

# BBB: Charitable giving after the Waukesha Parade tragedy

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*Milwaukee, Wis.* – After a terrible and very public tragedy such as the Waukesha parade tragedy, people want to help in any way possible, and that often means contributing to fundraisers to help the survivors and the families of the victims. Sadly, scammers often take advantage of these moments of vulnerability to deceive donors. In addition, there are often campaigns set up by well-meaning individuals who may or may not be directly connected to the tragedy.

“As our Wisconsin community and communities throughout the country come together in the wake of Sunday’s devastating event, BBB reminds everyone to be mindful of scams that often follow tragic incidents,” says Jim Temmer, BBB Serving Wisconsin CEO and president. “Please donate safely and report all scams to BBB Scam Tracker.”

BBB Serving Wisconsin urges donors to give thoughtfully and avoid those seeking to take advantage of the generosity of others. Here are BBB’s Wise Giving Alliance (WGA) tips for trusted giving:

**1. Thoughtful Giving:** Take the time to check out the charity to avoid wasting your generosity by donating to a questionable or poorly managed effort. The first request for a donation may not be the best choice. Be proactive and find trusted charities that are providing assistance. Visit Give.org to verify if a charity meets BBB Standards for Charitable Accountability.

**2. Crowdfunding:** Keep in mind that some crowdfunding sites do very little vetting of individuals who decide to post for assistance after a tragedy or a disaster, and it is often difficult for donors to verify the trustworthiness of crowdfunding requests for support. For more Give.org tips on crowdfunding, [click here](#).

**3. Respect for Victims and Their Families:** Organizations raising funds should

get permission from the families to use either the names of the victims and/or any photographs of them.

**4. State Government Registration:** About 40 of the 50 states require charities to register with a state government agency before they solicit for charitable gifts. If the charity is not registered, that may be a significant red flag. In Wisconsin, most organizations soliciting for charitable donations must register and file a report annually with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (WDFI). You can check if a charity or professional fundraiser is registered by clicking [here](#).

**5. How Will Donations Be Used?** Watch out for vague appeals that don't identify the intended use of funds. For example, how will the donations help victims' families? Also, unless told otherwise, donors will assume that funds collected quickly in the wake of a tragedy will be spent just as quickly. See if the appeal identifies when and how the collected funds will be used. Do not donate cash or through cash apps, instead

**6. What if a Family Sets Up Its Own Assistance Fund?** Some families may decide to set up their own assistance funds. Be mindful that such funds may not be set up as charities. Also, if collected monies are received and administered by a third party such as a bank, CPA, or lawyer this will help provide oversight and ensure the collected funds are used appropriately (paying for funeral costs, counseling, and other tragedy-related needs).

**7. Online Caution:** Never click on links to charities on unfamiliar websites or in text messages or email. These may take you to a look-alike website where you will be asked to provide personal financial information, or may download harmful malware onto your computer. Don't assume that charity recommendations on social media have already been vetted.

**8. Financial Transparency:** After funds are raised for a tragedy, it is even more important for organizations to provide an accounting of how funds were spent. Transparent organizations will post this information on their websites so that anyone can find out without having to wait until the audited financial statements are available sometime in the future.

**9. Tax Deductibility:** Not all organizations collecting funds to assist after a tragedy are tax exempt as charities under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donors can support these other entities, but keep this in mind if they want to

take a deduction for federal income tax purposes. In addition, contributions that are donor-restricted to help a *specific* individual or family are not deductible as charitable donations, even if the recipient organization is a charity.

To report scams to BBB Scam Tracker click [here](#)

For an online version click [here](#)

For more information or further inquiries, contact the Wisconsin BBB at [www.bbb.org/wisconsin](http://www.bbb.org/wisconsin), 414-847-6000 or 1-800-273-1002. Consumers also can find more information about how to protect themselves from scams by following the Wisconsin BBB on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

**ABOUT BBB WISE GIVING ALLIANCE:** BBB Wise Giving Alliance is a standards-based charity evaluator that seeks to verify the trustworthiness of nationally-soliciting charities by completing rigorous evaluations based on 20 holistic standards that address charity governance, effectiveness reporting, finances, fund raising, appeal accuracy, and other issues. Learn more about the 20 BBB Charity Standards and about local charity review at local Better Business Bureaus at [Give.org](http://Give.org).

**ABOUT BBB:** For more than 100 years, the Better Business Bureau has been helping people find businesses, brands and charities they can trust. In 2020, people turned to BBB more than 220 million times for BBB Business Profiles on 6.2 million businesses and Charity Reports on 11,000 charities, all available for free at [BBB.org](http://BBB.org). There are local, independent BBBs across the United States, Canada and Mexico, including BBB Serving Wisconsin which was founded in 1939 and serves the state of Wisconsin.