**October 2018**

Dear Habitat for Humanity California affiliate,

We are excited to share this toolkit with you to guide you on spreading awareness about how California tax filers have the opportunity to make a tax-deductible donation and help families build homes and hope as they file their 2018 taxes.

With as little as $1,California tax filers can donate to the ***Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund*** on their 2018 California tax return by April 15, 2019.

**The goals of this toolkit are to:**

* Engage all 41 affiliates in a branded campaign with a unified message
* Provide multiple ways for affiliates to use provided messages and materials in your work
* Educate California tax filers on how to donate to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund
* Increase contributions to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund

**Basic facts about the Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund:**

* The Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund is line 437 on the California Resident Income Tax Return Form 540.
* Detailed steps on how to contribute – whether someone files taxes on his/her own or receives assistance from a tax preparer – as well a donation reminder form can be found at [www.habitatca.org/taxfund](http://www.habitatca.org/taxfund).
* The Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund has generated more than $509,000 for Habitat for Humanity California and its affiliates to support families across California build stable homes in communities where they work and where their children attend school.
* It’s tax deductible! People can contribute $1 or more through the Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund section of their 2018 California tax return and receive a tax deduction.

**Important note:**

* There is no “box” on Form 540 in the Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund section to check. Tax filers must fill in a line with the amount they want to donate. Affiliates are advised to remove any graphics or references to the “check the box” slogan.

**Template Materials**

The toolkit includes several materials that affiliates can customize and update between now and April 15, 2019 for use in newsletters, email blasts, earned media outreach, local events and on social media.



Affiliates are encouraged to adapt items to meet their local needs and insert local statistics, stories and context as much as possible. Replace this placeholder picture (shown at right) with your local affiliate logo on the top of all materials next to the campaign logo.

Items in the toolkit and descriptions for how to best use each item follow.

* **Contribution Reminder Form** – Print copies and take this to groundbreaking events, pass it out at volunteer trainings, homeowner orientations and construction sites. Have it on a desk in your front office so visitors can take a copy. Insert it into mailings going out in December and/or January. This form is a great way to educate and remind California tax filers to think of Habitat for Humanity when they contribute through the Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund section of their income taxes.
* **Template Newsletter/Email Write Up** – Many affiliates have a newsletter or email program that regularly goes out to supporters, Habitat homeowners or volunteers. Make the Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund a part of the newsletter feature and/or email program.
* **Template Press Release** – Send this to your local media outlets – newspapers, TV and radio – and spread the word about the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund. Be sure to update the highlighted areas, local story and local statistic options. We recommend sending press releases early in the day.
* **Template Letter to the Editor** – See a local story in your newspaper about the housing crisis or how rising rents are hurting families? Did you have a recent build or family move into their home covered by local media? These can be great opportunities to submit a brief Letter to the Editor (LTE) and share information about the Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund campaign. LTEs are typically 150-200 words, must be from a local resident and should be submitted within a day or two of seeing a local story.
* **Template Opinion or Viewpoint Piece** – An opinion piece, also known as a viewpoint, can be another great way to reach many community members, shape your message and share the good work of your affiliate. Similar to a Letter to the Editor, try to take advantage of a newsworthy event or story, like the housing crisis, new study on housing affordability or family moving into a home. In any scenario, be sure to include a local family success story. Opinion pieces typically are 600 words or less.
* **Sample Social Media Posts** – Want to reach a lot of people quickly and share information on this campaign? Look to social media to spread the word about the Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund campaign to people who already “like” or are interested in Habitat for Humanity’s good work. Use these sample posts along with photos of families to share to show how tax contributions will be put to use. The best time to post on social media is between 11:00AM – 1:00PM, or 6:00PM – 7:00PM when studies show many followers are most likely to be online. Be sure to use a picture or video with your post to make it more engaging and visible to your followers.