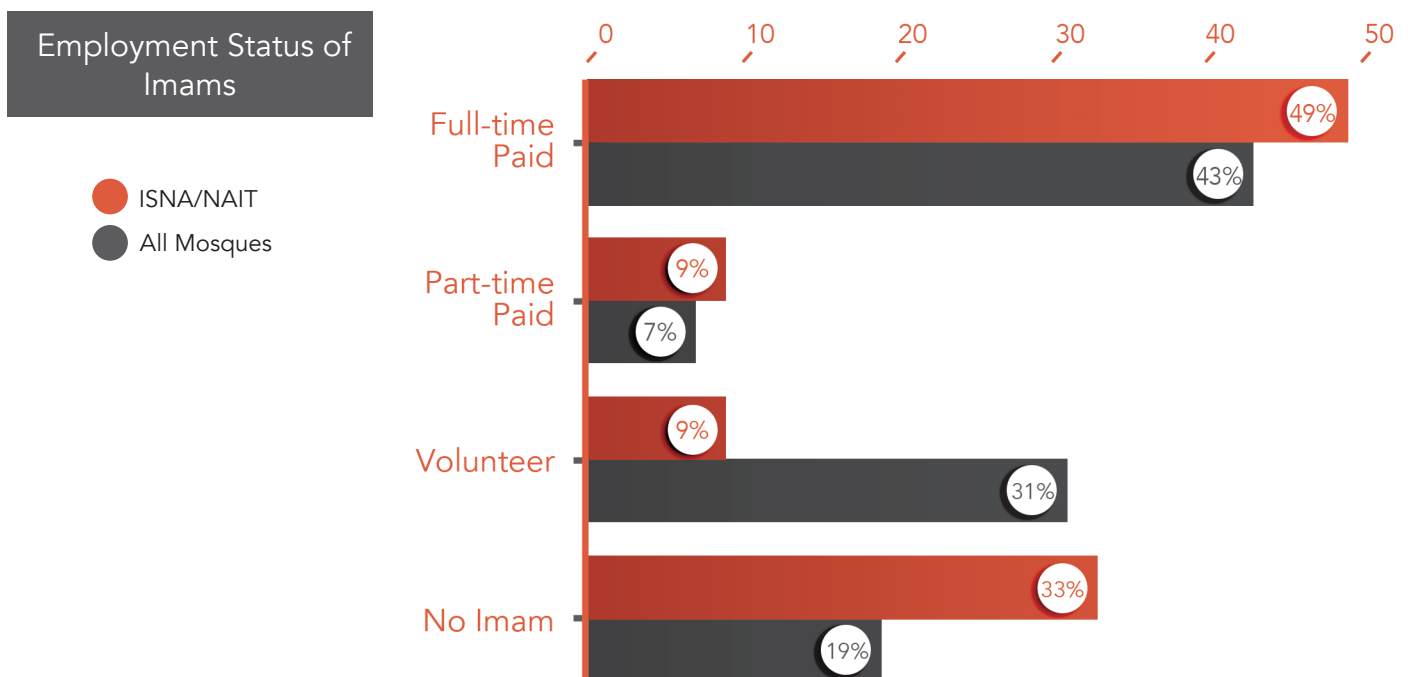
	Year Imam Arrived to America	
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
2010-2013	4%	4%
2005-2009	10%	20%
2000-2004	33%	23%
1990-1999	29%	31%
1980-1989	20%	19%
Before 1980	4%	4%



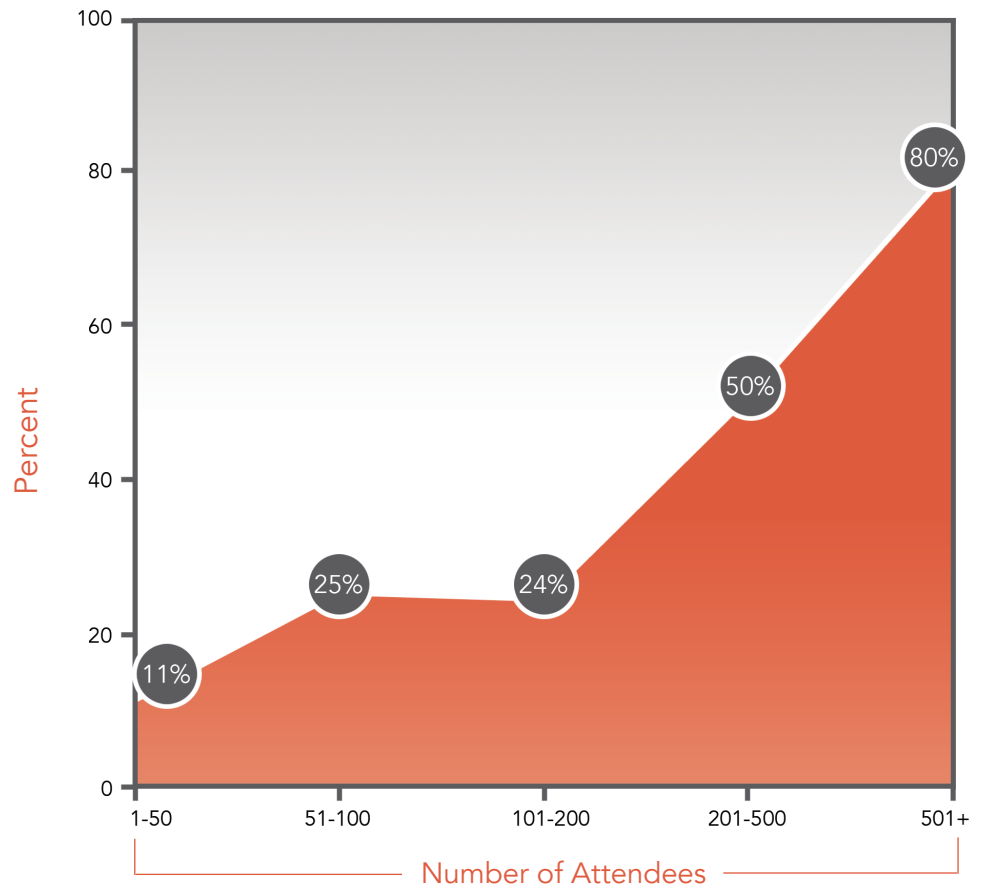
Approximately 70% of Imams in ISNA/NAIT mosques took their position since 2000, 53% since 2005. Similar figures exist for all Imams. The average number of years that an Imam has been on the job is 11 years and the median is 8 years.

	Year Imam Took Position	
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
2010-2013	21%	15%
2005-2009	32%	37%
2000-2004	17%	16%
1990-1999	20%	20%
1980-1989	7%	9%
Before 1980	3%	3%

