



# Muslim Faith Engagement Toolkit

October 2015 | By Min. David Street

Enroll America’s mission is to maximize the number of Americans who enroll in and retain health coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The multi-pronged approach to achieving this mission includes identifying and sharing outreach and enrollment best practices, providing technical assistance and support to coalitions across the country, working with stakeholders to coordinate enrollment efforts at the national level, and running a robust grassroots campaign (“Get Covered America”).

Enroll America is an independent nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with more than 6,700 partners in all 50 states, to meet its mission of maximizing the number of Americans who get covered and stay covered. Enroll America works with diverse group of thousands of partners, including non-profits, religious groups, fraternities and sororities, community colleges, small businesses, and many more to ensure that consumers get the information they need about health coverage and enrollment.

**This toolkit describes innovative campaign tactics individuals and organizations can use to connect Muslim consumers to new health coverage options. In addition, this toolkit provides talking points and action steps for those looking to engage and build partnerships within the Muslim community.**

To help more Muslims get covered and stay covered, it is important for groups to use comprehensive outreach and engagement tactics that help this community enroll in and retain health coverage made available through the ACA. Health is a central aspect of Islam, and when speaking about the ACA, it is important to focus the conversation on health.

Muslims represent 23.4 percent of the world population, or over 1.6 billion people, and there are between 5 million and 12 million Muslims in America.<sup>1</sup> Muslims live all over the United States, but states with large Muslim populations include Michigan, Texas, and California.<sup>2</sup> It is important to recognize the racial diversity among the Muslim community when you connect with Muslims from different backgrounds. A report released this year found that 38 percent of American Muslims reported their race as white (including Arab Americans), 26 percent as Black, 20 percent as Asian, 6 percent as Hispanic, and 16 percent as other or of mixed descent.<sup>3</sup>

## ✔ Overview of Health Care in the Muslim Community (HCMC)

This is an outline of activities for engaging the Muslim community. Please feel free to design a program and events that best suit the needs of the Muslim community that you're working with. Leaders in the Muslim faith community are crucial messengers that are able to mobilize and inform their constituents around issues such as health care that significantly affect members of that group.

### Connect With Your Local Mosque

- All mosques have boards and Imams (religious leaders of the mosque); they collectively make decisions about programming in the mosque. Find local mosques in your area, ask for the contact information of the board and the Imam, and reach out to both.
- Once you have connected with the appropriate person at the mosque, ask about the kinds of activities and events you could collaborate on. Many mosques across the country held events during the last two enrollment cycles; when starting your conversations, ask about this and see if they have any advice or feedback from past events.
  - If ACA outreach is new to the mosque, it is helpful to clearly articulate the need for outreach and structure of the event or activity.
- Once the mosque agrees to partnering on getting Muslims information about enrollment, decide what the best technique is to reach this community, such as hosting an enrollment event, launching a "Heal-the-Neighborhood" health outreach team, incorporating health into prayer services, hosting tabling events, and sharing important messages with the community.

### Important Dates for the Third Open Enrollment Period (OE3):

Make sure your community knows about these critical enrollment dates and deadlines.

**November 1, 2015:** Open enrollment begins in the health insurance marketplace.

**December 15, 2015:** The deadline to sign up for coverage that starts on New Year's Day.

**January 1, 2016:** Coverage begins in the health insurance marketplace for those who signed up by December 15, 2015.

**January 31, 2016:** Open enrollment ends in the health insurance marketplace.

### Incorporate Health Into Prayer Services

- Friday Prayer: A central part of the Friday service is a sermon referred to as a *khutbah*. Ask the Imam for an opportunity to speak at the khutbah or at any social programming they are having.
  - It may be helpful to first begin with asking the Imam to give a khutbah that can include the Enroll America message and then follow up with speaking yourself.
  - After speaking, it is helpful to stick around and interact with consumers to answer questions, and bring one-pagers or other resources that attendees can take with them.
- Sunday school: Most mosques have weekend school for children. It is an ideal venue for outreach as many parents will be there dropping off and picking up their children.
- Interfaith programming: Coordinate with other faith leaders such as African American church leaders for programming ideas.

