

# Making it easier to give to international aid organisations



## Take Action Now

- 1. Get your organisation and bank account verified** - it makes it much easier for employers to offer payroll giving for your organisation. For more information visit the Payroll Giving website ([www.payrollgivinginfo.org.nz](http://www.payrollgivinginfo.org.nz)).
- 2. Send this flyer** out to your donors and those businesses that support you.
- 3. Give this flyer** to your volunteers and make them aware that expense reimbursements are tax free.
- 4. Create a payroll giving request** form for download from your website.
- 5. Double check** you have donee status with Inland Revenue. Without it, donors can't receive a tax credit.
- 6. Visit Inland Revenue** ([www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz)), the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector ([www.ocvs.govt.nz](http://www.ocvs.govt.nz)) and the Charities Commission ([www.charities.govt.nz](http://www.charities.govt.nz)) for other information.

New Zealanders are naturally generous people. Each year an estimated 1.2 million of us volunteer our time and together we give more than \$1 billion a year to tens of thousands of nonprofit groups, including many international aid organisations.

Recent changes to New Zealand tax rules have made it even easier and rewarding to give in meaningful ways.

These changes include:

- the introduction of payroll giving
- clarification of the tax treatment of reimbursement payments and honoraria to volunteers
- removing the caps on the donations tax credit for individuals, companies and Māori authorities.

The changes have the potential to benefit international aid organisations by creating opportunities for sustained, cost effective giving, as well as lasting relationships. In an environment where the nonprofit sector is competing for heartstrings and purse strings, the tax changes help provide a level playing field.

This flyer includes information on the tax changes and looks at how international aid organisations can take advantage of these changes.



# Payroll Giving

## What is payroll giving?

Payroll giving is a voluntary scheme for both employers and employees. Employees make donations directly from their pay packets and receive immediate tax credits via PAYE.

Employees in participating companies nominate a chosen donee organisation (one that has Inland Revenue approved status) to donate to each payday and receive an immediate 33.33 per cent tax credit on the donation. For example, if \$15 is donated, it costs the employee about \$10.

## What are the benefits of payroll giving?

### Donee organisations

Payroll giving is an efficient, low-cost way to raise funds and receive regular income support. It is another option in the fundraising toolbox.

### Employees

Payroll giving is immediate, simple and rewarding. People donating through payroll giving don't need to retain receipts and wait to file an annual claim form to get their donation tax credit. Payroll giving means the donation and the 33.33 percent credit happen immediately.

### Employers

Payroll giving creates a win-win opportunity for employers, employees and their communities. Through payroll giving, businesses are able to demonstrate their commitment to their customers, clients and communities in a practical way. Because payroll giving is voluntary, employers have the choice of whether to offer the scheme. It is only available to employers who electronically file their employer monthly schedule and deduction form.

## How does my organisation become involved in payroll giving?

An organisation needs to be approved by Inland Revenue as a donee organisation to be eligible to participate in payroll giving. Check [www.ird.govt.nz/donee-organisations/](http://www.ird.govt.nz/donee-organisations/) to make sure your organisation is listed. Being on the Charities Register does not automatically qualify a group as a donee organisation because only Inland Revenue approves donee status.

Donations to organisations that apply most of their funds overseas will not qualify for donee organisation status, unless the organisation:

- has been approved by the New Zealand Parliament, or
- sets up a separate fund maintained exclusively for providing money for charitable, benevolent, philanthropic, or cultural purposes within New Zealand.

If your organisation is already registered as a charity with the Charities Commission and indicated that donations are a source of income on the application form, this information would have been passed on to Inland Revenue to consider assigning donee organisation status.

## What to do now

### 1. Promote your organisation to potential donors

You are encouraged to spread the news of payroll giving to your networks, to current donors and to the media.

### 2. Establish a system for issuing payroll giving summaries

This is not compulsory but it is recommended that donee organisations issue a payroll donation summary to the employer for their business records. The individual donor doesn't need receipts for donations made through their payroll because their pay slip will show all the details and they have already received their tax credits.

