

Write off your mission trip expenses on your Federal Tax Return

You can write off your mission trip expenses on your 2010 Federal tax return by claiming them as a charitable contribution on your Schedule A. The following is an excerpt for a book published by ECFA "Donor-Restricted Gifts Simplified", pages 98 & 99.

Funds directly expended by the trip participant with no financial involvement of the sponsoring organization. A participant in a short-term mission trip may partially or totally fund trip expenses by making direct payments for airfare, lodging, meals and other expenses. If a trip is sponsored or approved by a charity, the trip is consistent with the tax-exempt purposes of the charity, and there is no significant element of personal pleasure, recreation or vacation, expenses related to the trip are generally deductible as charitable contributions on the taxpayer's Schedule A, personal expenses relating to "side-trips" or vacation days included in the trip are generally not deductible.

A taxpayer can claim a charitable contribution deduction for travel expenses necessarily incurred while away from home performing services for a charitable organization only if there is no significant element of personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation in such travel. This applies whether a taxpayer pays the expenses directly or indirectly. Expenses are paid indirectly if a taxpayer makes a payment to the charitable organization and the organization pays the travel expenses. The deduction will not be denied simply because the taxpayer enjoys providing services to the charitable organization.

In essence, if you want to be able to write off your trip expenses you should make out your check to Sacred Portion Children's Outreach, and in the memo on your check make a notation "Mission trip expenses". We will send you a receipt for your tax-deductable contribution which you can use to claim as a charitable contribution on your Schedule A for your 2010 tax return. Hope this information helps make the trip more affordable and enjoyable!