

# Charity Tips

I believe it's important to give to charity. That's why I want to make sure the money you donate goes to the cause and not to a con artist or some overpaid fundraiser.

Don't believe what you hear on the phone or read in a charity solicitation. Before you give, check them out yourself and verify the claims. It doesn't take all that long. The sites listed below make it really easy to do.

## Charity Navigator

Kiplinger's named this the best charity review site of 2011. Charity Navigator rates more than 5,000 charities for financial health, accountability and transparency.

## Wise Giving Alliance

This site is run by the Better Business Bureau. It does not rank charities, but rather helps you make informed judgments about the groups that solicit your support.

## GuideStar

It maintains a national database of nonprofits. Much of the information comes from Form 990 that the charity files with the IRS.

## CharityWatch

This charity rating and evaluation service is run by the American Institute of Philanthropy. It sees itself as the "independent, aggressive charity watchdog" that you rely on.

Before giving to an unknown charity, it is always wise to make sure they are registered to solicit money in your state. In Washington you can check with the [Secretary of State's office](#).

## More Information

- ❖ BBB: [Tips of Charitable Giving](#)
- ❖ BBB: [Donating to Police and Firefighter Organizations](#)
- ❖ BBB: [Donating a Car or Other Vehicle to Charity](#)
- ❖ BBB: [Donating Used Clothes and Household Items](#)
- ❖ IRS: [Eight Tips for Deducting Charitable Contributions](#)
- ❖ FTC: [Charitable Donations: Give or Take?](#)