



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL LOPEZ CAUTIONS THOSE SEEKING TO DONATE TO  
VICTIMS OF THE LĀHAINĀ WILDFIRE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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HONOLULU – With the outpouring of donations and hosting of various fundraisers to help the victims of the Lāhainā wildfires, Attorney General Anne Lopez is reminding the public to carefully research before they either donate or create a fundraising event.

“We have seen a dramatic increase in fundraising efforts on various social media platforms,” said Attorney General Lopez. “We have also seen an increase in complaints of possible ‘scam’ charities soliciting donations on behalf of the victims of the Lāhainā fire. Residents are urged to take their time to do their research before donating.”

Before making a donation, Hawai‘i residents are encouraged to verify if a charity is legitimate by checking its status on the following online sources:

- **Hawai‘i Attorney General:** <https://charity.ehawaii.gov/charity/welcome.html>
- **IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search:** <https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/>
- **Charity Navigator:** <https://www.charitynavigator.org/>
- **DCCA Business Search:** <https://hbe.ehawaii.gov/documents/search.html>

Residents can also visit the Federal Trade Commission [website](#) for detailed tips on how to avoid scammers when donating through social media platforms. Examples of tips against scammers include:

- Finding out who is behind the crowdfunding request and donating only to campaigns organized by people who you actually know.
- Paying attention to who’s asking and who’s getting the money. Check where the donation link goes. Confirm with the person who posted the link that he or she knows the person behind the fundraiser.

- Checking if the fundraiser provides clear information on the following:
  - **Where your money goes.** Who is receiving your donation?
  - **Fees.** Will the fundraiser take any fees from the donation?
  - **Timing.** When will the charity actually receive my donation?
  - **Follow-through.** What will happen to my donation if my donation cannot be sent to the charity I chose?
  - **Your information.** Will my information be shared with the charity or anyone else?

If these details are not clear, consider taking your donation elsewhere or donate directly to the charities.

Any individuals or businesses wishing to organize a fundraising event on behalf of a charity are reminded to comply with the requirement to obtain a written consent of a charity before holding fundraisers. This written consent form can be submitted to the Department of the Attorney General by using the online form that is provided [here](#).

Charities should also do their own due diligence to ensure they are aware of and consent to fundraising events conducted on its behalf. Charities are also reminded to comply with the registration requirement with the Department of the Attorney General prior to conducting any solicitation for donations in Hawai'i. More details about the registration requirement can be found by visiting the [Tax & Charities Division website](#).

Any questions or complaints about a scam charity or suspicious fundraiser can be directed to the Tax & Charities Division at (808) 586-1480 or by sending an email to [ATG.Charities@hawaii.gov](mailto:ATG.Charities@hawaii.gov).

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