

## **Islamic Center of Pittsburgh (ICP) Zakah Distribution Policy**

**Formulated By:** The Executive Committee (EC) of ICP

**Implemented By:** The Zakah Committee of ICP

**(Members: Muhammad Mohsin Rasheed – Treasurer, Imam Abussemih Tadese and Imam Atef Hamed)**

The Islamic center of Pittsburgh has a long tradition of acting as a conduit for helping the needy and distribution of zakah money. Following procedures and guidelines are adopted to better serve the community members who rely on the generosity of the congregation to fulfill their needs. They are also meant to streamline overall process, increase transparency and ensure proper disbursement.

### ***Procedures***

- The applicant shall fill out a grant (zakah) application. All necessary information shall be provided and the form be signed by the applicant. The items to be provided are full legal name, address, phone number (if available), the reason for applying for the grant, name, address and phone number (if available) of at least one reference (preferably two) and other relevant items. A (zakah log) has been formed to keep the history of the applicants.
- A photo Id of the applicant shall accompany the form in case of first time applicants. The Id will be copied and maintained at the office along with the zakah log book.(further applications will not require a photo Id to be submitted).
- The applicant shall be interviewed by either of the imams before the grant is approved. Based on this interview, the imam will decide the approval of the grant along with the amount. Upon interviewing the applicant, the imam shall come up with a figure that will be treated as an initially approved amount.
- The zakah checks will not be signed before the Friday prayers unless it' considered a valid emergency.

- The zakah committee members shall communicate among themselves about the applicants and the amount to be distributed to each one of them.
- If there is an urgent need and the imam decides so, the petty cash can be used to fulfill the request. However, the amount in this case shall be limited to \$50.00 and will be logged in the zakah log. The office manager can help with this transaction. If the imam is not available, the office manager can contact him over the phone (if he/she is the one receiving the request) and their approval shall be sought before the amount is handed over to the applicant. The office manager shall make a note for the imam to update the zakah log.

### ***Decision guidelines***

- The need shall be the primary criterion for the grant approval. However, this shall not be the only one.
- The situation of the applicant.
- The severity of the required assistance (purchase of food, medicine, etc versus non-urgent needs, like travel expenses). Again this shall be judged based on the meeting with imam.
- A household shall be treated as one applicant (based on the address).
- The number of times and the total amount an applicant has applied for and received in the past year. The total amount shall not exceed more than \$800.00 in a given year from the date of application.
- The Zakat amount doesn't include the amount disbursed under the "families in crisis fund" which is a special circumstance fund designed to help out the victims of events such as fire, natural or man-made calamity, accidents, etc.
- The amount of money left in the Zakah account shall also be part of the decision-making process. The committee will try to balance the need of one applicant versus maximizing distribution to a greater number of applicants.

### ***Families in Crisis fund***

This fund has been designed to help out families who are undergoing a crisis situation such as a fire at the house, natural or man-made calamity, accident, a sudden death of a family member, etc.

Special consideration must be given to these applicants and a careful analysis of their situation made in coming up with the amount. Usually these applications are far and few in between and may appear as normal grant applications, as applicants may not be aware of the existence of such a fund. A separate log shall be kept about the recipients under this fund.