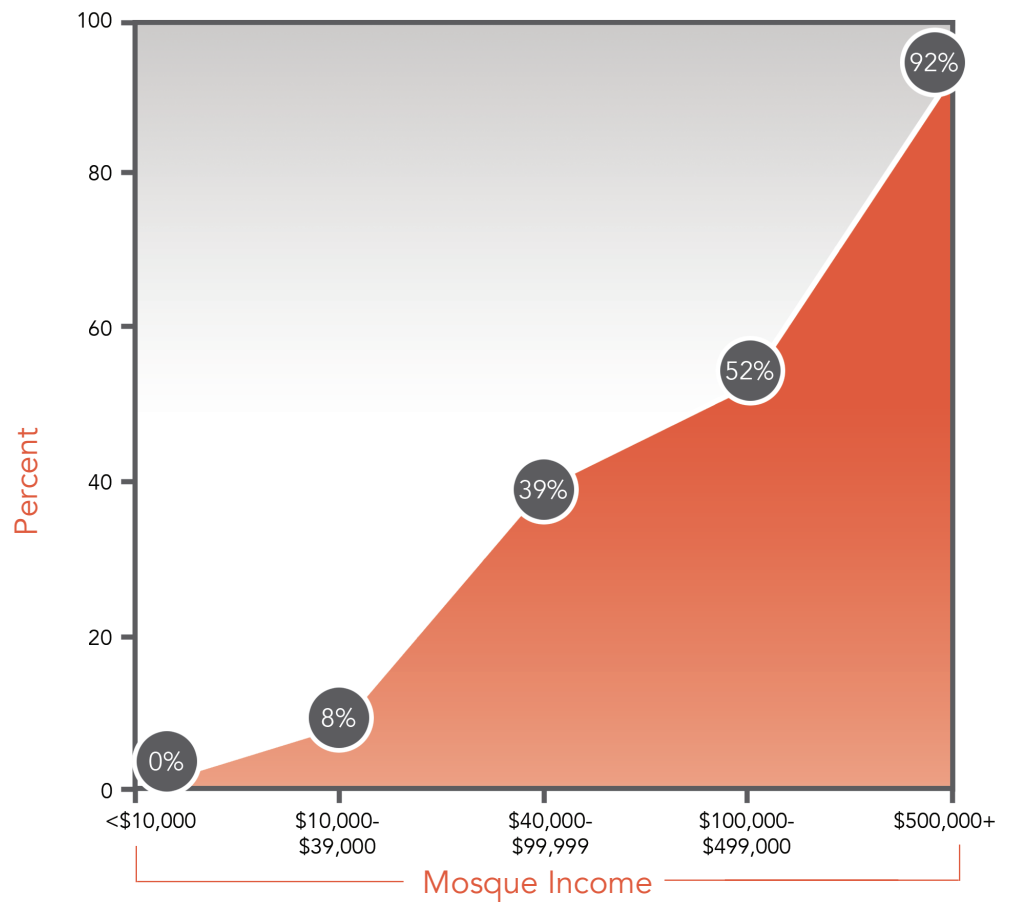
Almost half of ISNA/NAIT mosques (49%) have a full-time, paid Imam—compared to 43% of all mosques. These figures are far below other religious congregations in America where 71% of all congregations and 90% of mainstream churches have a full-time, paid pastor.



Jum'ah Attendance and Full-Time, Paid Imam



Mosque Income and Full-Time, Paid Imam



## Imam and Health Insurance

The National Needs Assessment asked mosque leaders if the mosque provides health insurance for their Imam: 62% indicated that they do provide health insurance (this figure includes those mosques that give the Imam extra money so that they can buy their own insurance). In comparison the Southern Baptist Convention reported in 2012 that 64% of their churches provide health insurance for their pastor.

([http://www.guidestone.org/NewsRoom/NewsReleases/2012/2012Sept27\\_CompStudyBeatingInflation](http://www.guidestone.org/NewsRoom/NewsReleases/2012/2012Sept27_CompStudyBeatingInflation))

## Mosque Staff

Over half of all ISNA/NAIT mosques (58%) have at least one full-time, paid staff. Overall ISNA/NAIT mosques are better staffed than all US mosques, but the difference is not great.

	Full-Time Staff	
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
No full-time paid staff	42%	50%
1 full-time, paid staff	22%	31%
2 full-time, paid staff	15%	10%
3 full-time, paid staff	12%	5%
4 or more full-time, paid staff	10%	5%

The Imam is the most likely full-time employee and the next most likely full-time employee is a custodian.

	Percentage of All Full-Time Staff	
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Imam and Assistant Imams	45%	54%
Administrative Staff	13%	16%
Program Staff	8%	5%
Secretarial Staff	9%	6%
Custodial Staff	21%	19%
Other	3%	2%

## TAKE AWAY

- » Mosques are significantly understaffed in comparison with other US religious congregations. Only about half (49%) of ISNA/NAIT mosques have a full-time, paid Imam—compared to 71% of other religious congregations. Research is needed to determine the reasons behind this low number of full-time, paid Imams.
- » Only 58% of ISNA/NAIT mosques have any full-time, paid staff. Few mosques have program staff such as youth directors. Mosque growth is undoubtedly handicapped by dependence on volunteers.
- » Full-time, paid Imams are not prepared to serve American mosques—92% were born outside America and 96% were trained outside America. ISNA/NAIT must work with other organizations to supplement the training of existing Imams. Mosques need to require and facilitate their Imams obtaining necessary training.
- » Some mosque leaders indicated a frustration in finding appropriate Imams. Mosques need help in identifying and hiring Imams who are competent in leading an American Mosque.

## QUESTIONS

- » What is the model Imam for the American Muslim context?
- » What are the areas of expertise that an Imam should be trained in?
- » What kind of orientation is needed for an Imam who comes from abroad?
- » What governance model facilitates a better outcome for an Imam's presence?

## Constitution

Virtually all of ISNA/NAIT mosques (99%) possess a written constitution or bylaws.

## Board of Trustees and Executive Committees

Approximately 62% of ISNA/NAIT mosques have both a board of trustees and an executive committee. About 34% have only an Executive Committee which runs the affairs of the mosque. Whether a mosque has a board of trustees is clearly associated with the size of the mosque. Larger mosques tend to have a board and small mosques tend not to have a board. Of the mosques with Jum’ah attendance over 500, 86% of them have a board, whereas mosques with attendance under 50, only 11% of them have a board.

Almost two-thirds of ISNA/NAIT mosques (65%) hold elections for their board and executive committee (mosques that have only an executive committee are counted in this group). Some mosques elect a portion of their board, and a portion of their board is permanent—these mosques were counted

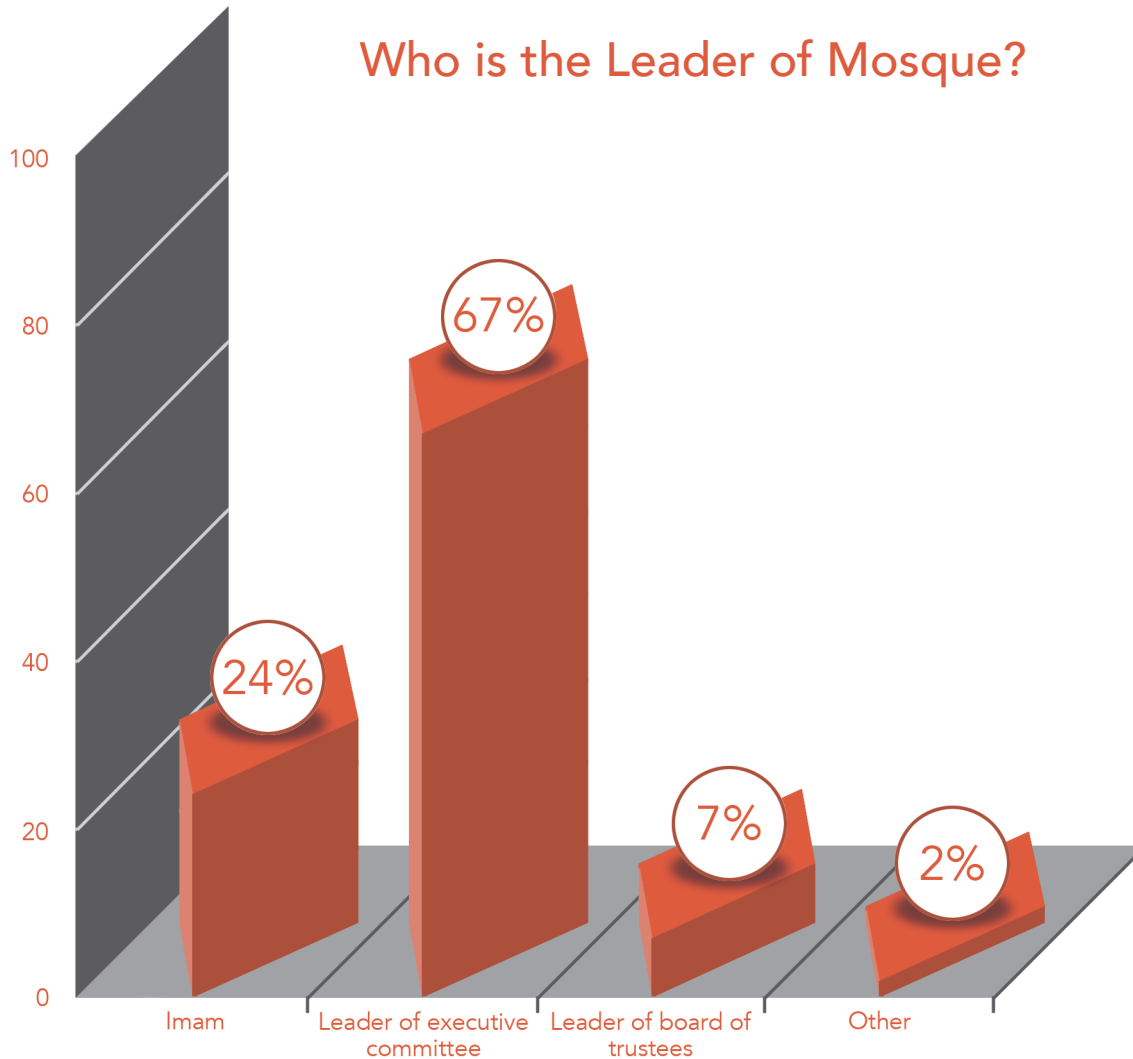
in this category. In 12% of the mosques, the board is not elected but the executive committee is elected. In these cases, the usual explanation is that the board is composed of founders or the elders of the community, and the board appoints its own members. In 11% of the mosques, the board is elected and then the board appoints the executive committee, so there is no election for the executive committee. A similar arrangement is found in 2% of the mosques, where the board is elected and it then hires staff to run the mosque. In 11% of the mosques neither the board nor the executive committee is elected. Very small mosques (Jum’ah attendance under 50) have a greater tendency not to have any elections. The largest mosques (Jum’ah attendance over 500) have a greater tendency to have boards that appoint an executive committee or hire staff.

