

Ensuring Donor Trust – How to Communicate about Crowdfunding Websites

***Disclaimer:** This document is not intended as legal advice. Your organizational goals, purpose, bylaws, and values should drive the creation of this document.*

In March 2026, Alaska Attorney General Stephen Cox announced lawsuits against six crowdfunding platforms for creating donation pages for all charitable nonprofits in the nation without their knowledge or consent. The lawsuits allege that these companies, along with another dozen or more, used publicly available data to generate fundraising pages for over a million 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofits – including all charitable nonprofits in Alaska. The sites are now actively soliciting donations through those pages without first obtaining permission from the organizations or even telling them that the sites exist. The lawsuits involve the violation of three Alaska laws. Until these websites are taken down, it is imperative that every nonprofit inform donors about trusted ways to give.

Ultimately, building and keeping donor trust and relationships is central to a nonprofit's mission.

The actions of these companies have raised important issues about nonprofit consent, donor transparency, and every nonprofit's ability to ensure the intent of each donation. **Many ways are available to help reassure your donors and potential donors that they are using a trusted vehicle to make their donation.** The information below is designed for all charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofits to communicate with supporters. For example, you can:

- Post one of the notices below on your website and specifically list the trusted online platforms that have your consent to collect donations
- Send a postcard, letter, or email to every donor in your database
- Provide a note insert with your solicitation requests or recognition communication
- Share regular notes on your social media pages, especially those featuring active campaigns or solicitation efforts

To develop appropriate messages, we suggest you convene your team to determine which of the following options set the right tone and match your communication style. Feel free to shift the language as needed while ensuring that you are communicating trust and accountability.

Option 1: Important Notice About Safe Giving

We're grateful for the generosity of our supporters and want to ensure your donations directly support our mission.

Recently, there has been increased attention from online crowdfunding and fundraising websites that may use nonprofit names, logos, and overall branding without authorization or imply a

relationship that does not exist. In some cases, donations made through these sites may be delayed, reduced by fees, or distributed without the nonprofit's knowledge or consent.

To ensure your gift reaches us directly and has the greatest impact, please donate only through our official channels:

- Our website: [insert website]
- Approved online fundraising platforms including: _____
- Mail: [insert mailing address]
- Phone: [insert phone number]
- In person: [insert details, if applicable]

If you see our organization listed on a fundraising platform and are unsure whether it is legitimate, please contact us directly at [insert contact information].

Thank you for helping us protect your generosity and ensure your support goes where you intend it to.

Option 2: Please Donate Through Official Channels Only

We want our donors to know that some fundraising websites are listing nonprofits without their knowledge or permission. These platforms may create donation pages using an organization's name, branding, or mission information without asking for consent or notifying the nonprofit. This can create confusion for donors, loss of trust, and may result in added fees or delays before funds reach the intended organization.

To make sure your donation goes directly to us, please give only through:

- Our official website: [insert website]
- Approved online fundraising platforms including: _____
- Mailed donations: [insert address]
- [Any additional approved methods]

Please avoid donating through unauthorized third-party fundraising sites unless we have explicitly shared that platform as an approved giving option.

Questions? Reach out to us at [contact information].

Option 3: Your Generosity Matters—And We Want to Protect It

Thank you for supporting [Organization Name]. Your financial investments make our work possible.

We want you to be aware that some online fundraising platforms may use nonprofit names without permission or knowledge. While these sites may appear legitimate, they are not always affiliated with the organizations they feature.

We want to ensure that your donation reaches us quickly, securely, and with the least amount of fees possible.

The best ways to support us are:

- Donate directly through our website: [website]
- Only use approved online fundraising platforms including: _____
- Send a check to: [address]
- Contact us about other giving options: [contact info]

If you ever have questions about whether a fundraising page is legitimate, please contact us before donating.

Thank you for supporting our mission in trusted ways.

Option 4: A Note to Our Supporters About Safe Giving

You may have seen recent news that the State of Alaska is taking legal action against crowdfunding companies over deceptive fundraising practices.

We want to remind our supporters that [Organization Name] only accepts donations through approved channels that we directly manage or where we have provided our consent.

Please give through:

- [website]
- Approved online fundraising platforms including: _____
- [mailing address]
- [other approved methods]

We cannot guarantee that donations made through third-party fundraising websites will reach us in a timely way – or in full.

If you are unsure whether a donation request is legitimate, please contact us directly before giving.

Thank you for supporting [Organization Name] and helping protect charitable giving in Alaska.

Option 5: Protect Your Donation

We are aware that some fundraising websites may feature nonprofit organizations without their consent or knowledge.

[Organization Name] does not authorize third-party fundraising platforms to solicit donations on our behalf unless explicitly stated by us.

To protect your donation and ensure 100% of your intended gift reaches our organization as quickly as possible, please donate only through our official giving channels:

- [website]
- (approved online fundraising platform)
- [address]
- [other approved methods]

If you encounter an online donation page using our name and are unsure whether it is legitimate, please contact us before making a gift.

Option 6: Short Social Media/Website Banner

Donor Alert: Please donate only through our official website and approved fundraising channels including _____. We are aware that fundraising platforms may use nonprofit names without permission or knowledge. To ensure your gift goes directly to our work, donate here (link) or contact us directly with questions.