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# CANCER FACTS

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National Cancer Institute • National Institutes of Health  
Department of Health and Human Services

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## Cancer Fund-Raising Organizations

Numerous private cancer fund-raising organizations operate locally and nationally in the United States. None of these is affiliated with the National Cancer Institute (NCI), which is the Federal Government's agency for cancer research.

As a Federal agency, the NCI receives most of its operating budget through congressional appropriations. The NCI may also accept contributions for cancer research, but the Institute does not solicit funds or conduct campaigns to raise funds. Although some private cancer organizations refer to the NCI and include the toll-free telephone number for the NCI's Cancer Information Service in their fund-raising literature, the Institute does not participate in or endorse their fund-raising activities.

Because the NCI is a research agency, not a regulatory agency, the Institute is not in a position to monitor or comment on the fund-raising practices or programs of other cancer organizations. Moreover, the NCI does not endorse or suggest specific organizations to which individuals may contribute. The NCI does, however, publish a fact sheet called *National Organizations That Offer Services to People With Cancer and Their Families*, which lists many organizations that provide cancer-related services and support cancer research. This is not a comprehensive list of such organizations, and inclusion on the list does not imply endorsement



by the NCI. It is available at [http://cis.nci.nih.gov/fact/8\\_1.htm](http://cis.nci.nih.gov/fact/8_1.htm) on the Internet and from the NCI sources listed at the end of this fact sheet.

You can use the following questions to evaluate the operations of a fund-raising organization and make an informed decision about contributing to the organization:

- Is the organization willing to make public its budget and a complete annual report, including an audit by an independent certified public accountant?
- Are the group's fund-raising and administrative costs reasonable?
- Does the organization use ethical and economical fund-raising methods?
- Is the management of the organization made public?
- Is the information it distributes misleading, deceptive, or inaccurate?

You may also wish to contact the BBB Wise Giving Alliance, an affiliate of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, for free information on the practices of selected charitable organizations. The BBB Wise Giving Alliance, formed in 2001 by the merger of the National Charities Information Bureau and the Philanthropic Advisory Service of the Council of Better Business Bureaus' Foundation, uses specific standards for charitable solicitation to evaluate the fund-raising activities of private, nonprofit organizations. These standards address the practices of public disclosure, financial accountability, fund-raising activities and materials, and the governing body of the organization. You may obtain this information on the Internet at <http://www.give.org/inquire/index.asp> or contact the Alliance headquarters directly at:

BBB Wise Giving Alliance  
Suite 800  
4200 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22203-1838  
Telephone: 703-276-0100  
Fax: 703-525-8277  
E-mail: [give@cbbb.bbb.org](mailto:give@cbbb.bbb.org)  
Web site: <http://www.give.org>

Local Better Business Bureaus (BBBs) also report on local fund-raising organizations.

The address for the office nearest you is available in your telephone directory, and on the BBB's

Web site at <http://lookup.bbb.org/> on the Internet.

You can also obtain information on charitable organizations from:

- The Office of the Attorney General in your state. Most offices have a consumer protection division that investigates complaints from the public lodged against companies and other organizations. Contact information is located in the blue Government pages of your local telephone directory.
- The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) offers a publication called *Charitable Donation\$: Give or Take*, which has information about making donations to organizations and whom to contact if you have questions or complaints. This publication is available at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/tmarkg/charity.htm> on the Internet, or through the FTC's toll-free line listed below. The FTC also handles complaints from the public about organizations. To file a complaint, you can contact the FTC at:

Consumer Response Center  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.  
Washington, DC 20580  
1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)  
TTY: 1-866-653-4261  
Web site: <http://www.ftc.gov>

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### **Related Topics**

#### **Publications (available on <http://cancer.gov/publications>)**

- Cancer Facts 1.1, *Cancer Research Funding*
- Cancer Facts 1.12, *Donations to the National Cancer Institute*
- Cancer Facts 1.23, *The U.S. National Cancer Institute*
- Cancer Facts 8.1, *National Organizations That Offer Services to People With Cancer and Their Families*

## **National Cancer Institute (NCI) Resources**

### **Cancer Information Service (toll-free)**

Telephone: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

TTY: 1-800-332-8615

### **Online**

NCI's Web site: <http://cancer.gov>

*LiveHelp*, NCI's live online assistance:

<https://cissecure.nci.nih.gov/livehelp/welcome.asp>

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