

# Muslim Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh (MCCGP)

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**Title:** Zakah Disbursement Policy

**Scope & Audience:** Applicable according to “Masarif-ul-Zakah”

**Authority:** The Executive Committee (EC) of MCCGP

**Date:** September 1, 2011

MCCGP, being in the business of serving the Muslim community of greater Pittsburgh, receives requests for help from a diverse section of the community.

The following procedures and guidelines are instituted to better serve the community members who rely on the generosity of the congregation to fulfill their needs. They are 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. Each application will be recorded in the Zakah log in order to improve tracking.
- 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 (further applications will not require a photo Id to be submitted).
- The applicant shall be interviewed by at least one member of Zakah committee of MCCGP or by at least 2 available EC members (in case of unavailability of any Zakah committee members). This step must precede the approval of the grant. Based on this interview, a decision shall be made as to the approval or denial of application and the amount in case of approval.

- The zakah checks may not be available to the applicant on the spot. Please rest assured that every attempt will be made to make the check available within a reasonable amount of time.
- If there is an urgent need and it has been determined, 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 zakah committee is not available, the office manager can contact him/her 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 zakah committee 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 zakah committee.
- 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. An exception to this can only be made by the approval of ALL zakah committee members. The President of MCCGP (or his designee) shall approve any disbursement of more than \$999.00.
- 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.