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Why did the care act replaced no secrets

Photo Courtesy: The Good Brigade/Getty Images The COVID-19 pandemic made 2020 an unprecedented year in a vast number of ways. The greater part of society shut down to minimize the spread of the virus, which had an undeniably large impact on the economy. Pandemic-related issues left many people without jobs and many businesses needing assistance to stay afloat. As a result, many of us who were able to do so made charitable donations to help out. The U.S. government also stepped in to provide aid, in part via the \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus bill known as the CARES Act. The CARES Act changed tax deductions for charitable donations in 2020, partly to encourage more giving in a time of need. Were you one of the many who made this type of donation? Now that it's tax time again, it's important to understand the various changes so you can file for tax deductions in relation to your charitable donations. How the CARES Act Impacts Your TaxesIn times of financial abundance, people often give more. When the economy is facing a downturn, however, people may have less to give or might be warier of giving in case they begin facing similar financial effects. Photo Courtesy: Kiyoshi Hijiki/Getty Images To lessen this likelihood during the pandemic, one provision in the CARES Act removed the income-related cap on charitable donations. The idea was to help nonprofit organizations, also known as 501(c)(3) qualified organizations, that experienced decreased contributions in 2020. Removing the cap encouraged people and corporations to make bigger charitable contributions than usual. A survey of 3,405 Americans found that a third of U.S. households had donated money to nonprofits by mid-May of 2020. Because they donated, their 2020 taxes will change, potentially giving them a significant tax break for their generosity. The CARES Act Opened Up Charitable Donation Tax Breaks to EveryoneUsually, in order to claim a deduction for a charitable donation you made to a 501(c)(3) organization, you have to itemize your tax deductions. The CARES Act changed that. Due to the act, Americans who don't itemize can deduct as much as \$300 from their 2020 taxes for charitable donations they made during the year. Photo Courtesy: Jamie Grill/Getty Images The \$300 maximum deduction applies to each tax-filing unit. As such, married couples who file their taxes together can only deduct up to \$300. The act passed in March, meaning that it may have encouraged more people who don't itemize tax deductions to donate, knowing they could be eligible for a tax break. The way the CARES Act addressed charitable contributions represents a significant change from the ways the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) altered the system so fewer people benefited from above-the-line itemizations on deductions. More people then began to use the standard deduction, meaning they wouldn't get any tax benefit from charitable donations whatsoever. Thanks to the CARES Act, everyone who donated to nonprofit organizations in 2020 can now potentially receive a tax break. How the CARES Act Made Charitable Donations a Win-WinThe CARES Act also changed how much a person who itemizes deductions on their taxes could deduct for their charitable contributions. Before, they could claim up to 60% of the amount of their adjusted gross income (AGI), and the CARES Act changed it to 100% of their AGI. Here's an example of this change. In 2019, if a person's AGI was \$100,000, their maximum deductible charitable donation was \$60,000 (60% of \$100,000). In 2020, their maximum deductible charitable donation is \$100,000, or 100% of their AGI. Photo Courtesy: 10'000 Hours/Getty Images If you donated more in 2020, it could potentially lower what you owe in taxes for the year. This is because when you make a charitable contribution, it equates to reduced income. So, giving more means you're taxed on less of your income. If you made \$100,000 and donated \$30,000 to a 501(c)(3), you'd be taxed on \$70,000 of your income for 2020. The CARES Act also increased the limit on charitable deductions for businesses. Usually, a corporation's maximum deductible charitable donation is 10% of its taxable income. In 2020, it increased to 25% thanks to the CARES Act. What Counts as a Charitable Donation?Only cash donations made in 2020 to 501(c)(3) nonprofits apply to the CARES Act deduction. Keep in mind that the deduction is specific to 501(c)(3) organizations, not any of the other 501(c) organizations. Included are public charities, private foundations and private operating foundations. All are highly regulated by the IRS. Photo Courtesy: Image Source/Getty Images To be clear, 501(c)(3) nonprofits run for charitable purposes and charitable purposes alone. Their charitable purpose could be scientific, literary, religious or educational. They could also be related to amateur sports, testing for public safety or the prevention of child and animal cruelty. Even though the CARES Act was passed in relation to the pandemic, the donations don't have to be connected to COVID-19 to qualify. If you donated physical goods or to donor-advised funds that indirectly support charities, those donations don't count toward the 2020 CARES Act deduction. For example, donating food to a food bank or donating clothes to a local thrift shop won't qualify. You had to have made a cash donation paid by cash, check or credit card. To prove the donation in case you are audited, make sure to keep some sort of official receipt with a date on it, as special rules apply to deductions for charitable donations. The Takeaway on Charitable Tax Deductions From the CARES ActSimplified, here's what the CARES Act did regarding deductions on your 2020 taxes you can claim if you made charitable contributions to 501(c)(3) nonprofits. If you take the standard deduction and don't itemize deductions on your taxes, you can deduct up to \$300 for charitable donations if you donated at least \$300. Photo Courtesy: DNY59/Getty Images If you do itemize your taxes, the limit for your deductible charitable donation changed from 60% to 100% of your AGI. For corporations, the deductible charitable donation limit increased from 10% to 25% of their taxable income. That tax incentive for charitable contributions made throughout 2020 no doubt impacted whether and how much people and corporations donated last year. The pandemic affected many people deeply, those who were able to stepped up and helped out where they could. MORE FROM REFERENCE.COM Skip to headerSkip to main contentSkip to footerAs the U.S. struggles to contain the effects of the coronavirus, it can be tough to get past day-to-day concerns about staying safe both physically and financially. Any thoughts regarding long-term planning have likely been shifted to backburner status, especially for those who are worried about