## Models for Board and Executive Committee Elections

Both Board and EC are elected	65%
Board not elected and EC is elected	12%
Board is elected and EC is appointed by Board	11%
Neither Board and/or EC are elected	11%
Board is elected and staff is hired	2%

## Leader of the Mosque

In almost two-thirds of ISNA/NAIT mosques (67%) the leader of the executive committee is considered the leader of the mosque. In only 24% of mosques is the Imam considered the leader.



In mosques that have an Imam and a President/Chair, the President/Chair in most cases is considered the leader. The Imam in ISNA/NAIT mosques is less likely to be considered the leader as compared to other mosques. A primary reason for this difference is that African American mosques tend to have the Imam as the leader.

### Who is the Leader — Mosque Leadership and the Imam

	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Imam	24%	54%
President/Chair/Director—mosque has Imam	44%	26%
President/Chair/Director—no Imam in mosque	33%	19%

In 97% of ISNA/NAIT mosques, the governing body is considered the final decision maker in the mosque.

### Final Decision Maker

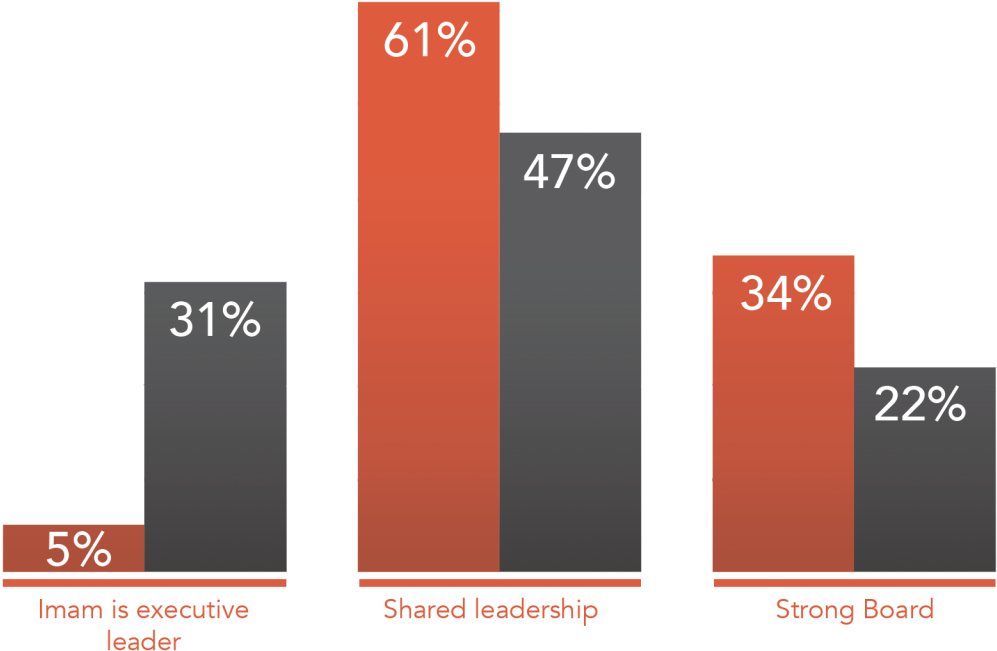
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
President/Chair	4%	6%
EC/Board	97%	69%
Imam	0%	25%

To understand better the relationship of the Imam to the board/executive committee, the question was asked (1) whether the Imam is in charge of all aspects of the mosque—this is the strong Imam model where the Imam is the executive and religious leader of the mosque; or (2) whether the functions of the mosque are split such that the board/EC runs the administrative aspects and the Imam runs

the religious and educational aspects—this is the shared model of leadership between the Imam and board/EC; or (3) whether the board dominates all aspects, and the Imam has a limited role of simply leading prayers and conducting some classes—this is the strong board model. The results show that close to two-thirds of ISNA/NAIT mosques (61%) prefer the shared model.

### Governance Model

- ISNA/NAIT
- All Mosques



Another model for shared leadership, which is possibly an emerging model in the future, is where the board hires staff to handle the administrative aspects of the mosque instead of being handled by a volunteer executive committee.

### Diversity of Board

Almost three-fourths of ISNA/NAIT mosques (73%) have young adults that serve on the board or executive committee, as compared to 55% of all mosques. South Asian mosques do the poorest in having young adults on their board: 67% of South Asian mosques have young adults as compared to 83% of Arab mosques.

ISNA/NAIT mosques were also asked if women serve on their board or executive committee. Approximately 59% of mosques indicated that women do serve on their

board or executive committee. Mosques that have young adults on their board or executive committee are not more likely to have women on their board or executive committee—and vice versa. In the case of women, Arab mosques are the least likely to have women on the board: only 45% of Arab mosques have women on the board as compared to 67% of South Asian mosques.

### Members

Most mosques have membership—86% of ISNA/NAIT mosques indicated that they have mosque membership. Mosques that don't have elections are typically the mosques that do not have membership: 83% of mosques, which don't have elections, don't have membership. Mosques with Jum'ah attendance under 50 people are most likely not to have membership (63% of mosques with attendance under 50 do not have membership). Undoubtedly smaller mosques do not feel the necessity to have formal membership since there are only a few people who participate in the mosque.

The average number of members in an ISNA/NAIT mosque is 262 and median number is 180. Comparing this figure to Jum'ah attendance and Eid attendance, the number of members is 41% of Jum'ah attendance (the median figure is 45%) and membership is 10% of the Eid attendance (the median figure is 18%).

	Members	Jum'ah Attendance	Eid Attendance
Average	262	643	2721
Median	180	400	1000



## Committees

Most mosques have committees: 86% indicate that they have committees. The average number of committees is 6 and the median number is 5. The number of committees is directly related to size: larger Jum'ah attendance equals more committees.

