



A COMMUNITY-LED IMAM SEARCH PROCESS

REIMAGINING
**MUSLIM
SPACES**

Many American mosques report problems hiring imams who fit the needs of their communities.

CASE STUDY: Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC) Boston, MA

70,000

square-foot
structure



Largest mosque in
New England

2,000

attendees/week



What lessons can be learned from ISBCC's successful search process?

1. Empower the Community

Board members at ISBCC took a back seat and empowered community leaders to drive the imam search.

2. Focus on Capacity-Building

Conscientiously create a search committee that represents the diverse segments of the community.

3. Invest Time and Effort

Although much time and energy were needed to carry out a successful search, the potential long-term benefits were worth the effort.

4. Prioritize Quality

Agree to invest financially in sustainable, high-quality leadership; it is key to the success of the search process.

5. Start with an Assessment

A needs assessment of the community helped guide the ISBCC search process to best reflect what mattered to the community.

6. Solicit Community Feedback

Conduct community forums, surveys, and focus groups to help identify the characteristics of an ideal imam.

7. Select a Search Committee

A committee reflective of the diverse community with a range of relevant expertise designed and led the ISBCC search effort.

8. Communicate

Clearly communicate the process to the community members and provide frequent updates on the progress of the search.

9. Hire Multiple Imams

Many American mosques like ISBCC are large and dynamic. The solution? Hire more than one imam and divide responsibilities into distinct roles.

10. Use Good Judgement

Balance community engagement and transparency with sensitivity for the hiring process. ISBCC solicited community feedback on candidates' performances without initially announcing they were candidates.

11. Go Beyond Interviews

Allow candidates plenty of opportunities to engage with the community outside of formal interviews.

12. Be Professional

Make every effort to be thoughtful, respectful, and efficient during the hiring process, especially during candidate visits.

Interested in reimagining your Muslim space? Visit: www.ispur.org/RMS.