



**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
NONPROFITS**  
National voice. State focus. Local impact.

# CHARITABLE SOLICITATION COMPLIANCE

An explanation of state charitable registration requirements.



October 2018

# CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Forms of Solicitation	4
Registration Forms for Charitable Solicitation	5
Exemptions from Registrations	6
Renewal Requirements	7
Extensions	8
Online Fundraising	9
“Foreign” Qualification and the Requirement for a Registered Agent	11
Good Standing	12
Disclosure Statements	12
Risks of Noncompliance	13
Benefits of Compliance	14
Deciding Where to Register	15
What is Ahead?	16
About Us	17

# INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of states require that before a charitable nonprofit may ask someone in their state for a contribution – whether by letter, phone, email, social media, and sometimes even grant applications – the nonprofit must register with the appropriate state official to let the state know that the nonprofit is soliciting contributions (also known as fundraising). The separate state “charitable solicitation registration” laws are not uniform, but inconsistent from state to state. Compliance is not only complicated, but also burdensome and costly for charitable nonprofits. From determining the overlap of fundraising activities with where registration may be required and identifying the correct initial forms for each state, to filling them in and preparing checks for various filing fees, the process diverts significant staff time and financial resources. The process continues throughout the year with potential new filings and repeats itself with annual renewals of previous filings. The panoply of state law requirements can drain significant staff time each month, and the cost of filing fees alone for registration in multiples states can easily cost thousands of dollars annually.

We prepared this report for two reasons. First, we want to help nonprofits meet their obligation to comply with those regulations, regardless of the many challenges to doing so. Many charitable nonprofits, as well as the donating public, do not fully understand the obligations, or the costs, triggered by state laws requiring nonprofits to register with a state before soliciting any charitable contributions. Second, we want to shed light on how unnecessarily complicated and burdensome these state regulations can be. We hope that eventually the laws that are supposed to protect the public can be tailored to provide necessary information to donors and regulators without causing confusion, creating risks, and raising costs for nonprofits to advance their missions.



Registration for charitable solicitation purposes requires nonprofits to disclose details of operations and finances with state government, often annually. In fact, the requirement to register for fundraising purposes contributes to the fact that charitable nonprofits are more transparent about their operations than privately owned for-profit businesses!

## Fundraising through the internet causes confusion about where to register.

An additional reason that we were motivated to publish this report is that while state charitable solicitation registration laws have been around for many years, most were passed before the widespread practice of fundraising via the internet. Consequently, there is often confusion about whether and which state’s charitable registration laws apply when a nonprofit is using the internet to fundraise – even having a “donate here” link on a website triggers a registration requirement in some states. While this guide is not a substitute for legal advice, it offers suggestions that may answer some of your questions about the intersection of online fundraising and compliance with state laws. And because this guide does NOT constitute legal advice, we encourage you to seek professional guidance for your specific questions as needed.



# FORMS OF SOLICITATION

As of November 2016, 41 states require nonprofits to comply with charitable solicitation registration requirements. Solicitations made by phone, direct mail, in person, by email, or online in those states may subject a nonprofit to registration requirements. In addition, solicitations through professional solicitors, fundraising consultants, and commercial co-ventures trigger registration requirements in many of the same states.

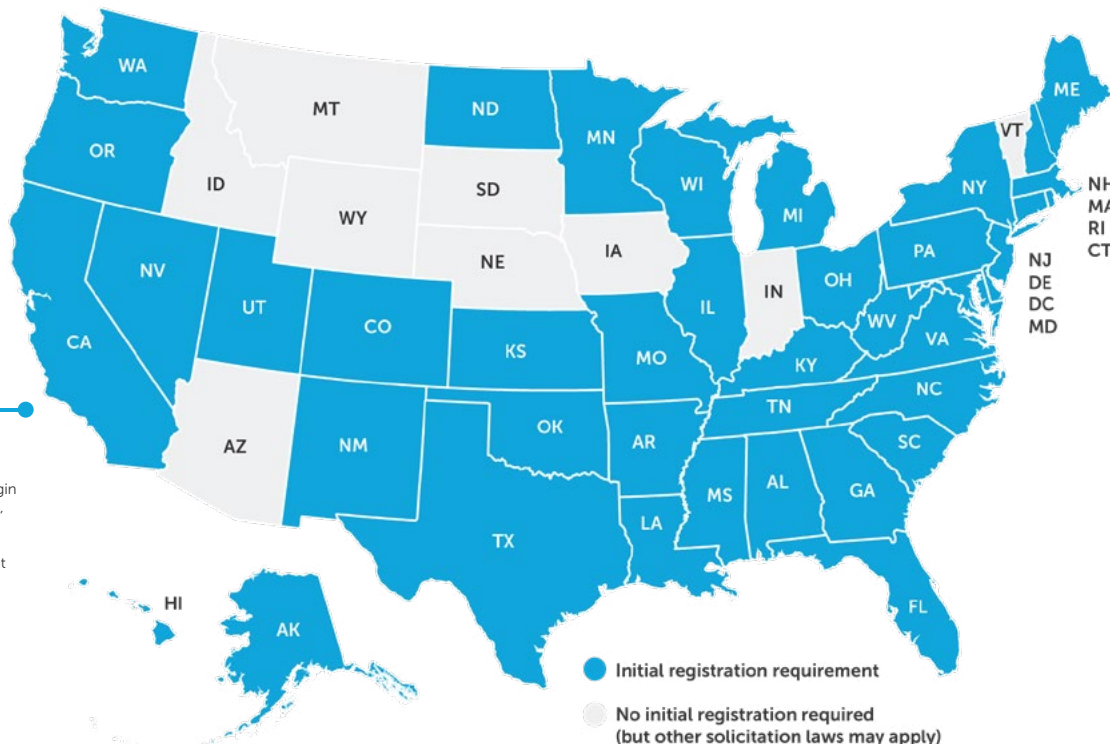
## Common forms of solicitation that may require registration:

