

**Beth Emet The Free Synagogue
Tzedakah Fund
Grant Application Guidelines**

According to the Torah and subsequent Jewish law, every Jew is obligated to extend a helping hand to a person in need, Jew or non-Jew, and it is the inherent right of every person to be helped, "for there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy in your land." Deuteronomy 15:11. *Gates of Mitzvah: A Guide to the Jewish Life Cycle*

The purpose of the Beth Emet Tzedakah Fund is to support causes, organizations and projects that promote justice, equality and social well being; to recognize each Jew's obligation to perform the mitzvah of tzedakah (righteous giving); and to encourage the member families of Beth Emet The Free Synagogue to give tzedakah as a regular part of their daily lives.

The Tzedakah Fund makes grants to organizations that address problems of basic human needs through:

- Social service by giving relief to the poor and help to victims of violence or injustice
 - Social action by educating the public, influencing public policy and advocating social change
1. Geographical boundaries: a concentration on Evanston and the Chicago metropolitan area, although requests for assistance from other locations are considered.
 2. Eligibility of organizations: any organization that meets the guidelines is eligible; small or large organizations needing funding for emerging or emergency projects. Ordinarily projects should not be receiving funds from traditional sources (e.g., Jewish Federation, United Way).
 3. Grant size and frequency: the maximum grant is \$500 for each request; receipt of a grant does not preclude subsequent grants.
 4. Grant requests:
 - Requests may come to the Tzedakah Fund committee through a synagogue committee, from a synagogue professional (i.e., rabbi, education director) or from individual synagogue members representing an organization.
 - The committee or individual sponsoring the request must use the Tzedakah Fund application form and must supply all the information requested on this form.
 - Tzedakah Fund application forms are available in the Beth Emet office.

The Tzedakah Fund Committee meets at least semi-annually, or when called by the chair of the Committee. The synagogue community will receive advance notification of the dates of application submission deadlines and scheduled meetings of the Committee.

Tzedakah boxes are distributed to the entire Beth Emet congregational family. A box is given to each new member household, and replacement boxes are readily available to those who need one.

An organized campaign to collect tzedakah boxes is held at least twice a year, usually around Rosh Hashanah and Pesach. Additional contributions to the Tzedakah Fund are accepted at any time. All funds collected by the Tzedakah Committee are deposited in a bank account separate from other synagogue funds. Tzedakah Committee funds are transferred to the Beth Emet general account for disbursement according to instructions from the chair of the Committee. All grants are made in the name of the Beth Emet Tzedakah Fund.