

## **Avoid becoming a victim of COVID charity scams**

Written by Staff Reports

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Many New Mexicans want to help during the COVID-19 pandemic by contributing to charities, but the FBI is warning that scammers also want to help – as in helping themselves to your money.

Nationwide, the FBI and other law enforcement agencies have received reports of scammers soliciting donations for individuals, groups, and areas affected by COVID-19.

Protect yourself and do your research before clicking on links purporting to provide information on the virus; donating to a charity online or through social media; contributing to a crowdfunding campaign; purchasing products online; or giving up your personal information in order to receive money or other benefits.

Be careful about giving money to any charity calling you for donations and be wary if you get a call about a donation pledge that you don't remember making – it could be a scam.

Here are some tips on how to avoid becoming a victim of a charity fraud:

Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowdfunding websites.

Never donate in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money.

Do not let anyone rush you into making a donation.

Do not click on links from sources you don't know. These could be attempts to download viruses onto your computer or cell phone.

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The FBI has more tips at: <https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes/charity-fraud>

If you think you are a victim of a scam or attempted fraud involving COVID-19, you can report it without leaving your home by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at (866)720-5721, or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>

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