## Conflict

Almost two-thirds of ISNA/NAIT mosques (64%) have experienced some type of conflict within the past five years, but only 31% of the mosques experienced serious conflict which included some attendees or leadership leaving the mosque. In the 2000 FACT study of all US religious congregations, the level of conflict in congregations was slightly higher than mosques—75% of congregations experienced some level of conflict but only in 25% of the congregations was the conflict serious.

	Conflict within Mosques	
	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
No conflict	35%	51%
Yes not serious	33%	21%
Yes people left	31%	28%

Conflict does seem to affect the growth, size or income of the mosque. Conflict also is not associated with any of the various aspects of the mosque, such as organizational structure, board diversity, presence of an Imam, Islamic approach, etc. The only small indicator was that Arab mosques are more likely to experience serious conflict than South Asian mosques: 42% of Arab mosques reported serious conflict while only 24% of South Asian mosques had any serious conflict.

### TAKE AWAY

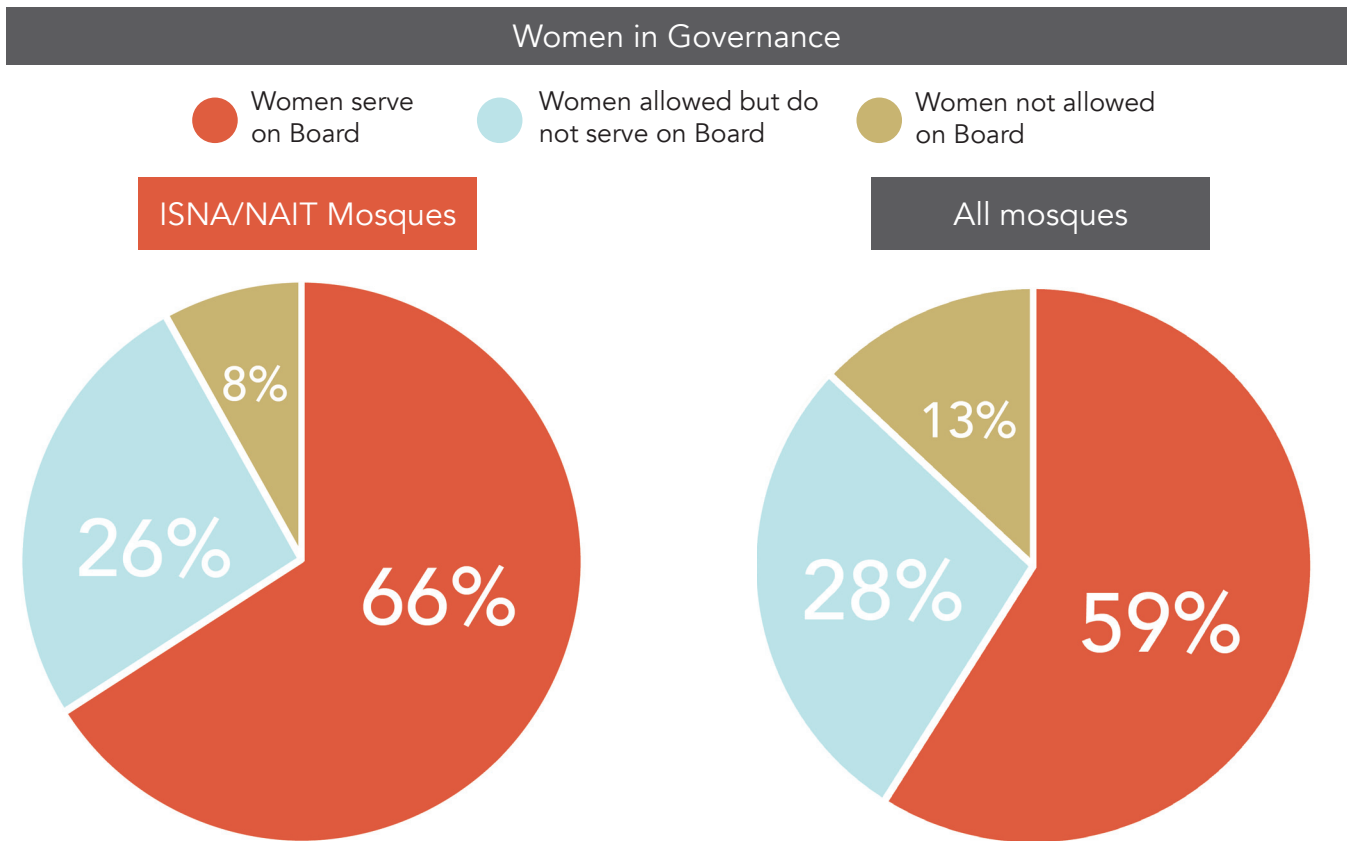
- » ISNA/NAIT mosques have largely adopted a democratic model of governance, involving elections for mosque leadership.
- » There are many governance models in ISNA/NAIT mosques, and there is a need to develop a consensus of which model works best for American mosques.

### QUESTIONS

- » Who should be the leader of the mosque?
- » How can mosques increase diversity in their mosque leadership?
- » What role should membership play in the mosque?

Overall ISNA/NAIT mosques are slightly more women-friendly than other US mosques.

Two-thirds of ISNA/NAIT mosques (66%) have women serving on their mosque board or executive committee as compared to 59% of all mosques.



Ethnicity and Islamic approach are apparent factors in women’s involvement in governance. Arab mosques are the least likely to have women involved in governance, and mosques that are mixed with South Asian and Arab are the most likely to have women on their board.

Women in Governance and Mosque Ethnicity	South Asian	Arab	Mixed	Other
Women serve on Board	67%	45%	79%	86%
Women allowed but do not serve on Board	28%	35%	21%	0%
Women not allowed on Board	5%	21%	0%	14%

ISNA/NAIT mosques, whose leadership looks to the purposes of the Law, have a greater tendency to have women on their board.

Women in Governance and Islamic Approach		
	Purposes	Great Scholars
Women serve on Board	75%	50%
Women allowed but do not serve on Board	22%	33%
Women not allowed on Board	3%	17%

More ISNA/NAIT mosques have women praying behind a curtain or in another room for daily salah than other mosques: 72% of ISNA/NAIT mosques have a curtain as compared to 66% of all mosques.

Use of Curtain in Daily Salah		
	ISNA/NAIT	All mosques
Yes, mosque uses curtain	72%	66%

For Jum'ah Prayer an even greater percentage of ISNA/NAIT mosques use a curtain: 78% use a curtain for Jum'ah Prayer. The reason why some mosques have a different policy for Jum'ah Prayer is the overcrowded conditions of Jum'ah Prayers, but it is the women who sacrifice instead of men.

The percentage of female attendees at Jum'ah Prayer is roughly the same as all US mosques.

