

How Nonprofits are Losing Control of Their Domain Names

A Connecticut nonprofit that helps veterans and individuals transitioning out of homelessness has been locked out of its own domain name after a web developer took control of it during a website project.



Waterbury, Connecticut Apr 9, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.Issuewire.com)) - A Connecticut-based nonprofit that has spent more than a decade helping veterans and vulnerable individuals move into fully furnished homes is now facing a different kind of crisis: loss of control over its own domain name.

The Make a Home Foundation, a Middlebury nonprofit serving veterans, domestic violence survivors, and individuals transitioning out of homelessness, has been locked out of its domain names following a website redevelopment project. The domains were allegedly transferred to a third party without authorization, leaving the organization unable to fully control its online presence.

The nonprofit has launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise approximately \$5,000 to cover legal costs associated with filing a domain name dispute through ICANN.

For organizations like Make a Home Foundation, domain names are not just web addresses—they are critical infrastructure.

“When control of a domain name is lost, the impact is immediate,” said Bill Hartzler, a domain name recovery expert and Director of DNAccess who is working on the case. “Websites can go offline, email stops functioning, and communication with donors and partners is disrupted.”

Hartzler, who has recovered more than 1,000 domain names for clients, says situations like this are becoming more common.

“We are seeing more cases where nonprofits and small businesses lose control of their domain names because a third party had access to the registrar account,” he said. “In many cases, organizations don’t realize the risk until it’s too late.”

According to information provided by the nonprofit, the domain names were originally registered and used continuously for more than a decade. During a recent website project, access to the domain registrar account was allegedly used to transfer ownership without authorization. The domains are now being held by that third party, forcing the organization to pursue formal recovery options.

The impact extends beyond the website itself.

“When a nonprofit loses its domain, it affects trust, visibility, and communication,” Hartzler said. “This is not just a technical issue—it’s an operational and reputational risk.”

Founded in 2010, the Make a Home Foundation provides complete home setups—including furniture, kitchen supplies, and essential household items—for individuals moving into housing after experiencing homelessness or crisis situations. The organization operates out of a 35,000-square-foot facility and serves communities across Connecticut.

Supporters say the organization plays a critical role in helping individuals transition into stable living environments.

The GoFundMe campaign will fund the legal process required to recover the domain names. Any funds raised beyond the initial goal will go toward supporting the nonprofit’s mission.

Those involved in the case hope the situation will raise awareness of a broader issue.

“If this can happen to a nonprofit, it can happen to anyone,” Hartzler said. “Domain names are one of the most important digital assets an organization owns, and they need to be protected accordingly.”

Interview Availability

Bill Hartzler, domain name recovery expert who has recovered over 1,000 domain names, is available to provide expert insight into domain disputes, digital asset protection, and recovery strategies.

Anita Pettengill, President of the Make a Home Foundation, is available to discuss the nonprofit’s mission and the impact of losing control of its domain.

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