- Board members asking their friends to make a donation
- Fundraising events, such as 5Ks, golf tournaments, or gala dinners
- Year-end letters asking for a contribution
- Phone calls requesting a gift
- Fundraising requests via email
- “Donate here” buttons on a nonprofit’s website
- Grant proposals submitted to a foundation
- Radio and TV spots that include a request to give
- Crowdfunding events, such as giving days

Each state’s law is different, consequently there is no easy way to address a nonprofit’s obligations without knowing what the laws require in each state where a nonprofit will be engaged in fundraising activities. The majority of states require charitable nonprofits to register **before** they begin soliciting, regardless of whether any donations are received.

**45 STATES HAVE CHARITABLE SOLICITATION LAWS**

- 41** REQUIRE NONPROFITS TO REGISTER IN ORDER TO FUNDRAISE
- 24** REQUIRE SOLICITATIONS TO INCLUDE DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS
- 4** REQUIRE DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS BUT NOT REGISTRATION



There are some exceptions to the general rule: for instance, California allows charitable nonprofits to begin soliciting before registering, but charitable nonprofits have 30 days to register in California after the date that the nonprofit receives a contribution.

# REGISTRATION FORMS FOR CHARITABLE SOLICITATION

Fundraising legally in a state usually requires a charitable nonprofit (and sometimes professional fundraisers hired by the nonprofit) to complete, sign, and submit the state's specific form(s), along with supporting documents, and often a filing fee. This process is referred to in this report as "charitable registration."

We recommend that nonprofits use the state specific registration forms rather than the now-outdated "unified registration statement" that was an attempt to create a common form for registration in multiple states. For a variety of reasons it is more prudent to use each state's own forms. Filing fees vary by state and are typically calculated based on total gross revenue in the previous year or amount of contributions received in the state.

State charitable registration forms may also require charitable nonprofits to attach copies of the nonprofit's organizing documents (its articles of incorporation and bylaws) and disclose solicitation methods, as well as the names of individuals responsible for fundraising and managing funds, and banks in which donations are deposited. Most states ask whether the organization's right to solicit has ever been denied or revoked, and require disclosure of any conflicts of interest that exist. An officer of the nonprofit corporation is generally required to sign the forms. In some states the corporate officers' signatures are required under penalty of perjury which means that it will be necessary to coordinate with volunteer board members so they can sign various forms prior to filing, which can add to the pressure to prepare and file the registration forms in a timely manner.

**TOTAL FEES  
TO REGISTER  
IN 41 STATES  
COULD RANGE  
FROM \$1,400  
TO \$5,000.**

## What Needs to be Filed

Typically, initial registration requires a nonprofit to file the following documents:

- Articles of Incorporation, or organizing document of another name
- Bylaws
- IRS Determination Letter
- IRS 1023 application
- List of all officers, directors, trustees, and key executives
- Lists of affiliated nonprofits
- IRS Form 990
- State-specific supplemental forms, as applicable in certain states
- Audited financial statements, or certified financial reports, depending on state law
- Contracts with professional fundraisers, solicitors, and consultants (as defined in state laws)
- Contracts that describe activities defined as "commercial co-ventures" in state law

# EXEMPTIONS FROM REGISTRATIONS

Certain categories of charitable nonprofits are exempt from registration in many states. State laws identify which organizations are exempt from registration in that state, and what qualifies as “exempt” varies from state to state. In many states, organizations are also exempt from registration until their total contributions, and/or the number of their donors, crosses over a threshold defined in state law that will trigger the registration requirement.

