
Improving Lives in Vanderburgh, Warrick and Spencer Counties

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Scam using United Way name hits Southwestern Indiana

United Way of Southwestern Indiana has learned that a grant scam using the United Way name has reached the Tri-State area.

In the instance we were made aware of, a message was sent to a woman through Facebook Messenger with instructions to call a phone number with a 213 area code from the Los Angeles area. The scammer then sent a string of texts asking for personal information and stating that she was eligible for a United Way Grant, but would have to pay the case filing and clearance fees in order to get the money. Grant amounts offered ranged from \$25K - \$500K with fees payable to the scammer ranging from \$500 - \$10,000.

United Way of Southwestern Indiana does not solicit money in exchange for grants, and we do not use social media for that purpose. This current scam uses Facebook Messenger, and it is possible that other platforms could be used as well. If anyone has received such messages soliciting money in exchange for a grant, they should not respond.

Oana Schneider, Director of Media Services for the Better Business Bureau of Evansville and the Tri-State said, "The Better Business Bureau has seen a significant increase in grant scams within the past year and it's probably due to the fact that not everyone knows how grants work. If you have to pay in order to receive a grant or prize, that's a major red flag. Call your Better Business Bureau immediately and don't give out personal or financial information."

If an individual has already responded to this fraudulent request, in addition to contacting the Better Business Bureau, they should also report this to local law enforcement. If money has already been sent, law enforcement tells us that it is unlikely that you will get your money back.

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About United Way of Southwestern Indiana

United Way fights for the health, education, and financial stability of every individual in our community. The 501(c) 3 organization serves at the center of a network of partner agencies and programs that address immediate issues facing thousands of local people in Vanderburgh, Warrick and Spencer Counties. To learn more about United Way's work in the community, please visit unitedwayswi.org.