

Attorney General Raoul Cautions Donors To Be Wary Of Scams Tied To Earthquake Relief Efforts

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CHICAGO - Attorney General Kwame Raoul today urged Illinois residents who plan to donate to support Turkey and Syria earthquake relief efforts to be on the lookout for fundraising scams. Raoul warned donors who want to give to the earthquake relief efforts to be wary of requests for clothing, food or other in-kind donations, which may not be appropriate.

Attorney General Raoul advised donors to ask questions to determine who receives the donations and what the charity's transportation and distribution plans are to ensure the organization can effectively provide aid. He also said unless the charitable organization

has the staff and infrastructure to distribute such aid, the donations may be more of a burden than a help.

“The devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria have sadly caused widespread destruction and loss of life. I urge Illinoisans who want to help by donating to the relief effort to take the time to look into the charitable organization before donating,” Raoul said. “Taking that extra step will help ensure your donations reach legitimate causes that directly contribute to helping the people of Turkey, Syria and other affected locations.”

Donors should give directly to charities that have a presence in the region instead of giving to an organization that supports multiple groups. Raoul also said donors should be wary of those who are not experienced in relief assistance.

Attorney General Raoul recommended that anyone who receives a call from a solicitor asking for donations keep detailed notes with the date and time of the call, the organization’s name, the name of the solicitor, the “pitch” the organization makes, and any other pertinent information.

Attorney General Raoul encourages donors to consider the following tips to ensure donations are used for the intended purpose:

- **Ask how much of the donation will go to the charity and how much will be used to pay fundraising costs.** Solicitors must give this information if asked.
- **Pay close attention to the name of the charity.** Some fraudulent charities mislead donors with names that sound or look like those of legitimate organizations.
- **Ask questions about the charity.** Donors should give only when their questions have been answered and when they are certain their money will be used according to their wishes. Donors should ask questions such as if the charity is registered with the Illinois Attorney General’s office and what percentage of the donation goes toward fundraising, administration, and charitable programming.
- **Exercise caution when giving online.** Email solicitations that appear to be linked to relief groups could be from scammers trying to take advantage of donors. Donors should be wary of any solicitations online from unfamiliar charities.
- **Be careful with personal information.** Donors should be cautious before giving out credit card or personal information over the phone, by text message, or via the internet.
- **Do not pay in cash.** For security and tax record purposes, pay by check. Be sure to write the full official name of the charity on a check and do not use abbreviations.
- **Request written information.** A legitimate charity will provide information outlining its mission, how donations are distributed, and proof that contributions are tax deductible.

- **Do not donate if the solicitor uses high-pressure tactics, asks for cash payment or insists on sending someone to pick up a donation.** These are all hallmarks of a scam.

Under Illinois law, fundraisers and charitable organizations are required to register each year with the Attorney General's office. To assist potential donors in making wise giving decisions, Attorney General Raoul provides [important information](#) about charitable organizations such as income, expenditures and programs. Raoul also encouraged donors to contact his office's Charitable Trust Bureau to report suspicious solicitations by calling 312-814-2595.