

Seasons Greetings for Safe Charity Giving

ALERT FOR STATE NETWORK USERS



The security office is tracking an increase in ransomware activity directed at state employees. The bad actors gained access to usernames and passwords from business web sites that were compromised years ago. They are including these passwords in email messages claiming to have taken over our employees' device or computer and claim they have access to both sensitive information and web sites employees have visited.

If you have received an email requesting a ransom payment, DO NOT PAY the ransom! Simply delete the message and report it to your ISO.

— **Solomon Adote, Chief Security Officer**

GUARD AGAINST CHARITY FRAUD

Before you donate to a charity, determine whether or not it is a legitimate organization. Use one of these organizations to help you research charities: [BBB Wise Giving Alliance](#), [Charity Navigator](#), [CharityWatch](#), and [GuideStar](#).



The Federal Trade Commission advises:

- Search online for the cause you care about — like “hurricane relief” or “homeless kids” — plus phrases like “best charity” or “highly-rated charity.” Once you find a specific charity you’re considering giving to, search its name plus “complaint,” “review,” “rating,” or “scam.” If you find red flags, consider finding another organization.
- Check out the charity’s website. Does it give information about the programs you want to support, or how it uses donations? How much of your donation will go directly to support the programs you care about? If you can’t find detailed information about a charity’s mission and programs, be suspicious.

See what your state’s charity regulator has to say about the charity. Don’t know who that is? Look it up at [nasconet.org](#).

Before you donate through an online portal that lets you choose from a list of charities, read the article [Donating Through an Online Giving Portal](#), available at [FTC.gov/Charity](#). It explains how these online giving portals work.

Another charity giving resource is the Better Business Bureau’s *Wise Giving Guide*. Published three times a year, it helps donors make more informed giving decisions. Each issue includes a cover story on charity accountability and a compilation of the latest national charity evaluation conclusions completed by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance.

HOW CHARITY SCAMS WORK

Some scammers set up fake organizations with fake names that are similar to well-known, reputable charities. Others take advantage of natural disasters, local tragedies, and online giving portals to dupe well-intentioned donors. Still others will thank you for a donation that you never made to trick you into paying them or revealing payment information.

You should avoid any charity or fundraiser that:

- Discloses no detailed information about its identity, costs, and mission.
- Won’t tell how your donation will be used.
- Won’t prove your contribution is tax deductible.
- Requires cash or wire transfer donations.
- Illegally guarantees or offers winning “sweepstakes prizes” in return for a charitable contribution.

Questions, comments or topic suggestions? Email us at eSecurity@delaware.gov