a loved one who's sick or how they're going to pay their bills this month. And yet, the actions you take now could make a huge difference in securing your future financial security. The impact of the coronavirus already has been significant. With fears escalating over issues that could evolve from a recession, the pandemic could have serious long-range economic implications. Good news is out there, however. In March, President Trump signed into law a historic \$2.2 trillion relief package known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which includes several measures aimed at helping Americans deal with the financial fallout as global markets reel and employers are forced to lay off employees or close. Additional aid is also expected. The situation is fluid, and the details are still being nailed down. Following are some of the steps that are being taken to help workers, retirees and small businesses in 2020. For families in need, this is huge. Stimulus checks, which are being treated as a tax rebate, are expected to go to those who are eligible within the next few weeks. The aid is intended to help low- and moderate-income families, so payments are based on each household's adjusted gross income. Individuals who make up to \$75,000 will receive \$1,200 checks, and \$500 for each child under 17 years old. The threshold for married couples who file a joint return is \$150,000; and for heads of household the threshold is \$112,500. The rebate drops by \$5 for every \$100 of income over those thresholds, and some may not receive a payment at all. (To see how big your check will be, try our Stimulus Check Calculator.) Payments will be based on your 2019 tax return, or your 2018 return if you haven't yet filed for 2019. And, yes, those who receive Social Security benefits qualify. The checks are expected to be a lifeline for families whose income has been negatively affected by the coronavirus. If you haven't been impacted financially, you might decide to keep the money to charity (more on that below), or invest it — carefully and deliberately — for your future needs. Anyone who hasn't yet filed a federal income tax return will have until July 15 to file. During that deferral period, they won't be subject to interest and penalties. Businesses and self-employed workers also will have until July 15 to file the first installment of their quarterly estimated taxes. Of course, procrastination isn't the best move for everyone: If you expect a refund and need the money, why wait? And while the IRS pushed back deadlines for federal taxes, some state tax deadlines — including Idaho, Mississippi and Virginia — are earlier. Worried about how your favorite charity is faring in these uncertain times? Contributions of up to \$300 donated to qualifying charities will be treated as "above-the-line" deductions in 2020, so taxpayers won't have to itemize on their returns to claim those gifts. And for those who do itemize, the CARES Act suspends the limit on cash donations to public charities in 2020. This will make giving a little easier this year for those who are so inclined. The CARES Act has a few provisions that apply to retirement savings. If you have questions about how these changes could affect your plan, talk to your account custodian and/or financial adviser. The date for making 2019 contributions to a traditional or Roth IRA has been extended from April 15 to July 15. (Be sure to let your plan custodian know the contribution should be coded for 2019, not 2020, if that's your intent.) Required minimum distributions (RMDs) will be waived for 2020. This will allow retirees who don't need or want to withdraw retirement funds to avoid these forced distributions. Another plus: It means retirees won't be paying taxes on withdrawals that are based strictly on Dec. 31, 2019, account values, when the markets still experienced a bull run. Individuals who are under 59½ can take up to a \$100,000 coronavirus-related hardship distribution from a 401(k) or other qualified retirement account through 2020 without paying the 10% early withdrawal penalty. They'll still have to pay income taxes on any withdrawals, but under this provision, they can stretch those taxes over three years instead of paying them all in one year. Or, they can replace the funds within three years without worrying about the annual cap on contributions. (Savers who are older than 59½ are also eligible to take advantage of the three-year tax deferral/payback provision.) Again, this is a hardship distribution, and should be used only as a last resort by those who are truly strapped for cash. The federal government also has several programs in the works to help small-business owners and their employees. These include Small Business Administration loans and grants to help with costs such as payroll and paid leave, group health care expenses, rent and utility payments. The loans come with friendly terms and relaxed eligibility standards and may be up to 100% forgivable if expenditures meet certain criteria. The first round of money has already been claimed — don't delay in applying for the second round. For more information, check out www.sba.gov/coronavirus. These programs also have been expanded to help those affected by the coronavirus. Under the CARES Act, unemployed workers may receive a \$600 per week increase to what they normally would receive in state benefits for up to four months, until July 31. The temporary Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program also will offer some benefits to workers who traditionally wouldn't qualify, including those who are self-employed or independent contractors. And the Families First Coronavirus Response Act provides protections for employees at small- to midsize companies and self-employed and gig workers who have coronavirus-related absences. These benefits may take a while to access, depending on demand, so again, start the application process as soon as you are eligible. These are just a few of the measures designed to offer relief to those who have lost income — or expect to lose income in the future — because of the pandemic. Additional aid is in the works. If you're working with a financial adviser, ask for regular updates regarding news that pertains to you and your plan. Planning for uncertainty should always be part of your plan in both thriving and declining environments. You don't have to check your account balances constantly (in fact, you may want to avoid it), but you should stay on top of any rule or benefit changes as they happen. Investment Advisory Services offered through Retirement Wealth Advisors, Inc. (RWA) an SEC Registered Investment Advisor. InPower Investments & Wealth Strategies and RWA are not affiliated. Investing involves risk including the potential loss of principal. No investment strategy can guarantee a profit or protect against loss in periods of declining values. 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