Before you donate to charities between now and the end of the year, do your research to make sure your hard-earned money is going to the intended cause. A 2021 AARP survey found that 38% of US adults say they have received a charity request that seemed fraudulent. The following are a few tips to help make sure that your donation is benefitting the intended cause:

- **Do your research.** Be wary if the charity fails to provide information about finances. Many reputable charities will provide the information up-front or if requested.
- Never give payment information to an **unsolicited caller.**
- **Give locally** to organizations you know do meaningful work in your community.
- Ask the solicitor **how much of the donation** will go to the charity and how much goes to the solicitor.
- Ask for a **registration number** of the solicitor and/or charity.
- **Watch out for charities with names that sound similar** to well-known organizations. These similar sounding names are intended to confuse those who give on a regular basis.
- **Do not pay in cash,** donate by credit card, when possible.
- Beware of **unsolicited emails or text messages.** Instead, go directly to the organization’s known website or call to make donations.
- **Make a plan** for your yearly giving and contact those organizations directly when you are ready to give.

Before you give, visit [www.checkthecharity.com](http://www.checkthecharity.com) to verify the charity is authorized to solicit donations in Colorado. Additional charity watchdog sites include [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org) and [www.give.org](http://www.give.org). If you don’t have access to the internet, call the AARP ElderWatch at 1-800-222-4444, option 2, to speak with a volunteer specialist who can help check the charity for you.

**800-222-4444**
Denver Metro Area
303-222-4444
[www.aarpelderwatch.org](http://www.aarpelderwatch.org)