Jum'ah Attendance by Gender		
	ISNA/NAIT	All mosques
Male	75%	77%
Female	19%	18%
Children	6%	6%

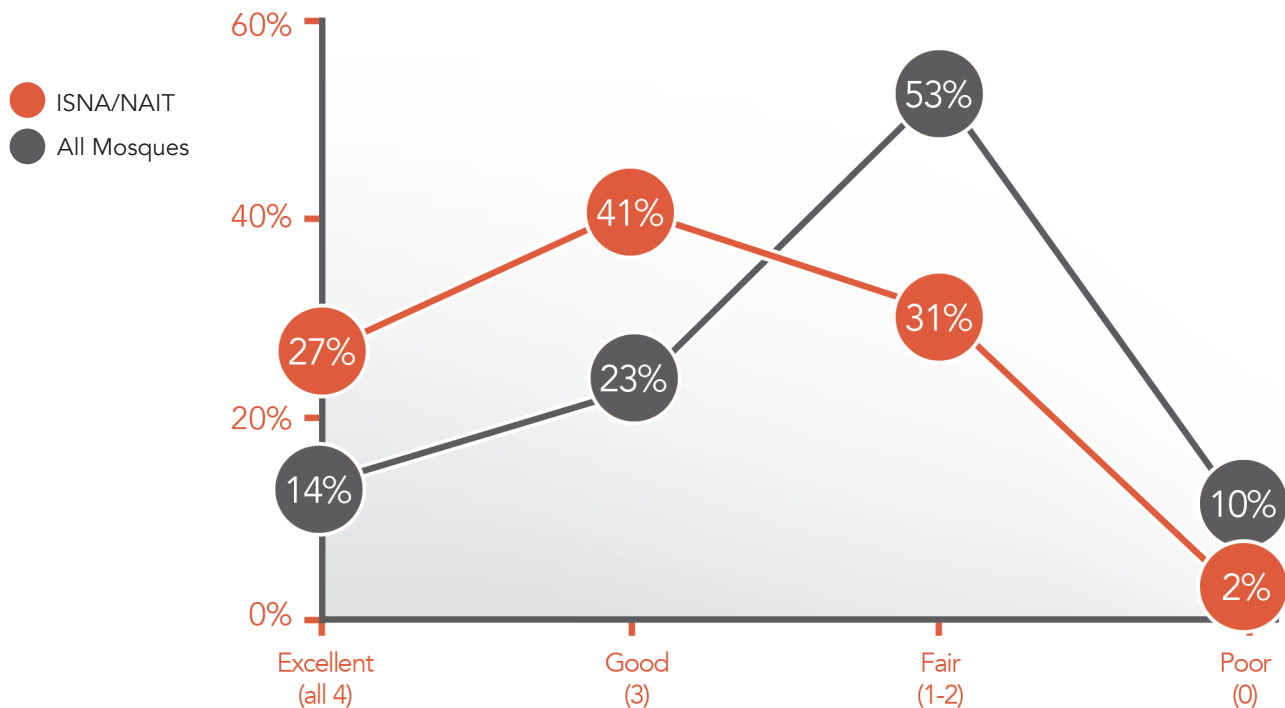
ISNA/NAIT mosques do slightly better than other mosques in having women’s activities and a women’s group.

Women Programming in Mosques		
	ISNA/NAIT	All mosques
Women Activities	80%	71%
Women Group	55%	32%

An index or scale of women-friendly mosques was created for the US Mosque Study 2011. The measures for the index consisted of four variables: female attendance at Jum’ah Prayer was above the average of 18%; a curtain or barrier was not present for daily salah; the mosque had women’s activities and/or a women’s group; the mosque had women on their board or executive committee. A score of “excellent” was

merited if the mosque had all four variables; “good” if it had three of the four variables; “fair” if only one or two; and “poor” if the mosque had achieved none of the variables. Overall ISNA/NAIT mosques scored higher than other mosques: 27% of ISNA/NAIT mosques scored “excellent” and 41% scored “good.” Only 14% of all mosques scored “excellent” and only 23% scored “good.”

### Scale for Women-Friendly Mosques



Size and location seem to be a factor in ISNA/NAIT women-friendly mosques. In mosques with Jum'ah attendance over 201, 33% have a score of excellent, compared to 15% of mosques with attendance below 201. In mosques located in newer suburbs, 50% of them have a score of excellent; 33% of mosques in older suburbs have a score of excellent; but only 22% of mosques in small cities or urban areas have a score of excellent. Islamic approach and ethnicity do not seem to be a factor in whether a mosque is women-friendly.

### TAKE AWAY

- » ISNA/NAIT mosques do better than other mosques in being women-friendly, but overall women are marginalized in ISNA/NAIT mosques as they are in other US mosques. In particular attendance is low for Jum'ah Prayer, participation in governance is insufficient and too often women cannot pray in the same musalla as men. ISNA/NAIT mosques need to become more women-friendly.

### QUESTIONS

- » How can mosques increase female attendance at Jum'ah Prayer?
- » How can mosques ensure that women are better represented in mosque governance?
- » What are the architectural models that will create a more women-friendly environment?

ISNA/NAIT mosques have many more activities and programs than other US mosques, undoubtedly due to the larger number of people that attend ISNA/NAIT mosques.

### Daily Salah

91% of all ISNA/NAIT mosques hold all 5 salah in congregation as compared to 60% of all mosques. The average number of people who pray the 5 daily salah in ISNA/NAIT mosques is 191 as compared to 117 in all mosques. All mosques, no matter the size, hold Salah al-Maghrib (sunset prayer) and Salah al-Isha' (evening prayer). However mosques with Jum'ah attendance of 100 or less have the most difficulty in holding Fajr (the morning prayer) and the day-time prayers of Zuhr and Asr.

### Weekend School

84% of ISNA/NAIT mosques hold weekend schools as compared to 76% of all mosques. The average attendance is 150, compared to 107 for all mosques; the median attendance is 100 as compared to 73 for all mosques. Size has a decisive effect on whether a mosque has a weekend school: 59% of mosques with Jum'ah attendance 100 or less do not have a weekend school as compared to 7% of mosques with attendance above 100.

### Islamic Study Circles

87% of all ISNA/NAIT mosques have Islamic study circles. A little over half of mosques have only one circle. Only mosques with Jum'ah attendance of 50 and below are less likely to have an Islamic study circle: over two-thirds of mosques (67%) with attendance 50 and below do not organize a study circle.

#### Number of Study Circles at Mosque

0 Circles	13%
1 Circle	51%
2 Circles	21%
3-4 Circles	14%

Most study circles (45%) have a general topic which simply means that the topic is not set, and therefore changes.

#### Topics of Islamic Study Circles

General	45%
Tafsir	29%
Sirah	9%
Fiqh	8%
Aqidah	5%
Hadith	4%
Other	1%

92% of all Islamic study circles are held weekly.

All ISNA/NAIT mosques (100%) hold community gatherings as compared to 93% of all mosques. Almost two-thirds (65%) of community gatherings are held monthly.

How Often Community Gatherings Meet	
0 Circles	13%
1 Circle	51%
2 Circles	21%
3-4 Circles	14%

