

BBB Charity Review Program



BBB Charity Review Program was developed to serve the needs of those who support local nonprofit organizations. It provides information to prospective donors, allowing them to make informed giving decisions. BBB's Charity Review Program reports on local charities and determines if they meet the voluntary BBB Standards for Charity Accountability. These standards address governance and oversight, measuring effectiveness, finances, fund raising and informational materials.

This information is not a complete listing of the local Cleveland area nonprofits that the BBB has on file. Inclusion or omission from this list should not be interpreted as either approval or disapproval. Call the BBB at (216) 241-4476 for information on any nonprofit not listed. This list reflects the Cleveland BBB's review as of October 2009

Standards for Charity Accountability

To help a donor make an informed decision about our local nonprofit organizations, the BBB Charity Review Program has adopted the following minimum acceptable standards. These are the same standards used to evaluate national charities by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. Below is a summary of these standards. Complete standards are available upon request or on our website at www.cleveland.bbb.org.

Governance and Oversight

To meet standards, the organization must have:

1. A board of directors that provides adequate oversight of the charity's operations and its staff.
2. A board of directors with a minimum of five voting members.
3. A minimum of three evenly spaced meetings per year of the full governing body with a majority in attendance, with face-to-face participation.
4. Not more than one or 10% (whichever is greater) directly or indirectly compensated person(s) serving as voting member(s) of the board. Compensated members shall not serve as the board's chair or treasurer.
5. No transaction(s) in which any board or staff members have material conflicting interests with the charity resulting from any relationship or business affiliation.

Measuring Effectiveness

To meet these standards, the organization shall:

6. Have a board policy of assessing, no less than every two years, the organization's performance and effectiveness and of determining future actions required to achieve its mission.
7. Submit to the organization's governing body, for its approval, a written report that outlines the results of the aforementioned performance and effectiveness assessment and recommendations for future actions.

Finances

To meet these standards, the organization shall:

8. Spend at least 65% of its total expenses on program activities.

9. Spend no more than 35% of related contributions on fund raising.
10. Avoid accumulating funds that could be used for current program activities.
11. Make available to all, on request, complete annual financial statements.
12. Include in the financial statements a breakdown of expenses (e.g., salaries, travel, postage, etc.) that shows what portion of these expenses was allocated to program, fund raising and administrative activities.
13. Accurately report the charity's expenses, including any joint cost allocations, in its financial statements.
14. Have a board-approved annual budget for its current fiscal year, outlining projected expenses for major program activities, fund raising and administration.

Fund Raising and Informational Materials

To meet these standards, the organization shall:

15. Have solicitations and informational materials, distributed by any means that are accurate, truthful and not misleading, both in whole and in part.
16. Have an annual report available to all on request.
17. Include on any charity websites that solicit contributions, the same information that is recommended for annual reports, as well as the mailing address of the charity and electronic access to its most recent IRS 990.
18. Address privacy concerns of donors.
19. Clearly disclose how the charity benefits from the sale of products or services (i.e., cause-related marketing) that state or imply that a charity will benefit from a consumer sale or transaction. Such promotions should disclose at the point of solicitation.
20. Respond promptly to and act on complaints brought to its attention by the Better Business Bureau about fund raising practices, privacy policy violations and/or other issues.

The following organizations have voluntarily provided information within the past year and participated in the BBB evaluation process.

As of October 9, 2009, the organizations below meet all of the BBB Standards for Charity Accountability unless there are numbers listed after the organization's name. The numbers correspond with the above Standards for Charity Accountability and indicate that the charity did not meet the standard.

Achievement Centers for Children

Adoption Network Cleveland

Alzheimer's Association, Cleveland Area Chapter

updated: 10/9/09

American Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter
American Sickle Cell Anemia Association: 13, 16, 17
Applewood Centers, Inc.
Bellflower Center
Benjamin Rose Institute
Berea Children's Home and Family Services
Boys and Girls Clubs of Cleveland
Care Alliance Health Center
Citizens of Cuyahoga County Ombudsman Office
Cleveland Foodbank
Cleveland Housing Network, Inc.: 3, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18
Cleveland Jobs with Justice: 1, 8, 16, 17, 18
Cleveland Sight Center: 3, 16
Cleveland Tenants Organization
Consumer Protection Association: 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20
Diabetes Association of Greater Cleveland
Domestic Violence Center
East Side Organizing Project: 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18
Easter Seals Northern Ohio
Empowerment Center of Greater Cleveland
Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland
FutureHeights: 18
Girl Scouts of Lake Erie Council
Golden Age Centers of Greater Cleveland
Golden Retrievers in Need Rescue Service, Inc.: 1, 3, 6, 7, 16, 17
Greater Cleveland Community Shares
Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity
Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Association
Hannah's Home
HELP Foundation, Inc.
Karamu House Theater: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
Lake County Free Medical Clinic: 16
Lake View Cemetery Foundation: 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 18
Lake-Geauga Centers on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse
Love INC
Lupus Foundation of America, Greater Cleveland Chapter
MidTown Cleveland Inc.
Neighborhood House Association of Lorain County
New Life Community: 1, 3, 6, 7, 14
Northern Ohio Breast Cancer Coalition Fund
Northern Ohio Hemophilia Foundation
ORCA House, Inc.
Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio

Shoes & Clothes for Kids
Slavic Village Development
Speech Hearing & Rehabilitation Center
St. Mary of Egypt Orthodox Mission
The Arc of Greater Cleveland
The Center for Community Solutions
The City Mission
The Cleveland Foundation: 14, 16
The Cleveland Furniture Bank: 1, 6, 7, 12, 14, 16
The Cleveland Play House
United Black Fund of Greater Cleveland
United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Cleveland
United Way of Greater Cleveland
United Way of Greater Lorain County
United Way of Lake County
Urban League of Greater Cleveland: 1, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Youth Opportunities Unlimited

The following organizations did not provide requested information within the past year, but have had a high number of inquiries at the BBB. Without information from the organization, the BBB cannot determine if they meet standards.

American Veterans Relief Fund
Amvets District 20- Northeast Ohio
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Cleveland
Bridgeway, Inc.
Catholic Charities Health and Human Services
Catholic Diocese of Cleveland Foundation
Cleveland Animal Protective League
Cleveland Police Athletic League
Community Housing Solutions
Geauga Humane Society
Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland
Lake County Council on Aging
Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland Inc.
Northeast Ohio SPCA
Ohio Association of Police Activities League
Ohio Pet Placement Foundation
Paralyzed Veterans of America Buckeye Chapter
St. Vincent de Paul Society
The Great Lakes Museum of Science, Environment & Technology
The Housing Advocates, Inc.
Towards Employment, Inc.
Vocational Guidance Services
Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging