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# BBB tips on donating to help Ukraine relief activities

## BY THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

News reports of Russia's attack on Ukraine may encourage concerned individuals to reach out and help victims affected by the conflict. Concerns grow about the current and potential emergency needs of the Ukrainian people. Generous donors want to help by supporting charities that are raising funds for assistance.

Give.org notes that not all relief organizations will be able to provide timely assistance unless they already have a presence in Ukraine.

Before giving, BBB has the following tips:

√ Can the charity get to the impacted area? Not all relief organizations will be positioned to provide relief quickly. See if the charity already has a presence in Ukraine.

√ Should you send clothing and food? Local drives to collect clothing and food to send overseas may not be practical as the logistics and timing to deliver and disperse such items will be challenging. Relief organizations are better equipped to obtain what is needed, distribute it effectively and avoid

duplication of effort.

√ Does the relief charity meet BBB Charity Standards? You can verify a charity's trustworthiness by viewing an evaluative report completed by BBB Wise Giving Alliance. See the list provided below of charities that are soliciting relief assistance for Ukraine and that also meet the BBB Standards for Charity Accountability.

√ Is the charity experienced in providing emergency relief? Experienced disaster relief charities are the best bet to help deliver aid as soon as possible. New entrants may have difficulty in following through even if they have the best of intentions.

√ Are you considering crowdfunding appeals? If engaging in crowdfunding, it is safest to give to someone you personally know and trust, and review the platform's policies regarding fees and distribution of collected funds. If the crowdfunding request is from a charity, check out the group by visiting Give.org. Keep in mind that some crowdfunding sites do very little vetting of individuals or organizations that decide to post for relief assistance. Sites that take security measures will usu-

ally provide descriptions of these procedures.

√ Does the appeal make exaggerated financial claims such as "100% will be spent on relief." Charities have fundraising and administrative expenses. Any charity claiming otherwise is potentially misleading the donating public. Even a credit card donation will have a processing fee.

The following nationally soliciting charities are BBB Accredited (i.e., they meet the 20 BBB Standards for Charity Accountability). Their respective websites indicate that they are either currently raising funds for assistance efforts in Ukraine or preparing for needs that could arise if conflict results in population displacement.

- Alight | Ukraine Relief Activities
- American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee | Ukraine Relief Activities
- AmeriCares Foundation | Ukraine Relief Activities
- CARE USA | Ukraine Relief Activities
- Catholic Relief Services | Ukraine Relief Activities
- CHC: Creating Healthier Communities | Ukraine Relief Activities

• Direct Relief | Ukraine Relief Activities

- Episcopal Relief & Development | Ukraine Relief Activities
- Heart to Heart International | Ukraine Relief Activities
- GlobalGiving | Ukraine Relief Activities
- International Medical Corps | Ukraine Relief Activities
- International Rescue Committee | Ukraine Relief Activities
- MAP International | Ukraine Relief Activities
- Matthew 25: Ministries | Ukraine Relief Activities
- Medical Teams International | Ukraine Relief Activities
- Mennonite Central Committee | Ukraine Relief Activities
- Mercy Corps | Ukraine Relief Activities
- Operation USA | Ukraine Relief Activities
- Salvation Army | Ukraine Relief Activities
- Save the Children | Ukraine Relief Activities
- United Methodist Committee on Relief | Ukraine Relief Activities
- United States Association for UNHCR | Ukraine Relief Activities

# BBB alert: Don't reply to that text message, it's a scam!

## BY THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU OF UPSTATE NEW YORK

Better Business Bureau of Upstate New York's scam tracker received several reports over the weekend of this text scam. In fact, some BBB staff members received the text as well.

A new text message scam seems so innocent that it's tempting to reply. But con artists are using phony "wrong number" texts to lure victims into a conversation and falling for a scam.

### How The Scam Works

You receive a text from someone

claiming they met you recently. If you reply to a text like this, even with a polite, "Sorry, wrong number," the stranger responds anyway, seemingly ignoring your answer. Usually, you'll receive a few compliments and some photos.

If you continue to engage with the stranger, which is really a chatbot, it tries to trick you into registering for dating or adult websites. Your new "friend" will encourage you to sign up for a specific website to see more explicit photos, which may involve offering up your credit card number. Consid-

ering the dubious nature of this scam, if you hand over your credit card information at any point, you could be putting yourself at risk for fraudulent charges and identity theft.

How to Avoid Chatbot Scams  
√ Ignore texts from strangers. If you receive a text from someone you don't know, simply don't reply. It's the safest route. If you engage with a scammer, even briefly, they will mark your number as active and you could receive even more shady texts in the future.

√ Block numbers that appear to come from scammers. Unsolicited

texts that look like they come from a chatbot or that ask you to click on suspicious links are probably not safe. Block these numbers to prevent scammers from contacting you through them again.

√ Never give your personal information to strangers. Never share your credit card or banking information, your full name, home address, or Social Security number with someone you never met in person.

Visit [BBB.org/ScamTracker](http://BBB.org/ScamTracker) to report this scam or read about other scams happening in your area.

# Use of word 'stigma' not helpful

We are repeatedly told to say there is a "stigma" to mental illnesses, failing to recognize that we have the choice (as we have with all prejudices) to participate or not participate. We have a choice as journalists, editors, as individuals, yes, even as government employees. Regardless of the pressure we can say, "No."

### Why say "No"?

First, supporting that prejudice

has helped no one. It has in fact been detrimental to generations. Placing that prejudice in minds has deterred research on those specific illnesses, and prolonged our multiple ignorances about them. It has deterred benefactors from providing monies for that research. Without those monies, research cannot progress.

My mom died from breast cancer in the early 1970s when the

public largely connected to it the term "stigma." Oncologists did not, the public stopped. We owe a great deal of gratitude to those oncologists. The progress we have made in addressing breast cancer is largely the result of oncologists not doing so.

Each of us has the choice to follow the lead oncologists took when looking at all illnesses. We have not done so. The lack of prog-

ress we witness in mental health issues is largely the result of that stubbornness: We alienate where we ought investigate, we alienate where we ought educate.

And most curiously, we believe we are supposed to.

*Harold A Maio  
Retired mental health editor  
Florida*

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