

National Charities Conference

A joint program of the Center for Consumer Protection and the National Association of State Charity Officials

Oct. 6–8, 2026 | [The Benson Hotel](#)
Portland, Oregon

PUBLIC AGENDA

ALL TIMES ARE PACIFIC TIME

All sessions will take place in the Mayfair Ballroom unless otherwise noted

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM **Badge Pick up available** – [Mayfair Foyer \(2nd floor\)](#)

6:00 PM – 10:00 PM **Optional Informal Social Event – Portland Food Hall**

*Please join us for an optional informal evening social event open to all registered attendees. We will meet in the hotel lobby to walk (10 minute/.5 mile) or ride share to the [Portland Food Hall](#). The Portland Food Hall is a community driven gathering place in the heart of downtown where independent local food businesses come together under one roof. It is designed to be welcoming, flexible, and social, a place to grab a quick bite, linger with friends, or discover new flavors, while supporting small operators and reflecting Portland's diverse, creative food culture. If you arrive after 6 pm, please join us! This venue offers a selection of vendors, beverages, and indoor seating, so check their website for the latest information. **Transportation and meals on your own.***

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6 – Public and Government Attendees Welcome

**Please note that today's program will be recorded*

6:30 AM – 7:30 AM **Optional Run/Walk for Donuts**

If you're an early riser, runner, or lover of donuts, join NASCO President-Elect Josh Studor for a run/walk for donuts. We'll meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 AM and proceed to (location to be announced)

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM **Badge Pick-Up** – [Mayfair Foyer \(2nd floor\)](#)
Breakfast – [Crystal Ballroom \(1st floor\)](#)

9:00 AM – 9:15 AM **Welcome & Introductory Remarks**

Kate Donovan, Director, National Association of Attorneys General Center for Consumer Protection

Benjamin Gutman, Deputy Attorney General, Oregon Department of Justice

Beth Short, NASCO President, Director of Outreach and Education, Ohio Attorney General's Office

9:15 AM – 10:15 AM **Session 1 – Blame Elizabeth I: 500 years of Charitable Oversight and Why It Landed on the AG's Desk**

Long before the modern regulatory state, English Chancery courts and royal commissioners were wrestling with the same fundamental problem that occupies charity regulators today: who watches the watchers when charitable assets go astray? This session traces the surprisingly deep roots of charitable oversight – from early English common law to modern state charities bureaus.

PANELISTS:

Erin Kandel, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the New York Attorney General

Josh Studor, Vice President, NASCO, Assistant Attorney General, Washington Attorney General's Office

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10:15 AM – 10:30 AM **Break**

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM **Session 2 – NASCO Update: State Regulatory Activities**

Regulators from across the country discuss recent enforcement actions, legislative developments, emerging issues, and new approaches to charitable oversight. This fast-paced update highlights trends to watch, lessons from the field, and developments that may shape state charity regulation in the year ahead.

MODERATOR:

Cara Spencer, Assistant Attorney General, District of Columbia Attorney General's Office

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM **Buffet Luncheon Served** – Please return to the [Mayfair Ballroom](#) for continued programming.

12:15 PM – 12:30 PM **NASCO Announcements**

12:30 PM – 1:15 PM **Session 3 – Keynote Speaker**

Diane Yentel, Chief Executive Officer, National Council of Nonprofits

When Diane Yentel joined NCN in January 2025, her work was cut out for her. Her tenure began the same time as the second Trump Administration and nonprofit issues were occupying a major part of the national dialogue. She quickly led the organization in filing multiple successful lawsuits against the administration's attempts to starve nonprofits of needed funding and programs, she testified before Congress advocating for the sector, and launched a national narrative campaign to build support for the vital work of nonprofits. In 2025 Diane was named Influencer of the Year by The Nonprofit Times and one of Washington DC's Most Powerful Women by the Washingtonian. Diane will provide an overview of some of the sector's challenges and will take questions following her presentation.

