Have you gotten this call? “I’m not calling for a donation.” (But really, I am.) Many charitable organizations contract out telephonic solicitations for donations to third party firms, often known as ‘For Profit’ Charitable Callers. These firms keep a certain percentage of every donation they collect as their fee for soliciting the donations.

How much of your donation do they keep? That depends on the agreement they negotiated with the charity. That fee has been known to range to up to 80% of each donation! That’s a pretty big chunk of your charitable donation going to a ‘for profit’ company and not to the ultimate charitable recipient.

Can you find out how much of your donation goes to the intended recipient? Yes you can!

Every charitable organization licensed to solicit in the State of Florida is required to register with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS). DACS runs a site called Check-A-Charity on the internet. You can reach that site at: https://csapp.800helpfla.com/CSPublicApp/CheckACharity/CheckACharity.aspx

Enter your charity’s name in the Search box and, if they are licensed to solicit charitable contributions in the State of Florida, the site will tell you how much of each dollar you contribute goes to the intended recipient, how much goes to cover administration costs, and how much goes to cover fundraising costs.

You already may know that The Do Not Call Registry is designed to stop unwanted sales calls, but it has some exceptions. One exception allows for-profit fundraisers to call you on behalf of charities even if your telephone number is listed on the Do Not Call Registry. But when these charitable fundraisers call you, they must still follow the Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR).
According to Colleen Tressler, a Consumer Education Specialist with the Federal Trade Commission, the rules are:

- They can’t call you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m.
- They must promptly tell you the charity they’re calling for and tell you if the purpose of the call is to seek a donation.
- They can’t make a false or misleading statement to persuade you to donate.
- They can’t misrepresent information during the call, such as:
  - The fundraiser’s connection to the charity.
  - The mission or purpose of the charity.
  - Whether a donation is tax deductible.
  - How a donation will be used or how much of the donation actually goes to charity programs.
- They can’t use a robocall or prerecorded message to reach you unless you have supported the charity in the past.
- They also can’t call you again if you tell them that you don’t want any more calls from that charity.

If you hear from fundraisers who don’t follow the rules, hang up and report them to the FTC. Reports that include information about what is said during the call, and the names of the fundraiser and the charity, can help law enforcement agencies put an end to unfair and misleading practices.

If you need assistance with understanding any aspects of the charitable giving, contact your nearest Seniors Vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. Seniors Vs. Crime can be reached at:

- The Fruitland Park Police Department Annex in the Moyer Recreation Center in The Villages – (352) 674-1882
- The Marion County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages – (352) 753-7775
- The Sumter County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages – (352) 689-4600, Extension 4606
- The Wildwood Police Department Annex at Brownwood in The Villages – (352) 750-1914

Volunteers at all four offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. To keep up with the latest scams, LIKE ‘Seniors Vs. Crime Region 4’ on Face Book. Hablamos Español. Por favor pregunte por Yolanda. Martes a Viernes: 10:00 A.M. a 2:00 P.M., (352) 689 4606.