

Summary of the documentation rules for charitable contributions.

Type of Donation	Amount Given in a Single Donation			
	Less than \$250	\$250 to \$500	\$501 to \$5,000	Over \$5,000
Cash	Bank record or written receipt from charity ¹	Acknowledgment ²	Acknowledgment ²	Acknowledgment ²
Payroll deduction	Paystub, W-2, or other reliable written record from employer Documentation from charity ³	Paystub, W-2 or other reliable written record from employer Documentation from charity ³	Paystub, W-2 or other reliable written record from employer Documentation from charity ³	Paystub, W-2 or other reliable written record from employer Documentation from charity ³
Out-of-pocket expenses while serving as a volunteer	Receipt, cancelled check, or other reliable written records	Receipt, cancelled check, or other reliable written records Acknowledgment ⁴	Receipt, cancelled check, or other reliable written records Acknowledgment ⁴	Receipt, cancelled check, or other reliable written records Acknowledgment ⁴
Noncash:⁵				
a. Publicly traded stock	Receipt or reliable written records ⁶	Acknowledgment ² Receipt or reliable written records ⁶	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ^{6,7}	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ^{6,7}
b. Nonpublicly traded stock	Receipt or reliable written records ⁶	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ⁶	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ^{6,7}	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ^{6,7} Qualified appraisal if FMV > \$10,000 ^{8,9} Declaration of appraiser and donee acknowledgment (Form 8283)
c. Artwork	Receipt or reliable written records ⁶	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ⁶	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ^{6,7}	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ^{6,7} Qualified appraisal (must attach to return if FMV > \$20,000) ⁸ Declaration of appraiser and donee acknowledgment (Form 8283)

Type of Donation	Amount Given in a Single Donation			
	Less than \$250	\$250 to \$500	\$501 to \$5,000	Over \$5,000
d. Qualified vehicles (motor vehicles, boats, and planes)	Receipt or reliable written records ^{6,10}	Form 1098-C or other written acknowledgment Reliable written records ^{6,10}	Form 1098-C (attached to tax return) Reliable written records ^{6,10}	Form 1098-C (attached to tax return) Reliable written records ^{6,10} Donee acknowledgment (Form 8283) Qualified appraisal if deduction not limited to gross proceeds from vehicle's sale.
e. All other noncash donations	Receipt or reliable written records ⁶	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ⁶	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ^{6,7}	Acknowledgment ² Reliable written records ^{6,7} Qualified appraisal ^{8,9} Declaration of appraiser and donee acknowledgment (Form 8283)

¹ Recordkeeping requirements are satisfied only if the donor maintains either a bank record (most likely a cancelled check, wire transfer acknowledgement, or credit card record) or a written communication for the charity showing the name of the donee organization, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution [IRC 170(f)(17)].

² Written acknowledgment from the charity must include a description of the property or amount of cash donated plus a statement as to whether the donor received any goods or services (with a good faith estimate of value) in connection with the donation [Reg. 1.170A-13(f)]. If the donor received intangible religious benefits, the acknowledgment must say so, although no valuation of such benefits is required. Taxpayers must receive the acknowledgment before the earlier of (a) the date the return for the year of the donation is filed or (b) the due date, including extensions, for filing the return. The acknowledgment can be either a paper copy or in electronic format, such as an email addressed to the donor (IRS Pub. 1771).

³ Donor must obtain a pledge card or other documentation from the charity that also states that the charity does not provide goods or services in return for any contribution made to it by payroll deduction.

⁴ Acknowledgment from charity must contain (a) a description of the services provided, (b) a statement as to whether the charity provided any goods or services in return for the services and if so, a description and a good faith estimate of their value (or a statement that only intangible religious benefits were provided). The acknowledgment must be received the earlier of the date the volunteer's return for the year of the volunteer efforts is filed or the return due date, including extensions.

⁵ Form 8283 (Noncash Charitable Contributions) must be filed if the total deduction for noncash contributions is more than \$500.

⁶ Reliable written records must include the following information: (1) name and address of donee organization; (2) date and location of the contribution; (3) description of the property; (4) FMV of the property (or cost, if election is made to reduce FMV for appreciated property); (5) information related to contributions of partial interests in property, if applicable; and (6) terms of any conditions attached to the donation, if applicable [Reg. 1.170A-13(b)(2)(ii)]. For donations of less than \$250, reliable written records are required when it is impractical to obtain a receipt from the donee organization [Reg. 1.170A-13(b)(1)]. For used clothing and household items, property must be in "good condition or better" unless value is over \$500 and a qualified appraisal report is attached to the tax return [IRC Sec. 170(f)(16)].

⁷ In addition to items described in footnote 3, records must include information on how and when the property was acquired. Records of cost or adjusted basis must also be maintained if the property (other than publicly traded securities) was held for less than 12 months and, if available, the cost or adjusted basis of property held 12 months or more [Reg. 1.170A-13(b)(3)].

⁸ The appraisal must be performed by a "qualified appraiser," as defined in IRC Sec. 170(f)(11)(E)(ii) (or IRS Notice 2006-96 for appraisals of personal property).

⁹ For property donations in excess of \$500,000, the appraisal must be attached to the return.

¹⁰ Qualified vehicle donations must be acknowledged in writing and the acknowledgment must include the name and taxpayer identification number of the donor, the vehicle identification number, and the date of the contribution. For qualified vehicles valued at over \$500, donors must obtain from the donee organizations Form 1098-C (Contributions of Motor Vehicles, Boats, and Airplanes) and attach Copy B to their Form 1040s. Form 1098-C, which is prepared to provide the donor with the necessary information regarding the vehicle donation, is optional for contributions valued at \$500 or less, but mandatory for vehicles valued at over \$500. In addition, the following substantiation rules apply:

- Charity sells without significant use or material improvement:The charity's acknowledgment must contain the sale date, a certification that it was sold at arm's length between unrelated parties, the gross proceeds from the sale, and a statement that the charitable deduction is limited to the gross proceeds from the sale.
- Charity's significant use or material improvement before disposition:The charity's acknowledgment must contain the information in the first sentence of this footnote and a certification and detailed description of the intended material improvement or the intended significant intervening use and the intended duration of such use and a certification that the vehicle won't be sold before completion of such use or improvement.
- Charity gives or sells at significantly discounted price to needy individual in a qualified transfer:The charity must give the donor a statement to this effect and provide the information discussed in the first sentence of this footnote.