



Tennessee Department of State

Secretary of State

Tre Hargett

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFERS CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS OPTION TO REGISTER ONLINE

As the end of June approaches, many of the state's charitable organizations will be renewing their registration with the Tennessee Department of State. Unlike years past, they now have the option of doing so online. Currently 5,271 charities are registered with the state.

"I believe many organizations will find online filing more convenient," said Secretary of State Tre Hargett. "One of my goals is to make the Department of State as user-friendly as possible to the citizens who interact with all of our divisions."

Secretary Hargett continued: "It's a change that's intended to make life a little easier for the people who run these valuable organizations – as well as helping state government to operate more efficiently."

State law requires most charitable organizations that solicit contributions from the public to register with the Department of State and to renew their registration annually.

The registration process involves submitting an application, a summary of financial activities, and a copy of the organization's Form 990 annual report to the Internal Revenue Service as well as paying a registration fee.

Applications will still be accepted by mail, but the Department of State recently added the convenient option of submitting the registration documents and credit card payments electronically.

"It should save organizations time and money," said Todd R. Kelley, director of the Department of State's Charitable Solicitations and Gaming Division. "It's a lot easier than writing a check, filling out an application and putting it in the mail."

Online filing also creates greater efficiency within the Department of State. Kelley said applications filed online are easier to review, process and track.

“My staff will spend less time entering information from the paper documents into our database,” Kelley said. “That gives us more time to check for any irregularities in the financial statements, which helps prevent money donated for charitable purposes from being spent improperly.”

“For a lot of reasons, it makes sense to reduce the flow of paperwork into this office as much as possible,” Hargett added. “Online filing is another step in that direction.”

The registration renewal date is six months after the end of a charitable organization’s accounting year, which for many is Dec. 31, the end of the calendar year. That means many of the organizations will need to renew their applications by June 30.