



May 23, 2013

**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN WARNS DONORS TO BE WARY OF SCAMS TIED TO OKLAHOMA TORNADO RELIEF*****Madigan Urges Illinois Contributors to Research Charities Before Donating***

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today urged Illinois residents who want to donate to charitable efforts to help the victims of Monday's devastating tornado in Oklahoma to watch out for fundraising scams by con artists seeking to exploit the disaster for their personal profit.

"In the wake of such devastation, people understandably want to do what they can to help people in need," Madigan said. "Unfortunately, scam artists try to take advantage of this goodwill. I urge Illinois residents who want to make charitable contributions to research organizations before making a donation to ensure it will directly benefit the victims in Oklahoma."

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 Madigan [provides important information about charitable organizations](#) such as income, expenditures and programs.

Attorney General Madigan suggested the following tips to ensure a donation will be used for its intended purpose:

- Donate to charities you know and trust. Be alert for charities that seem to have sprung up overnight in connection with current events such as natural disasters.
- Be especially careful online. Make sure the website you are visiting belongs to a legitimate, established and registered charity, and that the website and the charity match. See if other legitimate websites will link to that website. Also, make sure the site is secure.
- Check out the charity with the Better Business Bureau, Charity Navigator, GuideStar and the Attorney General's office.
- Be wary of urgent appeals that play on your emotions for aid. Do not donate if the solicitor uses high-pressure tactics, asks for cash payment or insists on sending someone to pick up your donation. These are all hallmarks of a scam.
- Ask how much of your donation will go to the charitable work and how much will be used to pay fundraising costs. If you don't get a clear answer — or if you don't like the answer you get — consider donating to a different organization.
- Never send cash. You can't be sure the organization will receive your donation, and you won't have a record for tax purposes. And, don't give out personal or financial information until you have reviewed all the information from the charity and verified its legitimacy.

Madigan encouraged donors to contact her office's Charitable Trust Bureau to report suspicious solicitations at (312) 814-2595. The Attorney General recommended that, if possible, when solicitors call, keep notes detailing the date and time of the call, the organization's name and the name of the solicitor. Madigan also advised consumers to try remembering the "pitch" as well as any other pertinent information so that it is easier to track the scam.

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