

Fake charity scam information for meal service providers

Reading and sharing this information with seniors in your community, along with the fake charity scams placemat, will help prevent financial fraud. It can also help you recognize if one of the people you serve has become a victim of fraud.

Signs of a Charity scam

Fake charities and fundraisers often use the same way to reach donors as the legitimate charities and fundraisers, such as phone, face-to-face contact, email, the internet (including social networking sites), and mobile devices. Scammers use these same methods to take advantage of your goodwill.

Regardless of how they reach you, be cautious of any charity or fundraiser that:

- Refuses to provide detailed information about its identity, mission, costs, and how the donation will be used, including what percent of your donation will go to the charity rather than to the caller or the caller's company.
- Uses a sound-alike name that closely resembles that of a better-known, reputable organization.



- Thanks you for a pledge you don't remember making.
- Uses high-pressure tactics such as trying to get you to donate immediately, without giving you time to think about it and do your research.
- Asks for donations in cash or asks you to wire money.
- Offers to send a courier or overnight delivery service to collect the donation immediately.
- Guarantees sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution. By law, you never have to give a donation to be eligible to win a sweepstakes.

Charity checklist

These precautions can help you ensure that your donation benefits the people and organizations that you want to help.

- Ask for detailed information about the charity, including name, address, and telephone number.
- Do some research. Searching the name of the organization online – especially with the word “complaint(s)” or “scam” – is one way to learn about its reputation.
- Call the charity directly. Find out if the organization is aware of the solicitation and has authorized the use of its name.
- 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 entity that provides information about charities such as guidestar.org, give.org, or charitynavigator.org. You may also call or visit your local Better Business Bureau to make sure the charity is real. Keep a record of your donations and pledged donations.
- Make an annual donation plan. That way, you can decide which causes to support and which reputable charities you choose to receive your donations.
- Never send cash donations. For security and tax purposes, it’s best to pay by check – made payable to the charity – or by credit card.
- Never wire money to someone claiming to be a charity. Scammers often request donations to be wired because wiring money is like sending cash: once you send it, you can’t get it back.
- If a donation request comes from a group claiming to help your local community (for example, local police or firefighters), ask the local agency if they have heard of the group and are getting financial support.

What you can do if you suspect someone has fallen victim to a fake charity scam:

- Report fake charity scams to the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov/complaint.
- If you believe a crime has occurred, report it to law enforcement’s non-emergency number. If you suspect that someone is a victim of elder abuse or financial exploitation, report it to your local Adult Protective Services. You can find your local APS at eldercare.gov.
- You can also report charity scams or financial abuse of elders to your state attorney general. You can find your attorney general at naag.org/naag/attorneys-general/whos-my-ag.php. If you think the person’s safety may be at risk, call 911.

Disclaimer

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