

## SCAM AVOIDANCE TIPS

As with any disaster, there will likely be “bad apples” among individuals and groups that will try to take advantage of the Highland Park shooting to scam money.

There are two organizations accepting donations for the victims of the shooting that are overseen by local government in the Highland Park area:

- **Highland Park Community Foundation's July 4 Shooting Response Fund** - Donations support individual victims and families directly impacted by the shooting.
- **The Lake County Community Foundation Crisis Relief Fund** - This serves as a permanent countywide funding resource in times of emergencies. We are currently raising funds to support crisis relief efforts in the wake of the Highland Park shooting. Funds will be granted to support emergency response needs, mental health counseling services, downtown repair and revitalization, violence prevention and education and other urgent needs as they arise in the aftermath of this tragedy.

While some Go Fund Me accounts may be legitimate, there are far too many incidents in which account administrators kept most of the funds for themselves, and little of the money went to the people the funds were ostensibly supposed to help.

### TIPS:

Do research! Take some time to determine if this is a legitimate organization and exactly what the funds will be used for.

From the FBI:

- Use caution anytime you see an email, social media post, crowdfunding platforms, cold calls, etc.
- Give to established charities or groups whose work you know and trust.
- Watch out for organizations with copycat names.
- Check the organization’s reputation through the Federal Trade Commission.
- Be wary if someone asks for cash, gift cards, virtual current, or wire transfer. If you feel an organization is legitimate, give using a check or credit card.
- If you think you’ve been scammed, report it to the [Illinois Attorney General’s office](#), the [FBI](#), the [FTC](#), and/or the [National Center for Disaster Fraud](#).

From the Federal Trade Commission:

- Be wary if someone rushes you into donating
- Ask for specifics about the donation; be concerned if claims are vague or sentimental.
- Some scammers will thank you for a donation you didn't make in hopes you'll donate on the spot.
- Offering prizes or sweepstake winnings should be a red flag.