## Examples of organizations that are typically exempt from registration include:



Exemption is not always automatic. Some states require nonprofits to file an application for exemption from registration requirements. Exemptions usually have to be renewed on an annual basis. For this reason, qualifying for exemption from charitable solicitation registration may reduce the state registration fees, but doesn't necessarily reduce the amount of time a nonprofit has to spend filling out forms in order to comply with all aspects of the charitable solicitation registration process.

Additionally, charitable nonprofits that qualify for exemption still face the challenge of keeping up with changing state requirements, tracking varying dates for deadlines to renew their applications for exemption, and monitoring fluctuations in annual contributions that could trigger the need to register in other years.

# RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

Charitable solicitation registrations must be renewed on an annual basis (with the exception of Georgia and the District of Columbia, where renewal is required every two years). As with initial registrations, filing renewal registrations is a complex process. Most states have a separate process and fee structure for renewal. Organizations can expect to submit, along with their renewal form, the most recently filed annual information return to the IRS (Form 990), and in some states nonprofits must also file their most recent financial audit. Additionally, certain states require charitable nonprofits to provide an updated copy of organizing documents, such as bylaws, if recently amended.



Deadlines for renewal registrations vary state-by-state, and different states have different deadlines throughout the year. Keeping track of renewal due dates is one of the major challenges of charitable solicitation registration compliance. Keep in mind that renewal dates are subject to change with changes to state regulations. Stay connected with your state association of nonprofits for updates on all state regulations, including charitable solicitation registration rules.

## Headaches in Charitable Solicitation Renewal Deadlines

Dates for renewals in various states could be:

- On a fixed date, such as September 1st (example: Alaska)
- On the anniversary of registration (example: Florida and Georgia)
- At the end of the organization's fiscal year, usually four months and fifteen days later (example: South Carolina)

Currently, the majority of states require charitable nonprofits to file initial and renewal registrations by paper. However, in future months and years more states will be changing to mandatory online (e-filing) registrations, joining Colorado, Hawaii, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Ohio.

Some states allow charitable nonprofits to file by email or fax. For organizations with lengthy or complicated registration filings, the time to compile, copy, and mail what could end up being 100-200 pages of paper, is significant.



# EXTENSIONS

Whether or not organizations are required to file an extension varies state-by-state, and can even vary year-to-year for the same organization. The earlier that the audit and Form 990 are complete, the earlier the organization can submit its fundraising registration renewals. When a nonprofit is filing an extension for its IRS 990, it also needs to remember to file for extensions in each state where it will be filing charitable solicitation registrations, to avoid any penalties for late filing of charitable solicitation registrations.

For organizations that use a calendar year as their fiscal year, renewal deadlines of May 15 pose an additional challenge, since that is the same day that Form 990 is due to the IRS. Some organizations may struggle to meet both the state registration and IRS filing deadlines. A common reason to seek an extension is that a nonprofit's IRS Form 990 and financial audit may not be ready in time to allow the organization to file charitable registration forms.

## Filing for an Extension

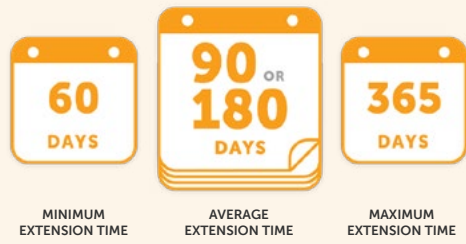
The process of requesting an extension for filing state charitable solicitation registration renewals varies:

- Submit a copy of IRS Form 8868 to the charity official (example: Hawaii)
- Send a request by mail, fax, or email (example: Illinois)
- File an entire renewal packet, without the Form 990 (example: Kansas, South Carolina)
- Use the state's own form (example: New Jersey)

A few states grant automatic extensions without the need to file anything (example: New York, Ohio), but failure to file extensions where required can lead to late fees and penalties for lapsed registration, so it is important to treat extensions as seriously as renewal applications: that means (i) keeping track of deadlines and state law variations, and (ii) monitoring regulations for potential changes throughout the year.

### A NOTE ABOUT EXTENSIONS

Extensions granted by various states can be for different amounts of time. Generally, the length of an extension is 90 or 180 days, but can be as little as 60 days, and as much as a year.







# ONLINE FUNDRAISING

Many nonprofits do not realize that fundraising online is likely to subject their nonprofit to charitable solicitation registration requirements in multiple states. As more nonprofits have their own websites and learn how effective customized donation pages can be, it has become common for charitable nonprofits to include a “donate here” button on their websites.

Those nonprofits with such buttons may wonder whether simply having a button will subject their nonprofit to registration requirements in other states. Good question! In some states having a “donate here” button WILL subject a nonprofit to registration requirements – in other states it may not.

