

MEDIA RELEASE

PUBLIC FUND-RAISING DISCLOSURE REGIME TO BE IMPLEMENTED FROM 9 OCTOBER 2023

- *The public will have access to more details of public fund-raising activities conducted for registered or exempt charities and those with existing permits from the Commissioner of Charities (COC) for donations to foreign charitable causes, to verify the legitimacy of their fund-raising collections.*
- *Only registered and exempt charities, and valid permit-holders raising funds for foreign charitable purposes are exempted from having to apply for a House to House and Street Collections (HHSC) licence from the Police before they raise funds in public.*

8 September 2023 (Singapore) – The Commissioner of Charities (COC) will be implementing the disclosure regime for public charitable appeals conducted by (i) registered and exempt charities under the Charities Act 1994 (CA), and by (ii) Fund-Raising for Foreign Charitable Purposes (FRFCP) permit holders approved by the COC (collectively known as “charitable fund-raisers”), with effect from 9 October 2023. Amendments to the Charities (Fund-raising Appeals for Local and Foreign Charitable Purposes) Regulations 2012 will come into operation on the same date to give effect to the disclosure regime.

Safeguards for public to make informed decisions on donations, while streamlining processes for charities

2 Currently, all house to house and street collections including those conducted for charitable fund-raisers, require a licence from the Police or a permit from the National Council of Social Service (NCSS). This subjects charitable fund-raisers to the regulations and requirements under both the CA and the House to House and Street Collections Act (HHSC).

3 With a maturing charity landscape, the revised regime seeks to ensure appropriate transparency and accountability safeguards to help the public make informed decisions on their donations, while streamlining processes and reducing administrative burden on bona fide charities and fund-raisers. These are in line with Singapore’s efforts over the years to strengthen trust and promote good governance in the charity sector. Enforcement action, where necessary, may be taken by the COC

against improper appeals, failure to comply with the new disclosure and identification requirements, and/or wilfully providing inaccurate disclosures.

4 House to house and street collections for organisations other than those indicated above will still be licensed by the Police under HHSC.

New disclosure requirements

5 The implementation of the disclosure regime comes following an online public consultation exercise in May 2022 to seek feedback on the proposed changes to the regime. This drew over 200 responses. The COC also held focus group discussion sessions on the revised regime with over 40 charity representatives, with there being general support of the proposed changes.

6 The new requirements are as follows:

- (a) Under the new disclosure regime, charitable fund-raisers will be required to disclose details of their public fund-raising appeals on the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg).
- (b) Public fund-raising appeals refers to collections of monies and other property (e.g. donations-in-kind) by means of visits from house to house or by soliciting in the streets, and includes such appeals made by third parties.
- (c) The disclosure should be made at least seven working days before the commencement of the appeal, and this information will be made available on the Charity Portal. This will enable the public to verify the legitimacy of such collections.
- (d) Collectors and fund-raisers will also be required to carry clear identification during collections, such as an official letter from the charity or FRFCP permit holder.

7 Mr Desmond Chin, Commissioner of Charities said, “We seek to maintain a balance in encouraging charitable efforts and giving while safeguarding public interest and trust. The disclosure regime aims to strengthen the transparency and accountability of fund-raisers and promote safer giving for appeals conducted through house to house visits or by soliciting in the streets. While most fund-raising appeals are genuine, members of the public should still ask for more details and ensure that they are contributing to a genuine cause and that donations will be used for the intended purposes.”

Building a safer giving culture

8 The COC is committed to ensuring that the public's trust in Singapore's charity sector is upheld and that donors continue to have avenues to give safely to causes they support.

9 The COC regularly engages various partners and stakeholders to upskill charities in their capabilities against donation scams and to educate their donors on safer giving. This includes a webinar on Fund-Raising Regulations and Digital Protection conducted in March 2023 in partnership with Pro Bono SG to guide charities on steps to take to protect themselves and their donors against common attack methods associated with charity donation scams. Going forward, we will continue to train charities on how they can do their part in fighting scams and educating their donors on informed giving.

10 The COC strongly encourages the public to continue practicing safer giving to ensure that their donations are used for genuine charitable purposes. By practising the three simple steps of "Ask, Check, Give" when responding to both in-person and online fund-raising appeals, the public can better protect themselves against charity donation scams:

- a) **[Ask]** Ask questions such as (i) who the beneficiaries are, (ii) what the donations will be used for, (iii) how much of my donation goes to the beneficiary or the charity and (iv) whether the collector or fund-raiser has an official letter from the beneficiary organisation to conduct public fund-raising appeals.
- b) **[Check]** Check if the organisation or beneficiary is a registered/exempt charity or FRFCP permit holder, or has disclosed details of their public fund-raising appeal via any of the following channels:
 - i. Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg)
 - ii. Scan QR code on the official letter from the organisation (which will lead to disclosure details on Charity Portal)
 - iii. SMS to 79777 in the following format *FR<space>Organisation Name*
 - iv. Call Charities Unit hotline at 6337 6597
- c) **[Give]** Give with a peace of mind once donors are assured that their donations are for a genuine cause.

