

## Tips for Community Leaders: Managing Donations

- If possible, have a plan for managing donations and volunteers in advance.
- Move rapidly to create a central non-profit to channel funds. This includes incorporation papers, a bank account, website and PayPal account. Be clear on who is responsible for managing funds.
  - See this Harvard Business Review on lessons learned:  
<https://hbr.org/2016/01/lessons-from-%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20bostons-experiment-with-the-one-fund>
- Avoid stressful and prolonged negotiations needed to disburse money that is donated in victims' names by using new models of giving.
- In the absence of a community non-profit, consider using the National Compassion Fund, a safe, transparent way for the public to give directly to the victim of mass casualty crimes. <https://nationalcompassionfund.org/faq/>
- Funneling funds through existing foundations usually takes much longer for money to actually get to victims and the foundations may take excessive administrative fees.
- Put out a news release and public service announcement through local, national and social media to advise will wishers and donors what is needed and where to send financial donations to avoid confusion and fraud.
- Notify the public not to send gifts or in-kind donations unless specifically asked for. Money is more useful in mass violence situations.
- Communicate with the public about how gifts were stored, dispersed, or disposed of in a respectful way.
- Contact businesses for specific needs.
- Be innovative. You know your community and what your resources are or are not.
- Contact your counterpart in other cities and states to find out best practices.
- Set up a separate category of giving for victim services, distinct from giving directly to victims if feasible.
- Create a committee with a well-respected chair to manage funds. Include representative from key agencies. Enlist local banks to oversee collection and control systems.
- Identify an individual from the Attorney General's office who can monitor the collection of money and how it is being managed.
- Both GoFundMe and GiveForward employ a variety of safeguards to deter scams and ensure that the funds go to the intended victims. GoFundMe has a team that vets any suspicious campaigns. GiveForward assigns a live "fundraising coach" to each campaign that vets and guides fundraising and will only write checks in the name of the named beneficiary.
- Maintain exact records of what is received, what is spent and what is disbursed.
- Develop a fair formula for how victims, survivors and families will be helped.
- Accurately educate the public on crime victim compensation from state or federal sources and what they do or do not cover.

- Clarify the different sources of compensation: OVC, DOJ, FEMA, state funds, etc.
- Translate crime victim compensation information into languages specific to your location.
- Request that television stations put crime victim compensation messages on the scroll-line at the bottom of their programming
- No matter how much your raise, there won't be enough to cover everyone and all they need. Focus on the survivors and the families of the victims and *let them decide* what to do with the money.
- Trust your citizens. Resist the temptation to divert funds for bureaucratic functions.
- Consider retaining counsel for mediation or alternative dispute resolution.
- Follow the rules. Sometimes the law, a statute or the rules require you say no. Explain to people as best you can that these programs have to be very, very principled.

### **What NOT to DO**

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- Allow disputing factions to derail the functions of the fund and further hurt your community cohesion.
- Blame one group over another. Everyone is hurting and seeking a fair, though different, solution.
- Make public (or private) statements that may inflame emotions during a difficult time.
- Keep secrets. Without accurate and timely information, rumors begin which are hard to stop once they have begun.