



Attorney General  
of New York  
**Letitia James**

## Dear Charitable Organization,

Fundraising is often a necessary task that charities must perform. It ensures that you have the funding needed to pursue your mission. Because of this, many charities hire professional fundraisers to help in their efforts. However, not all fundraisers are the same. Some professional fundraisers charge significant amounts for their services. In some cases, most of the money goes to them instead of to the charity.

If you are going to use a professional fundraiser, it is crucial that you make sure they are reputable before you hire them. This brochure provides information about how to verify that your charity is getting most out of their services so that you can ensure that the money raised goes where it is needed most.

Sincerely,



# Resources

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These tips can help guide your hiring process. If you need more information, please go to our website send us an email.

### **NYS Attorney General Charities Bureau**

Find information about a charity's registration and financial filings.

[charitiesnys.com](http://charitiesnys.com)

[charities.bureau@ag.ny.gov](mailto:charities.bureau@ag.ny.gov)

(212) 416-8401 or (800) 771-7755

### **Charity Navigator**

Provides information about charities and tips about donating.

[charitynavigator.org](http://charitynavigator.org)

### **Better Business Bureau**

Provides information about charities' finances, effectiveness reporting and fundraising appeals.

Metro NY, Long Island, Mid-Hudson

[bbb.org/new-york-city](http://bbb.org/new-york-city)

Upstate NY

[bbb.org/upstate-new-york](http://bbb.org/upstate-new-york)



# Before You Hire a Fundraiser

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*Tips to Maximize Your Charity Benefits*



New York State Office  
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## Make Sure the Fundraiser is Registered

Most fundraisers are required to register and file financial reports with the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau.

## Get the Best Deal Possible

Check out the fundraiser's performance for other charities - you can get their financial reports from the Charities Bureau at [charitiesnys.com/search-reports](https://charitiesnys.com/search-reports). Get proposals from several fundraisers and compare them.

## Protect Your Rights in Writing

You must have a written contract with a fundraiser clearly describing its responsibilities and your organization's rights. The contract must also include:

- Your charity's right to cancel the contract, without penalties, within 15 days after it is filed with Charities Bureau as well as the addresses of the fundraiser and the Attorney General to which your cancellation notice must be sent;
- The contract's financial terms, including how much will be kept by your organization and how much must be paid for fundraising fees and other expenses;
- A requirement that, within five days of receipt, all contributions must be placed in an account controlled by your charity.

## Keep the List of Your Contributors

Make sure your contract makes your organization the owner of the list of its contributors. Otherwise, the fundraiser may have the right to use the list when raising money for other charities or to sell or rent the list for other campaigns.

## Protect Your Organization's Name

Your organization's name is one of its most important assets. Make sure your contract requires the fundraiser to get your approval of what will be said — orally or in writing — about your organization. In New York, charitable solicitations must include:

- Information about where to obtain the charity's latest financial report;
- A description of the charity's programs or directions about how to obtain that information;
- Disclosure that the solicitation is conducted by a professional fundraiser and the fundraiser's name. Individuals, such as telemarketers, must disclose their names and that they are being paid to solicit.

## Get the Records

Require the fundraiser to give you regular reports and records of its expenses. Ask questions about expenses you don't understand or that seem high.

## Find Out What the Public is Saying

Require the fundraiser to give you reports of any complaints it receives and procedures for resolving them.

# Checklist for Hiring a Fundraiser

Thinking about hiring a fundraiser? Before you sign or renew a contract, it's important to look carefully at the details. Be sure you take the necessary steps to maximize the benefits to your charity and help protect it from loss or damage to its reputation.

- Check to see if they're registered with the NYS Attorney General's Charity Bureau at [charitiesnys.com](https://charitiesnys.com).
- Review the fundraiser's performance at [charitiesnys.com/search-reports](https://charitiesnys.com/search-reports)
- Get proposals from several different fundraisers and compare them for the best deal possible.
- Get a written contract describing the fundraiser's responsibilities and your organization's rights.
- Keep a list of all your contributors.
- Review all communication your fundraiser is doing to protect your charity's name.
- Get regular reports from your fundraisers including expenses.
- Have the fundraiser pass on any feedback from the public including complaints.