

## Sample article for organizations to use to reach customers (421 word count)

*Customize and post the following article on your websites and/or use in other communication vehicles, to inform your customers about the tax benefits of making charitable contributions.*

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### Charitable contributions may help lower your tax bill

Do you want to lower your tax bill? You can take steps that can lower your 2014 taxes by making charitable contributions. Now is a good time to prepare for the upcoming tax filing season. Taking this step can help you save time and tax dollars.

If you plan to give to charity, consider donating before the year ends. That way you can claim your contribution as an itemized deduction for 2014. This includes donations you charge to a credit card by Dec. 31, even if you don't pay the bill until 2015. A gift by check also counts for 2014 as long as it is mailed in December.

To get a tax deduction, you must give to a [qualified organization](#). You cannot take a deduction for contributions made to specific individuals, political organizations or candidates; you must file [Form 1040](#) and itemize the deduction on Schedule A.

Contributions to individuals are not considered charitable. See [Publication 526](#), *Charitable Contributions*, for more information. If your contribution entitles you to merchandise, goods or services, including admission to a charity ball, banquet, theatrical performance or sporting event, you can deduct only the amount that exceeds the fair market value of the benefit received.

So, what do we mean by fair market value? This is generally the price at which property would change hands between a willing buyer and a willing seller, neither having to buy or sell, and both having reasonable knowledge of all the relevant facts.

For a contribution of cash, check, or other monetary gift, you must maintain a record that includes a bank statement or a written communication from the qualified organization containing the name of the organization, the date of the contribution and the amount. In addition to deducting your cash contributions, you generally can deduct the fair market value of any other property you donate to qualified organizations. See [Publication 561](#), *Determining the Value of Donated Property*, to learn more.

If you claim a deduction for a contribution of noncash property worth more than \$500, you also will need to attach the qualified appraisal to your return and file [Form 8283](#), *Noncash Charitable Contributions*.

Special rules apply to donations of certain types of property such as automobiles, inventory and investments that have appreciated in value. For more information, refer to [Publication 526](#), *Charitable Contributions*.

For more information on charitable contributions, read:

- [Form 8283](#), *Noncash Charitable Contributions* and its instructions
- [Publication 526](#), *Charitable Contributions*
- [Publication 561](#), *Determining the Value of Donated Property*
- [Publication 1771](#), *Charitable Contributions: Substantiation and Disclosure*

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**NOTE TO EDITOR:** Below are helpful resources on charitable deductions on IRS.gov:

[IR-2013-98](#) - IRS Offers tips for year-end giving

[Exempt Organization Select Tool](#) – find out if an organization is eligible to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions

[Tax Topics - Topic 506 Charitable Contributions](#)

[Organizations Eligible to Receive Tax-Deductible Charitable Contributions](#)

Donor's guide to vehicle donation <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4302.pdf>

- [Eight Tips for Deducting Charitable Contributions](#)

IRS YouTube

- [Tax Tips: Fair Market Value of Charitable Donations?](#)
- [Tax Tips: Charitable Contributions](#)