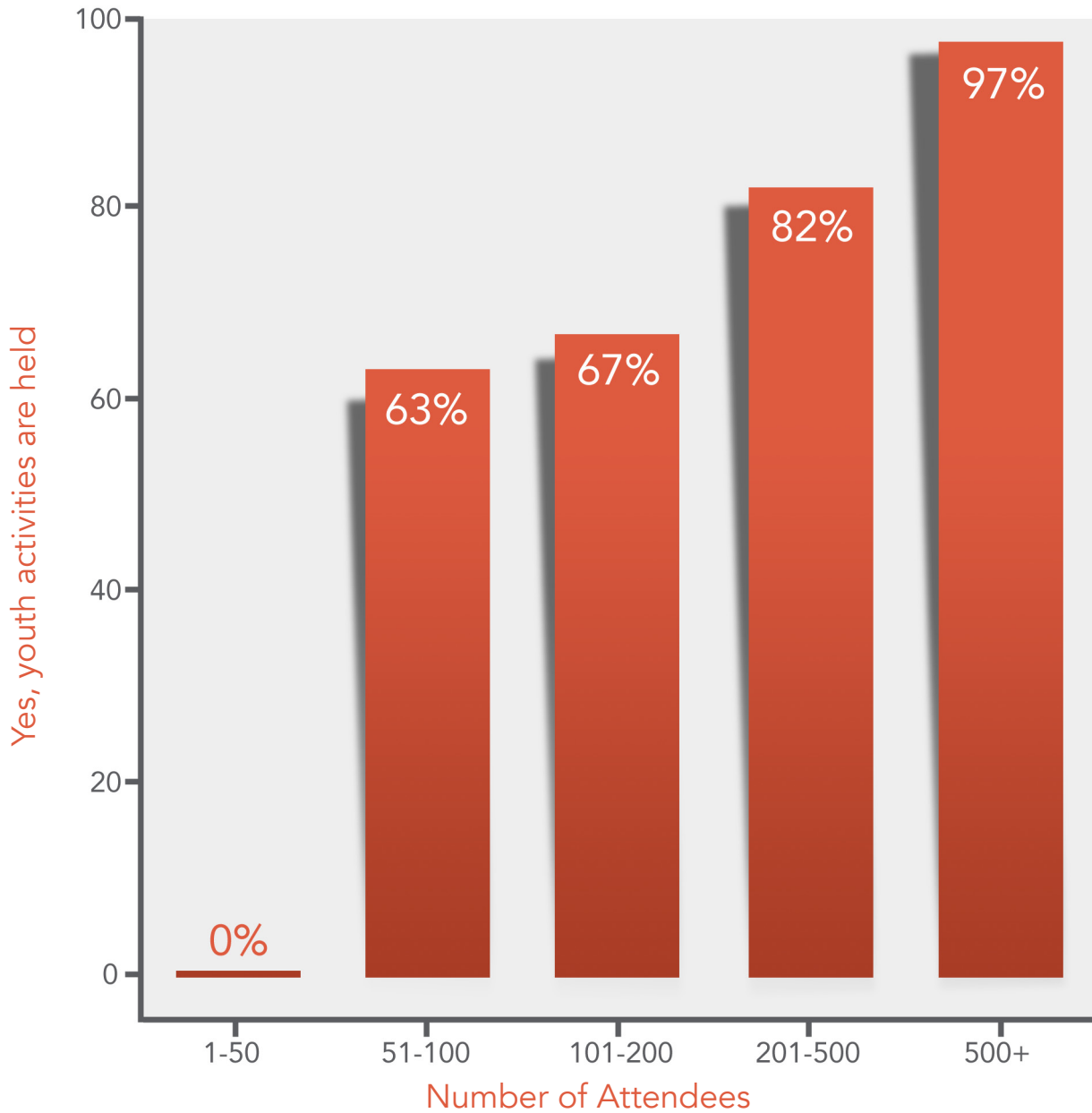
In almost all cases the community gathering includes food and a talk: 93% of them serve food and 94% of them have some type of talk.

Among other mosque educational and group activities, ISNA/NAIT mosques score slightly higher than other mosques. In particular ISNA/NAIT mosques do better in hosting women activities, women groups, youth activities, youth groups and new Muslim programs.

Percentage of Mosques that conduct the following activities	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Women Activities	80%	71%
Youth Activities	75%	65%
Khatirah	68%	46%
Youth Group	57%	32%
Women Group	55%	32%
Quran tajwid/memorization	52%	50%
New Muslim program	44%	23%
Arabic language program	42%	39%
Marriage/parenting program	38%	32%
Young adult program	21%	17%

Size is a determining factor in all these activities: the larger the mosque the greater likelihood that the mosque holds these activities. An example is youth activities: a greater percentage of larger mosques have youth activities

### Youth Activities and Jum'ah Attendance





## Welcoming Program for newcomers

Few ISNA/NAIT mosques (19%) have programs for welcoming newcomers to their mosque. The types of welcoming programs vary greatly. The most common program seems to be information on their web site for newcomers and some written material available in the mosque. Only a few mosques reported that they have people designated in the mosque to proactively identify and welcome newcomers.

## Interfaith Activities

ISNA/NAIT mosques are also more active in interfaith activities: almost three-fourths (73%) held an open house and 95% indicated that they are involved in interfaith activities. Mosque size affects whether a mosque holds an open house but not whether it is involved in interfaith activities. Small mosques are not hampered from being involved in interfaith.

Interfaith Activities	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Open House	73%	63%
Involvement in interfaith activities	95%	79%

Although mosques are involved in interfaith activities, most (41%) are involved only on a quarterly basis.

How often is the mosque involved in interfaith activities?	
Weekly	3%
Monthly	31%
Quarterly	46%
Semi-annual	14%
Annual	2%
Not involved	5%

## Islamic Schools

One-third of ISNA/NAIT mosques (33%) have Islamic schools as compared to 19% of all mosques. Most Islamic schools (44%) are Kindergarten to 8th grade.

Grades Covered by Full-Time Schools Islamic Schools	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Pre-K – K	2%	6%
K-5	29%	28%
K-8	44%	31%
K-12	24%	32%

The average number of students at the ISNA/NAIT schools is 205 as compared to 180 in other schools. The median number is 150 as compared to 133 in other schools.

## Quran Memorization School

Almost one-fourth of ISNA/NAIT mosques (24%) have a Quran hifz school. About one-third (65%) are full-time schools where students meet during the week. The rest are part-time schools: 27% of them meet for a few hours after school

Schedule of Qur'an Memorization Schools	
Weekdays	65%
After School	27%
Weekends	4%
Summer	4%

The average number of students in the Qur'an schools is 61 and the median is 30.

## Social Service and Community Service Programs

Besides zakah and marital counseling, ISNA/NAIT mosques are much more involved in social service activities than other mosques. For example, 70% of ISNA/NAIT mosques are involved in some type of community service activity, as compared to 47% of all mosques. A remarkable 63% have conducted some type of health fair or health education program, compared to 45% of other mosques.

Mosque Social Service Programs	ISNA/NAIT	All Mosques
Zakah	98%	95%
Marital counseling	83%	86%
Food collection, give-away	71%	58%
Community service activity	70%	47%
Health fair, health education	63%	45%
Voter registration	60%	48%
Involvement in community issue	43%	-
Health clinic	27%	-
Financial program on interest-free loan	20%	12%
Food pantry	14%	-
Elderly or home-bound program	13%	12%

Size is not as much a determining factor as it is in other mosque activities and programs. Size is not a factor in whether a mosque does zakah, marital counseling, community service activity, and involvement in community issue or food pantry. In particular, it is surprising that small mosques are just as likely as larger mosques to conduct some type of community service and to be involved in some community issue.

## Pre-Marital Counseling

The National Needs Assessment asked mosque leaders if they require pre-marital counseling: almost all of them (89%) reported that they do not require pre-marital counseling. Many leaders indicated that the Imam will talk to the couple briefly before the marriage. Some indicated that if there is an issue of compatibility, such as a couple from different ethnic backgrounds, they will try to have some type of counseling session before the marriage.

## Media and Politicians

The vast majority of ISNA/NAIT mosques are in contact with the media: 80% reported that they have had contact with the media in the last 12 months. The average number of times that the media has contacted them within the last 12 months is three. However, only 38% of ISNA/NAIT mosques had issued a statement about the Boston bombing, which had recently taken place. Many mosques indicated that other groups in the area had issued statements, such as CAIR or an area-wide Muslim unity council, so they did not feel any need to duplicate these efforts.

Mosque leaders were asked if their mosques had hosted a politician or participated in a political event in the past 12 months: 41% reported affirmatively that their mosques had participated in such activities. In most cases mosque leaders attended an event where politicians were prominent speakers and in some cases politicians visited the mosque.

The National Needs Assessment asked mosque leaders a variety of questions concerning training programs that they might find useful. In all cases the majority indicated that they were not involved in training programs and that such programs would be useful.

Weekend school teachers: only 26% of ISNA/NAIT mosques report that their weekend school teachers receive some type of training. In most cases, the training consisted of a session organized by a licensed teacher; in some cases the Imam would conduct some sessions. The vast majority of mosques (86%) indicated that they would support weekend school teachers receiving training.

Over half of ISNA/NAIT mosques (56%) reported that they have a youth director or someone in charge of youth activities, but only 28% of these youth directors have any training in handling youth groups. Of the mosques that have youth directors, 97% indicated that they would support youth directors getting training.

