

Under Fire: The International Union of Police Associations and its Practices

The International Union of Police Associations (IUPA) is a non-profit organization, exempt under section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Organization was formed in 1979 for the purpose(s) of organizing “all law enforcement officers; [t] o encourage the information of local unions, regional or state councils and foreign affiliations; [t] o secure just compensation for their services and equitable settlement of their grievances...”¹ and several other related purposes.

Despite the IUPA’s commendable purposes, the organization has been the subject of criticism in recent years.² The majority of the criticism has arisen due to the organization spending the greater part of its funds to pay professional solicitors.³ The organization raises most of its money by hiring various phone solicitation companies. These companies then call individuals and solicit donations by telling the potential donors that the money will be used to aid families of fallen officers and for scholarships for those pursuing degrees in law enforcement.⁴ In reality, however, very little of the money is ever given out for those purposes.

For example, in 2011 the organization spent 92% of the \$8.1 million raised to pay solicitors.⁵ Of the \$650,000 the organization netted that year only \$25,000 was spent on scholarships and death benefits combined.⁶

¹ Office of the Secretary of State, Charities Program.

http://www.sos.wa.gov/charities/search_detail.aspx?charity_id=5457

² In a recent article, The Tampa Bay Times listed the organization as the 7th worst charity in America.

<http://www.tampabay.com/americas-worst-charities/charities/international-union-of-police-associations-afl-ci>

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

In addition to questionable money management practices the organization has sparked further criticism by the arguably indifferent nature in which it has responded to critics and members of the nonprofit community. In response to criticism concerning the extremely low percentage of funds spent on direct aid, .31% in 2011, the IUPA's public information officer, Rich Roberts said "[w]hile the percents are not what we would like them to be, it's money we otherwise wouldn't have to support our officers."⁷ Roberts went on to say that the organization plans to continue hiring professional solicitors.⁸

Finally, the Organization has been criticized for refusing to be evaluated or respond to requests by multiple charity rating services. Currently the organization has yet to respond to any requests for information by the Better Business Bureau and Charity Check 101.⁹ Despite these shortcomings the organization does provide some needed assistance, albeit inefficiently. Hopefully, as a result of the criticism or otherwise, the Organization will begin to change its practices and deliver aid more efficiently and transparently in the future.

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⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ <http://www.bbb.org/charity-reviews/wisconsin/police-and-firefighter/national-police-and-trooper-association-in-wauwatosa-wi-23212>