



**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

**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.



**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

## 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.



**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

# Support Habitat for Humanity California through your 2018 California tax return

You can help build a world where everyone has a decent place to live

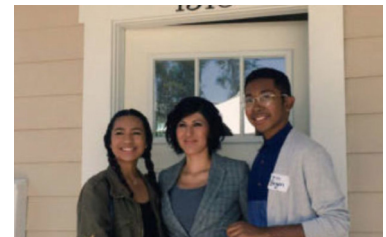
Your tax contribution to Habitat for Humanity California:



**Builds, renovates and repairs over 600 homes per year statewide**



**Helps families like U.S. Navy Veteran Maria and her two teenage children create a stable home**



**Is tax deductible!**

**Contribute \$1 or more through the Voluntary Contribution section of your 2018 California tax return.**

**\*Keep this form with your tax documents\***

**Build Homes. Build Hope.**

**YES! I want to help build homes for children, families and veterans!**

**I will contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund on my 2018 California State Tax Return!**

Voluntary contributions to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund [California Individual Tax Return form 540, Section 110 (437)] are distributed to Habitat for Humanity affiliates statewide by Habitat for Humanity California.

[www.habitatca.org/taxfund](http://www.habitatca.org/taxfund)



## **BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**

VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

### TEMPLATE NEWSLETTER WRITE-UP

#### YOU CAN SUPPORT HABITAT AT TAX FILING TIME

It's that time of year – W-2 forms are rolling into your mailboxes and you're starting to make a pile of tax forms for filing your 2018 taxes before Tax Day on April 15, 2019.

Did you know that you can support Habitat for Humanity **[AFFILIATE NAME]** when you file your California tax return?

With as little as \$1, California tax filers – you, your friends, and your family – have the opportunity to make a tax-deductible donation to the **Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund** on your 2018 California tax return and maximize our efforts to help children, families and veterans have a decent home.

The Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund has generated more than \$509,000 to support families across California. As a dedicated volunteer, Habitat for Humanity homeowner or supporter, you've seen the difference a stable home makes in the lives of families and children that Habitat for Humanity **[AFFILIATE NAME]** serves.

Here are three ways you can help build homes and hope with your state tax return today:

**1. Share a portion of your tax return.**

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 you file taxes on your own or receive assistance from a tax preparer – as well a donation reminder form can be found at [www.habitatca.org/taxfund](http://www.habitatca.org/taxfund).

**2. Tell 5 friends and family members they can help build homes too.**

Forward this message and share [www.habitatca.org/taxfund](http://www.habitatca.org/taxfund) by email with 5 family members, friends or coworkers and encourage them to become virtual builders today with their tax returns.

**3. Post about this giving opportunity on Facebook.**

Social media is a great way to tell your network about the campaign. Post about the campaign and why you are participating.

***Can we count on you to join us in urging California tax filers to donate as little as \$1 from their state tax returns to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund?***

Thank you for joining us to build homes and hope this tax season!

Habitat for Humanity **[AFFILIATE NAME]**



**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

## TEMPLATE PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

[Date]

[Contact & Phone Number]

### **HELP HABITAT FOR HUMANITY [AFFILIATE NAME] BUILD HOMES FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUR STATE TAX RETURN**

#### ***A Voluntary Tax Contribution on Your California Tax Return Helps Children & Families Have a Decent Place to Live***

[CITY] – Habitat for Humanity [AFFILIATE NAME] is reminding Californians they can help build homes and hope through their state tax returns this tax season and help the many families and veterans in need of a decent place to live.

With as a little as \$1, California tax filers have the opportunity to make a tax-deductible donation on their 2018 California tax return to the **Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund** before Tax Day, April 15, 2019. Donations generated through the **Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund** make homeownership a reality for the many California children, families and veterans who are caught in the housing crisis where one in three Californians can't afford their rent and many are unable to afford a safe, stable home.

“A stable home is the foundation of our lives, and at Habitat for Humanity [AFFILIATE NAME], we see how a home empowers families and children changing not only their lives but also strengthening entire communities,” said Habitat for Humanity [AFFILIATE NAME] Executive Director [NAME]. “Along with the sweat equity that is vital to each home we build in [REGION/COUNTY], we are grateful for every Californian who shares a portion of their tax return, makes a donation and helps us build homes this tax season.”

The Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund is line 437 on the California Resident Income Tax Return Form 540 – or ask the professional who helps prepare your taxes to note your contribution. Detailed steps on how to contribute – whether you file taxes on your own or receive 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 to support families across the state build stable homes in communities where they work and where their children attend schools because contributions received from California tax filers in [COUNTY/REGION] are distributed to our local affiliate.

