



Countering Anti-Muslim Opposition to Mosque and Islamic Center Construction and Expansion

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDIA, MOSQUE LEADERSHIP, ALLIES, AND POLICYMAKERS

A new toolkit published by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) and Over Zero offers recommendations and resources to understand, preempt, and challenge opposition to mosque and Islamic center construction and expansion.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Journalists

1. Get educated on **covering Muslims objectively**.
2. Be aware of setting norms, and avoid depicting opposition as more prevalent than it is. Instead, tell stories from the local Muslim community and its allies.
3. Highlight the community's self-declared positive value and identity rather than counter allegations made by the opposition. Repeating content that evokes stereotypes creates more familiarity with them.
4. Avoid inflammatory and dehumanizing language in reference to people.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Mosque leadership

1. Build strong neighborhood relationships with business, residents, and civic associations and establish trust and channels of communication.
2. Educate community members and leadership about possible mosque opposition strategies and narratives and local community history.
3. Preempt anticipated legal obstacles.
4. Assemble a strong team of experts from within and outside the Muslim community.
5. Retain the best possible legal representation that befits the nature of the opposition and local setting of the dispute.
6. Honor promises made to neighbors.
7. Develop and offer a concrete path for addressing future grievances.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Interfaith and community allies

1. Build a coalition with community partners, including local businesses, houses of worship, and civic leaders.
2. Build a strong interfaith coalition to stand together for religious freedoms and to demonstrate unity and mutual respect.
3. Be aware of setting norms, and avoid depicting opposition as more prevalent than it is.
4. Avoid inflammatory or dehumanizing language in reference to people.
5. Prepare coalition members for rapid response.
6. Create a messaging plan utilizing the most effective messengers and channels.
7. Use best practices to correct misinformation - be expedient, use positive framing, and avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR City council members and policymakers

1. Build meaningful relationships with local Muslim communities and leaders.
2. Establish direct channels of communications with local Muslims.
3. Reach out to local Muslim communities and leaders to understand issues and confront misinformation.
4. Understand the Islamophobia industry's efforts to create fear and resistance to mosques and Muslims.
5. Learn about anti-Muslim agendas disguised as anti-development arguments for mosque opposition.
6. Pursue factual information on the effects of diverse faith communities and the character and contribution of local Muslim communities.





A new toolkit published by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) and Over Zero offers recommendations and resources to understand, preempt, and challenge opposition to mosque and Islamic center construction and expansion. Because opposition to mosque construction can itself become an accelerant/driver of increased anti-Muslim organizing and narratives in communities, these recommendations also support leaders with preventing escalations in anti-Muslim narratives and organizing from taking hold in their communities.

The full publication serves as a resource for organizations seeking an understanding of the dynamics of anti-Muslim organizing and narratives in opposition to efforts to build or expand mosques and Islamic centers. It focuses on developing an understanding of the challenge and how it manifests as well as providing case studies and suggestions for how communities can proactively navigate these dynamics to prevent anti-Muslim narratives and organizing from interfering/taking hold. Find the full publication [here](#).