



Charitable Donation Tracker—Cash Contributions

Recordkeeping Requirements for Charitable Contributions

Reporting Requirement Thresholds:

- *Cash.* Do not combine separate contributions.
- *Noncash.* Combine claimed deductions of all similar items to determine \$501 or greater amount.

Contribution: Less than \$250	
Cash	One of the following: 1) Bank record with organization's name, date, and amount of contribution. Bank records may include canceled check, bank statement, or credit card statement. 2) Receipt showing organization's name, date, and amount of contribution. 3) Payroll deduction record.
Non-cash	All of the following: Receipt from a charitable organization showing the name of the organization, date and location of the contribution, and a reasonably detailed description of property contributed. Note: A receipt is not required where it is impractical to get one, such as leaving property at a charity's unattended drop site. The organization's name, date of contribution, and description of property are still required.
Contribution: \$250 to \$500	
Cash	Same as less than \$250, plus: Written acknowledgement from the charitable organization or payroll deduction record. The acknowledgement must (1) show the date and amount of the contribution, (2) state whether any goods or services other than intangible religious benefits were provided by the charitable organization (including a good faith estimate of the value), and (3) a statement that the only benefit the taxpayer received was an intangible religious benefit, if that was the case. The taxpayer must receive the acknowledgement by the earlier of the date of filing or due date of the return, including extensions.

Contribution: \$250 to \$500 (continued)	
Non-cash	Written acknowledgement from the charitable organization showing (1) the date and location of the contribution, (2) a reasonably detailed description of the contributed property, (3) whether any goods or services other than intangible religious benefits were provided by the charitable organization (including a good faith estimate of the value), and (4) a statement that the only benefit the taxpayer received was an intangible religious benefit, if that is the case. The written acknowledgement does not need to state fair market value. The taxpayer must receive the acknowledgement by the earlier of the date of filing or due date of the return, including extensions.
Contribution: \$501 to \$5,000	
Cash	Same as \$250 to \$500.
Non-cash	Same as \$250 to \$500, plus: • How property was acquired (purchase, gift, inheritance, etc.). • Approximate date property was obtained or produced. • Cost or other basis and basis adjustments. If information about the date acquired or basis of the property is not available due to reasonable cause, attach an explanation to the return.
Contribution: Over \$5,000	
Cash	Same as \$250 to \$500.
Non-cash	Same as \$250 to \$5,000. A written appraisal is generally required.

Part Contribution, Part Goods or Services

A written statement from a charity is required if a donation is more than \$75 and is partly a contribution and partly for goods or services. The statement must contain an estimate of the value of goods or services received. **Exception:** A written statement for goods or services is not required if one of the following is true.

- 1) The charity is a federal, state, or local government, or a religious organization where the

- benefit is an intangible religious benefit, such as admission to a religious ceremony.
- 2) The goods or services are of token value.
- 3) The goods or services are membership benefits.

Out-of-Pocket and Auto Expenses

Taxpayers who do volunteer work for charitable organizations can deduct their out-of-pocket expenses. The expense must be incurred because of the services rendered. The value of the taxpayer's time to render the services is not deductible. Report out-of-pocket expenses as cash contributions.

- **Auto expenses.** Deductible out-of-pocket expenses include the cost of using the taxpayer's auto in providing services for a charitable organization. Deduct the actual cost of gas and oil or the standard mileage rate. Add parking and tolls to amount claimed for either standard mileage rate or actual expenses.
- **Standard mileage rate.** The general standard mileage rate for charitable deductions is 14¢ per mile for 2014. Ask your tax professional for the 2015 rate.
- **Travel expenses.** The cost of travel, such as air, rail, and bus transportation, as well as meals and lodging, are deductible while away from home doing volunteer work if there is no significant element of personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation in the travel. The deduction will not be denied simply because the taxpayer enjoys doing the volunteer work. However, if the taxpayer has only nominal duties for the charity, or if for significant parts of the trip the taxpayer does not have duties to perform, the travel expenses are not deductible.