Mosque leaders report that marital counseling is usually handled by the Imam: in 70% of mosques an Imam does the marital counseling, and in 26% of mosques a mosque leader handles marital counseling. However, only 17% of those Imams or leaders have any training in marital counseling.

Mosque leaders were asked if they would benefit from media training: exactly two-thirds (66%) responded that they would benefit from media training (30% said no and 4% said that they don't know).

Mosque leaders were asked if their board of trustees or executive committee had participated in a board training program: only 9% reported that they had participated in a board training program. The vast majority (81%) indicated that they would benefit from such a training program. Those who said that they did not think that such training was necessary most often remarked that their board is composed of professionals who do not need training.

### TAKE AWAY

- » Most ISNA/NAIT mosques do a good job in offering a wide variety of educational, social service, and outreach activities.
- » The menu of activities for the majority of smaller mosques (Jum'ah attendance 100 or less) includes the daily prayers of Maghrib and Isha', an Islamic study circle, a community gathering, zakah, marital counseling, interfaith involvement and some type of community service activity.
- » Most people involved in mosque activities have no training in that particular activity. One of the more glaring deficiencies is in the lack of training in marital counseling.

## Grading Various Aspects of the Mosque

Mosque leaders were asked “What grade would you give to the following aspects of the mosque?” The grades were, A (4), B (3), C (2), D (1). The following aspects of the mosque are ranked by their grade—the number represents their average grade.

1	The spirit of brotherhood/sisterhood in the mosque	3.18	B
2	Relations between the Imam and mosque leadership	3.15	B
3	Quality of the Jum’ah khutbah	3.07	B
4	Organizational structure of the mosque	3.00	B
5	The Imam	2.98	B
6	The building	2.97	B
7	Interfaith activities, involvement	2.93	B
8	The finances of the mosque	2.90	B
9	Leadership of the mosque	2.89	B
10	The way conflicts are handled within the mosque	2.79	B-
11	Social services offered by the mosque	2.75	B-
12	The spirit of commitment of attendees	2.73	B-
13	Women’s activities, involvement in the mosque	2.65	B-
14	Educational activities for adults	2.62	B-
15	Attendance at mosque events	2.60	B-
16	Involvement in the neighborhood/city	2.58	B-
17	The number of volunteers	2.43	C+
18	Youth activities, involvement	2.36	C+

### TAKE AWAY

- » The spirit of Islamic brotherhood and sisterhood receives the highest score but the spirit of commitment and the number of volunteers receive low scores. Mosque leaders are very satisfied with the brotherhood in their diverse mosques, but this does not translate into commitment and volunteers.
- » In terms of programs, interfaith activities receive the highest grade and youth activities receive the lowest grade. Mosque leaders are most dissatisfied with youth activities.
- » The mediocre grade for most aspects of the mosque indicates that mosque leaders realize the need for improvement.

Mosque leaders were asked the open-ended question “What do you think should be the top three priorities for the mosque?” The percentage represents the percentage of respondents who listed this priority as one of his priorities—for example, 61% of all respondents listed youth as one of their priorities. A sample of the comments are included in each box.

<p><b>1. Increase Involvement, Commitment, and Unity of Attendees</b></p> <p>Increase involvement of attendees; increase attendance; develop sense of community; connect people to mosque; increase people’s attachment to the mosque; getting all people involved including African Americans; increase women and youth participation; mosque not just for Jum’ah; sense of ownership; brotherhood; unity; resolve conflicts; civilized discussion; increasing volunteers; increasing commitment; getting people motivated to become active; sense of mission, purpose</p>	<p>61%</p>
<p><b>2. Youth</b></p> <p>Increase youth activities, programs; improve quality of youth programs; how to bring youth to mosque; improve weekend school; improve full-time Islamic school</p>	<p>61%</p>
<p><b>3. Outreach</b></p> <p>Civic engagement; interfaith; involvement with city/neighborhood; service to general society</p>	<p>25%</p>
<p><b>4. Finances</b></p> <p>Improve finances; improve fund raising; self-sufficiency; endowment; pay off loan</p>	<p>23%</p>
<p><b>5. Education for Adults</b></p> <p>Educational programs for adults; increase Islamic awareness; we need basic understanding of Islam; activities that increase faith (iman)</p>	<p>23%</p>
<p><b>6. Construction</b></p> <p>Build new mosque; expansion of mosque; finish mosque; new building for classrooms; build community center</p>	<p>22%</p>
<p><b>7. Hire Imam and Staff</b></p> <p>Hire paid staff; hire full-time Imam; hire youth director, executive director</p>	<p>19%</p>
<p><b>8. Strengthen the Organization</b></p> <p>Improving the organization; training leadership; human resources; good governance; strategic planning; long-term planning; better communication</p>	<p>18%</p>

9. Social Services Marital counseling; clinic; refugee programs	12%
10. Dawah and New Muslims	6%
11. Sisters Creating a women-friendly mosque	6%

**TAKE AWAY**

- » Almost two-thirds of mosque leaders (61%) indicated that one of their priorities is increasing commitment and involvement of attendees. This same point is the number one challenge that mosque leaders cited. As mosque leaders stated, too many people are content to pray and leave, and as a result there are few volunteers and the sense of community is dampened.
- » The same percentage of mosque leaders (61%) indicated that their priority is youth. This is accentuated by the fact that the mosque leaders give youth programming their lowest grade. There is an urgent concern that youth programs need to improve.
- » Besides youth, the next program priority is interfaith and community involvement, which demonstrates that ISNA/NAIT mosque leaders are committed to outreach to the larger society.



## Priority Ranking of Various Aspects of the Mosque

Mosque leaders were asked to give a level of priority for 15 various aspects of the mosque. Leaders were given the aspect of the masjid and then asked to assign a number, 1 to 4, to that aspect—number 1 being a top priority, 2 a high priority, 3 a medium priority, and 4 a low priority. Responses are ranked from the top-most priority.

1	Increasing the spirit of commitment of attendees	1.23
2	Increasing youth involvement	1.31
3	Increasing spirit of brotherhood/sisterhood	1.34
4	Improving the finances of the mosque	1.44
5	Increasing the number of volunteers	1.46
6	Making the organization more efficient	1.55
7	Increasing attendance at mosque events	1.63
8	Increasing attendance at daily salah	1.70
9	Improving the weekend school	1.72
10	Improving educational activities for adults	1.74
11	Increasing women's involvement in the mosque	1.77
12	Increasing involvement in the general society	1.93
13	Improving the building	1.96
14	Increasing interfaith involvement	2.14
15	Increasing social services offered by the mosque	2.14

### TAKE AWAY

- » Mosque leaders point to “increasing the level of commitment of attendees” as their number one priority—corresponding with the open-ended question about priority where most mosque leaders placed increasing involvement and commitment as their priority, alongside youth. “Increasing the spirit of brotherhood” and “increasing the number of volunteers” are also high priorities
- » Finances are ranked as the fourth priority in this ranking and the open-ended ranking, demonstrating that the need to increase fund raising is a major concern for mosque leaders.

## Challenges Facing the Mosque

Mosque leaders were asked, "What are the greatest obstacles, the greatest challenges that your mosque faces in realizing its goals?" Comments from mosque leaders are in the boxes.

