As we enter the fourth quarter, it's about that time of year for your supervisor to come by your workstation to drop off your workplace giving packet.

You know the one — it's got a list of charities with some codes after them, an invitation to a presentation by some several charity representatives and a letter about the importance of participating.

But what exactly are you participating in? If you're not sure, you aren't alone. According to the Urban Institute, workplace charitable giving has been declining since the 1980s, just as the Millennials who make up half of today's workforce were being born. It's not something today's workers have that much experience with.

But workplace giving remains an important source of income for many nonprofits, accounting for $5 billion in donations every year. It also offers you an easy way to budget your charitable giving throughout the year so you don't have to write large checks to your favorite charities just as the Christmas shopping season hits.

This blog series is designed to help you make sense of your charitable giving packet. We'll explain what workplace giving is and why it's a great way for you to make your charitable donations. We'll also give you simple step-by-step instructions for donating to Catholic Charities and look at the impact your donation makes.

An Easy Way to Give to Your Favorite Charity

According to America's Charities, workplace giving campaigns are "annual…employer-sponsored programs that offer employees the opportunity to make a charitable contribution through a payroll deduction."

In other words, workplace giving is a way for you to help make a collective impact on your community.

Because your workplace giving campaign is employee-sponsored, the participating charities are all pre-screened. That security allows you to donate to the causes you love knowing that your money will go to a reputable organization and support the cause you intended. Often, charities have an opportunity to present at your workplace to explain their mission and the impact donating to them can have.

Once you complete the donation forms, your payroll department will process the deductions and you will see the donations as a line item on your paycheck. Generally, your donation selections last for a calendar year, from January to December, and you need to complete the donation forms annually. Because it's your money, you can also stop the donations at any time by contacting your payroll department.

Payroll deduction also makes workplace giving an easy way to donate to your favorite charity. Rather than filling out a form every time you want to donate, you only have to complete the donation form once to make a year's worth of donations.

The Reasons we Give at Work

But where did this custom of donating at work through payroll deduction originate? According to the Urban Institute, workplace giving emerged gradually over the past century and a half as workers developed more wealth and civic pride compelled giving.

After the Civil War, charity organization societies emerged to screen the growing number of charitable causes. At this point in American history, charities solicited businesses for donations because laborers did not have sufficient wealth to make donations. To stem the deluge of appeals from individual charities, business owners began charitable federations that made a single appeal to businesses and distributed the funds to charities, which benefitted from planning a single, efficient campaign.

The single-charitable-appeal model spread nationwide with the need to fund the U.S. World War I effort. Community chests, often run by business owners, collected war donations, and after the war they continued to use a single, coordinated appeal to raise and distribute funds across local charities. Charitable giving to community chests grew as laws began allowing businesses to deduct donations as business expenses.

The payroll deduction emerged during World War II to help workers purchase war bonds. Businesses and unions adopted the tool to collect taxes, pay for union dues and help employees contribute to workplace benefits. Charities saw it as a way to tap the growing wealth of the post-war middle class.

Participation in workplace giving campaigns through payroll deductions boomed with the economy over the second half of the 20th century. To find further efficiencies, local community chests merged over time to create organizations like The United Way that lead today's workplace giving campaigns.

Today, workplace giving has declined, but charities continue to rely on donations from individuals as a key source of funding. Today's workplace giving campaigns allow donors to set up donations online and choose which charities to support.

Four Ways to Include Catholic Charities in your Workplace Giving

There are many ways you can donate to Catholic Charities through your workplace giving campaign.

United Way

Many local companies participate in the United Way. When you receive your pledge form, fill in Catholic Charities Spokane as your charity designation.

Washington Combined Fund Drive

Spokane is home to many state employees. The state employee workplace giving campaign is the Washington Combined Fund Drive. All donations must be made online. You can donate by going to the Combined Fund Drive website and searching **charity code 0316163 or federal tax ID number 91-0569880**.

Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)

For federal employees living in Spokane, the federal employee CFC is the best way to give. All donations must be made online. [You can create an account](#) on the CFC website and designate your gift to Catholic Charities with **charity code 22732 or federal tax ID number 91-0569880**.

Workplace Giving/Matching Gift

If your company runs its own campaign, you can still give to Catholic Charities. Designate your gift to Catholic Charities Spokane by including **federal tax ID number 91-0569880**.

Open that Giving Packet with Confidence

Now that you understand more about your workplace giving campaign, go ahead and open that giving packet with confidence.