## FUNDRAISING ONLINE CAN TAKE MANY FORMS INCLUDING:

-  CROWDFUNDING
-  WEBSITE “DONATE NOW” BUTTONS
-  EMAIL NEWSLETTERS
-  BLOGS
-  GIVING DAYS
-  SOCIAL MEDIA

## The Charleston Principles

The current challenge for many nonprofits engaged in online fundraising is that states regulate online fundraising in different ways. In 2001, the National Association of State Charity Officials (NASCO) released the Charleston Principles to serve as a guideline to the state charity regulators about how to regulate fundraising through the internet. This effort to unify state requirements was not entirely successful, as the Charleston Principles were only guidelines to the states, and not law.

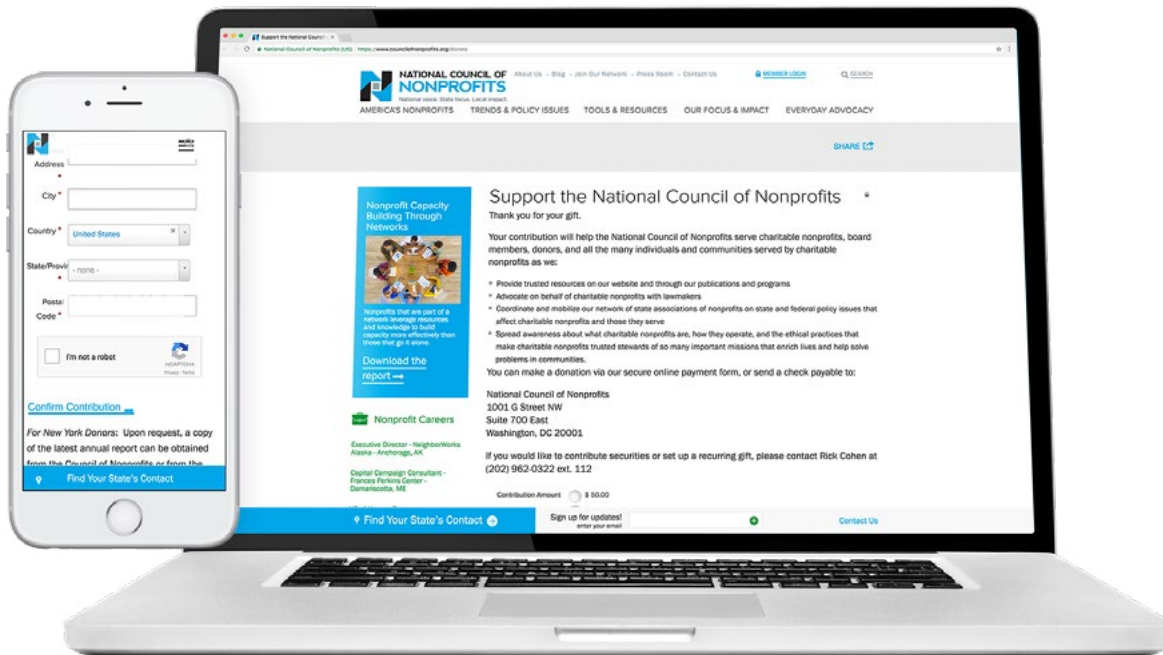
Only 19 state charity regulators expressed that they would follow the Charleston Principles, and the remaining 22 state regulators adopted their own criteria related to online solicitations.

Thus, the Charleston Principles are not necessarily controlling, and different states have different definitions of what triggers registration in their state. Understandably, with the laws so unclear, it means that nonprofits and fundraising professionals are frequently unclear about where nonprofits must register.

Many organizations place “donate” buttons on their websites, and send email solicitations to subscribers of their newsletters, as well as bring attention to the opportunity to donate using social media. Nonprofits that either push out an “ask” via an electronic newsletter, and/or follow-up with donors to ask for additional donations, either by email or any other method, are clearly engaged in “charitable solicitation” activities. But what about solicitations that are not targeted to a resident of any particular state? As we know, technology is constantly presenting new opportunities for donations via the internet: from “text to give,” and crowdfunding, to the normalization of virtual reality, solicitations are happening in ways that were barely conceivable just a decade ago.

Our conclusion is that with all of these new ways to solicit, it will be increasingly common for charitable nonprofits to need to register for charitable solicitation in multiple states.

Nonprofits that fundraise online should carefully monitor their registration requirements to avoid the risk of noncompliance. Researching each state requirement and applying those requirements to each individual situation is a monumental task. Many organizations find that simply registering in all 41 states to ensure compliance is the best course of action. Other organizations may not have the budgetary capacity to register in all states and may need to make choices about where to solicit contributions and where not to – but the complication remains that even when a nonprofit is not intending to solicit a contribution from a resident of a particular state – a donor from that state may still decide to make a donation, potentially triggering the need to register in that state. For instance, in some states (e.g., New Jersey), a nonprofit that sends a donor a written confirmation of a pledge must include a “disclosure statement” in the written confirmation, stating that the nonprofit is registered in New Jersey for charitable solicitation purposes.