## Launch a “Heal-the-Neighborhood” Health Outreach Team

A health outreach team can be a group of volunteers that are trained to participate in the “Heal-the-Neighborhood” program, which will reach the uninsured by actively conducting consumer outreach at local schools, grocery stores, community centers, and events within the community.

- Your Heal-the-Neighborhood team and volunteers can work with Enroll America staffers to receive consumer outreach training and to set up an outreach plan.
- After the team identifies a leader who can schedule and organize volunteers to conduct outreach, that leader can stay in contact with Enroll America.
- The team leader will then identify places and locations in the community for the team to engage Muslims, such as k-12 schools, health centers, community centers, service organizations, civic organizations, grocery stores, and other places which serve as meeting points for members of the Muslim community.

## Host an HCMC Enrollment Event

- Host events that the mosque will encourage consumers to attend to understand their coverage options.
- If you’re hosting the event at the local mosque, work with their staff on getting the equipment you need and then promote the event, including by sending out messages via the mosque email list, posting fliers in the mosque, and creating a Facebook event page.
- For an enrollment event, make sure to partner with enrollment assisters to provide application help, and set up tables and laptops for them to have the space to help consumers enroll in or renew their coverage.

## Tabling Events

After the Imam or other Muslim community leaders deliver a message around the moral imperative of being insured, a tabling event is a great opportunity to get the community enrollment information. A tabling event is where volunteers or organizers greet attendees and talk with them, providing information about health coverage options and connecting them to resources that will help them get covered and stay covered.

Enroll America and its partners can either provide volunteers or train your health outreach team to staff a table after service to talk about health coverage and have uninsured individuals complete contact cards (commit cards) so they can be followed up with and provided with more information or resources. Commit cards are used to collect contact information from consumers who have identified they would like more information about health coverage. Usually the tables also have materials such as pamphlets and brochures that the consumer can keep to learn more about open enrollment and their health coverage options.

## ✔ Effective Messaging & Social Media Outreach

Recognizing that Muslims are ethnically diverse and live nationwide, a way to target and deliver the important enrollment information they need is via social media. Young Muslims are 30 percent of the U.S. Muslim population,<sup>4</sup> and many can be reached through social media channels. Consider creating a social media strategy that promotes the new health coverage options under the ACA.

- **Use multiple channels:** Promote HCMC events on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- **Stay on message:** Many young Muslims are active participants on social media about a wide variety of topics, and it’s easy to make the connection between the ACA and topics

such as social justice to help get the message to young Muslims.

- **Use supported hashtags:** You can use these coalition-wide health care enrollment related hashtags to let others know about your efforts: #GetCovered and #StayCovered
- **Promote @GetCoveredUS:** Point people to @GetCoveredUS as a trusted resource for tips and enrollment information.
- If you have a digital or multimedia outreach team, ask them to create posts and tweets leading up to your events.
- Ask members of the mosque to post information about your events on their own social media accounts.
- Have a designated time during the service for members to Tweet or text to those who may be uninsured. Members of your congregation can offer them information, or share that there are free resources online or in their local area to help get covered.

## ✔ Important Resources

These resources below can be incorporated into your HCMC events and activities, or you can simply use them to help you and your team get ready to help consumers during OE3.

- We know that connecting consumers to application assistance is crucial to maximizing the number of Americans that get covered. That's why Enroll America created the [Get Covered Connector](#), a free online tool available in English and Spanish that connects consumers to free local in-person application assistance.
- Your Mosque or organization can apply to Enroll America's [Get Covered Academy](#), a training program to equip and train partners on outreach tactics. The Academy is not a one-off training or consultation; rather it is a

commitment from two equal partners to engage on a long-term basis and track results of helping their community get covered and stay covered.

