



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Access California Services Partners with Islamic Relief USA to Provide Essential Financial Assistance to Families Battling Poverty in Southern California**

**Anaheim, Calif. – March 19, 2018 –** [Access California Services](http://www.accesscal.org) (AccessCal) is partnering with Islamic Relief USA to provide the Emergency Financial Assistance and Case Management/Zakat Program to underserved, low-income individuals and families including immigrants and refugees. This program helps ease urgent financial hardships facing many Southern Californian residents, while also empowering them to gain self-sufficiency.

AccessCal and Islamic Relief USA are responding to a critical need within the community. Orange County's poverty rate is 24.3%, which near doubles the federal rate of 12.8%. Underserved families, especially refugee families, are struggling to find sufficient employment to cover their basic needs and expenses, including food, shelter, and utilities.

The Emergency Financial Assistance/Zakat Program not only provides financial ease but also specialized case management to ensure individuals and families have the opportunity to lead secure and healthy lives. The AccessCal team works with each qualified individual or family to determine barriers and explore pathways to employment while also promoting personal responsibility.

“The Emergency Financial Assistance and Case Management/Zakat Program goes beyond simply providing a Band-Aid solution,” said Access California Services Founder and Executive Director Nahla Kayali. “We work closely with each individual or family, linking them to a range of services that are specific to their needs and available on-site, including employment, health access, and mental health, so that they may begin the steps that are needed to attain self-determination.”

With Islamic Relief USA support, eligible individuals and families may receive financial assistance for rent assistance; emergency medical expenses, emergency transportation expenses, vocational training expenses, food, and legal assistance expenses for immigration challenges.

“By taking a holistic approach with this program, we can ensure the underserved members of our community are armed with the tools they need to lead an enriched life,” said Kayali. “AccessCal is honored to partner with Islamic Relief USA and commend their commitment and support of this program.”

“This program will enable people of limited means to gain access to an array of services that AccessCal provides, helping them get on a path to independence,” said Islamic Relief USA President Anwar Khan. “It is vital that we help those who are in some of the most vulnerable positions and provide them with assistance in the short term and that help them have promising futures in the long run. Nobody deserves to live in the dark, go hungry, or not have access to skills training to achieve gainful employment.”

For more information, please visit the Access California Services website via [www.accesscal.org](http://www.accesscal.org) or call (714) 917-0440.

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### **About Access California Services**

Founded in 1998, Access California Services (AccessCal) is a culturally sensitive community-based organization dedicated to empowering underserved populations, with a focus on the local Arab-American and Muslim-American communities. AccessCal aims to enhance quality of life and foster self-determination through direct and indirect advocacy, health, and human services to anyone who needs support in the community. Providing more than 50,000 units of services annually to community members and families in Southern California, AccessCal has become the go-to resource center for many seeking support with linguistic, economic, community, and civic integration. For more information, visit [www.accesscal.org](http://www.accesscal.org).

### **About Islamic Relief USA**

Islamic Relief USA, based in Alexandria, Va., is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) humanitarian organization. Its mission is to alleviate suffering, hunger, illiteracy, and disease regardless of color, race, gender or creed, and to provide aid in a compassionate and dignified manner. Islamic Relief USA aims to provide rapid relief in the event of human and natural disasters and to establish sustainable local development projects, allowing communities to better help themselves. Its programs benefit millions of people each year around the world, including in the United States.

Islamic Relief USA meets all of the Standards for Charity Accountability of the BBB Wise Giving Alliance, a national charity monitoring group affiliated with the Better Business Bureau system. Islamic Relief USA is on the U.S. government’s Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) charity list, and it is also a signatory to the code of conduct of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

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