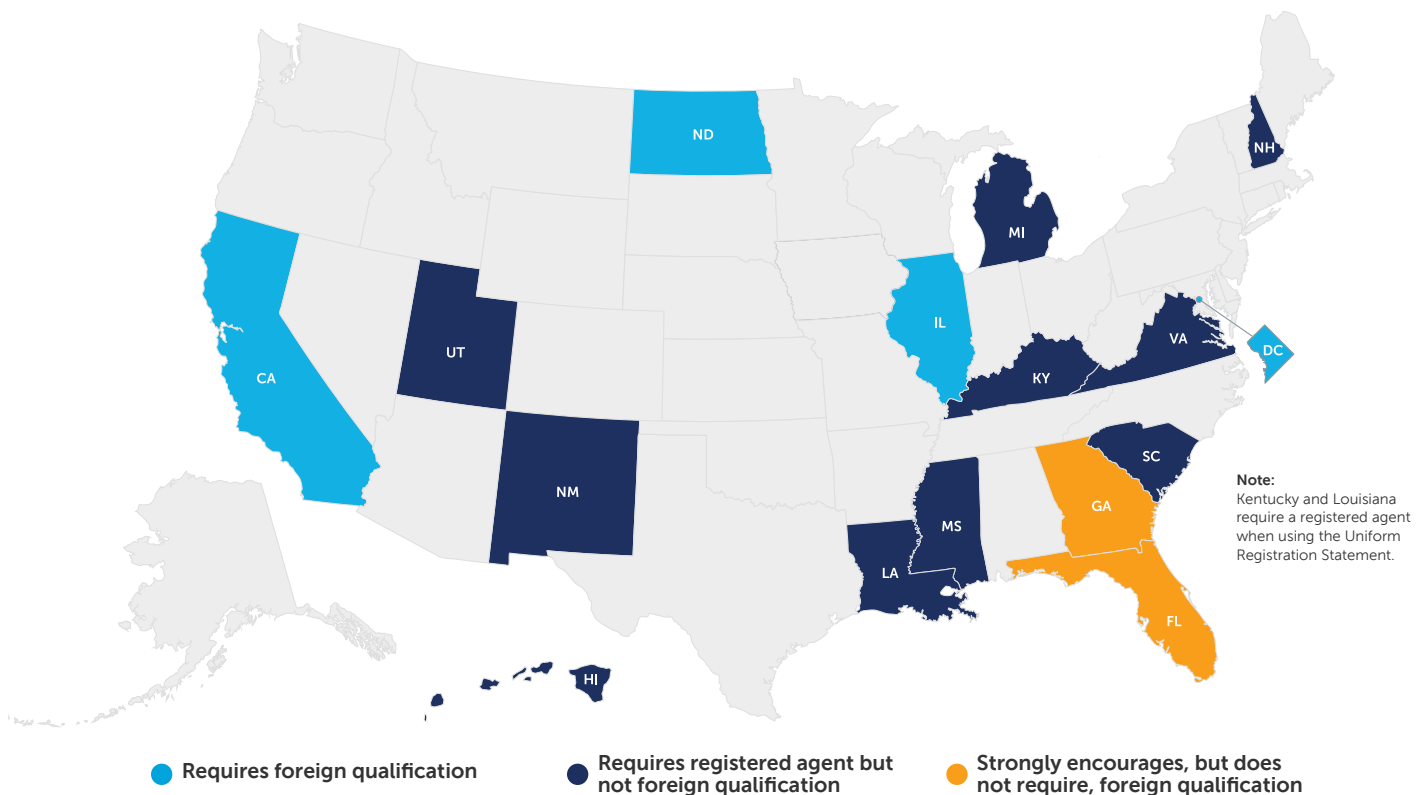
## Fundraising Registration Approaches

There are two basic approaches for compliance with online fundraising registration requirements:

- 1** Register (or file for an exemption) in all 41 states.
- OR**
- 2** Make a determination based on fundraising activities and solicitations that your nonprofit should register in certain – but not all – states and register in those states only. **HOWEVER**, if your nonprofit receives contributions from residents of states where it is **NOT** registered, the nonprofit should consider registering in those additional states as well.

# “FOREIGN” QUALIFICATION AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR A REGISTERED AGENT

As a prerequisite to charitable solicitation registration, certain states require nonprofits that are primarily operating in another state to file for permission to conduct business in that state. Soliciting residents of those states to make a contribution may be considered, “conducting business” that will trigger the obligation for the nonprofit to file for permission to transact operations as an out-of-state, or “foreign” nonprofit corporation. This process is called “foreign qualification.” The states that require foreign qualification are **California**, **District of Columbia**, **Illinois**, and **North Dakota**. **Florida** and **Georgia** strongly encourage, but do not require, foreign qualification.