- To stay up to date about the marketplace enrollment and outreach activity, check out [EnrollAmerica.org](#).
- To refer consumers to a website with enrollment and health coverage information that is in simple, easy-to-understand language, encourage them to visit [GetCoveredAmerica.org](#).
- Enroll America's newest tool is the [Get Covered Plan Explorer](#). This digital plan compare tool will be available to consumers in federally facilitated marketplace states at no cost, and will provide them personalized information about the plans available through the marketplace, including information about expected out-of-pocket costs, covered providers, and prescription drugs.
- The [Get Covered Calculator](#), available in English and Spanish, is a tool that consumers can enter some basic info into and see how much financial help they could qualify for.
- You can join the [Communicators Program](#), which is open to anyone who plans to share the "Get Covered, Stay Covered" message with the public. We know consumers are hungry for the facts and we are excited to provide as much clear and helpful information as possible.
- For more information, see Enroll America outreach toolkits: [EnrollAmerica.org/Research-Maps/Toolkits](#). Enroll America has produced several easy-to-read toolkits with tips on grassroots organizing, engaging different constituency groups, reaching ethnic media, and more.

## Partner Spotlight: Compassionate Care Network

For the past two enrollment seasons, Compassionate Care Network (CCN), a 501(c)3 based in the greater Chicago area, has helped the Muslim community enroll in coverage through the marketplace. Collaborating with local mosques, CCN hosted enrollment events to help Muslims get covered. The mosques have dedicated community members who come together to host health screenings and ACA events to meet the health care needs of the local community members. The health screenings are provided by CCN's network physicians as well as medical and dental student volunteers. These screenings are free to the public, and anyone with or without insurance can get screenings for body mass index, blood pressure, and blood sugar, as well as eye and dental checkups. For health coverage enrollment, CCN has partnered with Worry Free Health, which connects consumers to health care providers, and Heartland Alliance, the leading anti-poverty organization in the Midwest, to provide assisters to enroll people in marketplace coverage. These experts provide on-site enrollment during the events at the mosques.

It is important to note that these events were communicated, at least two weeks in advance, to the local community through khutbah and through distribution of fliers after each prayer by the members of the mosques. Early communication allows consumers to have ample time to arrange their schedules, gather their enrollment documents, and have their questions ready for the enrollment experts. Mosque members play a key role in arranging and providing enrollment resources to community members by dedicating a place in the mosque for filling out the online application, space to consult in privacy, and access to Wi-Fi for enrollment purposes.



Compassionate Care Network Education Event.

CCN has recently proposed a structured approach to develop a Health Awareness Committee in every mosque whose members can be trained to address the health coverage enrollment needs of the local community. The training is being developed and will be provided by Worry Free Health. The particular model of Health Awareness Committees along with the training package is scalable throughout the United States.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## ✔ **What is the health insurance marketplace?**

The health insurance marketplace is a new way that Americans can compare prices and plans side-by-side with no fine print, and shop for health insurance that fits your needs and budget. In the marketplace, financial help to pay the monthly premium is available for many consumers. The plan sold on the marketplace must include free preventive care and have important benefits like doctor visits, hospitalizations, prescriptions, and more. From November 1, 2015, until January 31, 2016, consumers can enroll in health insurance through the marketplace. For more information on how to sign up, visit [GetCoveredAmerica.org](http://GetCoveredAmerica.org).

## ✔ **Where can I find my state's marketplace and who runs it?**

You can get connected to a health insurance marketplace that serves your state by visiting [GetCoveredAmerica.org/Enroll](http://GetCoveredAmerica.org/Enroll).

## ✔ **When can I sign up for health insurance?**

Open enrollment for 2016 health coverage starts on November 1, 2015, and ends on January 31, 2016. Coverage will begin on January 1, 2016, for people who have enrolled by December 15, 2015. Consumers can enroll in health insurance through the marketplace either online, over the phone, by mail, or in a free appointment with a local in-person assister. For more information on how to sign up, visit [GetCoveredAmerica.org](http://GetCoveredAmerica.org).

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Michael Lipka and Conrad Hackett, Pew Research Group, *Why Muslims Are the World's*

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center, *Religious Composition by Country, 2010-2050*:

<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projection-table/2010/number/all/>

<sup>3</sup> Muslim Journeys, Item #169: *Distribution of Muslim Population in the United States, 2010*:

<http://bridgingcultures.neh.gov/muslimjourneys/items/show/169>.

<sup>4</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism*: <http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/section-1-a-demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans/>.