



Our communities would be hollow without the work done by nonprofit organizations. Be it the churches that offer spiritual guidance and community, the libraries and museums that provide educational resources or the senior centers that serve up companionship, these organizations — and thousands like them — are the heart of our cities, towns and neighborhoods.

Their focus and capability shouldn't be diverted by unscrupulous business practices and scams.

Just like individual consumers, nonprofits experience advertising misrepresentations, billing disputes, unauthorized charges, shoddy workmanship and poorly performed services. And now, they can turn to the Ohio Attorney General's Office for help.

The Attorney General's complaint resolution process, available to consumers since the 1970s, has been expanded to address the problems that nonprofit organizations and small businesses experience in their transactions.

Hundreds are using this service, which has helped nonprofits and businesses recover or avoid payment of sums ranging from less than \$100 to more than \$40,000.

TO FILE A COMPLAINT:

Visit www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Nonprofits or call Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's Help Center at **800-282-0515**.

LEARN MORE ONLINE

A number of resources for nonprofits can be found on the Ohio Attorney General's website.

Visit www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Nonprofits for these and other items that can assist your organization:

- Handbook for Nonprofits
- Nonprofit News monthly newsletter
- Guide for Charity Board Members
- Avoiding Theft in Your Charitable Organization



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MIKE DEWINE**

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PROTECT YOUR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

*Advice for standing up
against rip-offs and scams*



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★ OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL ★

www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Nonprofits

TOP 5 COMPLAINTS NONPROFITS AND BUSINESSES REPORT TO THE OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE:

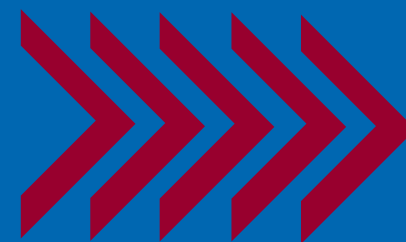
1. Failure to receive a service or product
2. Poorly performed property improvements and repair services
3. Unauthorized charges on telephone bills
4. Phony "yellow page" advertisements
5. Unauthorized charges for office supplies

TO SEEK HELP RESOLVING A PROBLEM:

Visit www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Nonprofits or call Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's Help Center at **800-282-0515**.



BE ON GUARD



FOR RIP-OFFS AND SCAMS

SUCCESS STORIES

FROM OHIO NONPROFITS THAT SPOKE OUT

A library staff member in Madison County turned to the Ohio Attorney General's Office for help when she discovered the library's phone bill included \$279.60 in unauthorized charges.

A complaint specialist contacted the company that tacked on the fees, which reportedly were tied to a free web service trial offer the library didn't cancel. The library disputed the allegation, and the firm credited the library's phone bill.

asking for their maintenance worker's name, then shipped the employee unwanted and overpriced supplies. Once contacted, the Attorney General's Office negotiated the return of the items and a refund for the church.

A Cleveland church recovered \$1,144.45 and avoided payment of \$856.71 for cleaning supplies that it never ordered. Church officials said someone called

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE MAY BE ABLE TO HELP

While we can't promise you the exact outcome you desire, the Ohio Attorney General's Office will do its best to help you achieve a fair and equitable resolution to your complaint. For instance, we may be able to help you:

- Recover funds
- Secure the product or service you were seeking
- Reach a mutually agreeable resolution with the other party

COMMON SCAMS... AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

THE SCAM: >

A caller contacts a nonprofit claiming to be from Yellow Pages. Sometimes the organization agrees to purchase an ad, and sometimes an invoice is sent with no agreement. In either case, the nonprofit pays for an ad that it expected to be widely circulated in a popular publication. Instead it has paid for something that few people — if any — will see.

THE SOLUTION: >

- Don't place orders over the phone unless you know the company you're dealing with.
- Get the firm's name, address and phone number as well as the name and position of the caller.
- Verify that the publication exists and get circulation information.
- Check your records to confirm that you've done business with the company in the past.
- Warn employees to be on the alert for suspicious invoices.
- Contact your phone directory of choice and verify the company's process.

THE SCAM: >

A caller contacts a nonprofit asking for the model number of its printer or copier. It then sends toner cartridges that were never agreed to along with an invoice. Often the quality is low and the cost is high. Efforts to return the toner are met with refusals and demands for payment. The organization has just become the victim of a "toner phoner." Light bulbs, computer supplies, fax paper or copy paper also might be the scammer's product of choice.

THE SOLUTION: >

- Assign one staff member to handle sales calls and purchase all office supplies.
- Check out unfamiliar companies and offers with the Ohio Attorney General's Office and Better Business Bureau before ordering.
- Keep a list of regular vendors to consult when someone calls claiming an order is a renewal.
- If you do place an order, get confirmation in writing of all conditions.
- Immediately notify the supplier in writing of unauthorized shipments or invoices, stating that you did not place an order and will not accept delivery. If delivery has already been made, notify the company that you will not pay and that the items are available to be picked up.