The process of foreign qualification involves filing an application for authority to transact business and appointment of a registered agent. The application requires documents from the state of domicile, which is usually a “certificate of existence” (commonly known as a certificate of “good standing”) and/or certified copies of the nonprofit’s Articles of Incorporation, and all amendments.

In each state where foreign qualification is required, nonprofits must appoint and maintain a registered agent for service of process in that state. Approximately ten additional states require a registered agent, but not foreign qualification as a foreign corporation. The registered agent must be located within the state’s borders, and its duties are to receive service of process and other legal and government notices on the organization’s behalf. Most organizations appoint a corporate registered agent with a presence in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. With a reliable corporate registered agent, organizations can consolidate representation in all states with one provider and ensure receipt of time-sensitive legal documents. A registered agent is useful, and sometimes essential, to help an organization stay in good standing with legal and regulatory requirements in that state.

## GOOD STANDING

Maintaining good standing status in the state where your charitable nonprofit is incorporated is a fundamental underlying requirement for all the registrations discussed in this paper. The state agency that handles the initial creation of a nonprofit corporation generally requires nonprofits (or any corporation created in that state) to file periodic reports to maintain the corporation's good standing, typically annually. Due dates for annual corporate status filings vary by state and are not the same as the charitable solicitation filing deadlines. It is equally important to track and file these corporate reports on time so that the "good standing" status of the nonprofit is not revoked. Failure to remain in "good standing" can result in a nonprofit corporation losing its ability to fundraise completely, or the ability to take corporate actions, such as renewing its charitable registrations, changing its name, amending its articles of incorporation, or merging.

## DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

Another often overlooked aspect of compliance with charitable solicitation registration rules is that approximately 24 states require nonprofits that are fundraising to publish a "disclosure statement" that explains to the person receiving a solicitation that the nonprofit is registered for fundraising purposes. Although state laws differ, disclosure statements typically must be included in any written solicitation, and in some cases also in written confirmations of a donor's pledge (including gift acknowledgement communications). The purpose of disclosure statements is to provide transparency for prospective donors, giving them contact information about a nonprofit and confirmation of registration.

The specific language of the required disclosure statement varies state-by-state, but generally the statement must contain enough information so that a potential donor knows where s/he can obtain more information about a nonprofit, either from a government agency or from the organization itself. Some states are very picky about disclosure statements, requiring them to be in a certain size font, and prominently displayed in written communications. Disclosure statements generally must also be displayed on an organization's website.

The following language is required for nonprofits registered for charitable solicitation in Pennsylvania:

### EXAMPLE OF A DISCLOSURE STATEMENT FOR PENNSYLVANIA:

10 Pennsylvania Statutes § 162.13 (c)

#### (c) NOTICE ON PRINTED SOLICITATION

On every printed solicitation or written confirmation, receipt and reminder of a contribution, the following statement must be conspicuously printed verbatim: The official registration and financial information of (insert the legal name of the charity as registered with the department) may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

# RISKS OF NONCOMPLIANCE

State charity regulators exercise oversight over charitable solicitation activities in various ways, including through investigation, enforcing state laws by court order, and/or criminal prosecution.

The risks and consequences of failing to register in a state where a nonprofit is engaging in solicitation activity include:

- ✗ **Fines (monetary penalties).** States have the ability to levy fines against noncompliant organizations, and individual board members, as well as professional solicitors, fundraising firms or individual fundraising consultants.
- ✗ **Investigations and enforcement actions.** State charity regulators can initiate investigations of an organization that can lead to a variety of enforcement actions ranging from sending a warning letter to the organization, to obtaining a “cease and desist” order from a court, or revoking or canceling registration and preventing a nonprofit from soliciting funds in that state, or even (in rare situations) obtaining a court order to dissolve the nonprofit. Many state charity regulators track the enforcement actions in other states and keep an eye out for noncompliant fundraising activities that have been investigated and/or stopped in other states.
- ✗ **Loss of state recognition of tax exemption.** One of the most severe penalties for failure to comply with registration requirements can be loss of tax-exempt recognition in that state, resulting in the nonprofit having to pay state income tax on all revenue. For example, the California Franchise Tax Board has the ability to revoke a charity’s state tax exemption for failure to file a registration or file its annual report with the California Attorney General.
- ✗ **Personal liability.** Corporate officers (usually volunteer board members) and senior staff members who sign inaccurate or false charitable registration forms, or those who knowingly allow the nonprofit to operate without registering, can be held financially responsible for penalties and criminally liable in some states.
- ✗ **Negative headlines.** Some criminal and civil penalties are a matter of public record, so it is not difficult for journalists to find out when an enforcement action is taken against a nonprofit that did not comply with charitable solicitation filing requirements. No nonprofit wants its failure to follow the law to be the headline!
- ✗ **Embarrassment for board members.** Negative publicity for a nonprofit that fails to comply with the law can reflect poorly on its board members.
- ✗ **Missed grant and donation opportunities.** Thirty-nine states have online search tools that donors and grantmakers can easily use to learn whether a nonprofit has registered in that state. Many grant guidelines require that the grantee is registered for charitable solicitation in order to be eligible to apply for a grant.
- ✗ **Revocation of the right to solicit.** A charitable nonprofit can face losing its ability to fundraise in a state altogether, and that loss can trigger an investigation/enforcement in other states.



