

Charity Verifications for Seniors



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Charity Type Verification Actions

"Pause • Question • Verify Before You Donate"

Charity Type	Questionable Charity	What to Verify
Veterans Charity	<i>Patriots of Valor Foundation</i>	Check Charity Navigator, CharityWatch, IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search, and determine how much money reaches veterans versus fundraisers.
Veterans Assistance Charity	<i>WarriorAid Support Fund</i>	Verify actual veteran assistance programs, confirm beneficiaries exist, and review fundraising percentages.
Children's Literacy Charity	<i>Books for Tomorrow</i>	Review Form 990, executive compensation, board independence, and program-spending ratio.
Animal Rescue / Shelter Charity	<i>SafePaws Rescue League</i>	Confirm physical shelter location, verify animals are actually being housed or rescued, and check state nonprofit records.
Scholarship Charity	<i>FutureScholars Foundation</i>	Verify scholarship recipients, school partnerships, public scholarship databases, and award records.
Medical Research Charity	<i>HopeCure International</i>	Confirm partnerships with hospitals, universities, and clinical trial registries. Verify research actually exists.
Religious Charity / Ministry	<i>FaithHands Outreach Ministries</i>	Verify church affiliations, physical locations, leadership oversight, and community programs.
Environmental Charity	<i>ReGreen America Initiative</i>	Confirm permits, partnerships with conservation groups, project reports, and measurable environmental outcomes.
Hospice Charity	<i>ComfortCare Hospice Fund</i>	Verify licensing, medical staff, healthcare partnerships, and actual patient services provided.

Charity Verification Checklist for Seniors

✅ Step 1: Verify IRS Status

Search the charity using:

- IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search
- State Charity Registration Database

Look for:

- Active nonprofit registration
- Current tax-exempt status
- No revocations or suspensions

✅ Step 2: Review Independent Watchdogs

Check:

- Charity Navigator
- CharityWatch
- BBB Wise Giving Alliance
- Candid (GuideStar)

Look for:

- Good financial ratings
- Transparency
- Governance information
- Program effectiveness

✅ Step 3: Review Financial Health

A healthy charity generally should:

- Spend at least 65% on programs
- Ideally spend 70-80% on programs
- Have reasonable executive salaries
- Have audited financial statements

Warning Signs

- ▶ Less than 50% spent on programs
- ▶ Most donations spent on fundraising
- ▶ Excessive executive compensation
- ▶ No independent board members

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✅ Step 4: Verify Programs Actually Exist

Ask:

- Can I see evidence of the program?
- Are there independent news stories?
- Are partners willing to confirm participation?
- Can I visit the facility?

Warning Signs

- ▶ No physical address
- ▶ Mailbox-only location
- ▶ Stock photos
- ▶ AI-generated images
- ▶ Vague descriptions of activities

✅ Step 5: Verify Leadership

Look for:

- Board of directors listed publicly
- Independent board members
- Experienced leadership
- Published annual reports

Warning Signs

- ▶ No board listed
- ▶ Family members controlling the entire organization
- ▶ Leadership salaries hidden



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✅ Step 6: Watch for Fundraising Abuse

Ask:

- Who is asking for my donation?
- Is a telemarketing company involved?
- What percentage actually reaches the cause?

Warning Signs

- ▶ Repeated mailers
- ▶ High-pressure calls
- ▶ Requests for immediate action
- ▶ Emotional stories with no proof
- ▶ Third-party fundraisers keeping most of the donation

✅ Step 7: Verify Claims

For Medical Charities:

- Verify hospitals
- Verify clinics
- Verify clinical trials

For Veteran Charities:

- Verify veteran support programs
- Confirm relationships with recognized veteran organizations

For Scholarship Charities:

- Verify schools
- Verify recipients
- Verify scholarship awards



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For Environmental Charities:

- Verify permits
- Verify projects
- Verify government partnerships

For Religious Charities:

- Verify congregations
- Verify denominational affiliations
- Verify outreach programs

Top 10 Senior Donor Red Flags

- ▶ No physical address
- ▶ No Form 990 available
- ▶ Excessive fundraising costs
- ▶ Unverifiable success stories
- ▶ Emotional pressure tactics
- ▶ Repeated mail and phone solicitations
- ▶ No independent oversight
- ▶ Mission keeps changing
- ▶ Programs cannot be independently confirmed
- ▶ "Donate today or people will suffer" messaging

Remember Before You Give:

PAUSE if you feel pressured.

QUESTION the charity's finances, programs, and leadership.

VERIFY using independent sources.

ASK FOR HELP from a trusted family member, financial advisor, attorney, accountant, or local nonprofit expert.