DAVE YOST
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

Be a wise donor

Donors need to ask the right questions and do research to be confident that their gifts will be used as they intend.

Do your homework with tools provided by the attorney general

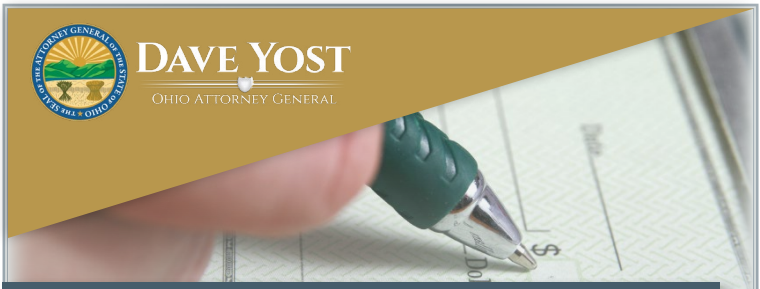
To learn whether a charity has complied with registration requirements, visit www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Charities and select the Research Charities link.

- Use the links on the Research Charities page to connect with charity watchdog organizations and learn what others say about the group. Media articles and other postings can also provide useful details about groups, board members and key employees.
- View 990 forms, which most tax-exempt groups must file with the Internal Revenue Service. These forms describe where organizations get their funding and how they spend it. Use the link to Guidestar, an organization that promotes transparency in the charitable sector, to view the forms.
- If you're considering a donation to an unfamiliar group, check its website first. Does the information match what you received when you were asked to contribute? Do the group's programs and services make sense? Does the charity provide useful information and seem to foster transparency?
- Talk with friends and family about unfamiliar solicitations. Have they heard of the group? Do they know of anyone who has been assisted by it?

PROTECTING ★ THE ★ UNPROTECTED

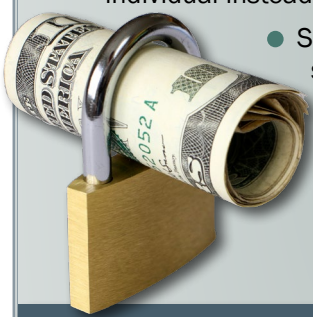
Contact the Ohio Attorney General's Office by calling **800-282-0515** or visiting **www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov**

DAVE YOST
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL



Watch for warning signs

- Do not provide credit-card or banking information to unexpected callers. Ask for written information.
- Consider checking with the charity that a caller mentions to determine whether a fundraising campaign is legitimate.
- Avoid groups that pressure you to make donation decisions immediately or offer to pick up a gift at your home.
- Fraudulent organizations often create names similar to those of large, well-known charities. Scams often center on causes related to veterans, police and fire departments, natural disasters and cancer.
- Scammers may claim that you made a pledge or donated previously when you did not. They also may ask you to make a check payable to an individual instead of an organization.



- Some charities pay professional solicitors to raise money on their behalf. When asked, the fundraisers must disclose the percentage of donations that benefit the charity. Sometimes the figure is very low.

Develop a giving plan in advance

Identify the groups you feel strongly about, and donate solely to them. You can tell other solicitors that you have finalized your annual giving plan but would be happy to review written information for next year.

Help us protect charities and donors

If you learn that a charity is misusing resources or you know of fraudulent solicitations, **please file a complaint** with the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

Ohio Attorney General's Office
Charitable Law Section
150 E. Gay St., 23rd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
800-282-0515
www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov