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Chief Daniel J. Ransone
Sunrise Police Department
10440 West Oakland Park Boulevard
Sunrise, Florida 33351

Re: Donation of Forfeiture Funds

Chief Ransone,

This letter is provided in response to your request for a legal opinion outlining the statutory authority and requirements for donations from state Law Enforcement Trust Fund ("LETTF") proceeds. My opinion is based on the following: a review of the relevant Florida Statutes, a review of the entities seeking donations, and the information provided to the City from the requestor entities documenting the expenditure of money received in previous years. Please read carefully below to ensure that I have properly summarized the facts and answered the question posed. If you have any further questions, please notify me immediately.

Facts:

The City of Sunrise Police Department ("Department") has received requests from six (6) charitable organizations for donation of state LETF proceeds. The Department may grant such requests, provided the requestor submits supporting documentation to satisfy the requirements of Section 932.7055, Florida Statutes. You advised that the Department has funds in its state LETF account to grant the requests, should you determine the requests to be sufficient and appropriate.

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Question:

Based on the facts above, is there a legal impediment to the donation of state LETF proceeds to any of the requesting organizations? If not, what due diligence is required prior to your certification?

Answer/Opinion:

Under Florida law, forfeiture donations are considered an expenditure and are regulated in the same manner as other forfeiture expenditures. The Department may utilize forfeiture funds only for permissible expenditures. Donations are a permissible expenditure of state LETF proceeds as long as the receiving organization uses the donated funds for an authorized purpose. The Department has the discretion to determine which organizations or programs will receive donations.

Section 932.7055(5)(c), Florida Statutes, requires a requesting organization to apply to the Chief of Police for a donation of forfeiture funds. The application must be accompanied by a written certification that the donation will be used for an authorized purpose. The requesting organization is further required to include a statement describing anticipated recurring costs for subsequent fiscal years ("FY"). An organization that receives a donation must provide an accounting for the monies received and "shall furnish the same reports as an agency of the county or municipality that receives public funds."

Donated funds may be used only for school resource officer, crime prevention, safe neighborhood, drug abuse education, or drug prevention programs or such other law enforcement purposes as the City Commission sees fit. The Chief of Police is required to present donation requests to the City Commission, accompanied by a written certification that the request complies with Section 932.7055(5), Florida Statutes.

The Department should review each donation request received for compliance with Section 932.7055(5)(c), Florida Statutes. Each requesting organization must:

1. Apply to the Chief in writing for a donation;
2. Include a certification that the money will be used for an authorized purpose;
3. Describe the organization's anticipated recurring costs; and
4. Provide an accounting for donations received by furnishing the same reports as an agency of the municipality that receives public funds.

Before certifying that donated money is actually being allocated and used for an authorized purpose, the Chief of Police should exercise due diligence by scrutinizing requests in the following manner:

1. The requesting organization should be a not-for-profit entity;
2. The requesting organization should be an active and lawfully created entity within the State;
3. The requesting organization should be current in all licensing, taxes, and required registration fees;
4. The requesting organization's application should be reviewed to ensure money is accounted for and expended within the statutory requirements;
5. The request should be free of conflicts of interests;¹ and
6. The request should not directly benefit any employee or family member of the City.²

Applying the standards above to each donation request allows the Department to be transparent in its approval or denial of a donation request.

Application to Current Requests

I have applied the standards outlined above in my analysis of the six (6) pending requests for donations. The six (6) requests are analyzed below based on the documentation provided by each organization.

Kiwanis Club of Sawgrass Sunrise, Inc.

There is a written request from Kiwanis Club of Sawgrass Sunrise, Inc. for a donation in FY 2025-26. The request acknowledges the permissible uses of forfeiture funds contained in Section 932.7055 and certifies that the requested money will be expended only on those uses, including crime prevention, safe neighborhood initiatives, drug abuse education and drug prevention programs. There is no reference to the organization's anticipated recurring costs.

As to the due diligence standards, Kiwanis Club of Sawgrass Sunrise, Inc. is registered with the Department of State as an active Florida not-for-profit corporation which filed an annual report in July 2026. The letter of request is dated June 26, 2026, for a donation of \$6,000 for 15 new bicycles for underserved youth, alongside 115 comprehensive safety kits (CPSC-certified helmets, high-visibility reflective stickers, and LED clip-on safety lights) for the wider student community. The "accounting" for the previous donation in FY 2024-25 only acknowledges compliance with Section 932.7055 and does not provide

¹ I am not in a position to opine on conflicts of interests or direct benefits to employees, so this letter does not analyze those issues. The Department should make that determination.

² See footnote 1 above.

details as to specific expenditures. The Chief should consider all the above factors in considering certifying this request.

First Call for Help of Broward, Inc. d/b/a 2-1-1 Broward

There is a written request from First Call for Help of Broward, Inc. d/b/a 2-1-1 Broward for a donation in FY 2025-26. The request acknowledges the permissible uses of forfeiture funds contained in Section 932.7055 and certifies that the requested money will be expended only on those uses, including crime prevention, safe neighborhood initiatives, drug abuse education and drug prevention programs. There is no reference to the organization's anticipated recurring costs. There is a letter acknowledging that a previous donation of \$3,500 in FY 2024-25 was properly spent. The request further includes information pertaining to the services provided to Sunrise residents. It is unclear whether the information provided constitutes a sufficient "accounting" as I do not see a breakdown of exactly how the monies were expended. Also, the information provided may or may not constitute "the same reports as an agency of the municipality that receives public funds."

