



February 6, 2017

The Evolving Unified Registration Statement

NOT-FOR-PROFIT
BY

Compliance with laws relating to charitable solicitation or fundraising has always been a difficult and laborious process. In fact, as of November 2016, 46 states require that before a charitable organization, or their agent may solicit funds from a state resident, the charitable organization, or their agent, must undergo a registration process. The difficulty with these registration processes is that 46 states bring 46 different laws. The laws largely lack any sense of uniformity or consistency between each state, with some states requiring little more than an online form alerting the state you intend to begin soliciting funds, while others require detailed applications, in addition to filing periodic financial reports and registering consultants/paid solicitors. However, a new partnership of organizations is seeking to bring charitable solicitation into the 21st century with the Single Portal Initiative, an online hub that allows for charitable solicitation in any state with little more than the click of a button.

The Introduction and Decline of the URS

In the late 1990s, the National Association of State Charities Officials ("NASCO") and the National Association of Attorneys General ("NAAG") unveiled the Unified Registration Statement ("URS") as a way to alleviate some of the difficulty associated with this charitable solicitation process. The goal of the URS was to create both a standard set of laws for charitable solicitation and a single form that would be accepted by any state agency registering charities. While the original URS was incredibly successful with 40 states accepting the form, a failure to create a uniform set of laws seemingly doomed the idea from the start. As charitable solicitation and fundraising changed over the past two decades, the accompanying laws regulating the practice also changed. As the laws have changed, the form has struggled to remain current or relevant, leading a growing number of states to reject the form entirely each year. And while the form is still utilized in some capacity today, only 29 states still accept the URS for an initial registration, and the form has not been updated since 2014.

The Multistate Registration and Filing Portal

Building off the knowledge learned from the URS, NASCO and NAAG, have partnered with the Multistate Registration and Filing Portal ("MRFP"), a Delaware nonprofit organization, to create the Single Portal Initiative ("SPI"). The goal of the portal is to offer charitable organizations electronic compliance with 39 different state registration requirements all from a single website. According to the MRFP, not only will the SPI maximize organization efficiency and transparency by being able to prepopulate a majority of each state's registration requirements based on data in the organization's Form 990, but it will also serve as a single

repository for collecting state filing fees. Once those fees are collected, the SPI will be able to disburse those funds out to the respective state without any further effort by the user.

The time frame for finalization of the SPI has yet to be determined, but invitations for development of the online platform were supposed to be sent in June 2016. From there, the SPI is intended to enter a pilot phase of 13 states before eventually expanding to 39 states. As additional information develops, we will be sure to let our readers know. Additional information on the SPI can be found at <http://mrfpinc.org/index.html>

For more information, visit the [Our Thoughts On](#) blog or [contact Schneider Downs](#).

You've heard our thoughts... We'd like to hear yours

The Schneider Downs Our Thoughts On blog exists to create a dialogue on issues that are important to organizations and individuals. While we enjoy sharing our ideas and insights, we're especially interested in what you may have to say. If you have a question or a comment about this article – or any article from the Our Thoughts On blog – we hope you'll share it with us. After all, a dialogue is an exchange of ideas, and we'd like to hear from you. Email us at contactSD@schneiderdowns.com.

Material discussed is meant for informational purposes only, and it is not to be construed as investment, tax, or legal advice. Please note that individual situations can vary. Therefore, this information should be relied upon when coordinated with individual professional advice.

© 2024 Schneider Downs. All rights-reserved. All content on this site is property of Schneider Downs unless otherwise noted and should not be used without [written permission](#).