#### **STATISTIC OPTION [If you have local stats, this will help improve release]**

Locally, families supported through Habitat for Humanity California homes report significant improvements in their children's academic lives and financial stability at home, including:

- **XX%** of families with school-age children have seen an improvement in study habits and school performance



**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

- **XX%** of families have had at least one family member start or complete higher education or job-training programs
- **XX%** of families have more savings

**STORY OPTION [Recommend adding family story to strengthen interest and quote from family]**

Every year, Habitat for Humanity **[AFFILIATE NAME]** works with families like Tracy Owens, a mother of an 11-year-old boy, who after being diagnosed with breast cancer at age 35 also faced eviction and had to end her marriage. She feared she and her son might become homeless. Despite the many obstacles, Owens was determined to rebuild her life and turned to Habitat for Humanity for help.

“With the help of Habitat for Humanity, I will forever have a home and a safe neighborhood for my son to grow up in, and he will always have a home to call his own,” Owens said. “Habitat for Humanity is just an awesome organization that helps build not only homes, it builds self-confidence, self-worth and a vision for the future. I will forever be an advocate for Habitat for Humanity because it provides the foundation for success and it builds the walls for security and these homes become filled with love that will have a positive impact on the communities that surround them.”

###



**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
 VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

## TEMPLATE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### *Habitat Homeowner Voice*

My family and I have just spent our first month in a home of our own thanks to Habitat for Humanity [AFFILIATE NAME] and many local volunteers and supporters. With the help of Habitat for Humanity and this community, my children will grow up in a safe neighborhood, and we will always have a place to call home. Thank you for such a gift!

I know first-hand there are many ways to give back in our community and to help one another out. While helping to build my own home, I put in hours helping another family build their Habitat home. And with many families struggling to find an affordable home, we all can do something. Right now, many Californians are doing their taxes, and they have the unique opportunity to make tax-deductible donations to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund on their 2018 California tax return. Donations generated through this fund will maximize Habitat for Humanity's work and make homeownership a reality for more families like mine. Visit [www.habitatca.org/taxfund](http://www.habitatca.org/taxfund) to learn more and help ease the housing crisis hitting children and families in [COUNTY/REGION].

[Name & City]

---

### *Supporter Voice – Board Member, Respected Community Voice*

Reading about the housing crisis gripping California and pushing families to the financial brink too often leaves us feeling helpless and hopeless. What can any of us do to help the many families and veterans shut out from having a decent place to live?

We can support organizations like Habitat for Humanity [AFFILIATE NAME] that construct, rehabilitate and preserve homes right here in our community. While sweat equity is a vital part of how Habitat for Humanity homes are built, support comes in many forms. Right now, Californians preparing their taxes have the unique opportunity to make tax-deductible donations to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund on their 2018 California tax return. Donations generated through this fund will maximize Habitat for Humanity's work and make homeownership a reality for the many [COUNTY/REGION] families and veterans in need of an affordable home. Visit [www.habitatca.org/taxfund](http://www.habitatca.org/taxfund) to learn more.

[Name & City]

---

### *Volunteer Voice*

What a joy it was to see so many community members recently come together and help build a Habitat for Humanity home for a local family. Together, we contributed more than XX hours of sweat equity to help the family put a roof over their head and build a stable, home that will be life-changing.

As a long-time volunteer with Habitat for Humanity [AFFILIATE NAME] I know not everyone has the time to pick up a hammer and spend a Saturday helping to build a home. But we all can do something to help the many Californians we read about daily who are struggling with housing costs and are on the brink of homelessness. Right now, as Californians get ready to file their taxes, we have the unique opportunity to make tax-deductible donations to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund on their 2018 California tax return. Donations generated through this fund will maximize Habitat for Humanity's work and make homeownership a reality for more families like mine. Visit [www.habitatca.org/taxfund](http://www.habitatca.org/taxfund) to learn more and help ease the housing crisis hitting children and families in [COUNTY/REGION].

[Name & City]



**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

## TEMPLATE OPINION OR VIEWPOINT PIECE

### We Can All Help Children and Families Avoid Homelessness with the Foundation of a Home

*[Introduction Suggestions – open with something happening locally/in the news such as the housing crisis or homelessness in the community; look to tie in a recent family move-in]*

We all read the headlines and know the crisis facing children, families and seniors – people are struggling with rising housing costs. Choosing between buying food, medical care or keeping a roof over their heads is now the norm for many families. And even as people work two and three jobs, they lack access to affordable financing that might put them on a path to buying a home.

Unfortunately, Californians are being locked out of homeownership and stable housing with devastating consequences for children, families and communities. A [recent study by researchers at Boston Medical Center](#) found housing instability, including chronically late rent payments, can affect the mental and physical health of family members of all ages.

