

How to Give Back, Safely

The ongoing pandemic has further deepened the economic needs for many families. Residents may be looking for ways to give back, but it can be difficult and time-consuming to vet the many charities that operate locally and across the country.



The website www.charitynavigator.org uses a rating system to examine two broad areas of a charity's performance: their Financial Health and their Accountability & Transparency. The site allows you to search for charities by name, category/cause and/or location. Residents can also visit trusted research sites <https://www.guidestar.org/> and <https://www.charitywatch.org/> to obtain background information on potential charities, including financing and use of funds.

Residents can also check with the Maryland Secretary of State's Office at 410-974-5521 or <https://sos.maryland.gov/Charity> to be sure the charity is registered.

Lastly, Montgomery County's Office of Consumer Protection suggests using a check or credit card to make donations. If a charity or organization asks for a donation through cash, gift card, virtual currency or wire transfer, it is probably a scam. Review checking and credit card statements closely to make sure you were only charged the amount you agreed to donate – and that you are not signed up to make a recurring donation (unless that is your intention).