

ARS ZAKAT POLICY 2019

A. Terminology

Zakat is a charitable contribution that redistributes wealth to those in need. It is an obligation upon all Muslims who meet the requirements for giving it. For the purpose of this document zakat refers to the money collected by ARS that is intended for use in empowering those less fortunate.

Sadaqa is voluntary charity and can include any virtuous act of compassion. For the purpose of this policy it refers to non-zakat donations given to the organization. Zakat Recipients are those entitled to receive zakat. Zakat Donors, are those who are obligated to pay zakat.

B. How does ARS understand zakat?

Zakat is a sacred trust requiring proper oversight & compliance with the Zakat rulings found in sacred texts. Zakat is not to be used for purposes outside the eight categories mentioned in the Quran (9:60). The priority of zakat is the community from which it comes, and specifically those less fortunate who have the capacity to become productive members of their communities and societies. ARS will focus on the following categories: the poor, needy, wayfarers, and their support and management.

C. What will ARS use zakat funds for?

ARS only serves zakat eligible recipients. Zakat funds collected will be used for both short-term and long-term programs that may include training, empowerment, and mentoring programs designed to grant Zakat recipients the tools they need to become productive members of society.

Members include: women with refugee or forced migrant status and their dependents.

D. How will ARS determine zakat eligibility?

ARS has a detailed intake process by which we determine who is eligible for ARS services or not. Those who have finished our client intake process or are referrals from

other similar services and meet the standard of need for such services are eligible for Zakat, under the category of refugees and wayfarers mentioned in 9:60 of the Quran.

E. What are ARS' current programs and how do they meet Zakat eligibility?

Our programs are focused on two specific populations within the refugee community: children and women.

The Youth Empowerment Services (YES), which is our in-school and after-school service for refugee students has grown significantly. We improved the curriculum, student experience, and also added a social services component to assist students with meals, uniforms, and supplies. The program has made a significant impact on student academics and personal development.

We also developed a Womens Empowerment Program (WE), which is a long-term support program exclusively for women. Women-led households in crisis are assisted in areas such as housing, employment, transportation, language development, and social well-being.

We also sponsor and host joint events with other community organizations

F. Client Intake Process

During the client intake process, ARS strives to accept mothers in the program that it deems to be a match with the program mission which is to aid the client to becoming self sufficient in their new environment. If an eligible client appears that they will solely rely on the financial assistance portion alone this type of client will likely not be accepted into the program.

Based on this information, ARS can i) determine program eligibility and ii) prioritize clients based on severity of need, prior use of service, and potential for completion.

A client who is stable will for the most part have access to resources in any major areas of need, will be able to seek employment and learn the language or already has a job and may have some english skills.

A stable client is not in a thriving state but they are able to access resources in the community.

A client considered to be “critical” is in need of significant help in key areas of their life. This includes but is not exclusive to: not knowing english, being unemployed, being at risk of being evicted, or unsure of how they will pay their bills without any financial assistance.

Being program eligible does not guarantee one will receive services or assistance, as such may be beyond the scope of ARS’s capabilities or capacity.

G. How will ARS obtain consent from the zakat recipients?

By signing up with ARS’s membership or mentorship programs, participants consent to and are informed of the fact that ARS’s funds are zakat-eligible. All of ARS’s programs and operations allocate staff time to serving clients that are often excluded and need support through education, opportunities, and relationships. Due to this and the target demographic of ARS, all ARS activities are Zakat-eligible.

For the use of zakat funds for operations, collection, and distributions, ARS maintains a guideline of using no more than 12.5% of aggregate Zakat funds collected for non-program activities. ARS will not be involved in the distribution of cash awards from Zakat al-Mal or collection and/or distribution of cash or in-kind awards from Zakat al-Fitr or Expiations (Kaffarat).

In the case of legacy programs such as “Rock the Block,” this will be a separate event that can raise funds through 3rd parties for zakat al fitr/zakat al mal. Rock the Block may raise funds via tickets sales from volunteers and some portion will go to ensuring zakat al fitr/zakat al mal funds are used to purchase goods that will be distributed to families identified by ARS.

H. Who are the Demographics served by ARS

ARS targets a very specific demographic: women and children from the refugee and forced migrant communities. ARS has represented clients from but not limited to: Afghanistan, Iraq, Congo, Somalia, Syria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burma, Sudan, Nepal, Bhuan, Cuba, and El Salvador.

I. What Categories of Zakat eligibility do ARS Clients fall under?

The Quran designates 8 broad categories for the use of Zakat funds. ARS clients fall under the category of the Wayfarer (Ibn al-Sabil) who are those people driven out of their homes and unable to support themselves. Refugees and forced migrants fit this definition, and because the most vulnerable of that group are women and children, we've dedicated all our resources to servicing those two groups only.

J. Why not give financial assistance directly to those who are zakat eligible?

ARS does not provide direct financial assistance for the following reasons:

- 1) it could jeopardize the organization's charitable status due to mission alignment,
- 2) it could impact the recipient's ability to receive government benefits,
- 3) to mitigate fraud/abuse.
- 4) to maximize the efficacy of the funds use in programs that directly benefit the recipients.

K. How does ARS track zakat?

All ARS services and operations are used in servicing our Zakat eligible clients. Because our mission is focused specifically on Zakat eligible populations, all donations both specific and general donations are considered zakat eligible. Because we only service Zakat eligible clients, there is no need to segment our funds or earmark donations as zakat or not Zakat.

For more about ARS programs, visit refugeelink.com

For further inquiries, please email us at info@refugeelink.com.