



State of Maryland AGENCY NEWS

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Maryland Secretary of State, Attorney General Warn Donors to Beware of Charity Scams in Light of Crisis in Ukraine

ANNAPOLIS, MD—The Maryland Secretary of State and Attorney General are warning that while appeals for charitable donations may surge as the crisis in Ukraine escalates, it is important to do research before giving. There are a number of ways to donate to Ukraine-related causes, while ensuring donations are given to a reputable organization.

"Scam artists seek every opportunity possible to prey on the generosity of well-intended donors," said Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith. "If you choose to give to help relieve the pain and suffering in Ukraine, please be vigilant and donate wisely to reputable, well-established charities."

The Office of the Secretary of State registers and regulates charitable organizations that solicit contributions in Maryland. Together with the assistance of the Maryland Attorney General, the Secretary of State enforces Maryland's charitable giving laws to ensure that donations are used for their intended purpose. Visit the Secretary of State's [website](#) for tips on how to safely donate to charities.

"We are committed to connecting Maryland's donors with tools and tips on how to give wisely," said Attorney General Frosh. "Maryland is home to a number of charitable organizations worthy of your generosity. As our hearts reach out to the people of Ukraine, it is important to be prepared and do your research before donating."

Tips on how to avoid a charity scam:

- Do research before giving and visit an online resource, such as [Charity Navigator](#), that can provide in-depth information on thousands of charities. Search the name of the charity and the terms "complaint," "review," "rating," or "scam" for potential red flags.
- If a telemarketer calls asking for a donation by phone, do not agree to give right away. Ask the telemarketer questions, such as how much of each donation goes to the program, how the organization carries out its mission, what percentage of money it collects is used for program services, whether contributions are tax-deductible, and how much goes to fundraising and administration. Additionally, ask the caller to send information by email or mail before deciding to give. If they refuse, this is a red flag that the "charity" may not be legitimate. Never share personal information over the phone.
- Watch out for names that only look like well-known charities—but aren't. Pay close attention to the name and logo to make sure it matches the intended charity before giving.

The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division offers tips on giving wisely that can be found [here](#).

Maryland law mandates that charities are registered with the Secretary of State and reveal to the public their financial and programmatic activities. You can search the Maryland Charities Database found [here](#) to see if a charity is registered in Maryland.

If you think that you have been a victim of a charity fraud or scam, contact the Office of the Secretary of State, Charities and Legal Services Division by email: DLInvestigations_SOS@maryland.gov or telephone: [410-974-5534](tel:410-974-5534).