

Muslim Students
Working
Together
Fi Sabilillah

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MSA OF THE US & CANADA

Muslim Students On the Rise

Serving Muslim students since 1963

MSA National serves Muslim students during their college and university careers by facilitating their efforts to establish, maintain, and develop chapters of Muslim Student Associations, Unions, Organizations, and Islamic Societies. Emphasis is placed on the learning and well-being of the individual Muslim student, as well as networking and growth of the chapter through sponsorship of educational programs, camps, zonal and annual conferences, and worker training programs. MSA National works with all organizations whose agenda includes a special focus on students and issues of concern to them during their college career. MSA National strives to inform and mobilize students to respond to crises around North America and the world.

Get involved today with MSA National at the local, regional, zonal or national levels!

WHAT IS MSA-NATIONAL?

MSA National is a student movement, providing a broad platform for Muslim students of all diverse backgrounds for the past four decades. On January 1st, 1963, about 75 Muslim students, representing nearly 10 campus organizations, met at the Urbana campus of the University of Illinois to consider coordinating their efforts. The result was an organization known as the Muslim Students Association of the US & Canada or more commonly known as MSA-National. MSA National's broad goals are to:

- help Muslim student organizations to implement Islamic programs and projects,
- mobilize and coordinate the human and material resources of Muslim student organizations,
- and educate, mobilize, and empower students to struggle against injustice and oppression.

Many current national leaders, speakers, and scholars have built this organization and humbly credit part of their training to MSA National. Geographically, MSA National has divided the US and Canada as such: East Zone US, Central Zone, West Zone US, East Zone Canada and West Zone Canada. Each zone has a Zonal Representative who is assisted in his/her work by the Zonal Council, which is composed of regional representatives. The Zonal Representative speaks and acts on behalf of his/her zone in the MSA Executive Committee. The zones are as following:

US East Zone includes the states of Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virgin Island, Virginia, and West Virginia.

US Central Zone includes the states of Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

US West Zone includes the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Canada East Zone includes the provinces of New Brunswick, New Found land, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec,

Canada West Zone includes the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

WHAT ARE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF MSA?

The Muslim Students Association members are guided by the following principles, which emanate from the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad:

Sincerity is the foundation of our existence.
Knowledge precedes our actions.
Humility guides our conduct.
Truthfulness is the mark of our speech.
Moderation is the compass of our journey.
Tolerance is the banner of our outreach.
Forgiveness precedes our reconciliatory efforts.
Patience is the hallmark of our planning.
Gratitude binds our hearts together.

IS MSA NATIONAL A PART OF ISNA?

In 1983, MSA National gave birth to the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), to be the umbrella of Islamic organizations that sprang from MSA in North America. MSA National maintains continuous affiliation with ISNA. As an affiliate of ISNA, historically, the MSA National President has a seat on the ISNA Majlis Ash-shura. However, beyond this, ISNA does not have any direct involvement in MSA National affairs. In addition, the MSA Annual Continental Conference is held alongside ISNA because it is cost-effective for students to attend with their families and for MSA National to benefit from ISNA's negotiations for hotel/conference rooms. A students-only summer convention is currently being explored.

HOW IS MSA NATIONAL FUNDED?

MSA-National is a non-profit, 501(c) (3), tax-exempt organization that finances itself mainly by fundraising activities. We do not receive funding from overseas governments. We do not accept funding from any one source that might potentially seek control of MSA National's agenda or affairs. The finance task force is charged with generating creative fundraising ideas. If you have fundraising experience and/or can contribute to this task force, please contact: treasurer@msa-national.org We welcome your tax-deductible contributions and qualify as a recipient of sadaqah/zakah donations. Both you and your parents can strengthen MSA National with your donations!

HOW CAN WE START AN MSA CHAPTER?

To start a Muslim student organization on your campus, you would have to find out the go to the student affairs office or the administrative offices that deal with student affairs and ask them the procedures. Next, you will have to formulate a constitution for your organization. Your zonal representative can help you reach other chapters and request sample constitutions. Collect names of Muslim students so you can present the list to the student council or the administration as evidence of the number of students who would actually benefit from having an official MSA on campus. Try to also get a preliminary list of officers and choose an organizational structure to be presented to the student council/administration. You can always hold official elections once the MSA has been registered as a student organization on campus.

For more information check out the MSA's Starters Guide at: www.msa-national.org/

DOES OUR CHAPTER HAVE TO USE THE NAME "MSA?" TO BE AFFILIATED?

All Muslim student organizations are welcome to benefit from and contribute to the brotherhood and sisterhood that is MSA National. For uniformity, most chapters are called MSA, however, we welcome existing names such as Muslim Student Union, Muslim Student Organization, Islamic Society, or any such derivations as long as the general principles governing the chapter adhere to the Quran and the Sunnah. Don't be left out. Join MSA National today!

WHY SHOULD MY MSA CHAPTER AFFILIATE?

By affiliating, the chapters stand to strengthen MSA National and the student movement. MSA National is adamant about not micromanaging work at the chapter level, thus assuring each chapter its independence. There are two ways you can look at the advantages of joining this body of Muslim student organizations from all over North America:

? The chapter as a contributor/mentor: The chapter will benefit fellow chapters by providing them its support in terms of resources, experience, etc.

? The chapter as an active participant/recipients: an affiliated chapter has the right to send delegates to the Executive Committee (refer to structure below) meetings and to participate in voting on all matters, and is eligible to receive the literature of the MSA-National and benefit from its services including:

Speakers list
National newsletter
MSA conference/training manuals
Islam Awareness Week/Month resources
Tax exempt status for your chapter
Access to national archives and more...

WHAT RESOURCES DOES MSA NATIONAL PROVIDE?

MSA National can provide many resources for a local MSA chapter. These include:

- Conference Planning Manual
- Da'wah materials for IAW/IAM
- The MSA Starter's guide
- Speakers contact information
- MSA Link (The MSA National Newsletter)
- Internet infrastructure
- and much more...

Contact your zonal representative for more information.

WHAT IS MSA NATIONAL'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE?

The MSA conducts its activities through its Executive Committee, which is elected by affiliated MSA chapters on an annual basis.

The executive committee consists of the President, two Vice Presidents (US & Canada), the Ex-officio, the Treasurer and one Zonal representative from each of the five zones.

In addition to this, there are many task forces that work on specific MSA projects.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE?

Under the restructuring plan being proposed, you, the individual Muslim student will be able to become a member of MSA National. We will still have affiliated chapters, but every Muslim student will have the opportunity to learn, benefit from, and contribute to the student movement that is MSA National. In addition, if you are looking to put your MSA experience and skills to work at the national level, then the MSA-National Task Forces are a great place to start! Currently, MSA National has the following task forces:

Dawah Task Force
Education Task Force
Finance Task Force
Programs Task Force
Computers Task Force
Media and Communications Task Force
Religious Accommodations Task Force
Political Activism Task Force

For an introduction to each task force and the different projects they are involved in, please visit: <http://www.msa-national.org> or contact your zonal representative

In addition, MSA National also develops new task forces as the needs arise. Current examples are the Jerusalem Task Force, and the Iraq Task Force (which joined the Free Iraq Foundation). We have also helped form the Student Alliance for Imam Jamil Al-Amin (SAIJ).

Visit: www.msa-national.org

THE INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT ON TERRORISM