11 Members of public should not feel pressured to give if they have concerns or suspect that an appeal for donations is not legitimate. If there are any serious concerns regarding suspicious charitable fund-raising activities, the public can report the matter to the COC at mccy_charities@mccy.gov.sg. If fraud or scams are suspected, the public should file a Police report immediately.

12 In tandem with the implementation of the disclosure regime, the COC has also launched the “Better Ask, Better Check, Give Better” campaign to raise awareness and better educate the public on safer giving and practicing the steps of “Ask, Check, Give”.

13 For more details on the disclosure regime and safer giving, visit go.gov.sg/safergiving.

Enclosed:

Annex A	Media Factsheet
Annex B	Summary of feedback from the public consultation on revised regime for charitable fund-raising appeals and responses
Annex C	“Better Ask, Better Check, Give Better” campaign materials

Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth
8 September 2023

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OTHER INFORMATION

About the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

The Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth seeks to inspire Singaporeans through the arts and sports, strengthen community bonds, and promote volunteerism and philanthropy. Since its inception in November 2012, MCCY has been actively engaging the arts, heritage, sports, community and youth sectors. The Ministry aims to bring into sharper focus the efforts to build a more cohesive and vibrant society, and to deepen a sense of identity and belonging to the nation. MCCY will work with its stakeholders to create an environment where Singaporeans can pursue their aspirations for a better quality of life and together, build a gracious and caring society we are proud to call home.

About the Commissioner of Charities

The Office of the Commissioner of Charities (COC) was set up on 1 July 2006. Together with our five Sector Administrators, namely the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social and Family Development, People's Association and Sport Singapore, the COC registers and regulates charities and Institutions of a Public Character (IPCs). The vision of the COC is to nurture a well-governed and thriving charity sector with strong public support. To achieve this, the COC regulates charities by advising them on how to operate in compliance with the requirements of the Charities Act and subsidiary legislation and how to maintain high standards of governance and internal controls. It also regulates all private and public fund-raising appeals in Singapore, be it for local or foreign charitable purposes, with a view to promote transparency and accountability in the appeals administered.

ANNEX A – MEDIA FACTSHEET

1) Are all organisations no longer required to apply for a license from the Police or NCSS for public fund-raising appeals once the disclosure regime is implemented?

House to house and street collections are still licensed by the Police under the House to House and Street Collections Act except for collections for the following groups: (i) registered or exempt charities, and (ii) those with existing permits from the Commissioner of Charities for donations to foreign charitable causes. Instead, these groups will be required by law to disclose details of their public fund-raising appeals, including appeals made by third parties, on the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg).

Police will continue to assess all applications received for house to house and street collections licenses on a case-by-case basis before deciding whether a license may be granted.

2) Is the disclosure regime only required for public fund-raising appeals? How about other forms of fund-raising appeals (e.g. online)?

The disclosure regime is applicable only to public fund-raising appeals conducted by means of visits from house to house or by soliciting in the streets or other places or by both such means, for collections of monies and other property such as donations-in-kind) which are conducted by or for registered or exempt charities and FRFCP permit holders. It does not apply to other forms of fund-raising such as online or via the media.

Nevertheless, all fund-raising appeals conducted in Singapore, including those conducted online, for charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes are regulated by the Commissioner of Charities (COC) under the Charities (Fund-Raising Appeals for Local and Foreign Charitable Purposes) Regulations 2012, ("the Regulations"). Fund-raisers are required to comply with the Regulations which include providing clear and accurate information to donors about the beneficiary and the purpose, proper usage and records of donations received and disbursed.

3) What information will the registered/exempt charities and FRFCP permit holders be required to disclose on the Charity Portal before commencing on their public fund-raising appeal?