Many families are just one crisis from not having a home at all.

Families like Tracy Owens and her 11-year-old son. The single mother was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 35. The challenges kept coming her way. Facing intense medical treatment, and just months after losing her own father to cancer, Owens had to end an unhealthy marriage. In a matter of months, she also had to look for a new place to live when her landlord suddenly decided to sell the home she had been renting. She feared she and her son would be homeless.

But like all the families we work with at Habitat for Humanity **[AFFILIATE NAME]** Owens was determined to rebuild a stable life for her and her son. After more than **XX** hours of sweat equity, and thanks to the contributions of community members, Owens and her son have an affordable home to call their own.

And we know this home is just the beginning for Owens and her son. At Habitat for Humanity **[AFFILIATE NAME]**, we see every day the significant improvements a home brings in children's academic lives and financial stability for families. A local survey found **XX%** of families with school-age children reported an improvement in study habits and school performance, **XX%** of families have had at least one family member start or complete higher education or job-training programs, and **XX%** of families have more savings than prior to earning their Habitat home.

To build up families and communities, and with a housing crisis of the magnitude California faces, we need all hands on deck.

That's where you come in. As you file your state tax return this season, you can help build homes and hope and create a state where every child, family and veteran can have a decent place to call home. With as little as \$1, and without even picking up a hammer, you can make a tax-deductible donation to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund on your 2018 California tax return.

Detailed steps on how to contribute – whether you file taxes on your own or receive assistance from a tax preparer – as well a donation reminder form can be found at [www.habitatca.org/taxfund](http://www.habitatca.org/taxfund).





**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

Thanks to the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund, more than \$509,000 has been generated in recent years, helping make homeownership a reality for hundreds of families and releasing them from the anguish of choosing between keeping the lights on or paying for groceries and educational opportunities for their children.

Families like Owen's will tell you what a gift having a home has been for her and her son: "It's not only about building a home, I was able to build back up my self-confidence, self-worth and a vision for the future."

Let's help prevent homelessness and give all children and families in our community a brighter future with the foundation of a home.

*[Author Name & Title/City]*



**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

**\*Make sure to always include images or video in your posts!**

### Sample Twitter or Facebook Posts:

#### Post these first:

It's time to #BuildHomesBuildHope! You can help California families have a decent place to live, without even lifting a hammer. Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) to learn how you can help!

We're helping to #BuildHomesBuildHope this tax season! Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) to learn how you can help us build homes for California families in need!

This tax season we want to #BuildHomesBuildHope! Join our tax fund campaign and spread the word to your followers about the Habitat for Humanity Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund to help CA families have a home! Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) for more info!

#### Then follow up with these posts:

#BuildHomesBuildHope this tax season with your tax return and make sure California families have a decent place to live! Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) for more info on how you can help with as little as \$1!

Doing your taxes tonight? Remember to #BuildHomesBuildHope with [\[@AFFILIATE NAME\]](#). Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) for more info!

Turn your tax return into homes and hope for California's families and children! Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) to learn more! #BuildHomesBuildHope

Make a tax-deductible donation to Habitat for Humanity's Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund on your 2018 CA tax return and maximize our efforts to help children, families and veterans have a decent home. Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) to learn how to help! #BuildHomesBuildHope

Turn your CA tax return into a home for a California family in your community! Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) for more info on how you can #BuildHomesBuildHope!

Imagine how many homes we could build if every Californian donated just \$1 from his or her tax return. Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) for more info on how your \$1 can #BuildHomesBuildHope this tax season.

Did you know you can help build homes and hope with your CA tax return today? Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) for more info on how \$1 can help #BuildHomesBuildHope this tax season.

Last year we built **XX** homes for local families with donations from Californians. This year we're trying to double that! Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) to learn how to help us #BuildHomesBuildHope!

Want to make a difference this tax season? Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) to learn more about how you can #BuildHomesBuildHope for California families.



**BUILD HOMES. BUILD HOPE.**  
VOLUNTARY TAX CONTRIBUTION FUND

### Sample Facebook Posts:

**Customize with a story from one of your local families. Make sure to include a photo!**

Every year, Habitat for Humanity **Los Angeles** builds homes for families like Maria and her two teenagers. [Maria](#) is a U.S. Navy veteran and mother to Briana, 17, and Bryan, 15. She struggled to find a job and an affordable home after she returned from her service.

With as a little as \$1, you can make homeownership a reality for the many California children, families and veterans like Maria who are caught in the housing crisis and unable to afford a safe, stable home. Visit [habitatca.org/taxfund](http://habitatca.org/taxfund) for more info on how \$1 can help #BuildHomesBuildHope.