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1:15 PM – 1:30 PM

Break

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Session 4 – Better Together: Charitable Mergers, Partnerships, and Other Structures for Effectiveness

With limited resources and increasing demands on the nonprofit sector, mergers and strategic partnerships can offer a path to greater sustainability and impact, but they remain relatively uncommon. This panel explores the opportunities and challenges of combining or aligning organizations, including considerations around governance, culture, funding and mission. Hear legal and regulatory perspectives on what makes these arrangements work and what regulators should consider when organizations join forces.

MODERATOR:

Josh, Studor, Vice President, NASCO, Assistant Attorney General, Washington Attorney General's Office

PANELISTS:

Jon Botten, Chief Executive Officer, Akin

Jacob Ferrari, Partner, Apex Law Group

Caitlin Noble, Supervising Deputy Attorney General, California Attorney General's Office

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Session 5 – Platform Fundraising, Technology, and Oversight: What's the Right Balance?

Many of the current charitable solicitation laws were developed during the era of direct mail and telemarketing campaigns, when it was easier to identify the parties, consent and flow of funds. But, as with many things, the speed of technology has outpaced the speed of fully grasping all the details as hundreds of fundraising platforms have popped up. The recent bankruptcy of FlipCause illustrates some of the problems and the dark side of platform operations when things go wrong. In balancing the interests of charities, donors and platform service providers, what is the right mix of oversight? Speakers on this panel will discuss the risks and platform growth, concerns many charities have related to

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platforms operating without their consent, the need to respond to the growing trend of digital giving, and whether current state solicitation laws adequately respond to this new world of fund development.

MODERATOR:

Beth Short, NASCO President, Director of Outreach and Education, Ohio Attorney General's Office

PANELISTS:

Sarah Saadian, Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Campaigns, Council on Nonprofits

Michael Thatcher, President and Chief Executive Officer, Charity Navigator

Robert Tigner, Regulatory Counsel, The Nonprofit Alliance

Bennett Weiner, President and Chief Executive Officer, BBB Wise Giving Alliance

Jim White, Executive Director, Nonprofit Association of Oregon

3:30 PM – 3:45 PM **Networking Break with Snacks**

3:45 PM – 4:30 PM **Session 6 – State of Confusion**

Northwest practitioners share candid stories from the trenches about advising charities amid constant change, navigating uncertainty, and tackling unexpected issues that land on their desks. Expect practical lessons, hard-earned advice, and a few stories about what happens when things don't go according to plan.

MODERATOR:

Heather Weigler, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Oregon Attorney General's Office

PANELISTS:

David Lawson, Partner, Ashurst Perkins Coie

Michele Wasson, Partner, Tonkon Torp

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| 4:30 PM – 5:00 PM | <p>Remarks: Attorney General John Formella</p> <p>New Hampshire Attorney General John Formella offers reflections on why state oversight of charities has grown in importance, drawing on experience as NAAG President and member of the Charities Subcommittee. Hear insights on national trends and the evolving expectations placed on charity regulators.</p> <p>MODERATORS:</p> <p>Leslie Friedlander, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Oklahoma Attorney General's Office</p> <p>Beth Short, NASCO President, Director of Outreach and Education, Ohio Attorney General's Office</p> |
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| 4:45 PM – 5:00 PM | <p>Closing Comments, Discussion, and Survey Reminder</p> <p>Beth Short, NASCO President, Director of Outreach and Education, Ohio Attorney General's Office</p> |
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| 5:00 PM – 6:45 PM | <p>Reception – Crystal Ballroom (1st floor)</p> |
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| 6:45 PM – 9:00 PM | <p>Informal Social Gathering Option</p> <p>Please join us for an optional informal post-reception social gathering. We will meet in the hotel lobby to ride share (8 minutes/.03 miles) to Punch Bowl Social, and Tuesday is Trivia Night! <i>Transportation and meals are on your own.</i></p> |
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Thank you for attending the NAAG/NASCO Charities Conference!

The National Association of State Charities Officials and the National Association of Attorneys General would like to extend special thanks to the Conference Planning Committee for their time and effort, without which this event would not be possible.

SAVE THE DATE

NAAG/NASCO Charities Conference | September 14–16, 2027