

Warning Signs

- Groups wanting you to make an immediate donation.
- Groups that use names similar to well known charities.
- Groups that use high pressure sales techniques.
- Groups that promise free gifts to lure you into giving.
- Groups that ask for your social security number or credit card numbers over the phone.
- Groups offering to send someone right over to get your money.
- Groups that solicit you on the phone. The telemarketers may keep a large portion of your donation.
- Groups that ask you to give them money on behalf of a charity. Give directly to the charity and not through a third party. That way you know your money is going where you intended.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Kansas Attorney General's Office
Consumer Protection Division
800-432-2310
or
785-296-3751
www.ksag.org

Kansas Secretary of State's Office
Charitable Solicitations Help Desk
785-296-4656

Kansas Charity Check
www.kscharitycheck.org
Kansas Department of Aging
800-432-3535
or
785-296-4986
www.agingkansas.org

Better Business Bureau
Wise Giving Alliance
703-276-0100
www.give.org

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GIVING WISELY TO CHARITY

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Consumer Protection Unit



INTRODUCTION

There are many worthy charities that need your donations and rely on your generosity.

Unfortunately, there are also many con artists who will take advantage of your generosity to line their own pockets.

In many cases, unscrupulous fundraisers claim to be associated with organizations that sound like well-known charities.

In other cases, bogus fundraisers resort to high pressure tactics to get your money, money that never ends up helping the cause you intend to help.

So how can you be sure your contributions end up where you want?

This brochure has important tips to keep in mind before you give.

Do Your Homework

Before giving to any group, check the organization's background to find out exactly how your contribution will be used.

The internet provides a number of powerful resources for checking out organizations that request your charity.

The Kansas Attorney General, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Aging have collaborated to help make it easier for you to do so. The website www.kscharitycheck.org has been created to give you quick access to information that you can review about charities registered in Kansas. The website provides a wealth of information on how to give wisely and is well worth a few minutes of your time.

For other charities or additional information, you can go to www.give.org the website of the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance. This site contains answers to frequently asked questions as well as news and alerts about various organizations that may be attempting to pass themselves off as charitable organizations.

Any reputable group should be willing to give you its annual report, which outlines where the money goes, how much is used for salaries and other expenses, and how much helps the cause itself.

The Council of Better Business Bureaus Standards state no more than half a charity's total income should be spent on administrative and fund-raising costs.

If an organization refuses to give you financial information, give to a group that will.

You can also research a charity's rating and reputation with the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance or The Secretary of State's Office.

Charitable Giving Tips

Most of us can think of well known charities we like to support. Unfortunately, there are phone calls and mail solicitations that are often received from organizations we do not know, but may have similar names to the ones we do. The following tips can help you protect yourself from giving to groups that are more interested in a profit than in any charitable purpose.

- Never assume that because an organization claims it supports a particular cause that it actually does.
- The more pressure you receive in a phone call to make an immediate donation, the more suspicious you should become. If the person on the phone becomes intimidating, rude, or questions your compassion, these are red flags that should cause you to question the organization or caller's ethics. Remember, you can ALWAYS hang up the phone. You do not have to be kind to someone that is trying to take advantage of you.
- Get all information in writing, especially how the group spends its money.
- Ask if a contribution is tax deductible. There is a difference between tax deductible and tax exempt.