<p><b>1. Lack of Involvement, Volunteers</b></p> <p>Lack of participation; lack of interest, motivation, enthusiasm; inability to attract people; too many on sidelines; people satisfied with coming to mosque and leaving; not prepared to be a community; little sense of community; lack of volunteers; only a few committed people do most of the work; many professionals in the community and they are busy; volunteers not doing their job and not taking job seriously; hard to train volunteers and then they move away</p>	<p>49%</p>
<p><b>2. Differences of Mentality and Madhhab</b></p> <p>Differences between those born overseas and those born in America; gap between generations-old and young; people from overseas more conservative and those from here more progressive; difficult to harmonize; people come to America for the American dream and Islam is not a priority; mentality of exclusiveness; overseas Muslims don't see benefit of reaching out; different understanding of Islam; some don't want to bridge the gap; challenge to integrate; different views of Islam; different groups have their own activities.</p>	<p>39%</p>
<p><b>3. Finances</b></p> <p>Everyone doesn't pay their way; depend on few people; back home view of mosque where few give; entitlement mentality-don't give their fair share; tradition of not giving; tradition of not contributing regularly; someone else will take care of it; dependent on a few donors</p>	<p>35%</p>
<p><b>4. Organizational Difficulties</b></p> <p>Leaders don't know how to run an organization; little experience in non-profits; lack of skill sets; don't know how to work together; tend to be authoritarian; how to disagree and continue to work; inefficiency in governance; we disagree and open another mosque; how to work as team; resistance to change; quality of programs ; difference in organizational vision; different priorities within community; some wanted Imam to run things; people think Imam can do everything; staff not full partner with Board; terms of executive committee too short</p>	<p>29%</p>

<p>5. Education for Adults</p> <p>Educational programs for adults; increase Islamic awareness; we need basic understanding of Islam; activities that increase faith (iman)</p>	<p>23%</p>
<p>6. Construction</p> <p>Build new mosque; expansion of mosque; finish mosque; new building for classrooms; build community center</p>	<p>22%</p>
<p>7. Hire Imam and Staff</p> <p>Hire paid staff; hire full-time Imam; hire youth director, executive director</p>	<p>19%</p>
<p>8. Strengthen the Organization</p> <p>Improving the organization; training leadership; human resources; good governance; strategic planning; long-term planning; better communication</p>	<p>18%</p>

Mosque leaders were asked the open-ended question, "How do you think ISNA or NAIT might help you to grow and strengthen?"

<p><b>1. Provide Guidelines</b></p> <p>Provide guidelines, policies, recommendations, information, advice, standards, models, vision of excellence, road map, resources for how mosques should function; by-laws, administrative functions, fund raising, outreach, how to get people involved, how to live together, relationship between Imam and Board</p>	<p>41%</p>
<p><b>2. Provide Training</b></p> <p>Provide training, seminars, workshops for leadership; training in how to function as mosque; training in fund raising, dawah, prisons, accounting; train Imams, prepare Imams to serve American Muslim; train mosque boards, youth leaders, volunteers; do it online, webinars</p>	<p>31%</p>
<p><b>3. Visit Mosques</b></p> <p>Visit mosques; educate people about what's going on; meet with mosques to share ideas; people from overseas have no idea about existing organizations</p>	<p>21%</p>
<p><b>4. Criticism of ISNA and NAIT</b></p> <p>ISNA and NAIT are not on the ground; not bottom-up; not grassroots; no presence in local mosque; don't provide services; people don't know about ISNA, NAIT; they have hands-off approach; ISNA failed in making affiliates; ISNA becoming too progressive</p>	<p>20%</p>
<p><b>5. Connect Mosques Together</b></p> <p>Connect mosques; provide network for mosques; connect centers to empower them; allow for sharing experiences of those who have succeeded and pass on best practices; need council of mosques; regional leadership councils</p>	<p>19%</p>
<p><b>6. Communicate with Mosques</b></p> <p>Communicate with us; listen to us; you need public relations; need to better consult with local community; provide section of website for mosque leaders to give their view; involve mosque leaders in decision making; ISNA should reflect the views of their constituency</p>	<p>10%</p>

7. Provide Loans	10%
8. Provide Speakers Provide people to do talks in area; provide scholars; provide network of scholars to provide guidance; Fiqh Council needs more visibility in local area; scholars should offer programs in the area	9%
9. Organize Events Organize local, regional events, workshops on family issues, fiqh issues; organize youth programs in area; organize conference, forum in which mosque leaders can think together were we are going as a community;	7%
10. Consulting Services Offer attorney help; conflict resolution; construction assistance; construction manager, web site help, investment assistance	7%
11. Help in Hiring Imam and Staff Help in identifying and hiring Imams; facilitate hiring staff; youth directors	6%
12. Research Find out why some mosques succeed and some don't; more studies like this one; identify issues to focus on	6%
12. Help Raise Funds Help us raise funds; provide data base; give list of good fund raisers	4%

Based on the results of the National Needs Assessment, the following recommendations are proposed as an agenda for strengthening mosques in America.

### 1. Develop a New Vision of a Prophetic Mosque

The number one priority for mosques in America is to develop and propagate a new paradigm for mosques that breaks away from the old-world understanding of a mosque as simply a place of prayer. Mosque leaders indicated numerous times that too many mosque attendees come to pray and then leave, having little sense of mission, community, or financial responsibility. The mosque should be a nexus for the Muslim community where all aspects of the Muslims' life is touched—spirituality, education, social relations, cultural expression and pursuit of justice in the world. A new vision of the Prophetic Mosque is needed, looking back to the dynamic and mission-oriented community of Muhammad (saws) and looking forward to the task of establishing Islam in America.

### 2. Inspire Commitment and Involvement of Mosque Attendees

The highest ranking priority of mosque leaders is “increasing the spirit of commitment of attendees,” and the number one challenge that mosque leaders identified is the lack of involvement and the lack of volunteers of mosque participants. A sense of commitment to a particular mosque needs to be engendered in mosque participants, while maintaining the understanding that Muslims are members of the ummah. Mosque participants need to be inspired with a vision of the Prophetic Mosque, and thereby give more of their time, energy and money to the mosque.

### 3. Improve Finances of Mosque

Mosque attendees do not give to the mosque on the same level as Christians, and as a result mosques have not hired Imams and professional staff to run the mosque and direct programs. Mosques must increase the giving rate of mosque participants and also find new avenues of raising money.

### 4. Hire Imams and Staff

Mosques are largely run by volunteers, and the ability to grow and produce good programming is handicapped by the fact that untrained volunteers do most of the work. Only half of ISNA/NAIT mosques have a full-time, paid Imam. Mosques need to professionalize their operation by hiring competent Imams and staff people. One of the stumbling blocks in addressing this agenda item is the lack of Imams and staff who are trained for the American context. Mosques, therefore, need to support efforts and institutions who aim to train Imams and mosque staff.

### 5. Train Staff and Volunteers

In the absence of trained Imams and staff, mosques must be proactive in supporting and facilitating the training of their volunteers and Imams for the functions that they are responsible to carry out.

## 6. Initiate Youth Programming

Of all the possible activities and programs of a mosque, the top priority is youth programming. In the open-ended question on mosque priorities, mosque leaders placed youth activities and involvement as their number one priority. The challenge is how best to attract youth to the mosque, and how best to inspire and educate them in the ideals of Islam.

## 7. Involve Women

Women are largely marginalized in mosques and as a result a vital human resource is lost. Women are the mothers of the Muslim community, and ideally the mosque should be in partnership with mothers in affecting the youth. In general Muslim women have more free time than men, and the mosque needs to benefit from this important human resource.

## 8. Improve Governance

Mosques operate under different models of governance, and a consensus needs to develop as to which model is best suited for American mosques. Most mosque leaders have little expertise and knowledge in running a mosque and as a result there is a great need to provide training and guidance to mosque leaders.

## 9. Balanced Understanding of Islam

The second greatest challenge that mosque leaders identified is the differences in opinion among the diverse groups within the Muslim community. Mosque leaders made mention in particular of mosque participants who bring ideas of Islam that are based on cultural notions that are out of context in America. Mosques need to be strong advocates of an authentic, balanced understanding of Islam.

## 10. Outreach

An essential function of any mosque is to facilitate Muslims becoming involved in American society—through various avenues of involvement such as educating America about Islam, interfaith, dawah, community service and advocacy for justice.