State charitable solicitation registration laws may also trigger the requirement for a nonprofit to have an independent financial audit. State laws do so by requiring a nonprofit to file a copy of its independent audit, or certified financial statements prepared by a CPA, along with other registration forms. Background and detailed information on nonprofit financial audits is available from the National Council of Nonprofits’ online (free) Nonprofit Audit Guide (<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/nonprofit-audit-guide>).

# BENEFITS OF COMPLIANCE

The ability of a charitable nonprofit to raise money through fundraising activities essentially relies on donor trust. Even if a nonprofit has a compelling mission, and multiple testimonials praising the positive outcomes that the nonprofit has achieved, if it is not trusted by the public, the nonprofit will have a very difficult time raising funds. Complying with state charitable registration laws usually requires nonprofits to disclose financial reports, identify board members, and describe the methods the nonprofit will use to fundraise. Being willing to share this information with the state charity regulator is useful to demonstrate that the nonprofit's operations are prudent and that its practices are accountable and transparent.

Conversely, failure to comply with basic registration requirements raises red flags for donors or anyone seeking to conduct business with a charitable nonprofit. Registration provides law enforcement with information that is useful when investigating fraudulent fundraising activities, and may serve to deter criminals seeking to pose as legitimate charitable nonprofits.

Consequently, laws and regulations that help to build and support the public's trust in nonprofits are beneficial to the donating public and to charitable nonprofits – especially for nonprofits that want to differentiate themselves from fraudulent actors.

Benefits of compliance with charitable solicitation laws include:

- ✓ **Promote transparency and trust.** Registering and publishing the required disclosure statements can help demonstrate an organization's credibility and legitimacy.
- ✓ **Reassure Donors.** Some donors check to make sure the nonprofit they plan to donate to is registered. Others will be pleased to learn that their contribution went to a nonprofit that follows the law.
- ✓ **Qualify for contributions:** Guidelines of some private foundations provide that the foundation will only make a grant to a nonprofit that is registered. Foundation staff members are known to check the online lists published by state charity regulators to make sure that a nonprofit applying for a grant is on the list of registered nonprofits.
- ✓ **Avoid penalties.** Board members should recognize that it is part of their fiduciary duty to ensure that the nonprofit treats compliance with charitable solicitation requirements the same as any other legal requirement. Complying with state fundraising laws is no different from ensuring that the nonprofit files its IRS Form 990 each year.



## What if your nonprofit has not registered in the past, when it should have? Will registration put our nonprofit at risk?

Compliance is far preferred to continuing willful non-compliance. The risk of penalties rises as soon as a nonprofit has knowledge that it should register, but does not. If a nonprofit can legitimately say that it did not know it had an obligation to register, or a "good faith" belief that it did not have to register, it still may be less risky to proactively register than wait to be forced to do so through an enforcement action.

# DECIDING WHERE TO REGISTER

## Questions to ask when determining where to register:

### Does the nonprofit currently have any donors residing in other state(s)?

If the total number of donors in other states is more than a handful, then there is a likelihood that the nonprofit should be registering in other states.

### What is the total amount of contributions from outside the state of the nonprofit's primary operations?

If the amount of contributions is more than insignificant, there is also a likelihood that the nonprofit should be registering in other states.

### Do any of the state(s) where donors reside have state law requirements for registration that are triggered by the amount of contributions raised from residents of those states?

If so, determine whether the amount contributed by residents of individual states rises to the level that triggers registration in that state.

### Do any of the state(s) where donors reside have state law requirements for registration that are determined by the annual budget of the nonprofit?

A few states have thresholds that are based on an organization's annual budget. Organizations must either research the individual states or simply register in the states in which it solicits.

Organizations that fundraise in every state must generally register in each of the 41 states that require registration. Registering in all 41 states allows organizations to solicit donations by any method, including online, and apply for grant funding anywhere in the United States without the doubts and risks of noncompliance. Despite the effort and paperwork involved, many organizations find the benefits of multi-state registration outweigh the costs.