### 3. Offer payroll giving to your own employees

If your organisation employs staff, be one of the first to offer payroll giving options to your employees – it will help you get to grips with how it works and you'll gain an appreciation of what is involved in setting it up.

### 4. Keep donors informed

Consider how you will keep payroll givers informed about your work as you may not know their names and contact details – perhaps you need a newsletter for people to sign up for, a social media site or posters for workplaces? If existing donors switch over to payroll giving – offer them a way to stay informed about how their donations are used by your organisation.



# Removing the caps on the donations' tax relief

The caps have been removed on the tax credits for donations given to donee organisations.

## What do the changes mean for business?

Businesses are now entitled to a deduction for all donations made to donee organisations up to the total amount of their net income. The donation deduction also applies to unlisted close companies (companies with five or fewer shareholders). There are approximately 155,000 active close companies.

## What does this mean for individuals?

Individuals can now claim a tax credit of one third (33.33%) of all donations they make up to the level of their annual taxable income. That means that for every \$1 given as a donation people get 33 cents back in cash. If people make donations directly (i.e. not through payroll giving) to an approved donee organisation and have the receipts, they can claim them on the Tax credit claim form (IR526).

## Making the business case for giving

cbm ([www.cbm-nz.org.nz](http://www.cbm-nz.org.nz)) is an international Christian organisation whose primary purpose is to improve the lives of the world's poorest people with disabilities.

National Director Darren Ward says the organisation has a low profile in New Zealand but cbm is looking to change that through a concerted effort to gain business support.

cbm recently sponsored a business breakfast in Auckland attended by about 90 senior managers, where Mr Ward presented the 'why' and 'how' of corporate giving partnerships, including payroll giving.

Mr Ward says giving partnerships not only provide staff engagement, public relations opportunities and corporate social responsibility profile but also profile in new markets.

**"If a New Zealand business gives to us, we can give them profile in developing countries that they may wish to do business in. They'll gain exposure to markets they maybe wouldn't normally have access to."**

"cbm is just beginning to engage with business in New Zealand but we are strongly advocating the benefits of long term partnerships. We're also asking businesses to be leaders in payroll giving and to be one of the first to come on board."



# Clarifying the tax treatment of volunteer payments

Volunteers may:

- be reimbursed for any expenses they have from their voluntary activities
- receive an honorarium (payment made for services where no fixed payment would normally be made)
- receive a combination of both reimbursement and honorarium.

## What are the rules for volunteer reimbursements?

Volunteers often incur expenses in the course of their “work,” such as travel and meal costs, buying special clothing, using their own telephone and so on. Reimbursements can be:

- for actual expenditure
- based on a reasonable estimate of expenditure likely to be incurred.

The reimbursement may be in a non-cash form, such as petrol or meal vouchers, and can be made progressively as expenses are incurred or as a period lump sum.

To further recognise the value of volunteers in our community, reimbursement for these expenses are treated as tax-free, and so do not have to be included as income in tax returns.

Tax-free reimbursement payments may also be made to volunteers who are non-residents such as a holidaying visitor. These people will not be required to file a New Zealand tax return, as long as they receive no other New Zealand income.

## What are the rules around honoraria?

Honoraria are schedular payments (formerly called “withholding payments”). This means PAYE rules apply and the payments are taxed.

If you pay honoraria to:

- an employee, use the PAYE calculator to work out the amount of tax
- someone who is not an employee, the payment is taxed at a flat rate.

If the payment is partly honoraria and partly reimbursement of expenses and the different amounts are clearly identified and recorded, the honoraria will be taxable income and the reimbursement will be tax-exempt income. If there is no distinction between the honoraria and the reimbursement, the entire payment is treated as honoraria and therefore taxed.

Organisations are encouraged to make the distinction, such as through separate payments, so volunteers do not pay tax on reimbursements.

For more information refer to Inland Revenue’s website: [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz).

