



SCAM
ALERT

CONTRIBUTION SCAMS

There are many ways to contribute to a worthy cause in times such as the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Many people are assisting others by volunteering, creating or assembling products to help others or through financial donations. These wonderful works that are in the spirit of giving are seen by scam predators as opportunities to obtain your personal information and your money.

There are amazing organizations that you can support but, you must do your research before you share any personal information or commit any financial donation. It is great to help but protect your contribution and yourself!

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Better Business Bureau provide the following guidance when considering a contribution:

- **Do** look up the organization online and pair it with words like *scam*, *review* or *complaint* to see what others are saying about the business
- **Never** pay in cash, money transfer, gift card or Bitcoin; legitimate organizations do not operate in this way
- **Watch** for names that are only similar to well-known organizations
- **Do not** trust caller ID; scam predators can imitate a legitimate number
- **Pause** if someone rushes you; scam predators want to get your personal and financial information quickly and may pressure you by saying you made a pledge: **Do not respond to these tactics**
- **Visit** *How to Donate Wisely* at <https://www.FTC.gov/Charity>

Note: You may report scam predators to the FTC, Adult Protective Services (APS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Internet Crime Complaint Center.

If you think you may be a victim of a scam, contact
San Bernardino County APS at 1 (877) 565-2020
or your local police department.