The first step towards compliance is awareness. Nonprofit boards and staff leaders have a lot at stake, both personally and for the reputation of their organization. We believe charitable nonprofits should approach compliance proactively, keeping in mind the risks of enforcement as well as the benefits of registration, and taking into consideration practical limitations such as budget and number of individuals solicited/dollars raised in various states. Taking a proactive approach to compliance is an investment in the nonprofit's trusted relationships with donors, and prudent advancement of its mission.

Best practices suggest that nonprofits should be transparent about legal compliance. For more information on ways that charitable nonprofits' fundraising practices can be transparent, see the National Council of Nonprofits' resource on Ethical Fundraising <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/ethical-fundraising>.



# WHAT IS AHEAD?

State charity offices recognize that registering for charitable solicitation in multiple states is burdensome. The time needed to prepare the forms and cost of filing fees are substantial. Government regulators also realize that to encourage compliance, the process will need to be streamlined and made less expensive. Accordingly, the National Association of State Charity Officials (NASCO) launched the “Single Portal” initiative as a potential solution to ease the burden.

The Single Portal effort intends to create a website portal that will be administered by a nonprofit, the Multistate Registration and Filing Portal, Inc. established by the National Association of Attorneys General and National Association of State Charity Officials. The new entity is building a site to allow charitable nonprofit organizations and their professional fundraising advisors/consultants to register in multiple states through a single online portal. You can read more details about the initiative here: <http://mrfpinc.org/files/MRFP-one-pager-3716.pdf>. This initiative is still a work in progress.

The Single Portal replaces a prior attempt to simplify the process through the “Uniform Registration Statement” (URS). The URS was intended to save nonprofits time and money through use of a common form that would satisfy several states’ charitable solicitation filing requirements. Unfortunately, the URS is not accepted by all states, and many states that do accept it also require additional information beyond what is asked for in the URS form.

It remains unclear when a single portal will be available, and whether all states will participate. In the immediate term, the existing maze of state charitable solicitation registration requirements are still state law and should be respected as such. We encourage charitable nonprofits to comply with charitable solicitation laws in every state in which they fundraise. The current system may be archaic and broken, but charities still need to comply with state requirements until reforms can be made.

Nonprofits can receive assistance with multi-state registrations through a full-service compliance company that can help the nonprofit (or those charged with compliance) save both time and money. Consider enlisting the assistance of a team of professionals that has a robust understanding of the various state requirements as well as the technology to track all the variables for ongoing compliance.

We wish you good fortune in your fundraising activities!

To join your state association of nonprofits, visit [www.councilofnonprofits.org](http://www.councilofnonprofits.org) – and subscribe to the National Council of Nonprofits’ free e-newsletters: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/connect>.

## Next Steps

Interested in fully managed fundraising compliance? Explore Harbor Compliance’s comprehensive solutions to learn how proven expertise and accessible technology combine to streamline your registration: <https://www.harborcompliance.com/fundraising-registration>

For more information on state requirements, fees, and additional resources, view Harbor Compliance’s free Fundraising Compliance Guide: <https://www.harborcompliance.com/information/charitable-registration>.

# ABOUT US



 [HarborCompliance.com](http://HarborCompliance.com)

 [facebook.com/HarborCompliance](https://facebook.com/HarborCompliance)

 [twitter.com/HarborComply](https://twitter.com/HarborComply)

 [linkedin.com/company/Harbor-Compliance](https://linkedin.com/company/Harbor-Compliance)

Founded in 2012 by a group of government licensing professionals and technology experts, Harbor Compliance is a leading provider of compliance solutions for organizations of all types and sizes. Headquartered in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Harbor Compliance partners with organizations in every state and over 25 countries abroad to help solve the most challenging compliance problems.

Our clients range from the largest organizations in the country to fast-growth startups, and our deep industry expertise allows us to fully manage government licensing compliance in both nonprofit and business sectors. For more information on Harbor Compliance, please visit us online at [www.harborcompliance.com](http://www.harborcompliance.com).



 [councilofnonprofits.org](http://councilofnonprofits.org)

 [twitter.com/NatlCouncilNPs](https://twitter.com/NatlCouncilNPs)

The National Council of Nonprofits (Council of Nonprofits) is a trusted resource and advocate for America's charitable nonprofits. Through our powerful network of state associations of nonprofits and their 25,000+ members – the nation's largest network of nonprofits – we serve as a central coordinator and mobilizer to help nonprofits achieve greater collective impact in local communities across the country. We identify emerging trends, share proven practices, and promote solutions that benefit charitable nonprofits and the communities they serve. Learn more at [www.councilofnonprofits.org](http://www.councilofnonprofits.org).

