

The Most Commonly Missed Charitable Deductions

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Most taxpayers are aware that if they donate cash or personal items to a qualified organization they may be able to claim an itemized deduction for the fair market value of their donation. It is also pretty common knowledge among taxpayers that you are not allowed a deduction for the value or time of the services you provide. What many tax payers commonly neglect to deduct are the following...



You can deduct 14 cents a mile for each mile you drive for charitable purposes, plus parking fees and tolls. This includes your mileage to Goodwill or Salvation Army to drop off your old clothes and furniture. If you're a weekly (or monthly or occasional) volunteer at a Hospice, Hospital, Cancer Center, etc. this mileage is all deductible. Alternatively, you could deduct the actual costs of transportation, like gas, oil changes, parking fees, and tolls, but you would need receipts to prove them.

If you incur expenses while traveling away from home while performing services for a charity, including out of pocket costs for round-trip travel, taxi fares, and other costs of transportation between the airport, bus station, train stations and hotel, plus lodging and meals are deductible in full. NOTE: These expenses are only deductible if there is no significant element of personal pleasure associated with the travel, or if your services for a charity do not involve lobbying activities.

The cost of entertaining others on behalf of a charity, such as wining and dining a potential large contributor are deductible, but the cost of your own entertainment or meal is not deductible.

You can deduct the cost of your uniform (Hospital Scrubs, Cub Scouts, etc.) when doing volunteer work for the charity, as long as the uniform has no general utility. The cost of cleaning the uniform can also be deducted.

Remember, to document you charitable giving such that you can receive a tax break at the same time. Keeping a log book is the easiest way to make sure you don't miss a deduction. And make sure that the organization you are providing these services to a qualified organization. Publication 78, Cumulative List of Organizations described in Section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, is a list of organizations eligible to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions. You can find this publication [here](#).

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