Charities and FRFCP permit holders will have to disclose on the Charity Portal (and if they wish, on their own websites) the following information, which will be made publicly available, at least seven working days before the appeal commences:

- a) Purpose, duration and method of collection (e.g. street collection or house to house visit);

- b) Location(s) where the collection will be conducted;
- c) Contact number and email address that the charity or FRFCP permit holder can be reached at should the public require any clarifications on the collection; and
- d) Where a third-party fund-raiser is involved:
 - i. Name of third-party fund-raiser conducting the collection;
 - ii. Percentage of the total gross receipts from the collection that is expected as payment for the expenses incurred for the conduct of the collection; and
 - iii. Declaration by the charity or FRFCP permit holder that (i) a written agreement has been established with the fund-raiser as required under the Regulations; and (ii) the charity or FRFCP permit holder has conducted its due diligence and ascertained that the third-party fund-raiser is fit and proper.

Mock up of disclosure on Charity Portal

A Singapore Government Agency Website

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By Charities

Fund-Raising

Only one field is required for this search.

Name of Organisation

UEN

Certificate/ Permit No.

Fund-Raising / Collection Period:

to

Issuance Agency

Search Results (2 records found) [Export to Excel](#)

Filter

Name of Organisation	Purpose	Fund Raising / Collection Period
CHARITY METHOD UEN: T20SS3976H	<p>Purpose(s) of Public Fund-Raising Appeal: Programme Expenses</p> <p>Details of Public Fund-Raising Appeal: Project X is our annual islandwide Flag Day which fund-raises to provide financial assistance to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Your contribution to Project X will provide continued support for our beneficiaries in their school fees, food, transport, uniform and other education related expenses.</p> <p>Nature of Public Fund-Raising Appeal: Street collection</p> <p>Mode(s) of Collection: Flag Day Collection Box/ Bag/ Tin</p> <p>Location(s) of Public Fund-Raising Activity: islandwide</p> <p>Name of Third-Party Fund-Raiser: ABC Pte Ltd</p> <p>Percentage of total gross receipts from the fund-raising appeal expected to be used to pay for the expenses incurred for the appeal: 20%</p> <p>Contact Number: 61234567</p> <p>Email Address: txyz@charity.com</p>	24/05/2023 - 31/05/2023

4) What information or documents will the registered/exempt charities and FRFCP permit holders be required to have on hand or carry around when conducting a public fund-raising appeal?

When conducting the public appeal, collectors and fund-raisers on the ground must clearly identify themselves as conducting a fund-raising appeal. Collectors and fund-raisers must also carry an official letter from the charity or FRFCP permit holder indicating the following information:

- a) Serial number of the letter;
- b) Collection's purpose, duration, location (as disclosed on the Charity Portal);
- c) Contact number and email address that the charity or FRFCP permit holder can be reached at should the public require any clarifications on the collection;
- d) QR code issued by the COC;
- e) Name of the third-party fund-raiser (if any); and
- f) Signature of the Chairman, CEO or ED of the charity or FRFCP permit holder; and where a third-party fund-raiser is engaged, signature of its CEO or equivalent designation.

5) How can the public be certain that they are donating to a legitimate cause?

All fund-raising appeals conducted in Singapore, including those conducted online, for charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes are regulated by the Commissioner of Charities (COC) under the Charities (Fund-Raising Appeals for Local and Foreign Charitable Purposes) Regulations 2012, ("the Regulations"). Fund-raisers are required to comply with the Regulations which include providing clear and accurate information to donors about the beneficiary and the purpose, proper usage and records of donations received and disbursed.

Anyone (including businesses and organisations) raising funds for foreign charitable causes is also required to apply for a Fund-Raising for Foreign Charitable Purposes (FRFCP) permit from the COC before raising funds. This ensures that donors' funds are channelled to the stated, bona fide purposes.

It is always good practice for donors to practise the three simple steps of "Ask, Check, Give" when responding to fund-raising appeals.

ANNEX B – SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON REVISED REGIME FOR CHARITABLE FUND-RAISING APPEALS AND RESPONSES

S/N	Proposed Change	Feedback Received	Considerations and Adjustments Made
1	<p>Disclosure of information – Charities and FRFCP permit holders will have to disclose information about the fund-raising appeal, such as (i) the purpose, duration and location of the appeal; (ii) mode of collection; (iii) details on the third-party fundraiser; and (iv) contact details of the charity and FRFCP permit holder, on the Charity Portal at least one month the appeal commences.</p>	<p>Most expressed support for the proposed disclosure requirements. Some even suggested requiring additional information to be disclosed, including the financial information regarding the entity, details of the due diligence process conducted to ensure the third-party fundraiser is fit and proper, the amount of funds raised, operating expenses and net amount given to the beneficiaries.</p> <p>However, some were concerned with the requirement to disclose the information at least one month in advance and shared that it may be difficult to comply with as some appeals were organised within a short period of time.</p>	<p>Charities and FRFCP permit holders will have to disclose the following details of their public fund-raising appeals on the Charity Portal: (i) Purpose, duration, location and method of collection; (ii) Contact details of the charity or FRFCP permit holder; and (iii) Details of any third-party fundraiser involved in the collection. This will provide the public sufficient information to easily verify the legitimacy of a fund-raising appeal, without placing too much demands on the charities and FRFCP permit holders administratively.</p> <p>To address the concerns raised on the timeline to submit the disclosures, charities and FRFCP permit holders should now make the disclosures at least 7 working days before the appeal commences, instead of a month in advance.</p>

