



# MIKE DEWINE

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

*Protecting Ohio's Families*

## Be a wise donor



**With many groups and individuals seeking contributions, donors need to ask the right questions and do research to be confident their gifts will be used as they intend.**

### Do your homework with tools provided by the Attorney General

Visit [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Charities](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Charities) and select Research Charities. You will find information on specific organizations and learn if they are in compliance with registration requirements.



- 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 on groups, board members, and key employees.
- View the 990 form that most tax-exempt groups must file with the Internal Revenue Service. It describes where organizations get their funding and how they spend it. To view the tax forms, use the link to Guidestar, an organization that promotes transparency in the charitable sector.
- 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?

[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov)

## Watch for warning signs

- Do not provide credit card or banking information to unexpected callers. Ask for written information.
- Consider checking with the charity the caller mentions to determine if a campaign is legitimate.
- Avoid groups that pressure you to make donation decisions immediately or offer to pick up a gift at your home.
- Scam organizations often create names similar to those of large, well-known charities. Scams often center on causes related to veteran, police and fire, natural disasters, and cancer.
- Scammers may claim you made a pledge or prior gift when you did not. They also may ask you to make a check out to an individual instead of an organization.
- Some charities pay professional solicitors to raise funds on their behalf. When asked, they 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 limit your giving to them. You can tell others you have made 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](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov)**

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