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## Cancer Fund-Raising Organizations

Numerous private cancer fund-raising organizations operate locally and nationally in the United States. None of these is affiliated with the National Cancer Institute (NCI), which is the federal government's agency for cancer research.

As a federal agency, NCI receives most of its operating budget through congressional appropriations. NCI may also accept contributions for cancer research, but the Institute does not solicit funds or conduct campaigns to raise funds. Although some private cancer organizations refer to NCI and include the toll-free telephone number for NCI's Cancer Information Service in their fund-raising literature, the Institute does not participate in or endorse their fund-raising activities.

Because NCI is a research agency, not a regulatory agency, the Institute is not in a position to monitor or comment on the fund-raising practices or programs of other cancer organizations. Moreover, NCI does not endorse or suggest specific organizations to which individuals may contribute. However, the NCI database National Organizations That Offer Cancer-Related Support Services lists many organizations that provide cancer patients and their families with financial and emotional support, advocacy, and information. This is not a comprehensive list of such organizations, and inclusion in the list does not imply endorsement by NCI. This resource is available at <http://supportorgs.cancer.gov>.

You can use the following questions to evaluate the operations of a fund-raising organization and make an informed decision about contributing to the organization:

- Is the organization willing to make public its budget and a complete annual report, including an audit by an independent certified public accountant?
- Are the group's fund-raising and administrative costs reasonable?
- Does the organization use ethical and economical fund-raising methods?
- Is the management of the organization made public?
- Is the information it distributes misleading, deceptive, or inaccurate?

Information about the practices of charitable organizations is available from a number of online services. For example, the BBB Wise Giving Alliance, an affiliate of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, uses specific standards for charitable accountability to evaluate the fund-raising activities of private, nonprofit organizations. These standards address the practices of public disclosure, financial accountability, fund-raising



activities and materials, and the governing body of the organization. You can obtain this information at

<http://www.bbb.org/us/charity> or by contacting the Alliance headquarters at:

BBB Wise Giving Alliance  
Suite 600  
3303 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22201  
703-276-0100

Local Better Business Bureaus (BBBs) also report on local fund-raising organizations. The address for the office nearest you is available in your telephone directory and at <http://www.bbb.org/us/find-a-bbb>.

You can also obtain information on charitable organizations from:

- The Office of the Attorney General in your state. Most offices have a consumer protection division that investigates complaints from the public lodged against companies and other organizations. Contact information is located in the blue Government pages of your local telephone directory.
- Your local consumer protection agency. The Consumer Protection page on USA.gov (<http://www.usa.gov/topics/consumer.shtml>) includes contact information for local consumer protection offices that respond to consumer complaints. A complete list of state, county, and city government consumer protection offices is available at <http://www.usa.gov/directory/stateconsumer/index.shtml>.
- The Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC's Avoid Charity Fraud page (<http://www.ftc.gov/charityfraud>) includes tips on how to make your donations count by learning about charities and the warning signs of a scam. The FTC also offers a publication called *Charitable Donations: Give or Take?*, which has information about making donations to organizations and whom to contact if you have questions or complaints. This publication is available at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/telemarketing/tel01.shtm> or through the FTC's toll-free line listed below. Although the FTC does not investigate individual consumer complaints, complaints reported to the FTC can help the agency detect patterns of wrong-doing and lead to investigations and prosecutions. These complaints are entered into Consumer Sentinel, a secure online database that is used by thousands of civil and criminal law enforcement authorities worldwide. Complaints can be filed online at <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>. You can also contact the FTC at:

Consumer Response Center  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.  
Washington, DC 20580  
1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)  
1-866-653-4261 (TTY)  
<http://www.ftc.gov>

## Related Resources

- *Cancer Research Funding*  
(<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/NCI/research-funding>)
- National Organizations That Offer Cancer-Related Support Services  
(<http://supportorgs.cancer.gov>)

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