2	<p>Presentation of public information – Information disclosed will be published immediately on the Charity Portal for public viewing once submitted. Members of the public will be able to view the disclosures when they search for fund-raising activities (e.g. by name of the charity) on the Portal. This acts as a means for the public to verify these public appeals.</p>	<p>Majority of the feedback received included suggestions on how to improve the process of verifying the fund-raising appeals, such as use of QR codes, auto-generated serial numbers and SMS service. Suggestions were also received on how the search of fund-raising appeals could be more user-friendly.</p>	<p>The public will be able to verify public fund-raising appeals through various channels including the Charity Portal website, Charities Unit hotline and SMS verification service. Collectors and fund-raisers will also need to carry clear identification such as an official letter from the charity or FRFCP permit holder so that the public can clearly identify them as conducting a fund-raising appeal.</p> <p>We have also taken the suggestions into consideration and have improved the user experience for the Charity Portal e-Search function.</p>
3	<p>Simplifying access to information – To promote the transparency and accountability of charities, and facilitate informed giving practices, we intend to simplify public access to the annual reports and financial statements submitted by charities by removing the Singpass login requirement for members of the public.</p>	<p>Majority expressed support for this recommendation.</p> <p>Some expressed reservations on the removal of the Singpass login requirement as it is deemed as a basic deterrence for viewers who may obtain the information for nefarious purposes.</p>	<p>We will be removing the Singpass login requirement for members of the public who are interested to access the annual report and financial statements of charities on the Charity Portal. This serves to promote greater transparency and accountability of funds used by charities.</p> <p>This practice is also consistent with that of other countries where members of the public can access charities' financial statements without any log-in requirements.</p>

4	<p>Clear identification – Collectors and fund-raisers on the ground must carry clear identification as well as provide the relevant information to donors who wish to authenticate the fund-raising appeal. Suggested forms include (i) a tag or lanyard displaying which charity or FRFCP permit holder the funds are raised for; or (ii) an official letter (with letterhead) from the charity or FRFCP permit holder indicating details of the appeal and contact information for clarifications.</p>	<p>Majority of the feedback were related to the effectiveness of the proposed identification for collectors and fund-raisers in preventing impersonation. Some of the suggestions received include a requirement for the official letter to be company-stamped, signed, and dated by the chairman of the charity, in addition to having the letterhead of the charity or FRFCP permit holder.</p>	<p>Collectors and fund-raisers on the ground will need to present a signed official letter (with letterhead) from the charity or FRFCP permit holder containing: (i) Details of the collection; and (ii) a QR code issued by the Commissioner directing users to the disclosures of the collection on the Charity Portal. This serves to ensure that collectors and fund-raisers on the ground can be easily identified by the public to be conducting a fund-raising appeal.</p> <p>We will continue our public education initiatives to train charities on how they can do their part in fighting scams and educating their donors on informed giving.</p>
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ANNEX C – “BETTER ASK, BETTER CHECK, GIVE BETTER” CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Video



Facebook: [Link](#) | Instagram: [Link](#) | Youtube: [Link](#) | Tik Tok: [Link](#)

IT'S GOOD TO GIVE BETTER



BETTER ASK

Ask for more details if you are unsure, such as:

- 1 How will my donations be used?
- 2 Who is the beneficiary?
- 3 How much of my donation goes to the beneficiary or charity?

BETTER CHECK

Verify if organisation or beneficiary is a registered charity or has disclosed its public fund-raising details via these options:

- 🖱️ Visit Charity Portal (charities.gov.sg)
- 📱 Scan QR code on organisation's appeal letter carried by fund-raiser
- 📞 SMS FR<space>Organisation Name to 79777
- ☎️ Call Charities Unit hotline at 6337 6597



GIVE BETTER

with peace
of mind!



Learn more at
charities.gov.sg

Let's Do Our Part and Practise Safer Giving

- ✓ Do not feel pressured to give if you have doubts
- ✓ Report any concerns to mccy_charities@mccy.gov.sg
- ✓ File a police report if you suspect a scam