As to the due diligence standards, First Call for Help of Broward, Inc. is registered with the Department of State as an active Florida not-for-profit corporation which filed an annual report in January 2026, as well as amended annual reports in May 2026 and June 2026. The letter of request is dated July 17, 2026, for a donation of \$3,500 in FY 2025-26. The "accounting" for the previous donation in FY 2024-25 only acknowledges compliance with Section 932.7055 and does not provide details as to specific expenditures. The Chief should consider all the above factors in considering certifying this request.

Crime Stoppers Council of Broward County, Inc.

There is a written request from Crime Stoppers Council of Broward County, Inc. for a donation in FY 2025-26. The request acknowledges the permissible uses of forfeiture funds contained in Section 932.7055 and certifies that the requested money will be expended only on those uses, including crime prevention, safe neighborhood initiatives, drug abuse education and drug prevention programs. There is no reference to the organization's anticipated recurring costs. There is a letter acknowledging that a previous donation of \$5,000 in FY 2024-25 was properly spent and includes an "accounting" of a donation from FY 2024-25 showing how that money was spent. That information may or may not constitute "the same reports as an agency of the municipality that receives public funds."

As to the due diligence standards, Crime Stoppers Council of Broward County, Inc. is registered with the Department of State as an active Florida not-for-profit corporation which filed an annual report in January 2026. The letter of request is dated August 3, 2026, for a donation of \$5,000 in FY 2025-26. The request includes a letter certifying the

proper use of a previous donation. The “accounting” of FY 2024-25’s donation provided includes the dollar amounts of the specific expenditures and describes each expense; however, I am unable to ascertain if those expenditures related to crime prevention, safe neighborhood initiatives, drug abuse education or drug prevention programs. The Chief should consider all the above factors in considering certifying this request.

Women in Distress of Broward County, Inc.

There is a written request from Women in Distress of Broward County, Inc. for a donation in FY 2025-26. The request acknowledges the permissible uses of forfeiture funds contained in Section 932.7055 and certifies that the requested money will be expended only on those uses, including crime prevention, safe neighborhood initiatives, drug abuse education and drug prevention programs. There is no reference to the organization’s anticipated recurring costs. The request includes a letter certifying that a previous \$4,000 donation in FY 2024-25 was properly spent. The request includes an attached “accounting” reflecting the organization’s “total value of services provided” with detailed descriptions of those services and costs. The information provided may or may not constitute “the same reports as an agency of the municipality that receives public funds.”

As to the due diligence analysis, Women in Distress of Broward County, Inc. is registered with the Department of State as an active Florida not-for-profit corporation which filed an annual report in January 2026. The letter of request is dated March 31, 2026, for a donation of \$4,000 in FY 2025-26. The request includes a letter certifying the proper use of a previous donation. The “accounting” provided for the prior donation appear to show the funds were used in compliance with Section 932.7055. The Chief should consider all the above factors in considering certifying this request.

Broward Victim's Rights Coalition, Inc.

There is a written request from Broward Victim's Rights Coalition, Inc. for a donation in FY 2025-26. The request acknowledges the permissible uses of forfeiture funds contained in Section 932.7055 and certifies that the requested money will be expended only on those uses, including crime prevention, safe neighborhood initiatives, drug abuse education and drug prevention programs. There is no reference to the organization’s anticipated recurring costs. There is a letter certifying that a previous \$4,500 donation was properly spent while delineating how the funds were spent. This information may or may not constitute “the same reports as an agency of the municipality that receives public funds.”

As to the due diligence analysis, Broward Victim's Rights Coalition, Inc. is registered with the Department of State as an active Florida not-for-profit corporation which filed an annual report in February 2026, as well as an amended annual report in July 2026. The letter of request is dated August 3, 2026, for a donation of \$4,500 in FY 2025-26. There

is a letter certifying the proper use of a previous donation, including an “accounting” of monies received and spent. The previous expenditures appear to support safe neighborhood initiatives and/or crime prevention, which are permissible uses. The Chief should consider all the above factors in considering certifying this request.

A Child is Missing, Inc.

There is a written request from A Child is Missing, Inc. for a donation in FY 2025-26. The request acknowledges the permissible uses of forfeiture funds contained in Section 932.7055 and certifies that the requested money will be expended only on those uses, including crime prevention, safe neighborhood initiatives, drug abuse education and drug prevention programs. There is no reference to the organization’s anticipated recurring costs. The request includes a letter certifying that a previous \$3,000 donation in FY 2024-25 was properly spent. The request includes an attached “accounting” showing how the money was spent and how the requested donation would be spent. This information may or may not constitute “the same reports as an agency of the municipality that receives public funds.”

As to the due diligence analysis, A Child is Missing, Inc. is registered with the Department of State as an active Florida not-for-profit corporation which filed an annual report in April 2026. The letter of request is dated July 20, 2026, for a donation of \$3,000 in FY 2025-26. There is a letter certifying the proper use of a previous donation, including an “accounting” of monies received and spent. The previous expenditures appear to support crime prevention, which is a permissible use. The Chief should consider all the above factors in considering certifying this request.

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Forfeiture donations that satisfy the criteria listed above would be permissible uses of LETF proceeds under state law and would count towards the required twenty-five percent (25%) of funds to be distributed to specific charitable organizations pursuant to Section 932.7055(5)(c)3, Florida Statutes. All forfeiture expenditures, including donations, require the Chief's certification.

For the reasons stated above, LETF proceeds may be donated to the requesting charitable organizations if the Chief of Police certifies to the City Commission that the uses proposed by each organization comply with Section 932.7055(5) which requires: an application to the Chief in writing for a donation; a certification that the money will be used for an authorized purpose; a description of the organization's anticipated recurring costs; and an accounting for donations received by furnishing the same reports as an agency of the municipality that receives public funds. Of course, the City Commission must authorize such appropriations.

If you need further information or wish to discuss this matter further, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Ruiz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert M. Ruiz
Assistant City Attorney