



A Program with the
Colorado Attorney General
and the AARP Foundation



Colorado Attorney General
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Charity Fraud: Make the Business of Giving Your Business!

Prevention and Tips

Disasters bring out the best and worst in people. Charitable giving reached a record high in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and now in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike people respond to the need for help. Be aware of illegitimate charities that try to con individuals out of their money. Seniors can be especially vulnerable and are often a prime target for this type of fraud.

Warning Signs of Charity Fraud

- Beware of charities using names that closely resemble that of better-known, reputable organizations.
- Fraudulent charities often ask for donations in cash or a check made out to the salesperson and not the charity.
- The potential contributor is asked for bank account information or credit card information before they agree to contribute.
- A guarantee of sweepstakes winnings is given in exchange for a contribution.

Actions That Can Be Taken to Avoid Charity Scams

- If you're approached by an unfamiliar charity, investigate before giving:
 - Get the name, address, and phone number of the organization and ask for their registration number.
 - Also ask for a copy of its annual report and financial statement.
 - For a list of legitimate charities contact the American Institute of Philanthropy at www.charitywatch.org or the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance at www.give.org.
- Contact charities on your own rather than responding to those that contact you.
- Keep careful records of all your donations.
- Be especially cautious when there are natural or other disasters.

Unfortunately, charity fraud often makes a headline which causes people to be less confident about giving their money to legitimate charities. As a result, charities lose money that is genuinely used to support others in need. Don't let potential scams keep you from being generous, just be aware of the signs and take the proper precautions to ensure that the help you are extending is reaching those who need it most.

Prevent Financial Elder Abuse!

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www.aarpelderwatch.org