

CHARITY SCAMS

What is a charity scam?

Fake charities and fundraisers target seniors in the same way that legitimate charities may contact donors—such as by phone or email. However, these fake charities are taking advantage of seniors' good will and are not raising money for a valid cause.



HOW CAN YOU SPOT A FAKE CHARITY SCAM?

- The charity or fundraiser refuses to provide detailed information about its identity, mission, costs, and how the donation will be used.
- The organization uses a name that is similar to that of a reputable, well-known organization.
- The charity uses pressure tactics to get money from you, such as asking you to donate immediately without giving you time to think about it and do further research.
- Asks for donations in cash or for you wire money.



THIS FACT SHEET PRESENTED BY SOUTH CAROLINA LEGAL SERVICES

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HOW CAN YOU AVOID GIVING TO A FAKE CHARITY?

- Ask for detailed information about the charity, including name, address, and telephone number.
- Do some research. Searching the name of the organization online, especially including the phrase “fake” or “scam” is one way to learn about its reputation.
- Call the charity directly and find out if the organization is aware of the request for funding and has authorized the use of its name in connection with the fundraising.



- Find out if the charity or fundraiser must be registered in your state by contacting the National Association of State Charity Officials nasconet.org.
- Check on the charity by contacting an organization like charitynavigator.org to determine if the charity is real.
- Never send cash donations. It is always better for security and tax purposes to send money by check or credit card.
- Never wire to someone claiming to be a charity. Send money via a wire transfer is like sending cash—once you send it, its gone.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE HAS BECOME THE VICTIM OF A CHARITY SCAM?

- Report fake charity scams to the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov/complaint.
- Report the crime to local law enforcement
- Report the issue to your local Adult Protective Services agency, which can be located at eldercare.gov
- You can report charity scams or financial elder abuse to your state’s attorney general’s office