



Dear Fellow Delawarean,

When it comes to protecting our families, safeguarding our wallets, knowing our rights as victims of crime, or understanding how the

law can make our communities better, information is the key. Equipped with knowledge, we can make choices that greatly reduce our risk of becoming a victim of crime or fraud, and we can learn how to get help if we're mistreated.

The mission of the Office of the Attorney General is to protect Delawareans from harm by enforcing the law and being your advocate. We're here to help you, and also to give you the information you need to help yourself and your family. Inside this brochure, you'll find answers to some of the most common questions about charities fraud and how to contact the Department of Justice if you have been victimized.

Together, we can keep Delaware safe and strong.

Beau Biden  
Attorney General

Delaware Department of Justice  
Charity Enforcement  
820 N French Street, 5th Floor  
Wilmington, DE 19801

# Charities Fraud

Protecting Delaware's  
consumers against  
fraudulent solicitations

Delaware Department of Justice



Attorney General  
Joseph R. "Beau" Biden, III

### Consumer Protection Unit

- New Castle County • (302) 577-8600
- Kent County • (302) 739-7641
- Sussex County • (302) 856-5353
- Toll Free Consumer Hotline • (800) 220-5424
- Para asistencia en Espanol • (877) 851-0482

[www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov](http://www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov)  
Email: [Consumer.Protection@State.DE.US](mailto:Consumer.Protection@State.DE.US)

## How to Handle Charitable Solicitations

**If you don't know or recognize a charity, or the person soliciting your donation, ASK QUESTIONS:**

- Ask for identification.
- Ask for written information about the charity, including name address and telephone number.
- Don't be rushed. Even if the charity has an urgent need for money, the need will still exist after you read what they've sent.
- Do not be afraid to end the phone call if you are not comfortable with the solicitation. Be wary if the caller refuses to provide you with information requested.
- Be cautious of appeals that tug at your heart strings, especially involving patriotism, natural disasters, or current events.
- Refuse high pressure appeals. Remember legitimate fundraisers will not push you to give on the spot.
- Find out what percentage of your donation goes to the charity's mission.
- How much of your donation goes to the charity and how much is paid to the fund-raiser who contacted you.
- Ask whether your contribution is tax deductible.

## Before you donate

**Learn more about a charity:**

- Call the charity. Confirm that the organization has authorized the solicitation you received.
- Check with local recipients. If a charity tells you that your donation will support a local organization such as a fire department, police department, or hospital, call the organization to verify the claim.
- Visit the charity's website and consult with organizations that evaluate charities such as:

BBB Wise Giving Alliance  
[www.give.org](http://www.give.org)

American Institute of Philanthropy  
[www.charitywatch.org](http://www.charitywatch.org)

Many organizations' financial information may be found online at:

[www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)  
[www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org)

**If you believe you are a victim, contact:**

Delaware Department of Justice  
Attn: Charity Enforcement  
820 North French Street, 5th Floor  
Wilmington, Delaware 19801  
Phone: (302) 577-8600 or (800) 220-5424  
Fax: (302) 577-6499  
Email: [consumer.protection@state.de.us](mailto:consumer.protection@state.de.us)

## Warning signs of Charities Fraud

**Be wary of:**

- any organization that refuses to send you written material or financial information.
- a solicitor offering to send a courier to collect your contribution.
- an invoice or bill that you receive for a pledge you never made.
- similar sounding names. It could be an illegitimate copy-cat organizations

Illegitimate charities frequently use names that resemble those of well-known, legitimate organizations. These fake charities frequently surface after national emergencies or natural disasters. Do some research before you give to ensure that a charity is legitimate.

Remember, you have the right to ask as many questions as necessary to make an informed decision about whether or not to donate. If the charity you are considering resists answering your questions, don't give.